

Picking Peas

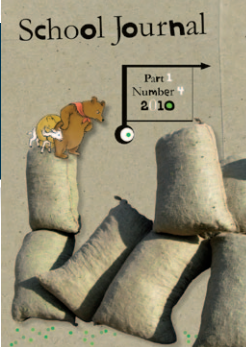
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School Journal

Part 1 Number 4 2010

Noun frequency level: 8–9

Year 4



Overview

Shanti and Shar are Kiwi twins living in India with their parents who are doctors. When the local pea crop needs to be harvested, they willingly help to pick (and eat) the juicy peas. This article provides opportunities to explore the different roles and responsibilities in a community.

The author's use of past and present tense for moving back and forth in time, along with time markers that show the order of events, provide opportunities for students to explore a different way of structuring a text.

Texts related by theme

“A Bowl of Rice” SJ 1.1.09

“What’s for Breakfast?” SJ 1.4.02

“King of the Grasses” SJ 1.4.00

Text characteristics from the year 4 reading standard

some places where information and ideas are implicit and where students need to make inferences based on information that is easy to find because it is nearby in the text and there is little or no competing information

some abstract ideas that are clearly supported by concrete examples in the text or easily linked to the students' prior knowledge

a straightforward text structure, such as a structure that follows a recognisable and clear text form

Along comes Ram Jeet, the farmer who owns the field. He lifts the sack, swings it onto his back, and carries it to the roadside.

Shanti and Shar are Kiwi twins who are living in Lahaul, in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. Lahaul is a wild and beautiful valley high in the Western Himalayas. Their parents are both doctors who work in a local community health programme.

It is July – the middle of the pea season in Lahaul. In three short weeks, thousands of kilograms of peas have to be picked, packed into sacks, and taken by truck to the markets in Delhi, 650 kilometres away.

Earlier this morning, Shanti and Shar were busy with their New Zealand Correspondence School maths lessons when the phone rang.

“Are you guys busy this morning? Our peas need harvesting, and we could do with some help.” It was their friend Usha, who lives ten minutes’ walk away at Naamu village.

“What do you think?” asked Dad. “Can the maths wait till this afternoon?”

“Yes!” shouted the twins, both together. Quickly, they put baby Jalori into his backpack and headed up the hill with Dad to Naamu.

other visual language features that support the ideas and information, for example, text boxes or maps

some compound and complex sentences, which may consist of two or three clauses

Reading standard: by the end of year 4

Possible curriculum contexts

SOCIAL SCIENCES

LEVEL 2 – Understand that people have social, cultural, and economic roles, rights, and responsibilities.

ENGLISH (Reading)

LEVEL 2 – Structure: Show some understanding of text structures.

ENGLISH (Writing)

LEVEL 2 – Structure: Organise texts, using a range of structures.

Possible reading purposes

- To find out about the importance of the pea harvest in a small community in India
- To identify the roles and responsibilities of people harvesting food together
- To compare aspects of life in Lahaul with life in New Zealand.

Possible writing purposes

- To describe a time when they participated in a community project
- To describe the roles and responsibilities that they have in their household
- To explain the process of harvesting a particular food or crop (for example, in the garden, on a farm, or from a pot).

See Instructional focus – Reading for illustrations of some of these reading purposes.

See Instructional focus – Writing for illustrations of some of these writing purposes.

Text and language challenges

VOCABULARY:

- Indian names, place names, and words that will be unfamiliar to most students
- Possible unfamiliar words and concepts including “heaving”, “bulging”, “Indian state”, “community health programme”, “pea season”, “harvesting”, “pea fields”, “work their way across”, “zip-lock plastic bag”, “mountain pass”, “precious”, “freshly picked”
- The vocabulary of measurement including “kilograms”, “kilometres”, “ten minutes’”, “an hour or so”, “4000-metre-high”.

Possible supporting strategies

Use strategies, including support from students with Indian ancestry, to familiarise students with the names of people and places.

Review the words used for measuring time, weight, distance, and height. List the words that will appear in the article to support students who may confuse similar words, such as kilogram and kilometre.

The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction, pages 39–46, has useful information about learning vocabulary.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED:

- An understanding of where India is in relation to New Zealand
- Knowledge of growing, picking, and eating vegetables
- Different roles and responsibilities in a community.

Possible supporting strategies

Use a world map to show where India is. Point out the Himalayas and the capital of New Delhi.

Ask students who have lived overseas to share their experiences.

Share knowledge about the growing cycle, including the times to harvest and eat fruit or vegetables.

As a model for later discussion, support students to identify the various roles people play in the community.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE:

- The use of dialogue
- The different verb forms
- The use of mostly present tenses for dramatic effect and engagement even though the writer is recounting something that happened in the past
- The compound and complex sentences
- The sequence of the events for a harvest
- The photographs of aspects of the harvest
- The map showing the location of Lahaul.

Possible supporting strategies

Review what the students already know about the ways we can recount an experience orally and in writing. Support the students to identify features such as sequence words and present and past verb forms.

Use a timeline to construct a diagram of the events in the article. If appropriate for your students, put the timeline in a table form and have a row or column for the words that tell the reader when things happen. Discuss how the time and sequencing language is used and practise making or reconstructing sentences using the language (for example, using “when” and “after”). Remind the students to look at these examples when they are writing their own recounts or presenting them orally.

Instructional focus – Reading

Social Sciences (Level 2 – Understand that people have social, cultural, and economic roles, rights, and responsibilities.)

Text excerpts from “Picking Peas”

Shanti and Shar are Kiwi twins who are living in Lahaul, in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. It is a wild and beautiful valley high in the Western Himalayas. Their parents are both doctors who work in a local community health programme.

“Are you guys busy this morning? Our peas need harvesting, and we could do with some help.” It was their friend Usha, who lives ten minutes’ walk away at Naamu village.

They need to hold the pod at its base, where it is attached to the pea plant, so that it doesn’t split open. She shows them how to work their way across the field, pulling up each whole pea plant, taking off the fat pea pods, and putting them into the buckets.

City customers will pay good money for freshly picked peas from Lahaul.

Students (what they might do)

Students locate and **evaluate** information in order to **identify a main idea** that these children are living in India where their parents are working. The students **ask and answer questions** to help them to understand why the family are living in India.

They use the word “Kiwi” and the map to **infer** that this is a long way from New Zealand, where the family usually lives. They draw on the title and the previous paragraphs to **make connections** with the background information in this paragraph.

Students identify the role that Shanti and Shar are asked to play in the local community and **make connections** with the roles and responsibilities that they have in their own families and communities.

Students use what they know about sentence structure to **unpack the first sentence**. They search for the main clause and use the commas and the word “where” to help them understand that the clause in the middle explains the word “base”.

Students use the commas and the verbs “pulling”, “taking”, and “putting” to follow each step of the process.

Students use what they know about the value of money to **infer** that “good money” means a lot of money. They **evaluate** this statement to **infer** that the peas have to get to market while they are still fresh.

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

ASK QUESTIONS to support students to make connections between this paragraph, the title, and the previous paragraphs.

- Why do you think the author didn’t put this paragraph at the beginning? What was her purpose?
- How does the information in this paragraph connect with the previous paragraphs?
- What do you think the girls were doing with the sacks? What clues helped you?

MODEL asking questions as a strategy to support understanding.

- Asking questions as we read can help us to find information. So when I read this, my first question is: Why are their parents working in India rather than in New Zealand?

PROMPT the students to make connections to their knowledge of family and community roles and responsibilities.

- Why did the girls get involved in harvesting the peas?
- How do the roles and responsibilities of the girls compare with your roles and responsibilities?

MODEL the reading of a complex sentence and searching for the main clause.

- Let’s look at this sentence. I’ll use the commas to help me read it aloud. I can see that the part between the commas is a clause that explains what the base of the pod is. I know that the pronoun “where” refers to the part of the sentence just before it (“at its base”). So the clause in the commas gives extra information about what the base is – it’s the part of the pod that’s attached to the pea plant.

ASK QUESTIONS to help the students clarify their understanding of particular phrases.

- What do you think “good money” means? Why do you think that?
- What’s special about these peas?
- We now know that it’s “a long and dangerous journey” to get the peas to the city. What does this tell you about the area and its transport system?
- Why do you think the people of Lahaul bother going so far to sell their peas?

GIVE FEEDBACK

- I could see you were wondering what was going on at the start, but you read on until you worked it out. Well done!
- I noticed the way you kept coming up with interesting questions about this family. That’s a great way to get more out of your reading.
- You wrote down new words but kept reading to the end of the paragraph and then tried to work them out. That’s a good way to deal with a few unfamiliar words. Well done!

METACOGNITION

ASK QUESTIONS to make the students’ strategies explicit for them.

- How often did you slow down to read the longer sentences? What strategies helped you work out the meaning in long sentences?
- What experiences have you had that helped you to make connections with this article? How did those connections help you to understand the text?
- Have you chosen some words to put into your vocabulary notebook? Why did you choose those words? What information do you need to write about each word?

Reading standard: by the end of year 4

The Literacy Learning Progressions

Assessment Resource Banks

Instructional focus – Writing

English (Level 2, structure – Organise texts, using a range of structures.)

Text excerpts from “Picking Peas”

It is July – the middle of the pea season in Lahaul. In three short weeks, thousands of kilograms of peas have to be picked, packed into sacks, and taken by truck to the markets in Delhi, 650 kilometres away.

Examples of text characteristics

USE OF TENSES AND TIME MARKERS

Use of the timeless present tense helps to set the scene.

The use of time markers helps the reader to locate the time frame and the order of events.

“Opening a pea pod is kind of like opening a zip-lock plastic bag,” says Shanti.

USE OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

The use of a simile can help the reader understand something unfamiliar by likening it to something familiar.

The twins have eaten so many fresh peas already that they don’t think they could eat any more for a month. But they don’t want to be rude, so they thank Usha, take the bag of peas, and wave goodbye to the other workers in the field.

IMPLICATION

The writer needs to imply ideas so that the reader can infer information. The writer can give the reader clues, but they also expect readers to make connections with their own knowledge and experience to understand what the writer is implying.

The precious load of fresh peas will jiggle and bounce over rough roads all through the night. The peas need to arrive at the vegetable markets of New Delhi as fresh, green, and crunchy as possible.

DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE

Verbs – jiggle, bounce

Adjectives – precious, fresh, rough, green, crunchy

METACOGNITION

ASK QUESTIONS to encourage the students to think more deeply about their writing.

- What strategies did you use as you planned for writing? How does thinking about a good structure help you?
- What did you mean when you said ...? How will your readers work this out? What experiences will help them to make that inference?
- Do you find it useful to plan and discuss your writing in your first language?
- How did your own experiences help you to write about this topic? How can you help readers who haven’t had these experiences to understand?

Teacher

(possible deliberate acts of teaching)

PROMPT the students to ask questions of each other as they form their intentions for writing. They can use an agreed set of questions such as:

- What is your purpose for writing?
- Who is your audience?
- What are the main ideas you want your audience to understand?
- How will you structure your writing? Why?

EXPLAIN that they need to start with an orientation telling the reader information such as when, where, what, and who.

EXPLAIN that time markers act as clues to help readers follow a sequence of events. Highlight examples of sentences with time markers in the text. Discuss how these sentences are constructed. Practise constructing some sentences with time markers, for example, by describing what you did in class the previous day. Support the students to use time markers appropriately in their writing. Some students might need sentence starters to help them.

MODEL how you can plan for writing by using a timeline.

- I want to write about the time we had a sausage sizzle for the netball team. I’ll make a line that shows what we did first, next, and so on. This helps me to keep things in order.

PROMPT the students to use figurative language to help explain unfamiliar ideas or actions.

- When you use a metaphor or simile, you’re helping your reader to imagine something you’re describing. This message is usually quicker and more effective than a long explanation.

TELL students how, as readers, they sometimes need to infer meaning from the text. Ask them to check their writing with a partner.



- Read your partner’s work and look for places where you have had to infer to understand what they mean. What clues and/or prior knowledge helped you?

ASK QUESTIONS to help students review and edit their writing.

- What was your purpose for writing? Do you think you’ve done what you set out to do?
- Have you used precise language to help your readers visualise what you’re writing about? What words or images are needed to bring an idea to life for your readers?

GIVE FEEDBACK

- You are very receptive to feedback, and you make thoughtful changes to improve your writing. I’m seeing much more interesting writing from you now.
- The structure and time markers you’ve used will help your readers to follow the events. Well done!
- I could almost taste those sausages the boys were cooking! That’s just what a good description should do.

 Writing standard: by the end of year 4
 The Literacy Learning Progressions