

ILLUSTRATING THE READING STANDARD

“Celebrating Matariki” *School Journal*, Part 2 Number 2, 2005

Noun frequency level: 9.5–10.5

By the end of year 4, students are required to locate and evaluate the information and ideas within a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts, drawing on the knowledge and skills described in the Literacy Learning Progressions, to meet the reading demands of the curriculum. The curriculum tasks will often involve the students in generating their own questions as well as answering questions from the teacher.

The students in a year 4 class are involved in a social studies inquiry into how people’s traditional cultural practices are reflected and expressed in celebrations of today.

“Celebrating Matariki” describes the events associated with the Kerikeri celebrations of the Māori New Year. The article concludes with a persuasive statement and a whakataukī that encourage

students to appreciate the importance of this festival to tangata whenua and to make positive plans for the future.

The text was selected for its simple report structure and the way it uses personal recount features to engage readers at this level. The sequential description of the day’s celebrations, together with photographs and a glossary, will support readers to identify main ideas and to understand the significance of Matariki celebrations in today’s world.

The following example illustrates aspects of the task and text and demonstrates how a student engages with both task and text to meet the reading demands of the curriculum. A number of such examples would be used to inform the overall teacher judgment for this student.

All around the north of New Zealand, people are celebrating Matariki, the traditional Māori New Year. At Waitangi, they’re planting native trees, in Kaikohe, they’re doing kapa haka, and in Whangārei, they’re flying kites. Here in Kerikeri, we’re waiting on the hill at Kororipo Pā for the celebrations to begin.

The great chief Hongi Hika used to launch his waka taua from here. In those days, this place was called the Te Waha o te Riri – The Mouth of Trouble.

He sticks out his tongue in a pūkana challenge and stares at us.

They are wearing maro and pākē made from flax, feathers, and hemp cloth.

The steamship blasts its horn ... where Hongi Hika’s waka were once launched. Even though the horse and cart ... are old, ... the traditions of the Ngā Puhī people are much older.

It’s great to be able to celebrate all these things together at Matariki. It’s a good time to learn about what has happened in the past and to think about what we’d like to happen in the future.

Every year, the festival of Matariki brings a fresh new start for Aotearoa New Zealand.

The student draws on his prior knowledge of family and wider community celebrations to understand the purpose for reading the text. He asks questions about the meaning of Matariki and, with teacher support, he can locate relevant information in the text to clarify that it is the traditional Māori New Year.

The student clarifies the setting by linking the place names to a prior mapping activity and by using his prior knowledge of Waitangi Day. He asks questions about the meaning of “The Mouth of Trouble”. With support, he connects to his prior knowledge of the historical events in the area, and also to “Today it’s quiet and peaceful” on the next page, to infer that the metaphor “The Mouth of Trouble” is used here because this was once a place of unrest.

The student visualises from the description provided and uses the glossary to confirm his understanding of pūkana.

With prompting, the student makes connections to his prior knowledge and identifies elements of the Matariki celebrations that relate to celebrations within other cultures that he knows.

With support, the student infers, from “the traditions of the Ngā Puhī people are much older”, that the Ngā Puhī people had a strong position in the area long before Pākehā settlement. He uses the information in the first part of this sentence to confirm this.

The student evaluates the three statements in the concluding paragraph. With prompting, he talks about the importance of cultural celebrations for expressing the customs, traditions, and values of individual cultures and also for bringing people together and creating positive relationships across cultures.

