



## Overview

This short, dramatic poem is in te reo Māori with an accompanying English interpretation. It describes the sights and sounds of lightning as Tāwhirimātea performs a haka. Tāwhirimātea is one of the children of Ranginui and Papatūānuku. He didn't want his parents to separate. When his brothers separated his parents to let light into the world, Tāwhirimātea caused violent storms. He is the Atua of the winds, clouds, rain, hail, snow, and storms. "Atua" refers to ancestors who have a continued influence on people's lives.

Note that this teacher support material mainly focuses on the English interpretation. This poem provides opportunities for students who are familiar with te reo, and with traditional Māori stories about Tāwhirimātea, to share their knowledge. Students will be able to make connections to their experiences of thunder and lightning. Students may also be familiar with the "Uira" waiata by Hirini Melbourne

on *Kiwi Kidsongs*. It can be downloaded from <http://digistore.tki.org.nz/ec/p/home>

"Uira" requires students to "confidently use a range of processing and comprehension strategies to make meaning from and think critically about" text (from *The Literacy Learning Progressions*, page 14). The characteristics of this text provide opportunities for students to make connections between their prior knowledge and the text to visualise, to make simple inferences, to identify how the author has used language for impact, and to use multiple sources of information to clarify the meanings of unfamiliar words and ideas.

There is an audio version of the text on the *Readalong 2012: Ready to Read and Junior Journal 44 and 45 CD* as well as on an MP3 file at [www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz](http://www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz)

You may want to listen to the audio before the session if you need guidance with the pronunciation.

## Text characteristics

Key text characteristics relating to the reading standard for after three years at school are shown in the boxes with a solid outline. Other boxes indicate additional characteristics.

A mix of explicit and implicit content within text and illustrations that requires students to make connections between ideas in the text and their prior knowledge in order to make simple inferences, for example, "sky alight" describes the brightness of lightning

Some unfamiliar words and phrases, the meaning of which is supported by the context or illustrations

**Uira**

Uira, tētere  
 Hihira ana te rangi  
 Haruru ana te ao  
 Rere ana te wehiwehi  
 Me te matakū e.

Kōhikohiko te ārero wera  
 Rū, wiriwiri te haka a Tāwhirimātea  
 Tihore ana te rangi i te uira  
 Ka pō, ka ao, ka pō.

**Lightning**

Lightning and thunder  
 The sky alight  
 The world reverberates  
 Causing awe and fear.

Hot tongue flashing  
 As Tāwhirimātea performs his haka.  
 The sky splits with lightning.  
 It is dark, it is light, it is dark.

*In Māori tradition, Tāwhirimātea is the Atua of the Weather. He looks after the wind, clouds, rain, hail, snow, and storms. He is one of the children of Ranginui (the sky father) and Papatūānuku (the earth mother).*

Hirini Melbourne

The poetic language features, including the use of repetition

The supporting explanation about Tāwhirimātea

**English (Reading)**

Level 2 – Ideas: Show some understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

**English (Reading)**

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

**Science (Material World)**

Levels 1 and 2 – Properties and changes of matter: Observe, describe, and compare physical and chemical properties of common materials and changes that occur when materials are mixed, heated, or cooled.

**Suggested reading purpose**

*(What can the students expect to find out or think about as a result of reading this text?)*

- To explore how the poet conveys the sights and sounds of lightning

**Suggested learning goals for this text**

*(What opportunities does this text provide for students to learn more about how to “read, respond to, and think critically about” texts?)*

**Select from and adapt** the suggestions below according to your students’ strengths, needs, and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1–8*, Knowledge of the learner, page 6).

- The students make connections between their prior knowledge and the language of the poem to visualise thunder and lightning and make simple inferences about them.
- They identify how the writer has used language for impact.
- They evaluate the effectiveness of the writing.
- They use multiple sources of information to clarify meanings of unfamiliar words and ideas.

**Text and language features****Vocabulary**

- Possible unfamiliar words and phrases, such as “alight”, “reverberates”, “awe”
- The name “Tāwhirimātea”.

**Text features**

- The poem in te reo and English
- The poem in two verses
- The use of imagery to describe thunder and lightning
- The supportive illustration
- The use of repetition
- The supporting information about Tāwhirimātea.

**Possible supporting strategies**

Encourage the students to share their knowledge of te reo and traditional Māori stories and histories about Tāwhirimātea.

Monitor students’ **decoding** attempts by noticing their use of words from the text during discussion. Prompt the students to remember strategies they can use, for example:

- drawing on knowledge of spelling patterns and syllables (“re-ver-be-rates”, “light-ning”, “a-light”).

Monitor the students’ use of **word-solving** strategies to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases. Prompt them to remember the strategies they can use, often in combination, for example:

- using a dictionary then checking the meaning in context to work out the meaning of “reverberates”.


Have a dictionary available to confirm or clarify word meanings. If possible, have appropriate bilingual dictionaries available for English language learners. Remind the students to combine the definition from the dictionary with the context to find the correct meaning.

**Specific knowledge**


- Familiarity with haka.


Students who are new to New Zealand may not be familiar with haka. If possible, have them view an appropriate media clip before reading this poem.

**Metacognition**

Effective readers are metacognitive. They are aware of the processes and strategies they draw on and are able to explain how they use these to successfully make meaning and think critically. Examples of metacognitive behaviours, or strategies teachers can use to promote metacognition, are threaded through the notes and indicated by .

**HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR STUDENTS TO READ, RESPOND, AND THINK CRITICALLY**

 Ask questions: *How did you know that bit was wrong? Or: I noticed that you reread that bit when you got confused. How did rereading help you?*

 Use prompts: *How did you know that bit was right? Think about the strategy you used. How did it help you?*

## Introducing the text

- Tell the students they are going to read a poem by Hirini Melbourne. Cover the English interpretation and have the students look at the illustration and the te reo version. The students may recognise some words, for example, “haka”, “Tāwhirimātea”, and “pō”. Alternatively, you could have the students listen to the audio version as they read along. Ask them to share what they think the poem is about.
- Ask the students to describe what they see, hear, and feel when there is thunder and lightning. Record their ideas on a chart. As you do this, highlight and, if necessary, illustrate key vocabulary and concepts about thunder and lightning, for example, “flashing” light. Students who share a first language other than English may benefit from discussing thunder and lightning in this language.

## Reading and discussing the text

Instructional strategies you can use to support the students to achieve the learning goals are in the right-hand column. **Select from and adapt** the suggestions below according to your students’ needs.

### What to look for, prompt, and support as the students work towards achieving their learning goal

The students use the text and the illustration to help them visualise the sights and sounds of lightning.

They identify words in the poem and make connections between these words and their experiences.

The students make connections to the words and their knowledge of haka to infer that the poet is describing the actions of Tāwhirimātea as the cause of the thunder and lightning.

They use the explanation and the illustration to confirm this inference.

They identify the repetition in the last line as they make connections and visualise the sky being dark and then light as the lightning flashes.

The students think critically by evaluating the effectiveness of the language and whether it describes what they have seen and heard.

☑ With support, students reflect on their learning. They revisit the reading purpose and learning goal or goals and explain some of the things they did to meet them, for example, how they formed images in their minds as they read the poem.

☑ The students identify some challenges in the text and explain what they did to work them out.

### How you can support students to read, respond, and think critically

Have the students read the first verse of the English version.

*What images did you see in your head as you read this verse?*

*What word tells you what the sky is like when the lightning happens?*

If necessary, support them with the meaning of “reverberates”. Draw out the idea about the way a room may shake when there is a very loud noise. Outside, the noise can sound like it is all around. *Have you ever heard a loud crash of thunder? Where were you?*

Alternatively, simply supply the meaning of “reverberates” and return to it later for word study.

*How do you feel when there is thunder?* Draw out the idea of something being both frightening and spectacular.

Have the students read the second verse.

*What do you see in your head when you read “Hot tongue flashing”? Whose tongue is it?*

Have the students think about haka they have performed or seen. *How does this help you to visualise what the poet is describing?*

Read the last line aloud. *What picture do you have in your mind? Why does the poet repeat the words “it is dark”?*

Refer back to the chart you created before reading. *Now that we’ve read the poem, do you think the poet effectively described the things you’ve seen and heard? Why or why not? Have they helped you to think about your experience in a different way?* Have them share their thinking with a partner.

Revisit the reading purpose and learning goal or goals.

☑ Ask questions: *How did you use the words and the illustrations to form a picture in your mind of lightning? How did the words help you form this picture?*

☑ *What strategies did you use to help you solve any difficulties you had when reading this text?* If necessary, model or explain some strategies they could use.

## After reading

- Students can reread the poem as they listen to the audio version on the *Readalong 2012: Ready to Read and Junior Journal 44 and 45* CD or MP3 file. Audio versions also provide English language learners with good models of pronunciation, intonation, and expression.
- Support visualising by having the students:
  - choose one word or phrase from the poem, for example, “sky alight”, “splits with lightning”, and then explain to a partner how the word or phrase helped them to visualise.
  - choose another weather or natural phenomenon to write a poem about, for example, heavy rain, hail, or an earthquake. Discuss the strong connection between the illustration and the text in “Uira” and ask them to illustrate their own poems in a way that will help readers to visualise the text.
- Provide a range of books and other resources that are about the stories of Ranginui, Papatūānuku, and their children.
- Provide opportunities for the students to explore other traditional Māori stories or poems about lightning and thunder or other natural phenomena. Some students may be able to make connections to traditional stories or poems from another culture.
- Use words in the poem as a basis for in-depth word study, taking the word and developing its word family as well as exploring its use in other contexts. For example, after looking at the word family for “reverberates”, you could make a list of things that reverberate, things that create reverberations, or words that have similar meanings, such as “shake”, “rattle”, or “quake”.
- Have the students read other poems about lightning and thunder, for example, “Thunder” (JJ 44) and compare them with the ideas and perspectives in “Uira”.
- Provide opportunities for the students to practise and consolidate their skills of identifying how the author has used language for impact across similar texts. See the Related texts section below for examples of texts you could use in a guided reading session.

## Related texts

Poems that provide opportunities for students to identify the way the author has used language for impact: “The Wind Hound” (JJ 32), “The Road to Milford Sound” (JJ 34), “Autumn Leaves” (JJ 36), “Rain Game” (JJ 38), “Thunder” (JJ 44), “Storm” (SJ 1.4.04), “Big Blue Mouth” (SJ 1.5.07).