

Text Structure and Language Features: Example 2

Text Structure - Narrative Title

HOW MAUI PLAYED WITH FIRE

Long long ago Maui, who was half god and half man, lived in Aotearoa, Land of the Long White Cloud. Maui liked making mischief and teasing.

Orientation - introduces main characters, time and place

One day, Maui decided to tease everyone by putting out all the cooking fires. He knew that they could only get fire from Mahuika, the goddess of fire. "I wonder what will happen if they have no fire," he thought wickedly. He waited till night fell, then he crept from house to house and put out all the fires.

Initial complication

In the morning the people woke and found that they had no cooking fires. "What has happened?" they all shouted angrily. "What will we do?" Maui's mother was one of the tribe's elders. She called one of her servants. "Go to Mahuika!" she ordered. "Ask her for more fire for the world."

He shivered and shook with fear and whispered "I can't. I'm too afraid." Maui's mother was full of rage, but her servant would not go. "I'm not afraid," laughed Maui. "I'll go." Maui's mother told him to leave at once.

Further complications and sequence of events

After days of travelling, Maui reached Mahuika's cave. "O great ancestress," he called, "we have lost our fire. We need more." Out came a fierce woman who had fiery red eyes and long red fingernails like claws. "Who are you and where do you come from?" she roared. "I come from where the wind comes," said Maui. "Then you are my mokopuna, my grandchild and I will give you fire," Mahuika replied.

She pulled a flame from her first fingernail and gave it to Maui. He wanted to see what would happen if he put the fire out so he threw it into the water. He returned to Mahuika and asked for more fire. She pulled out the nail of her second finger, but once again, he put out the fire. He went back several times until she had pulled out all her fingernails and her toenails except for one big toe.

Resolution

At last Mahuika realised Maui had been tricking her and she became very angry. She pulled out her last toenail. Instead of giving it to Maui, she threw it onto the ground, setting the ground on fire. Maui began to run, but the fire was snapping at his feet. He changed himself into a hawk and tried to fly high above the flames. The fire reached high into the sky and burnt his wings. This is why the hawk has brown feathers. The forest and all the land were on fire and Maui nearly died.

He called on his ancestors to send rain. The sky opened and rain began to fall. Maui was safe. The rainwater rose and began to cover the land and Mahuika was afraid. The last of her fire was left in her hair and as the water reached her, the fire seeds jumped into the trees. This is why we can get fire by rubbing the wood from some trees.

Reorientation

Maui travelled home to his village, but he did not give them back their fire. They had to make it by rubbing the sticks from the trees with the fire seeds. Even today, people make fire by rubbing sticks together.

Language Features

Use of word families and word chains to build information, e.g. fire, flame, burn, put out, fingernails

Use of action verbs, e.g. waited, crept, rubbing

Use of various tenses including past, future, present, e.g. lived, was, come, would happen

Use of direct speech, e.g. 'Who are you and where do you come from?' "It's D Day. Go!".

Use of reported speech. e.g. He asked her for more fire.

Use of saying verbs, e.g. asked, whispered, shouted

Use of thinking verbs, e.g. realised

Use of time conjunctions, e.g. at last, Nowadays

Use of compound and complex sentences, e.g. She pulled a flame from her first fingernail and gave it to Maui. He wanted to see what would happen if he put the fire out so he threw it into the water.

Use of detailed noun phrases to build description, e.g. long red fingernails like claws

Use of adverbial phrases to locate, e.g. to his village, into the trees

Use of adjectives, e.g. dangerous, brown, second

Use of adverbs, e.g. angrily, high

Use of nouns or pronouns identifying participants in theme position in sentence (as first element of clause) as this tracks the actions of the participants. e.g. Maui, He, the people, Maui's mother, She.