



Overview

In this information text, Fiona and her children visit a llama farm and go on a llama trek. Fiona shares what they learnt about llamas, including where they come from and why they are farmed in New Zealand.

This text 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).

There is a PDF of the text and an audio version as an MP3 file at www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz

Related texts

Information texts about working animals: *Guide Dogs* (Ready to Read, Purple); “Shetland Ponies” (*JJ 42*); “Backyard Chooks” (*SJ*, Level 2, Aug, 2013)

Text characteristics

Key text characteristics relating to the reading standard for after three years at school are shown in the boxes below.

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 inferences, for example, why people don't ride llamas

The context of a llama trek, which is likely to be unfamiliar to most students

A variety of sentence structures, including complex sentences, so that students are required to notice and use linking words and phrases (for example, “When”, “While”, “also”, “so”, “but”, “by”, “like”, “because”, “which makes”, “not only”) and punctuation to clarify the links between ideas

Why do we have llamas in New Zealand?

Llamas were first brought to New Zealand in 1865 **by** a man named Barnard Rhodes. He kept a few on his farm, **but until the 1980s**, most llamas in New Zealand were kept in zoos. **Then in 1987**, about 250 llamas were brought to New Zealand **by ship from** Chile. The people who brought them here wanted to start their own llama farms.

There are **now** around 1,500 llamas in New Zealand. Many are kept on **lifestyle blocks**. Most llamas are kept as pets or for their hair. Some are kept for breeding. Others, **like Wally**, are used for trekking.

“People like them **because** they're easy to care for,” Roz said. “They only need to be **shorn** and have their toenails cut every two years. **And** they're great at keeping the grass down.”



What do llamas eat?

Like a lot of animals, llamas eat grass, **but** they eat many other plants **as well**. Llamas have a split lip, **which** makes eating thorns easy. They can **also** walk a long way without having to drink much water.



A llama's split lip



Some unfamiliar words and phrases, including subject-specific vocabulary, the meaning of which is supported by the context, sentence structure, definitions, and/or visual language features

Visual language features, including subheadings, words in bold linked to a glossary, and labelled photographs that are clearly explained and linked to the body text

Ideas and information organised in paragraphs

Shifts in time and place, indicated by the use of the present or past tense and adverbs and adverbial phrases (for example, “When we arrived”, “in South America”, “for hundreds of years”, “until”, “Then”, “now”, “On the trek”)

English (Reading)

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

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

Science (Living World)

Level 2 – Life Processes: Recognise that all living things have certain requirements so they can stay alive.

Social Sciences

Level 2 – Social Studies: Understand how people make choices to meet their needs and wants.

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).

Possible reading purposes

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

- To find information about llamas
- To think about why llamas are useful in New Zealand

Possible learning goals

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

- The students **ask questions** about aspects they are not sure of or want to know more about and look for answers in the text.
- They **make connections** between the text and the visual language features to **locate and track** information.
- They **summarise** the main points about llamas.
- They **make connections** between their prior knowledge of useful animals and information in the text in order to **make inferences** about why llamas are useful in New Zealand.
- They **monitor** their reading, and when something is unclear, they take action to solve the problem, for example, rereading a sentence or looking for clues close by.

**Text and language features****Possible supporting strategies**

(These suggestions may be used before, during, or after reading in response to students' needs.)

Vocabulary

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases, including subject-specific words: “allergic”, “article”, “fertiliser”, “fuel”, “gorse”, “grease”, “guide”, “keeping the grass down”, “lanolin”, “leathery pads”, “lifestyle blocks”, “manure”, “panniers”, “pine needles”, “protect”, “shorn”, “split lip”, “valley”

Some words that are used (or that can be used) as both nouns and verbs, for example: “comb”, “combing”, “drink”, “farm”, “groom”, “guide”, “hugs”, “trek”, “trekking”.

Readers are able to use strategies for working out unfamiliar words only when they know most of the vocabulary in the text. For English language learners who need support with vocabulary, introduce and practise selected items before reading. See [ESOL Online: Vocabulary](#) for suggestions.

Prompt the students to remember the strategies they can use, often in combination, for example:

- when **decoding**:
 - breaking words into chunks or syllables (“fert-il-is-er”, “kilo-grams”, “pan-ni-ers”, “life-style”)
 - drawing on similarities to known words (using knowledge of “born” or “torn” to help with “shorn” and “thorns”)
- when **working out word meanings**:
 - using the context of the sentence and/or the surrounding sentences
 - searching for clues such as definitions (often within brackets) and supporting information within photographs
 - using the glossary to check the meanings of words in bold print.

Have a dictionary available for students to confirm or clarify word meanings, but remind them that they can make a best attempt at a word and come back to it later.

Specific knowledge

- Some understanding of how other animals and their products are used.

Encourage students to share their knowledge of keeping farm animals, such as chickens, sheep, or cows.

Text features

- A mix of text forms, including a recount and a report (and the use of different colours and fonts to indicate these different text forms)
- Within paragraphs, a lead sentence that states the main idea and other sentences with supporting information.

See “Introducing the text”.

Review the structure of a specific paragraph. Use the subheading to clarify the purpose of the paragraph, then support the students to identify the lead sentence and the sentences with supporting information. You could create a chart like the one below to clarify the links between ideas.

Heading: Where do llamas come from?	
Structure	Main ideas
Lead sentence	Llamas come from South America.
Supporting sentences	The people ... have kept them for hundreds of years ... They use llamas to carry things ...

**Metacognition****HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR STUDENTS TO BE METACOGNITIVE**

Here are some ways you can build students' awareness of the processes and strategies they are using as they make meaning and think critically.

- What do you think is the lead sentence in this paragraph? Why?
- What did you do to work out what “keeping the grass down” meant?

Introducing the text

- Use your knowledge of your students to ensure that your introduction of the text is effective in activating their prior knowledge and providing appropriate support for a successful first reading.
- Show the students the cover photograph and tell them you have an article about llamas for them to read. Have them use the contents page to find the article and page number. You could draw attention to the interesting spelling of llama with two “l”s.
- Ask the students to share what they know about llamas and record their ideas (even those that may be incorrect) on a KWL chart. Record any questions they have. You can add others that come up as they preview and read the text.
- Have the students look through (preview) the article, noting the visual language features and using the subheadings and photographs to make predictions about what they will find out. The questions in the subheadings may match some that they have already thought of or prompt them to think of new ones.
- Draw attention to the layout differences between the various sections. Remind them that the words in bold are explained in the glossary.
- Have the students read page 2 to clarify that this is an article written by someone who has been on a llama trek. Draw students’ attention to the definition of “trek” in brackets. Discuss what a llama trek might involve.
- To support English language learners with the changes of viewpoint in this article, explain that the text on page 2 is an introduction written by the journal editor, and that the text beginning on page 3 is told from Fiona’s point of view. Point out the word “we” in the first line of page 3 and clarify that Fiona is referring to herself and her children, Jasmine and Charlie.
- Share the reading purpose and learning goal(s).
- Remind the students to refer to the KWL chart as they read. You could provide the students with sticky notes, or some other tool, to mark information that relates to the KWL chart or to mark places where they have questions.

Reading and discussing the text

Suggestions for ways that you can support the students to achieve the learning goals are in the right-hand column of the table below.

Select from and adapt the suggestions according to your students’ needs. These suggestions may apply to the first or a subsequent reading.

Encourage the students to read the text by themselves, intervening only if it’s clear a student needs help. There will be many opportunities to provide support with word-solving and comprehension on subsequent readings.

Student behaviours

Examples of what to look for and support as the students work towards achieving their learning goal(s). Note that much of the processing that students do at this level is “inside their heads” and may not be obvious until after they have read the text and you are discussing it as a group.

Deliberate acts of teaching

Examples of how you can support students as they work towards achieving their learning goal(s). Often this will involve individual students rather than the whole group.

The first reading

- The students demonstrate evidence of self-monitoring and cross-checking. For example, in the first paragraph on page 3, they look for information close by in the text to work out what panniers are and use the photograph to check their thinking.
- As the students read page 4, they infer that llamas are important because they can be used in lots of ways. They may wonder why llamas were brought to New Zealand. As they read on (for example, the photo captions and information about llama hair on page 5), they begin to answer their earlier questions (to infer why people have wanted to bring llamas to New Zealand). They confirm these ideas when reading page 6.
- The students think of new questions as they read. For example, on page 6, they may note a question about the phrase “keeping the grass down” in the last sentence.
- The students reread long sentences, breaking them into smaller chunks to clarify meaning.
- As the students finish, they reflect on their purpose for reading. They scan back through the text to review the main points (using the subheadings as a guide) and check if their questions have been answered.
- Remind the students of strategies they can use to work out the meaning of words they don’t know. Remind them also that brackets are sometimes used to indicate a definition of an unfamiliar word.
- Prompt the students to make connections between ideas. *Think about what makes llamas so useful in South America. Would they be useful for the same reasons in New Zealand?*
- Remind the students they can use sticky notes to mark or record any answers or new questions they want to come back to.
- If necessary, prompt the students to attend to commas and linking words, such as “so” and “but”, to clarify links between ideas within the sentence.
- As they complete their reading, remind them of their reading purpose and to think about any questions they still have or any new questions.

Discussing the text after the first reading

- The students review the KWL chart and add any answers they have found, referring to the text to clarify information. They also add any new questions that have arisen.
- They think, pair, and share their ideas about why llamas are useful in New Zealand, drawing on the information in the text and on the chart and their prior knowledge.
- They share their personal responses to Fiona’s opinion about llamas being useful.
- Remind the students of the reading purpose. Together check through their questions on the KWL chart and add any answers they have found. *Does the information fit with what we thought we knew before reading?*
- Either in this session or when revisiting the text, have the students work in pairs to choose a heading from the text and orally summarise the relevant section. Have the students share their summaries and, as a group, decide on the most important ideas in the article as a whole.
- Have the students make connections between their prior knowledge of useful animals and information in the text to make inferences about why llamas are useful in New Zealand.
- Encourage them to think critically about Fiona’s opinion of llamas on page 8.

Supporting metacognition

With support, the students reflect on their learning. They revisit the reading purpose and learning goal(s). For example:

- The students give an example of how they used sticky notes (or another tool) to mark links between ideas or to note information relevant to a question on the KWL chart.
- The students identify a challenge in the text and explain how they solved it, for example, working out the meaning of panniers by noticing the bags in the photographs.
- Remind the students of the reading purpose and learning goal(s).
- *What helped you track the main ideas?*
- Have the students share with a partner any words or phrases they found difficult and the strategies they used to work them out. Listen in to the discussions. Do you need to follow up on any decoding strategies, particular for new words or features of words?

After reading: Practice and reinforcement

- The students can reread the text as they listen to the audio version. Audio versions also provide English language learners with good models of pronunciation, intonation, and expression.
- Provide further opportunities for students to reread this text as well as other texts about llamas or other working animals (see Related texts).
- Have the students choose three subheadings from the text to rewrite as statements rather than questions. Have them use the statement as the beginning of a summary sentence for each section (for example: Llamas come from ... Their feet are special because ...). Ask them to share their summaries with a partner and decide on an agreed final version. You can vary the level of challenge for this task by having the paired students work on the same subheadings or different ones.
- Have the students work in pairs to locate information about the ways llamas are useful. They could highlight the information on a printout of the text and record the main points in a chart like the one below. The students could add a column to the chart or make a Venn diagram to compare the llama with another animal that is helpful to people, such as a sheep or cow.

Llamas – what makes them useful?	Evidence from the text and photographs
They can carry things.	P3 – you can put saddles and bags on their backs P4 – they can carry 25 kilograms
Their hair is useful.	P5 – it’s warm and soft – people can use it for jerseys, bags, scarves, and hats – it’s good for people who are allergic to sheep’s wool

- The students could write their own opinion of llamas and explain why they hold that opinion.
- Have the students work in pairs to identify five topic-specific words that are not in the glossary and create their own glossary for them.
- To support vocabulary building for English language learners, provide a printout of pages 5 and 8 and ask them to highlight the nouns in the following sentences: “People use the hair to make things like jerseys, bags, scarves, and hats” (page 5), “They ate pine needles, grass, bits of bushes, and even gorse!” (page 8). Support the students in investigating the word meanings.
- With support, the students could research any unanswered questions from the KWL chart or find out about other creatures with characteristics in common with llamas, for example, animals with split lips, animals used for treks, or animals that provide hair or wool for clothing.
- Discuss the meaning of the prefix “kilo” in “kilograms” and “kilometres”. Support the students to identify other words containing familiar mathematical or scientific prefixes and discuss their meanings, for example, centimetre, triangle, microscope.
- Have students do some research about how llamas are used in South America.