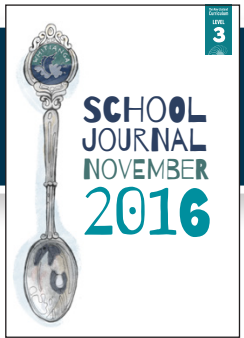


Puawai Cairns: Te Papa Detective

by Whiti Hereaka

School Journal
Level 3, November 2016
Year 6



Overview

This article describes the work of Puawai Cairns, a curator at Te Papa Tongarewa. Puawai believes that as a curator, her job is to tell stories about people: "Each one always begins with a taonga." She describes her work as being like the work of a detective. Two taonga are used as examples of how she goes about tracking down the origins of taonga, including using an understanding of their historical and social contexts.

Puawai also explains why it's important to collect items for the future. Students might like to suggest the items they use now as things future children might want to see at Te Papa.

Students may need support to understand historical events, such as the New Zealand Wars and the symbolic uses of flags.

This article:

- contains factual information about the way a museum collects and researches items
- has a glossary of less-familiar te reo Māori words and terms
- includes supportive historical illustrations related to the New Zealand Wars
- provides a model for writing about finding clues and following a chain of events.

A PDF of the text is available at www.schooljournal.tki.org.nz

Texts related by theme

"The Past beneath Our Feet" SJ L3 May 2016 | "Ngā Tātara kihi o Parihaka" SJ L4 May 2016 |
"Ngā Pakanga o Aotearoa: The New Zealand Wars" SJ L4 Nov 2014

Text characteristics from the year 6 reading standard

MĀTAURANGA MĀORI

Puawai is part of the team that works with Te Papa's Mātauranga Māori collection. As the contemporary curator, she looks after taonga that date from when Captain Cook first visited Aotearoa right up to the present day. "It was a time of huge change for Māori, which is one of the reasons the taonga in our collections are so varied," Puawai says. "We have kete and kākahu and medals. The collection even contains T-shirts!"

All up, there are around 35,000 objects in the Mātauranga Māori collection. Puawai says that ideally, a good curator should know something about each one of them – obviously an enormous job. "I could spend my whole life learning about Māori," she says. "Even then, it would

"I COULD SPEND MY WHOLE LIFE LEARNING ABOUT OUR TAONGA MĀORI."

abstract ideas, in greater numbers than in texts at earlier levels, accompanied by concrete examples in the text that help support the students' understanding

BY WHITI HEREAKA

Puawai Cairns loves history. That's why she became a curator at Te Papa Tongarewa. Puawai (Ngāti Pūkenga, Ngāti Ranginui, and Ngāiterangi) is especially interested in social history, which she says is just stories about people. As a curator, it's Puawai's job to tell these stories. Each one always begins with a taonga.

Te Papa has thousands and thousands of taonga. Some have been well researched and a lot is known about them. Others are more of a mystery – and this is when being a curator becomes a bit like being a detective. "When very little is known about a taonga," Puawai says, "you have to ask a lot of questions to get the full story."

"... YOU HAVE TO ASK A LOT OF QUESTIONS TO GET THE FULL STORY."

some ideas and information that are conveyed indirectly and require students to infer by drawing on several related pieces of information in the text

THE CROSS-TREE

Because of its size, the Mātauranga Māori collection can't be on display all at once. Taonga in storage are kept in a special room that has a carefully controlled temperature. Small pieces can be found in drawers or on shelves. Very large pieces are attached to metal grills. This includes one of Puawai's favourite taonga: a long carved pole, as thick as a lamp post in the middle

independence. "Many Māori joined this new religion as a way of protesting, and so the government treated them as dangerous rebels. When soldiers stormed pā where Pai Mārire lived, their first job was to cut down the niu. Rejecting the Pākehā flag and flying your own was a big deal back then."

scattered all over the central North Island. The flags they flew made a very strong statement!"

Niu were linked to a Māori religious movement called Pai Mārire, which began in Taranaki during the New Zealand Wars. Puawai says that Taranaki Māori fought hard for their land and

WHERE PAI MĀRIRE LIVED, THEIR FIRST JOB WAS TO CUT DOWN THE NIU."

from a captured family connection, Puawai says her hunt in Māori Whakatāne. "Imagine whānau cutting down a tree and knowing she says, "What that be?"

some information that is irrelevant to the identified purpose for reading (that is, some competing information), which students need to identify and reject as they integrate pieces of information in order to answer questions

human bones in their own special room. This tiki is also too glossy to be bone."

Puawai photographed and weighed the skull tiki. Then she examined it very carefully, noting anything that could be a clue. On the underside, she discovered cross-hatched markings. She'd seen something like these before. "When a person makes a plaster copy of a taonga, they use mesh," Puawai says. "Mesh leaves this kind of pattern."

This was proof that the skull tiki was not an original. But who had made the copy and when and why? The answer to "when" came from the label. It didn't

that the skull tiki was "George Rex" – or King George V, who was the king of Great Britain from 1910 to 1936. "So I knew the skull tiki was most likely made during this time," she says.

The next clue came from a book written by an anthropologist called Janet Edge-Partington. "He was very busy in the late 1800s, researching and drawing Pasifika and Māori taonga," Puawai explains. In this book, she discovered a sketch that matched Te Papa's skull tiki. A caption said that the original was in the British Museum. Useful information – but this still didn't explain how the skull had come to New Zealand.

a significant amount of vocabulary that is unfamiliar to the students (including academic and content-specific words and phrases), which is generally explained in the text by words or illustrations

Reading standard: by the end of year 6

Possible curriculum contexts

ENGLISH (Reading)

Level 3 – Ideas: Show a developing understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

ENGLISH (Writing)

Level 3 – Structure: Organise texts, using a range of appropriate structures.

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Level 3 – Understand how people remember and record the past in different ways.

Possible first reading purposes

- To find out about some taonga at Te Papa
- To understand why a Te Papa curator is like a detective.

Possible subsequent reading purposes

- To understand how taonga or artefacts can be a window into people's lives long ago
- To identify the chain of events that helped solve the mystery of the skull tiki.

Possible writing purposes

- To describe the chain of events that led to solving a mystery
- To describe a taonga or special item
- To explain the work of a curator or of another occupation that interests you.



The New Zealand Curriculum

Text and language challenges

(Some of the suggestions for possible supporting strategies may be more useful before reading, but they can be used at any time in response to students' needs.)

VOCABULARY

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases, including “curator”, “kete”, “grills”, “cross-tree”, “niu”, “rebels”, “cross-hatched”, “mesh”, “anthropologist”, “sleuthing”, “replica”, “guesswork”, “broadcasting”, “promote”, “stylised”, “notched”, “ceremonial”
- The use of te reo Māori with a glossary
- The metaphor “stormed”
- Proper nouns: “Te Papa Tongarewa”, “James Edge-Partington”, “Puawai Cairns”, “Mātauranga Māori”, “Fort Galatea”, “Murupara”, “Whakatāne”, “George Rex”, “King George V”, “British Museum”, “Dominion Museum”.

Possible supporting strategies

- Identify any words or phrases that may be unfamiliar to students and plan ways to teach this vocabulary before, during, or after reading. In particular, make sure students understand what a curator is and what they do.
- Create word maps to explore the vocabulary associated with being a detective (for example, sleuthing) and with museums.
- Review the use of a glossary and provide support for students where necessary.
- *The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction*, pages 39–46, has useful information about learning vocabulary.
- See also *ESOL Online, Vocabulary*, for examples of other strategies to support students with vocabulary.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

- Familiarity with museums and an understanding of their role
- Familiarity with the tasks of detectives, such as finding clues and identifying people and items
- Some knowledge of New Zealand's history, including the New Zealand Wars and their causes
- Some knowledge of making or copying articles using plaster
- Understanding of what constitutes a cultural treasure or taonga.

Possible supporting strategies

- Before reading, ask students to share their knowledge of museums. *Why do we have museums? What do they contain? Who decides what is kept in them? What jobs do people have in a museum?*
- Prompt students to consider the subtitle and discuss why Te Papa would have a detective. *What do you know about how detectives work? How does this fit with what you know about museums?*
- Review key aspects of the history of Aotearoa New Zealand, in particular, the colonisation by Britain and its resistance by Māori that led to the New Zealand Wars. Where necessary, provide students with relevant background knowledge through reading and discussing stories, articles, or video clips about New Zealand's colonial history and Māori resistance.
- Make connections by asking students to share what they consider to be a family taonga or treasure. To extend this idea further for English language learners, see the *Family Treasures* unit on ESOL Online.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE

- The use of headings to signal the topic of each section
- The use of pull-outs to highlight important ideas in the body text
- The glossary
- The language features used to describe a sequence of events (“Then ...”, “The answer to ‘when’ came from ...”, “The next clue ...”, “Then came ...”, “Eventually ...”).

Possible supporting strategies

- Build an expectation of the text before reading by noticing the headings, pull-outs, and images as you skim and scan the text together.
- If necessary, model the use of the glossary. The vocabulary could be used in a word and definition matching task.
- Draw out the sequence of events on pages 6 and 7 to support writing as well as reading. You could ask the students to make a list of the steps to finding out how the skull tiki came to be in Te Papa. The text could also be photocopied, cut into paragraphs, and mixed up for a text reconstruction activity. In pairs, the students reassemble the paragraphs in the correct sequence. This helps them to notice the time connective words.



Sounds and Words

Instructional focus – Reading

English Level 3 – Ideas: Show a developing understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

Social Sciences Level 3 – Understand how people remember and record the past in different ways.

First reading

- Set the purpose for reading.
- Skim and scan the article together, supporting students to identify the familiar non-fiction features and to prepare for reading.
- Prompt the students to activate their prior knowledge of museums and detectives to help make connections with the text. For example, ask: *What do detectives do that could be useful in a museum? What would museum curators want to track down?*
- Encourage students to pose their own questions about the text.
- Discuss what is meant by taonga. *What are some examples of taonga? What makes something a taonga? Does something need to be old to be a taonga?*
- Use a shared reading approach to support students for the first reading of pages 4 and 5. *Remember what you already know about the New Zealand Wars. This section tells us about a taonga from those times.*
- Draw attention to the last section, The Microphone, and check that the students are making connections to understand why Puawai collects objects of today.

If the students struggle with this text

- Chunk the text using the headings and provide focused guiding questions for each section.
- Stop at the top of page 4 to clarify that although Puawai says a good curator should know something about all the objects, the next sections are about just two objects.
- Explain that taonga are anything treasured or prized. Ask the students to share examples of things they consider taonga.
- Work through The Cross-tree section together, providing support for students to use and build on their prior knowledge of the New Zealand Wars.
- Allow students time to digest the material in each section but support them to keep reading on. Leave discussion of the details for a subsequent reading.
- Make a note of the students' questions or confusions and plan to provide support in subsequent readings.

Subsequent readings

How you approach subsequent readings will depend on your reading purpose. You may wish to allow the students to reread independently or with a partner before you return to focus on a specific purpose.

The teacher

Prompt the students to consider the claim that Puawai is a detective.

- *In what ways is her work similar to that of a detective? What evidence is there in the text for this?*
- *Why do you think some objects need to be investigated – why isn't their history already known?*
- *What does this tell you about the ways people remember and record the past?*

The teacher

Direct the students to reread pages 4 and 5.

- *How do we know that it was hard to identify the pole? (The guesses that had been made; the clue "At one time" that indicates niu are not found these days)*
- *Think about our flag debate in 2015. How would cutting down the niu make the Māori in the pā feel?*
- *Why do you think the cross-tree would interest the carver's whānau today? What connections could they make to it?*

The students:

- reread to locate and integrate evidence across the text to support the claim that Puawai is like a detective
- evaluate the evidence and compare it with what they know about detective work
- integrate the evidence and their evaluation to understand that the importance of objects can change over time, for example, things that were once discarded may now be valued for what they tell us about the past.

The students:

- search for clues and use connections with their own experiences of mysteries to infer that it took time and specific knowledge of the past to identify the pole as a cross-tree
- make connections between the information in the text and their experience of the flag debate to understand the significance of a flag as a symbol of identity
- visualise being in the pā and seeing the soldiers charge in and cut down the niu to infer that the people probably felt terrified and very angry
- make connections between pieces of information in the middle and the end of this section to infer that if the carver's whānau could be traced, they would feel proud and excited to see the work of their tipuna. They might also feel distressed about the events in the past that affected their whānau.

Subsequent readings

The teacher

Lead a discussion about the decisions museum curators make.

- *In the past, the objects in the article might have been seen as unimportant. How do we know what will be important in the future? Do you think the microphone can be called a taonga?*
- *What should curators be collecting now so that future generations understand what it was like to be a young person in the early decades of the twenty-first century? Why?*

GIVE FEEDBACK

- *You looked for evidence in the text that showed how Puawai's job was similar to that of a detective. That was a good way to understand why she made that comparison.*

METACOGNITION

- How did comparing old taonga in a museum with the devices we use today help you think about what people record from the past and why they record them?

The students:

- integrate information across the text with their prior knowledge to infer that some things gain in interest, value, or importance when they are very old
- make connections between the objects mentioned in the article and objects in use today to suggest what might be of interest in the future (and, therefore, what should be collected now).



Reading standard: by the end of year 6



The Literacy Learning Progressions



Assessment Resource Banks

Instructional focus – Writing

English Level 3 – Structure: Organise texts, using a range of appropriate structures.

Text excerpts from “Puawai Cairns: Te Papa Detective”

Examples of text characteristics

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

Pages 6–7

“When I first looked at this tiki,” Puawai remembers, “I knew it couldn’t be made from an actual human skull.” ...

Then came more sleuthing and the final clue: a letter from the director of the Dominion Museum in Wellington to James Edge-Partington. ...

Eventually the museum director from Wellington was rewarded with a plaster replica.

CHAIN OF EVENTS

When writers are describing a sequence or chain of events, they use words such as “When”, “Then”, and “Next” to help readers understand how one thing led to the next, and they usually end by letting readers know the outcome of the events.

Remind students to consider how writers organise information in a text.

- Find the place in the article where Puawai starts to explain how she investigated the skull tiki. What words has the author chosen?
- Now find the words that let you know she solved the puzzle of the tiki.
- As you plan, draft, and revise your writing about a sequence of events, check that you’ve included a beginning, some steps along the way, and an ending.

If students need extra support in using sequencing words and phrases, you could get them to complete a text reconstruction activity.

Alternatively, you could start a class list of time connectives that students could use in their own writing.

Page 4

This includes ... a long carved pole, as thick as a lamp post in the middle, with carved manaia at each end. Traditional kōkōwai has been used to paint the pole red. In some places, this paint is still as red as a tomato.

DESCRIPTION

Descriptions help readers visualise objects, especially when there are no images to help them. Writers use clear, straightforward language to give a factual description of an object.

Direct the students to examine their drafts, looking for places where they have used (or could use) a factual description.

- As you revise, ask yourself: am I telling readers exactly what it is? Have I provided information about the shape, size, colour, feel, and smell of the object?

Some students, including English language learners, may need support to correctly order the adjectives. (We write the quantity adjective first, followed by any opinion adjectives, factual adjectives, comparing adjectives, classifiers, and lastly the noun or pronoun.)

- Can you use similes or comparisons with familiar things to support the description? If a reader closes their eyes, will they be able to imagine what the thing you’re describing is like?
- Share your best description with a partner. Read it aloud while your partner listens with their eyes closed. Is it an effective description? What is missing? Is there too much information?

Page 8

“A hundred years from now, if a curator was making an exhibition about twenty-first century Māori, what would be in it?” she asks.

QUESTIONS

A provocative question can engage readers and help them to think beyond the text. This can deepen the reader’s understanding and allow them to explore a topic further.

Prompt the students to review this example.

- What did you think as you read this part of the article?
- Did it help you make connections between the article and your own life?
- If you want your readers to keep on thinking after they’ve finished reading, you need to give them something to think about. Try out some questions that you could use. Test them on your partner, and choose the best one for your topic.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- You’ve planned your writing carefully and identified the order of events. I could follow what happened, and I know how it ended up.

METACOGNITION

- Why did you decide to use this structure for your writing? How can you be sure that the structure you’ve chosen is the best one for your purpose?

Writing standard: by the end of year 6

The Literacy Learning Progressions