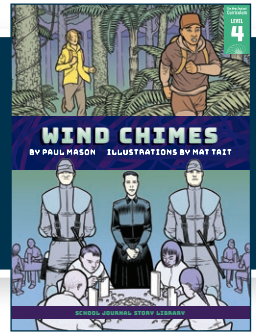# School Journal Story Library
Level 4

School Journal Story Library is a targeted series that supplements other instructional series texts. It provides additional scaffolds and supports for teachers to use to accelerate students' literacy learning.

Wind Chimes
by Paul Mason
illustrations by Mat Tait
Readability level: year 6

Overview

Wind Chimes is set in a dystopian future, in which children from "regions" are taken from their homes and forced to live in city "pens". The children are trained to think alike and act submissively, with any sign of creativity or dissent quickly "hushed". Tre is one of these children. As he feels his creativity slowly being stifled, he breaks out of the classroom with a like-minded peer and begins a journey to find his parents.

Stories set in dystopian societies typically describe totalitarian regimes where one group is oppressed by another. The oppressed are often persecuted and forced to adhere to the ruling group's ideology.

This is a rich text that you can revisit many times for different purposes.

Key competencies

Key competencies explored through this story include: thinking, relating to others, and using language, symbols, and text.

Themes and ideas

Themes and ideas explored in this text include:
- overcoming physical and mental challenges
- managing the effects of changing situations
- contributing to the well-being of people
- dealing with societal hierarchies and power structures
- socialisation and the power of peer pressure
- the importance of relationships and family ties
- making choices
- creativity and individuality
- survival.

Texts related by theme   **"Hushed"** SJ L4 May 2017 | *Frogs* SJSL L4 2013 | **"The Promise"** SJ L4 May 2015 | **"Close to the Edge"** SJ L4 November 2014 | **"Thirst"** SJ L3 August 2015

Text characteristics from the year 6 reading standard

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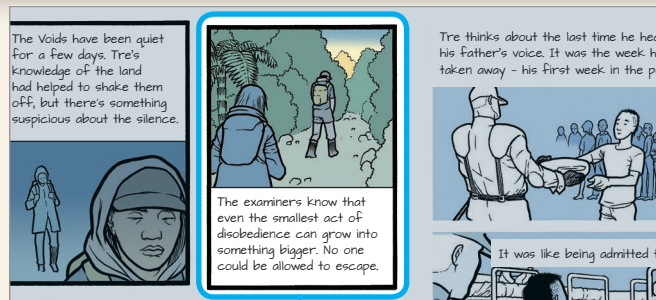

Sentences that vary in length and in structure (for example, sentences that begin in different ways and different kinds of complex sentences with a number of subordinate clauses)

Text characteristics from the year 7 reading standard

Elements that require interpretation, such as complex plots, sophisticated themes, and abstract ideas

Words and phrases with multiple meanings that require students to know and use effective word-solving strategies to retain their focus on meaning

Reading standard: by the end of year 6

Reading standard: by the end of year 7

Making meaning: Supports and challenges

VOCABULARY:

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases, including "wilderness", "yielding", "loom", "watchmen", "non-stop", "the thump of footfall", "batons", "paranoid", "splintering", "hauled", "scarcely", "droned", "stifling", "flicker", "exception", "regional", "examiner", "glimmer", "get going", "suspicious", "disobedience", "reprogrammed", "admitted", "static", "barely recognisable", "electrical", "clarity", "rubble", "chimes", "upstream"

- Māori vocabulary: kawakawa, tuna, harakeke

- Subject-specific words and names: "hushed", "Voids", "settlement", "regions", "pen", "Tre", "Muse"

- Adverbs: "barely", "scarcely", "suddenly"

- Similes, metaphors, and personification: "Trees loom like watchmen", "The sun was shining on the sea, shining with all his might", "the city droned", "each brick as white as a hospital sheet", "spark in her eyes", "like an electrical spark", "harakeke closes in, swallowing them up"

- Onomatopoeia: "thump", "clunk"

- Colloquial words and phrases: "She was totally out there", "copycat", "make a move", "check it out", "Give me a hand"

- A lack of time signals – the passage of time is inferred from the illustrations and the tense.

Possible supporting strategies

Explore how familiar language is used for different purposes, such as "get hushed" or "examiners". Lead a discussion around the different possibilities. *Does being hushed literally mean to be silenced? Or is it something more sinister? Why is it seen as shameful to be hushed? What does Tre mean when he says "You beat being hushed, didn't you?"?*

Review the use of te reo Māori. *What do the words mean? What do they tell you about the setting?*

Build up knowledge and understanding of word functions, such as verbs, adverbs, nouns, adjectives, and pronouns, to support understanding. For example, from page 8, *"The examiner checked the class's progress, picking her way through the work stations."* We know that the examiner must be a person – what words tell us what the examiner is doing? We find out that the examiner is a woman from the pronoun *"her"*. What does the verb *"picking"* tell us about her character?

Direct students to specific captions, such as "The city droned, stifling and grey" (page 6). Invite responses to the use of "droned" as a verb. *What do you imagine the city is doing? What connections can you make to other types of drones? What connections can you make to what is happening in the classroom?*

Prompt students to infer meaning from the images. How can we tell what the character is feeling when we have no words? What details has the illustrator included?

Explore prefixes "dis" and "re" and suffixes "ious" and "able" to strengthen understanding of unfamiliar vocabulary. Also, discuss words that go together to create a new meaning, such as "get going" and "non-stop".

For some learners, it may be necessary to highlight adverbs and discuss their purpose, for example, "barely recognisable", "totally", and "scarcely".

The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction, pages 39–46, has some useful information about learning vocabulary.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED:

- Some awareness of dystopian fiction or science fiction

- Understanding of how people can support each other in difficult situations

- Some awareness of the value of creativity and individuality

- Some understanding of societal oppression and power structures

- Some awareness of societies that use military force to maintain order

- Awareness of the influence of group or peer pressure

- Some familiarity with texts that incorporate shifts in time to provide background information

- Some experience of reading graphic texts.

Possible supporting strategies

Lead a discussion about the recurring themes and characteristics of science fiction or dystopian stories, such as restricted freedom and a futuristic setting. Prompt the students to think of other science-fiction or dystopian books or films or remind them of books you have read together.

Discuss the futuristic setting. Prompt the students to look for clues in the text and illustrations that signify when the story is set. *How do you know when the story is set? Is there anything in the text or illustrations that doesn't suggest the story is set in the future? Why is that?*

Encourage students to make inferences about the story's premise. *Who do you think is in charge? How long have they been ruling? Are they in control of everyone?*

Draw out or feed in students' prior knowledge of oppressive societies throughout history, such as Nazi Germany or apartheid South Africa. It may be helpful to supply information through visual material, including online clips, to build their knowledge and understanding. *Note: Be sensitive to students who may have experiences of cultural or societal oppression.*

Encourage students to discuss, in pairs or small groups, what creativity entails and what a society that aims to stifle creativity would be like. *Why would they want to stifle creativity? Encourage them to discuss why or how this might happen. Could something like this happen in New Zealand? Why/why not?*

Sounds and Words

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE:

- Graphic novel format, where meaning is presented in the illustrations as well as the text

- Use of captions, speech bubbles, and thought bubbles

- Use of dialogue to provide insight into the characters

- Futuristic, dystopian setting

- Deliberate use of short, simple sentences to create tension

- Use of compound and complex sentences

- The need to make inferences, for example, about the meaning of "hushed", who the Voids are, and what Tre's father's message on the phone means

- Sequenced events in the present tense, interrupted by flashbacks – and not in the order in which they occurred (for example, flashback 1. The children are taken away from the settlement; 2. Tre is in the classroom; 3. He remembers back to when they first arrived in the pen)

- Jumps in time with important events missing (for example, the journey to the pen and the escape from the classroom)

- An ambiguous, open ending that requires students to make their own interpretation.

Possible supporting strategies

Prompt students' prior knowledge of the graphic novel format. Check to make sure they know how to read each panel in a left to right, zigzag direction.

Encourage students to explore the information in the illustrations and explain how they work with the text to make meaning.

Model by thinking aloud how we can make meaning from visual text. *The bush looks very dense – it would be easy to get lost or to fall into a trap …*

Check the students' understanding of the differences between speech and thought bubbles.

Facilitate a discussion about parts of the text where short sentences are used for impact.

Ask students to note how the story is told – through dialogue, captions, and pictures. There is no first-person narration. Ask them to think about what that means for the reader. Make sure they understand that they will need to make many inferences when reading. Remind them of the clues they can use to give them support.

Possible curriculum contexts

ENGLISH (Listening, Reading, and Viewing)

Level 4 – Purposes and audiences: Show an increasing understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences.

ENGLISH (Writing, Speaking, and Presenting)

Level 4 – Structure: Organise texts, using a range of appropriate structures.

SOCIAL SCIENCES (Social Studies)

Level 4: Understand how the ways in which leadership of groups is acquired and exercised have consequences for communities and societies.

Possible inquiry questions
- How does society organise itself so that every person is safe, supported, and able to reach their potential?
- What is it like for people who live in an oppressed society – for the oppressed and the oppressors? Make sure students have a good understanding of what is meant by "oppressed" and "oppressors".
- Is it ever OK to run away?
- What is the value of creativity and individuality?
- How does it feel to be part of a community?

Possible reading purposes
- To think about what it is like to live in a society where you are very restricted
- To find out why Tre and Muse are running away and if they escape
- To explore the importance of working together to solve a problem
- To identify how the feelings and motives of the characters are depicted in the illustrations
- To identify how a tone is created through the combination of images and text
- To identify the features of a science-fiction text
- To look at how the illustrator achieves interest, variety, and dramatic effects, for example, through the use of perspective, framing, and size and through what is shown or not shown.

Possible writing purposes
- To explain why it is important for leaders to treat people fairly
- To list the characteristics of an oppressive society and a free society
- To persuade readers that it is important for people to be creative
- To retell the story as a narrative
- To tell the story from Tre's parents' perspective
- To tell or storyboard a missing episode. (How did Tre and Muse escape from the pen? How did Muse end up in the pen? What happened after Tre and Muse found the wind chimes?)

Instructional focus – Reading

Use this text to develop the students' metacognition. At all stages, encourage the students to vocalise their ideas and thought processes, supporting each other to justify their ideas with reasoning.

Introducing the text: Paving the way for successful readers

Before reading

- Clarify the meaning of dystopia (an imagined place or state where everything is bad and that is often ruled by a single dictator). Prompt prior knowledge by inviting students to talk with a partner about what they know of dystopian or science-fiction stories. Encourage them to make connections to stories they have read or to films they have watched, such as *The Hunger Games*.

- Lead a discussion about oppressive societies. Prompt critical thinking through questioning. *Have there been societies that could be described as dystopian in the past, or are they only found in an imagined or futuristic setting?* Connections may be made to students' knowledge of apartheid or Nazi Germany, if appropriate.

- Introduce *Wind Chimes* and share the purpose for reading. *This story gives us a glimpse of a dystopian society. As we read and look closely at the illustrations, we will notice how the characters are feeling.*

- Explain that this story is written as a graphic novel. Draw out their prior knowledge of graphic novels. *Have a chat with your buddy about other graphic novels or comics that you have read. What were their key features? What did you like about them? What helped you to follow the story?*

- It may be helpful to have the students skim through the first few pages and use the pictures to make predictions about what they think it is about and what might happen.

- Tell the students that they will enjoy finding out what happens by using the pictures as well as the words. You may wish to prompt the students' curiosity by questioning and thinking aloud. *On the cover, I can see a large building dominating a city and children in a classroom – I'm wondering who they might be and how the images might be related.*

- Point out the changes in time and setting and discuss reasons for these changes and the effect they have.

- Explore some useful strategies for dealing with unfamiliar words or ideas that the students might encounter.

First reading

- Share-read the story, or parts of it, for meaning and for enjoyment. It may be necessary to read the first two pages together. Some students, especially English language learners, may benefit from a more supported first reading.

- Some students may need to silently read the text in chunked sections and discuss what they're reading with a partner or whole group (think, pair, share). Suggested chunks: pages 2–3, 4–5, 6–9, 10–13, and 14–16. Have the students predict what they think will happen and then check to confirm.

- Prompt students to identify significant details in the illustrations.

- Use questioning to scaffold the students' understanding of the changes in time and setting. Changes in time and setting may be particularly difficult for English language learners. They could add sticky notes to indicate when a change happens and write a suitable connective sentence starter on the sticky note.

If the students struggle with this text

Remind students of strategies that are particularly useful on a first reading, such as reading on, rereading, and making connections with their prior knowledge. Use one of the following approaches, depending on students' needs:

- Support students with their understanding of how to approach the graphic-novel format, for example, following the zigzag pattern from frame to frame.

- Model asking questions about the visual text as well as the written text. *Who are the Voids? Are they a group of people? Is it the Voids who are destroying things? How are they treating the children? Look at the pictures on pages 4 and 5 – what's going on?*

- Provide support for the words and phrases that have multiple meanings. *What do you think "hushed" means? How could you check? When would we use the word "hush"? How do we respond if someone tells us to hush? Does it mean the same in the story?*

- Use discussion to draw out key words from the text and clarify their meanings.

- Focus on the use of flashbacks. *How can you tell from the illustrations which parts of the story are in the present and which are in the past? What is the sequence of events? How do you know? How do they help us to understand what is happening?* It may help to provide a simple graphic organiser for summarising the events and their order.

- For students new to New Zealand, it may be useful to discuss the "wilderness" portrayed in the story's opening spread and see if anyone can identify the New Zealand plants and the bird in the illustrations.

Subsequent readings

Use subsequent readings to focus on particular themes and ideas described in the text. Support the students through modelling, thinking aloud, prompting, and explaining to link and synthesise ideas across the text in order to interpret those ideas and the text's themes. See suggestions for possible reading purposes on page 3.

- Prompt students to make inferences and think critically about the futuristic setting and themes of the story. *When we first meet Tre and Muse, Tre is listening for "the thump of footfall, the clunk of batons". The writer's use of onomatopoeia lets us hear the sound. What sort of people might be following them?* Acknowledge that for many of us, we have been free from oppression and have not had to escape from soldiers. *How are we able to make connections to a situation outside our experience?* Prompt students to make connections to their experiences of being nervous or lost. Explain that a narrative set in the future still offers insight into current human behaviour and feelings. (Be sensitive to the fact that some students, particularly refugees, might have personal experiences of oppression.)

- Support the students' understanding of the narrative structure by using a visual story map. Prompt students to:
  - introduce the main character(s)
  - put the characters in a setting
  - clarify the problem that the character(s) are up against
  - identify the sequence of events – including the shifts in time (flashbacks)
  - describe the resolution – or the suggested resolution.

  Once completed, have students retell the story orally, paying particular attention to how well they understand it and how they use connectives and tense.

- Explore the features of a science-fiction story. Have the students work in pairs to identify the elements of the story that make it science fiction. It could be helpful to create a chart with the headings "Fictional narrative" and "Science fiction" and list the differences and similarities.

- Invite critical responses from students about the nature of oppressed societies. Encourage them to refer back to the text to identify differences between societies that are free and societies that are oppressed. In pairs, they could discuss examples of oppression and imagine what it would mean for them if their society were like that. *What benefit would there be in spending the day at school building towers out of white blocks? Why have some adults decided that this is what the students should be doing? What would it be like to be "hushed"?* It could be useful for the students to list all the freedoms they and their families have at school, at work, and in their communities and compare these with what is described in the story. Students could complete a 3-level reading guide to help them infer and develop their own opinions.

- Prompt students to notice the clues that tell us that Tre and Muse are fearful, for example, tense facial expressions, Muse's comment about Tre being paranoid, and Tre's anxiety when he arrives at the new school. Ask students to find the language that conveys fear. Note that the writer chooses his words very carefully (the best word in the right place) and that the concept is supported by the illustrations. Students could explore the concept of fear by completing a concept circle task. The students could then think critically about what else would be needed if this were a typical narrative instead of a graphic text.

- Facilitate a discussion about the importance of having an ally – rather than "going it alone" – when you need to escape, either literally or figuratively. *What would the story have been like if Tre were alone? Why did Paul Mason include another main character in the story? Was this effective? Why/why not?* Find out what other "escape" stories the students know. *Are there any similarities with* Wind Chimes*?*

- Trace the relationship between Tre and Muse. Does it change? How do they support each other? Is one character stronger than the other?

- Invite comparisons between the different forms of peer pressure. *What characters influence Tre in his decision making? Are all forms of peer pressure bad? How does Muse influence Tre?*

- Discuss the reactions of the other students at the school. *What is their attitude to Tre? What is their attitude to Muse? Why do you think they feel like that?*

- Discuss how well we could understand this story if it were told only with pictures.

Monitoring the impact of teaching

As the students read and discuss the text, take particular note of the following:

- Can the students identify and discuss the themes? Do they understand the futuristic or dystopian context?
- Can they independently use strategies for:
  - working out unknown vocabulary?
  - using the illustrations with the text to support meaning?
  - drawing on visual clues in the illustrations to make sense of ideas when meaning breaks down?
  - making inferences about the characters' actions and decisions?
- With support, can the students:
  - link ideas and information across the text?
  - use these ideas to draw conclusions about the characters' actions?
- Do the students transfer skills and knowledge from your modelling to their own reading?
- Are students able to use evidence from the text to support their responses?

Providing feedback and supporting metacognition

Provide explicit feedback and support the students to develop their metacognition. Both strategies support students' growing independence and confidence as proficient readers. Examples of each are provided below.

Providing feedback

I noticed you rereading the text several times to work out the order of events. Rereading a section is useful to remind yourself what happened and when.

Your group has done a good job of noticing all the visual clues that help us understand how the characters are feeling. You identified the feelings both in the flashbacks and in the present, as Tre and Muse made their escape.

Supporting metacognition

How did you make the links between the pictures and the dialogue?

Do you read a graphic novel in the same way that you read a regular written text? How is it different? What do you prefer? Why?

Suggestions for writing instruction

Students may choose to:

- put themselves in the shoes of the students in the city classroom and write what they would say to Tre to explain why they are happy to build the white towers
- select one of the frames that has dialogue and write a narrative description of what is happening. Students may benefit from talking with a partner about what is happening before writing.
- write a paragraph that describes a possible reunion between Tre and his parents
- create a narrative of a personal experience, using comic-strip frames with captions, speech bubbles, and thought bubbles. This could be done using a free online comic creation tool, such as Pixton, Toondoo, or Storyboard. Creating a professional looking comic is motivating, and not having to rely on drawing skills means the students can focus on the story.
- present a section of the story as a readers' theatre
- tell the story from one of Tre's parents' perspectives
- tell a missing episode in narrative form (How did Tre and Muse escape from the pen? How did Muse end up in the pen? What happened after Tre and Muse found the wind chimes?)

- storyboard a missing episode, identifying the key events and then deciding what each frame will show. They think about the most effective framing device for each panel, considering the angle, perspective, distance, and so on. Students could:

  - use a storyboard template (by folding an A4 page to give nine or twelve rectangles, then marking black lines along the creases. Alternatively, they could cut the paper into rectangles that can be rearranged as the students make and amend their plan.)

  - use a pencil to make a brief note or rough sketch in each frame as they work out how the story will be illustrated, then rearrange them to make sure the story works

  - add dialogue and narrative boxes if necessary

  - ask a buddy to read their first draft: Does the story make sense? Does it need more clarification in the illustrations? Would another speech or thought bubble or narrative box help make the meaning clear?

Scaffold the students to build on their writing strengths, giving stronger support where needed and reducing it as the students become confident using and developing the strategies themselves. Help them to see the connections between their reading strategies and writing strategies (for example, implying as writer, inferring as a reader). Also, it might be helpful to revisit the particular features of this text, for example, the use of dialogue in narrative. Allow plenty of time (with agreed targets) for the students to think about, plan, rework, and polish their writing.

Writing standard: by the end of year 7

The Literacy Learning Progressions

Assessment Resource Banks

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