



## Overview

This TSM contains a wide range of information and suggestions for teachers to pick and choose from, depending on the needs of their students and their purpose for using the text. The materials provide many opportunities for revisiting the text.

This article introduces readers to a family who have escaped war-torn countries in the Middle East and have now embraced the freedom and safety that New Zealand offers. However, settling as refugees has its own challenges. We learn about the reasons the Kaka family had to move from Iraq to Syria, on to Lebanon, and then to New Zealand. The article then looks at the specific challenges that they faced as they settled in their new home.

Some students will have first-hand experience of being refugees and will know about the living conditions in a country at war, but those things will be outside the experience of most readers. Many will have some understanding from meeting refugees in their own schools, but they will need to infer much from the information given and from further reading.

This article:

- recounts the experiences of one Assyrian family
- includes photographs of the family involved
- provides a map showing the countries of the Middle East
- has text organised into sections with headings
- includes a text box with additional information.

A PDF of the text is available at [www.schooljournal.tki.org.nz](http://www.schooljournal.tki.org.nz)

**Texts related by theme** “My Name is Rez” SJ L3 Nov 2017 | “Being Kiwi” SJ 4.2.10

## Text characteristics from the year 5 reading standard

### THE BOTTOM OF THE WORLD

The Kaka family has been in New Zealand for eighteen months. What did they notice on their first day? “The trees,” Christian says. “There were no trees in Syria. And I felt safe. I was so happy.”

Kathreen also remembers how beautiful everything was. “Iraq once had green countryside, but because of the war, it had become like a desert. And in Baghdad, all we saw were big walls dividing the city. In Syria, everything was dirty and dusty because of the bombs – even the air.”

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

### “IN ONE HOUR, YOUR LIFE COULD CHANGE”

Christian was still going to school, but life became more and more difficult. One day, Christian was in his classroom drawing. “A man came in and said ‘Run!’” Christian remembers. “So we ran.” Things like that happened a lot. “I really hated going outside because there were helicopters and people who searched cars. They were strict and angry. I didn’t even want to go out to play with other kids, so I just stayed home.”

There was no playing or school. There was nothing for the children to do. The family was frightened about what might happen next. “In one hour, your life could change,” Kathreen says. “The terrorists come, and you run and hide.”

Finally, in 2015, the family left for Lebanon. It was only an hour’s drive.

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

### Assyrian Christians

Assyria was an ancient kingdom that ruled over Mesopotamia (a very old name for most of Iraq and parts of Syria and Turkey). The kingdom’s centre was Nineveh, which has history dating back nine thousand years. When the kingdom fell in 612 BC, Assyrians

fled to different parts of Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Syria. Although the Assyrians don’t have their own country, they have a flag and speak their own language. All Assyrians are Christian. Now, because of war, they are scattered all over the world. There are around three thousand Assyrians in New Zealand, many of them in Wellington.

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

Assyria was an ancient kingdom that ruled over Mesopotamia (a very old name for most of Iraq and parts of Syria and Turkey). The kingdom’s centre was Nineveh, which has history dating back nine thousand years. When the kingdom fell in 612 BC, Assyrians fled to different parts of Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Syria. Although the Assyrians don’t have their own country, they have a flag and speak their own language. All Assyrians are Christian. Now, because of war, they are scattered all over the world. There are around three thousand Assyrians in New Zealand, many of them in Wellington.

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)




Reading standard: by the end of year 5

## VOCABULARY

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases, including “terrorists”, “registered”, “fled”, “freedom”, “refugees”, “crossed the border”, “discontented”, “United Nations”, “home tutor”, “translators”, “ancient kingdom”
- Colloquial expressions: “big deal”, “in the grip of war”
- Names of people and places: “Damascus”, “Syria”, “Assyrian”, “Iraq”, “Nineveh”, “Baghdad”, “Iran”, “Iraqis”, “Lebanon”, “Canada”, “Europe”, “Germany”, “Sweden”, “Chicago”, “Mesopotamia”, “Turkey”

## Possible supporting strategies

- Explain that the text includes many names of people, places, and languages.
- Help the students to locate on a world map the Middle Eastern countries mentioned and to see the distance between those countries and New Zealand.  
 You could use [Google Maps](#) to locate, explore, and compare locations.
- Support students, especially English language learners, with the meaning of the colloquial expressions.
- Prompt students to use context clues to make meaning, for example, for “crossed the border”.
- *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

- Some understanding of countries currently beset by war
- Some understanding of religious intolerance
- Understanding of the concept of refugee status
- Understanding that moving to another country brings challenges

## Possible supporting strategies

- Without dwelling on the aspects of war, discuss with students the reasons for moving to a different country. Recent migrants could share the reasons why their families moved to New Zealand. Check whether they are happy to share beforehand. Some students are sensitive to being recognised as a refugee, especially if they have been in New Zealand for some time.
- Clarify the meaning of “refugee” and “refugee status” in discussion. It may also be necessary to clarify the difference between a refugee and an immigrant.
- Explain that people can register as refugees in other countries, not only New Zealand.
- Explore what students know about the problems faced by people who move to a new country, for example, having a different language.
- Explore what students know about religious tolerance around the world and the concept that intolerance can lead to conflict.

## TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE

- Text is organised into sections with headings
- Includes photographs and a map
- The use of quotations to illustrate experiences

## Possible supporting strategies

- Discuss what to expect in an article, for example, factual information and photographs of real people and events.
- Point out that the majority of the photographs depict the family in New Zealand. Discuss the purpose of the photographs.
- Direct students to the headings and invite predictions. It may be useful to turn the headings into questions to guide predictions about the content.
- Prompt prior knowledge of the use of direct speech in text and support students to make links between the use of direct speech in fiction and in information texts.
- Have students work with a partner to locate direct speech and identify the speaker. *Which two members of the family have been interviewed for this article?*



## Possible curriculum contexts

### ENGLISH (Reading)

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

– Language features: Show a developing understanding of how language features are used for effect within and across texts.

### ENGLISH (Writing)

Level 3 – Purposes and audiences: Show a developing understanding of how to shape texts for different purposes and audiences.

– Ideas: Select, form, and communicate ideas on a range of topics.

### SOCIAL SCIENCES

Level 3 – Understand how the movement of people affects cultural diversity and interaction in New Zealand.

Level 4 – Understand that events have causes and effects.

### Possible first reading purpose

- To find out about the experiences of one refugee family now living in New Zealand.

### Possible subsequent reading purposes

- To find out what the challenges might be for refugees arriving in New Zealand
- To gain a deeper understanding of how world events can have an effect on ordinary families
- To consider the impact of having to flee from your home to another country.

### Possible writing purposes

- Write a personal response to the plight of people who are forced to leave their homeland
- Write questions to use to interview someone about their life in New Zealand
- Write an account of that person's experience of life in New Zealand and how they feel about living here.



## Instructional focus – Reading

**English** Level 3 – Ideas: Show a developing understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts; Language features: Show a developing understanding of how language features are used for effect within and across texts.

**Social Sciences** Level 3 – Understand how the movement of people affects cultural diversity and interaction in New Zealand; Level 4 – Understand that events have causes and effects.

### First reading

- Set the purpose for reading.
- Explain that this text tells us about a family who have come to New Zealand as refugees.
- Direct students to talk with a partner to discuss what they know about people coming to New Zealand from other countries. (If you have students who are refugees in the school or class it may be appropriate to invite them to share some of their own experiences.)
- Read the first text box together and clarify what we mean by considering something “a big deal”.
- Direct the students to the visual text and invite responses.
- Do the same with the sections and headings. Support students to identify the sequenced narrative.
- Break the text into the headed sections and support predictions based on the headings with discussion.

### If the students require more scaffolding

- Prompt prior knowledge of what to expect from an article.
- Provide opportunities for students to share ideas with a partner.
- Have students skim through the article and respond to the visual text.
- Direct students to each heading: “A Journey to Find Safety”, “Another War”, “In One Hour, Your life Could Change”, “The Bottom of the World”, “Day by Day”, “No Going Back”.
- Create a chart with the headings, leaving space for some key ideas to be added.
- Use prompts and questions (over more than one session) and record key ideas on the chart as the students discuss each section.
- Explain the purpose of the final text box about Assyrian Christians containing competing information.

**Subsequent readings** How you approach subsequent readings will depend on your reading purpose.

### The teacher


Direct the students to pages 38 and 39 and support them to locate all the evidence from the text that describes the challenges of trying to fit into a new school.

- *What does the text tell us about the challenges Christian faced at his new school?*
- *Why would these challenges be even harder for a refugee?*

If there are refugees in your school, consider whether it would be appropriate to have them talk to the class about their experiences.

Prompt students to make connections with learning a new language.

- *What is it like when you have to do all your learning in a language that is new for you?*
- *Is it just learning in a new language that made it so hard for Christian to fit in? What else can you find or infer from the text that made it difficult for Christian?*

 You could show the students a video featuring a conversation in another language so they can experience something of how it would have been for Christian. This video, “[18 Months Living In Spain! Hear The Kids Speak Spanish](#)”, shows two American children discussing school life in English and Spanish.

### The teacher

Prompt students to make connections with personal experiences of meeting new people and having to make new friends.

- *Talk with a partner about what it was like when you were new somewhere, such as when you joined a new class, a new school, or a new sports team.*
- *What helped to make you feel welcome?*

### The students:

- locate information in the text that describes the challenges that Christian faced at his new school and work with a partner to make inferences and think critically about why these things were challenges
- make inferences from the text to suggest why some of these things would be even harder for Christian than for many other students
- make connections to their own experiences of trying to learn another language or imagine what it would be like to be in a new school where they didn't speak the language
- create a chart that lists the negative and positive aspects of adapting to life in New Zealand.

### The students:

- make connections to Christian by sharing situations where they had to make new friends or find their way around a new school
- think critically about the difficulties faced when people are adapting to life in a new place or a new school
- make connections to Christian and his family to understand what he and his family would have been feeling as they adapted to life in New Zealand
- identify ways in which people can help refugees to adapt to life in New Zealand more easily.

## Subsequent readings (cont.)

### The teacher

Prompt students to find the key information about the events that led Christian's family to flee from their country. Have students work individually or in pairs to create a map showing Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon and annotate it with information about the Kaka family's experiences in those countries.

The students could play a Say It activity to help them understand the family's reasons for moving and becoming refugees and to understand some of the challenges that they faced. (An example is provided at the end of this TSM.)

### The students:

- create a map of the Middle East, then write a caption for each country that describes the experiences of the Kaka family when they were there, for example, "No freedom, bombs falling".

### GIVE FEEDBACK

- *That was a great connection you made to your own feelings of being shy when you moved to a new town to understand a little of how Christian must have felt when he first arrived in New Zealand. Making connections to our own experiences is an important way of understanding what it's like for the people we are reading about.*

### METACOGNITION

- *How does reading about things help you to understand situations? Would you have found the information about the wars in the Middle East interesting if you had not "met" the Kaka family?*



Reading standard: by the end of year 5



The Literacy Learning Progressions



Assessment Resource Banks

# Instructional focus – Writing

**English** Level 3 – Purposes and Audiences: Show a developing understanding of how to shape texts for different purposes and audiences; Ideas: Select, form, and communicate ideas on a range of topics.

**Social Sciences** Level 3 – Understand how the movement of people affects cultural diversity and interaction in New Zealand; Level 4 – Understand that events have causes and effects.

## Text excerpts from “New New Zealanders”

## Examples of text characteristics

## Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

Page 34

“In Iraq, we had no freedom,” Kathreen says. “It was as though we couldn’t breathe. But in Syria, there was freedom for Christians, for Muslims, for everyone. We lived peacefully together.”

### QUOTATIONS IN NON-FICTION

*Two members of the family are quoted throughout the article. You can identify the quotes by the use of speech marks.*

*The quotes, from interviews with the family, illustrate the situation and evoke understanding and empathy from the reader.*

Direct students to work with a partner to identify and locate all the quotations in the text. Discuss how the quotes help us to understand the situation from the family’s perspective. Direct students to their writing task (to interview someone about life in New Zealand).

- *What sort of things might you expect a person to say about life in New Zealand?*
- *What do you want to find out?*
- *What questions will you need to ask?*

Asking questions can be problematic for some English language learners. Help them by providing some question stems to use, for example:

*Why did you decide ...?, How many countries ...?, What do you ...?*

Role-play games such as “Hot Seat” or “Say It” are valuable in developing questioning skills. (In “Hot Seat”, one person takes the role of a character from the article. The other students take turns to ask them questions. The person in the “hot seat” answers in character, based on evidence from the text.)

Page 36

### ANOTHER WAR

Then in 2011, war began in Syria. Eventually the fighting came to Damascus. Bombs fell near the Kaka family’s home. They fell on a coffee shop, a school, a football field. Every day was dangerous. “You might go out to buy bread and not come back,” Kathreen says. The children didn’t have a normal life. They would hear screams. They would hear explosions and military helicopters.

### PURPOSES AND AUDIENCE

*When describing the Kaka family’s experience of war in Syria, the writer chooses readily identifiable venues (“a coffee shop, a school, a football field”) and activities (“buying bread”) to explain where the bombs fell. This shows awareness of the audience, as focusing on these recognisable settings accentuates the shocking scenario and allows readers to make connections to something beyond their experience.*

Discuss the impact of the excerpt.

- *What images do we see when we read “a coffee shop, a school, a football field”?*
- *Do these images come from our own experiences?*
- *How does this help us to understand what the family’s life was like before the war broke out?*
- *How do our images change when we read that the bombs fell in those places?*
- *How does the writer make sure that we are able to make some connection to the scenario?*

Have the students look at the quotes they have collected from New Zealanders. Have them work with a partner and invite them to offer some critical response.

- *If I was a new refugee reading this, would I be able to make a connection with my own experience?*
- *This quote says “I love going to the beach with my family.” Will this sound good to the refugee? Will they know what it would be like? How can we be aware of what will suit our purpose and our audience?*

Page 38

“As Assyrians, we like to be together,” Kathreen says, “especially at Easter and Christmas. It’s very important for us. But when families become refugees, they are often split up. The United Nations Refugee Agency sends one brother to Sweden, parents to Chicago, sisters to Germany – and people accept this because they want to survive.”

### VOCABULARY

*Writers choose the words that will best say what they mean.*

Have the students respond to the excerpt from “New New Zealanders”.

- *What do we find out?*
- *How does this make us feel?*
- *Do we get an idea of how Kathreen feels?*
- *Are we able to realise how difficult it is for her family?*
- *Is her message clear?*
- *Why does she choose to include where other members of the family have gone?*
- *What impact do the words “split up” have?*

Remind students about their word choices when they create text for a particular purpose and audience.

Have them reread their texts with a partner and choose some words to revisit together, checking to see that they have chosen words that best say what they mean.

### GIVE FEEDBACK

- *The questions you have written are very thoughtful. If the person you interview is able to respond to these, you should get some valuable quotes.*

### METACOGNITION

- *How do we know who our audience is going to be when we write? Do we sometimes write with only ourselves as an audience?*



Writing standard: by the end of year 5

The Literacy Learning Progressions

## Say It Activity: “New New Zealanders”, SJ Level 3 November 2017

Put the students into groups of four to six. Choose one student in each group to start, and allocate grid coordinates (for example, C2) to that student. The student reads the text in that cell aloud and then carries out the short role play. They then choose someone from the group to go second and allocate a new set of coordinates to that student. Continue until all the cells have been role-played.

	A	B	C
1	You are Christian – say why you think walking to school is a big deal.	You are Kathreen – say three things you miss about your life in Iraq and why you miss them.	You are Christian – say what you found difficult when you started school in New Zealand.
2	You are Georgette – say how you feel about living in New Zealand and what memories you still have of living in Syria and Iraq.	You are Toma – explain why you decided it was best for your family to leave Iraq and became refugees in Syria.	You are Kathreen – say what your hopes are for your family’s future life in New Zealand.
3	You are Toma – say three good things and three challenges about your family’s new life in New Zealand.	You are Kathreen – say what it was like living in the Syrian war zone and how you tried to protect your family.	You are Christian – say how you felt when you first arrived in New Zealand and why you felt that way.