

The Whale Rider **by Witi Ihimaera**

Introduction

New Windmill titles are supported with Student and Teaching resource sheets to engage students with the novel and to help you with your planning. Each set of resources includes a series of self-contained lessons with photocopiable worksheets, teaching notes and suggestions for guided reading. Each activity is mapped against the Framework to help you with your planning. There are also suggestions for further study areas including speaking and listening, writing and reading activities. If your students have enjoyed studying this novel there are suggestions of other New Windmills they may like to read for pleasure.

Extracts from *The Whale Rider* are used in Edges 2, Unit 5 (Heinemann Education) to investigate culture, examine the context and meaning of words and analyze the writer's attitude. The New Windmill worksheets offer additional support in these areas and can be used to complement the learning in Edges 2 or can be used as standalone worksheets.

The Whale Rider has been made into an award winning film

Resources for *The Whale Rider*:

- Synopsis
- Activate prior learning
- Activities
 - Investigating Culture
 - Reading characters' attitudes
 - Koro's changing attitude of Kahu
- Guided reading
 - Research
 - Close reading
 - Implied meaning
- Further study areas
- Reading for pleasure

Activities by Alan Pearce

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Synopsis

The Whangara tribe (a Maori tribe in New Zealand) is traditionally led by a male. However, this tradition is put under threat when first-born great grandchild, Kahu, is a girl. Koro, her great grandfather, and chief of the tribe is devastated, and rejects the loving attention of Kahu.

The Whangara tribe are proud of their traditions and history, and Koro teaches the youngsters about their past. The tribe believe that they are descendants of Paikea who escaped drowning by riding to dry land on the back of a whale. They are concerned about their future without a male leader, although the reader is left confident that Kahu has, in some mysterious way, been selected to lead her people.

Kahu has an extremely close relationship with her uncle, and the narrator of the story, Rawiri. Rawiri feels obliged to leave the village to broaden his experiences, but the draw of the tribe is too great and he returns, to experience Kahu's love, and to witness Koro's continued contempt for Kahu.

The tribe face a crisis when over two hundred whales beach themselves at Whangara. The tribe battle to save the whales, but gradually all of the whales die. However, this event is followed by the arrival of a spiritual, tattooed whale which forced itself onto the beach. The tribe believe that their destiny depends on their ability to save this spiritual whale. The men of the tribe fail, and so call for the help of the women, but they only partially succeed. Finally, Kahu swims out to the whale, boards its back and encourages it to swim back out to sea.

The whale, Kahu and the tribe all understand that Kahu is the chosen one, the one to lead the tribe successfully into the future. Even Koro is repentant enough to graciously accept Kahu.

Activate prior learning

The novel is based on Maori culture, and uses a wide range of Maori vocabulary. Elicit from students what they know about New Zealand and whether they know anything about the Maoris (Some may be familiar, for example, with the Rugby Team). It would be helpful if the students had some background information about Maori history. There are many websites that provide information about Maori culture, and it is possible to find an online Maori/English translator. Go to <http://www.heinemann.co.uk/hotlinks> and type in express code 1087P.

Teaching notes

Activity 1: Investigating culture

Framework Objectives

Year 7: R2 Use appropriate reading strategies; **R6** Adopt active reading strategies; **Wr11** Select and present information using detail, example, diagram and illustration as appropriate

Year 8: R2 Undertake independent research; **Wr10** Organise and present information, selecting and synthesising appropriate material and guiding the reader clearly through the text, e.g. a technological process, an information leaflet

Year 9: Wr3 Write in Standard English; **R2** Synthesize information from a range of sources; **Wr9** Integrate diverse information into a coherent and comprehensive account.

Activity aims:

- To research relevant information.
- To produce an informative leaflet.

This activity asks the students to explore Maori culture and to produce an informative leaflet.

Provide the students with Resource Sheet 1. The students are asked to read two extracts carefully, one piece of non-fiction and one piece from the novel. The students are asked to summarize the Whale Rider story, combining information from the two sources in exactly one hundred words. They are asked to imagine that their account is to be recounted orally to a group of Maori children; consequently, the students might need some help in making their account interesting for a listening audience.

Provide the students with Resource Sheet 2. The students are asked to research specific aspects of Maori life and to produce an informative leaflet. The students are likely to use the categories suggested on the Resource Sheet as key words for an Internet search. However, the school library might have other relevant information. Edges 2, Unit 5, which includes extracts from *The Whale Rider*, also includes work on how to research texts for information. The students are asked to consider the following when they use the information they find to write a leaflet:

- What sections will you have?
- Will you use illustrations?
- Will you use headings and sub-headings?
- Would bullet points be appropriate?
- Above all, will your writing style be appropriate for readers of your own age?

It might be necessary to remind the students that leaflets are conventionally written in a formal style. This particular leaflet will be written in a mixture of present and past tense: present tense for the things that Maoris do now; past tense for historical details about the Maoris. It is important, however, to stress to the students that the leaflet will be written for students of their own age, and so the language used in their leaflets needs to be appropriate for their target audience. It will not be appropriate to just copy material from websites.

Some helpful websites can be found at <http://www.heinemann.co.uk/hotlinks>, express code 1087P.

Students who might need more support with the research skills needed for this activity would benefit from the guided reading activity detailed below.

Guided reading – Research

Activity 1 asks the students to produce a leaflet that provides information about Maori culture. It asks the students to research and present information from four of the following categories:

- Maori culture and traditions
- Maori art
- the Maori wars
- Maori legends
- Maori religion and Gods
- the Maori language
- Maoris today.

Select a group of students who would benefit from some help with using the Internet to research information. Choose one of the categories, and show the students how a Boolean search works (Place two search words, plus the word 'and': *Maori and legends*.) Explain how this will ensure that all sources identified will have both Maori and legends in them. Without 'and' the search would identify all sources with 'Maori' in them plus all sources with 'legends' in them. Explore what happens when you place Maori or art into a search engine. Also, explore what happens when you place parentheses around Maori art: 'Maori art'.

It is important to be aware that different search engines operate in slightly different ways and so will respond in different ways to the options explored above.

1 Investigating Culture

Introduction

Maoris have a number of legends that explain aspects of their past. These legends are passed down from generation to generation by tribal leaders or priests. One such legend is the story of Paikea.

Activity

Carefully read the two extracts below. One extract comes from the prologue to the novel *The Whale Rider*. The other extract comes from a reference book about Maori culture. Imagine that you are a Maori tribal leader. Your task is to take information from each of the extracts, and to combine this information to create the story of Paikea. You are going to tell the story to a group of young Maori children, so you will have to make it interesting. However, because your audience is young children you have decided that the story cannot be too long. Consequently, you have given yourself the target of telling the story in exactly one hundred words.

Source 1: From *The Whale Rider: The Prologue*

A whale, gigantic. A sea monster. Just as it burst through the sea, a flying fish leaping high in its ecstasy saw water and air streaming like thunderous foam from that noble beast and knew, ah yes, that the time had come. For the sacred sign was on the monster, a swirling tattoo imprinted on the forehead.

Then the flying fish saw that astride the head, as it broke skyward, was a man. He was wondrous to look upon, the whale rider. The water streamed away from him and he opened his mouth to gasp in the cold air. His eyes were shining with splendour. His body dazzled with diamond spray. Upon that beast he looked like a small tattooed figurine, dark brown, glistening and erect. He seemed, with all his strength, to be pulling the whale into the sky.

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Source 2: From *Maori Legends*

The Legend of Paikea

Paikea is the Polynesian god of sea monsters. The name is also used to refer to the mythical person who began the Ngati Porou tribe in Whangara on the East Coast of Aotearoa. Maori legend has it that Paikea came from Hawaiki to Whangara, riding on the back of a taniwha. He had escaped drowning when his whaka capsized.

2 Investigating Culture

Introduction

Most people in Britain know very little about the Maoris. We might know that they come from New Zealand, and we might have seen the haka, the Maori war dance that is always demonstrated by the All Blacks rugby team before a game. It is difficult to fully appreciate the novel *The Whale Rider* without knowing something about Maori culture.

Activity

The Whale Rider was first published in New Zealand in 1987, and in 2003 it was made into a film. It has now been published by Heinemann in Britain in 2005. British readers will be fascinated by the insight they get into Maori culture, but will want to know even more. Imagine that Heinemann would like to provide students with some background information about Maori culture. They have given you the following task:

- 1 Produce a leaflet that provides some background information about Maori culture.
- 2 The leaflet should be written for students in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- 3 At least three of the following areas of information should be covered:
 - Maori culture and traditions
 - Maori art
 - the Maori wars
 - Maori legends
 - Maori religion and Gods
 - the Maori language
 - Maoris today.

You will be able to obtain some information from *The Whale Rider*. You will also be able to find information in reference books, such as an encyclopedia. In addition, there are some very helpful websites.

Notes

Think about the presentation of your leaflet:

- What sections will you have?
- Will you use illustrations?
- Will you use headings and sub-headings?
- Would bullet points be appropriate?
- Above all, will your writing style be appropriate for readers of your own age?

Teaching notes

Activity 2: Reading characters' attitudes**Framework Objectives**

Year 7: W14 Define and deploy words with precision; **W15** Use a dictionary with precision; **R2** Use appropriate reading strategies; **R4** Make brief notes; **Wr10** Organise texts appropriately; **Wr11** Select and organise information.

Year 8: W14 Collect and comment on language change; **R1** Combine information from various sources; **R2** Undertake independent research using ICT databases; **Wr10** Organise and present information.

Year 9: S8 Investigate the conventions of ICT texts; **R2** Synthesise information from a range of sources; **R3** Improve note-taking; **Wr4** Choose a range of presentational devices; **Wr9** Integrate diverse information.

Activity aims:

- To engage in close reading of an extract from the novel.
- To respond to a writer's use of language.

This activity asks the students to engage in some close reading in order to explore characters' attitudes towards events.

Provide the students with Resource Sheet 3. The students are asked to read an extract from *The Whale Rider*, and then respond to a series of questions about the extract. These questions ask the students for their own response to the text, and so there are no correct answers. However, if students need some prompts the following notes might be helpful:

- 1 Why do you think Nani is crying? 'I think that she is crying out of happiness. I think this because we know that she is delighted that she has a great granddaughter.'
- 2 When Nani tells the boys that they have a beautiful niece, what mood do you think she is in? 'I think that she is extremely proud, because she says the baby must be beautiful it looks like her.'
- 3 Why do you think the boys tried not to laugh? 'Because Nani was not pretty, and so Nani is actually implying that the baby is ugly.'
- 4 When Nani called to Koro, her voice 'boomed'. What does that suggest about the mood she is in? 'We are told afterwards that Nani called Koro an old paka, a term she used when she was being affectionate. Consequently, the 'boom' in her voice suggests how excited she is - we often raise our voice when we are excited.'
- 5 What does the verb 'jumped' suggest about Koro? 'Koro probably 'jumped' into the boat because he was desperate to get away. He was disappointed that he did not have a grandson, and was probably angry about all the celebrations when he was so disappointed.'
- 6 We know that Nani is angry. So, what does the verb 'muttered' suggest? 'This suggests that she is plotting a way to get back at Koro.'

Provide the students with Resource Sheet 4.

The students are asked to read an extract from *The Whale Rider*, and then respond to a series of questions about the language used in the extract. This activity is different to the activity presented in Resource Sheet 3 because it requires much more sensitive response to the language; the students are asked to respond at a more implicit level. Students might need to be helped to read beyond the literal meanings of the words in order to speculate on the writer's intentions. While the students are asked to respond personally to the passage, and consequently there are no correct answers, the following responses might be helpful if the teacher needs to prompt students who are finding any of the text difficult.

- 1 Does the verb 'weeping' have a different effect than 'crying' would? Although both words, 'weeping' and 'crying', would show that Kahu is upset, I think that 'weeping' makes Kahu sound very young, and vulnerable. The word 'weeping' helps us to sympathise with her, because she is upset.
- 2 What impression of Kahu do we get here? Kahu seems to be absolutely devastated, and is seeking some human support. She is almost acting like a little child and so we get the impression that she is extremely vulnerable at this point. It is also clear that Kahu feels an intimate affinity with the whales.
- 3 'Mewling' is an unusual word. What is the writer trying to suggest about Kahu and her relationship with the whales? The term 'mewling' comes from Shakespeare's *Seven Ages of Man* speech in *As You Like It*. It is a term used to describe the crying of a young child. It means to cry weakly. However, the term 'mewling' is also used to describe the sound that killer whales make when they congregate. Consequently, the term when applied to Kahu suggests both her desperation, and her affinity with the whales.
- 4 What is suggested about Kahu's feelings by the verb 'wrenched'? Wrenching is a forceful, twisting movement. This first shows that Kahu had been supported very tightly. However, more importantly, her violent movement shows how angry or upset she is.
- 5 This is a powerful sentence. What points can you make about it? The sentence is a very brief sentence: 'No, Paka, no!' she screamed. The exclamation mark shows how angry she is, as does the very abrupt utterance. The repetition of 'no' makes it very insistent, while the inclusion of 'Paka' makes the utterance sound like a very personal plea to her grandfather. The verb 'screamed' emphasizes how distraught she is, and how immediate she wants her grandfather's response to be. However, from the context of the novel, it is not clear what response Kahu wanted. The grandfather was only relating a story from his childhood, not stating contemporary Maori values.

Guided reading – Close Reading

Activity 2 asks the students to read an extract from *The Whale Rider* and consider the character's attitude. This essentially requires that the students engage in some close reading.

Select a group of students who would benefit from support with close reading. Together read from the top of page 40 to 'The rain fell like spears' on page 41. Ask the students to explain how Koro felt as a seven year old experiencing his first whale hunt. For example, it would be possible to ask the students to respond to the following details from the extract:

- a whaling was one of the great pastimes
- b you'd see all the whaling boats tearing out to sea
- c They were the most beautiful sight I had ever seen
- d I ran down past the sheds
- e Then the harpoons began to sing through the air

3 Reading characters' attitudes

When we read a novel we respond to the way the characters feel about events. To do this we think very carefully about the writer's use of words. Sometimes we are told exactly what a character feels, while at other times we have to make our own judgements from the evidence.

Look at the passage below. Nani is just receiving a 'phone call from her grandson to tell her that she has a great granddaughter. In the boxes around the passage answer the questions. Sometimes this will be very easy. At other times you have to make your own mind up from what has been written. If you can, explain how you have come up with your answer. You will notice that one of the boxes has been filled in for you.

Why do you think Nani is crying?

I think that she is crying out of happiness. I think this because we know that she is delighted that she has a great granddaughter.'

Next minute the tears started rolling down the old lady's face. 'What's that, dear? Oh, the poor thing. Oh the poor thing. Oh the poor thing. Oh. Oh. Oh. Well you tell Rehu that the first is the worst. The others come easier because by then she'll have the hang of it. Yes, dear. I'll tell him. Yes, don't you worry. Yes. All right. Yes, and we love you too.'

When Nani tells the boys that they have a beautiful niece, what mood do you think she is in?

Why do you think the boys tried not to laugh?

She put down the phone. 'Well, Rawiri,' she said to me, 'you and the boys have got a beautiful niece. She must be, because Porourangi said she looks just like me.' We tried not to laugh, because Nani was no film star. Then, all of a sudden, she put her hands on her hips and made her face grim and went to the front verandah. Far away, down on the beach, old Koro Apirana was putting his rowboat onto the afternoon sea. Whenever he felt angry he would always get on his rowboat and row out into the middle of the ocean to sulk.

When Nani called to Koro, her voice 'boomed'. What does that suggest about the mood she is in?

We know that Nani is angry. So, what does the verb 'muttered' suggest?

'Hey,' Nani Flowers boomed, 'you old paka,' which was the affectionate name she always called our Koro when she wanted him to know she loved him. 'Hey!' But he pretended he didn't hear her calling him an old bugger, jumped into the rowboat, and made out to sea.

What does the verb 'jumped' suggest about Koro?

Well, that did it. Nani Flowers got her wild up. 'Think he can get away from me, does he?' she muttered. 'Well he can't.'

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4 Reading characters' attitudes

When we read a novel we respond to the way the characters feel about events. To do this we think very carefully about the writer's use of words. Sometimes we are told exactly what a character feels, while at other times we have to make our own judgements from the evidence. In this activity you need to look beyond the literal meanings of the words, and try to work out what the writer might have been trying to achieve. There are no correct answers to any of these questions.

Re-read the passage below. Koro is telling the young boys of the tribe about his first whale hunt, when he was only seven years' old. However, Kahu is outside the room, and is listening to what Koro is saying. In the box below the passage there are some quotations from the passage. Your task is to explain what each of the quotations suggests to you about Kahu's feelings. Notice that there is a response to one of the quotations.

Koro Apirana led us in a prayer to bless the school. Then, after the introductions, he told us of the times which had brought the silence to the sea.

'I was a boy of seven years' age,' he began, 'when I went to stay with my uncle who was a whaler. I was too young to know any better, and I didn't understand then, as I do now, about our ancestor, the whale. At that time whaling was one of the great pastimes and once the bell on the lookout had been sounded you'd see all the whaling boats tearing out to sea, chasing after a whale. Doesn't matter what you were doing, you'd drop everything, your plough, your sheep clippers, your schoolbooks, *everything*. I can still remember seeing everyone climbing the lookout, like white balloons. I followed them and far out to sea I saw a heard of whales.'

The rain fell through his words. 'they were the most beautiful sight I had ever seen.' He made a sweeping gesture. 'Then, down by the slipway, I could see the longboats being launched into the sea. I ran down past the sheds, and the pots on the fires were already being stoked to boil down the blubber. All of a sudden my uncle yelled out to me to get on his boat with him. So there I was, heading out to sea.'

I saw a spiky head sneaking a look through the door. 'That's when I saw the whales really close,' Koro Apirana said. 'There must have been sixty of them at least. I have never forgotten, never. They had prestige. They were so powerful. Our longboat got so close to one that I was able to reach out and touch the skin.' His voice was hushed with awe. I felt the ripple of power beneath the skin. It felt like silk. Like a god. Then the harpoons began to sing through the air. But I was young, you see, and all I could feel was the thrill, like when you do a haka.'

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4

He paused, mesmerised. 'I can remember that when a whale was harpooned it would fight with all its strength. Eventually it would spout blood like a fountain, and the sea would be red. Three or four other boats would tow it ashore to the nearest place and cut it up and share out the meat and the oil and everything. When we started to strip the blubber off the whale in the whaling station, all the blood flowed into the channel. Blind eels would come up with the tide to drink the blood.'

I heard Kahu weeping at the doorway. I edged over to her and when she saw me she put her arms around my neck.

'You better go home,' I whispered, 'before Koro Apirana finds out you're here.'

But she was so frightened. She was making a mewling sound in her throat. She seemed paralysed with terror.

Inside, Koro Apirana was saying, 'When it was all finished we would cut huge slabs of whale meat and sling them across our horses and take them to our homes—'

Suddenly, before I could stop her, Kahu wrenched away from me and ran into the meeting house.

'No, Paka, *no!*' she screamed.

His mouth dropped open. 'Haere atu koe! Get away from here,' he shouted.

'Paka, Paka, no!'

Grimly, Koro Apirana walked up to her, took her by the arms and virtually hurled her out. 'Go. Get away from here,' he repeated. The sea thundered ominously. The rain fell like spears.

Does the verb 'weeping' have a different effect than 'crying' would?

Although both words, 'weepy' and 'crying', would show that Kahu is upset, I think that 'weepy' makes Kahu sound very young, and vulnerable. The word 'weepy' helps us to sympathise with her, because she is upset

What impression of Kahu do we get here?

'Mewling' is an unusual word. What is the writer trying to suggest about Kahu and her relationship with the whales?

What is suggested about Kahu's feelings by the verb 'wrenched'?

This is a powerful sentence. What points can you make about it?

Pages 40–41

Teaching notes

Activity 3: Koro's changing attitude of Kahu**Framework Objectives**

Year 7: R6 Actively read for information; **R8** Infer and deduce information; **R16** Distinguish between the attitudes of characters and author; **Wr19** Write reflectively about a text, taking account of the needs of others who might read it.

Year 8: R4 Read actively for meaning; **Wr6** Convey a sense of character in writing; **Wr18**, Write a critical review of a substantial text, taking account of the context in which it was written and the likely impact on its intended readers.

Year 9: R5 Evaluate their own critical writing about texts; **R6** Comment on the authorial perspectives offered in texts on individuals, community and society in texts from different cultures; **Wr17** Cite specific and relevant textual evidence to justify critical judgements about texts

Activity aims:

- To respond to the writer's use of language.
- To produce a piece of analytical writing.

This activity asks the students to produce a piece of analytical writing, tracing Koro's changing relationship with his great grand-daughter. The students are encouraged to use textual evidence to support their points of view.

Provide the students with Resource Sheet 5. The students are lead through an example of how to use textual evidence to support a point of view. The students are asked to respond personally to the writer's use of language, and consequently there are no correct answers. However, the teacher might find the following notes helpful if they are required to prompt students who find this activity difficult.

Extract 1

On Kahu's part, when she first met Koro Apirana, it must have been love at first sight because she dribbled all over him. Porourangi had walked through the door with his daughter and Nani Flowers, cross-eyed with joy, had grabbed Kahu for a great big hug. Then she put Kahu in Koro Apirana's arms before he could say 'No.'¹

'Oh no,' Koro Apirana said.²

'A little dribbling never hurt anybody,' Nani Flowers scoffed.

'That's not the end I'm worried about,' he grumbled,³ lifting up Kahu's blankets.

Extract 2

Under these conditions, the love which Kahu received from Koro Apirana was the sort that dropped off the edge of the table, like the breadcrumbs after everybody else has had a big meal.⁴ But Kahu didn't seem to mind. She ran into Koro Apirana's arms whenever he had time for her⁵ and took whatever he was able to give.

- 1 We can see here that Nani Flowers expected Koro to be rude about Kahu. Obviously Koro had already made his feelings clear about having a granddaughter.
- 2 Very few great grandfathers would be upset just because their new great granddaughter had dribbled on them. This public display of anger shows how disappointed Koro was, and also how selfish he is, making his feelings clear.
- 3 Koro's grumbling shows that he has continued to express his disappointment. The fact that he has checked Kahu's nappy shows that he is only thinking about himself.
- 4 This metaphor suggests that (a) there is very little love, (b) that any love that there is, is almost accidental, and (c) the child needs the love in order to survive.
- 5 This illustrates (a) how much Kahu loved her great grandfather, even though he was so dismissive of her, but also that (b) there were odd moments when Koro forgot about his disappointment, and showed some affection for his great granddaughter.

Provide the students with Resource Sheet 6. The students are asked to produce a piece of analytical writing, to consider Koro's changing attitude towards Kahu. Apposite quotations are provided and the students are provided with prompts to help them see why these quotations are important.

If students are not confident about analytical writing they will require a great deal of support with this activity. For example, the students might require some support with the opening paragraph which will provide an outline of the students' argument. They might also require help to insert quotations into an essay and then discuss their significance. Finally, students might need help to use connectives in order to link their ideas and their paragraphs in a logical manner.

It might be helpful to use the guided reading activity to support weaker students before they carry out this activity

Guided reading – Implied meaning

Activity 3 asks the students to produce a piece of analytical writing which explores Koro's changing attitudes towards Kahu. At the planning stage of the essay the students are asked to respond to a series of quotations. The following quotations are provided, with questions to encourage the students to think about the implied meaning behind the quotations.

Page	Quotation	Comment
12	The trouble was that Koro Apirana could not reconcile his traditional beliefs about Maori leadership and rights with Kahu's birth.	This is the key problem for Koro. However, what is the problem?
30	'Go away,' Koro Apirana would thunder.	How old was Kahu at this time? What effect does the verb 'thunder' have?
41	'Go. Get away from here,' he repeated.	How old was Kahu at this time? What effect is created by having the word 'Go' on its own in a sentence?
65	'Go back,' he said. 'Go away. You are of no use to me.'	What is Koro referring to when he says that Kahu is 'of no use'? Do you think this is a cruel thing to say?
67-8	For the rest of that evening the seat beside Nani Flowers remained empty, like a gap in a row of teeth.	This describes the empty seat during the end of school concert. What does the simile 'like a gap in a row of teeth' suggest about Koro's absence?
98-9	'When it dies, we die. I die.' 'No, Paka. And if it lives?' 'Then we live also.'	Why is this brief conversation between Koro and Kahu relevant for your essay?
107	The old man understood. He raised his arms as if to claw down the sky upon him.	We can see a change in Koro's attitude towards Kahu. What has Koro understood? What does the simile 'as if to claw down the sky upon him' have?
117	'I should have known that she was the one,' Koro Apirana said.	What does Koro mean when he says 'She is the one'? For what?
120	Oh, yes, grandchild. Rise up from the depths of your long sleep. Return to the people and take your rightful place among them.	What does Koro mean when he refers to 'your rightful place'?
121	'You're the best grandchild in the whole wide world,' he said. 'Boy or girl, it doesn't matter.'	How does this comment relate back to the quotation from page 12, at the top of this table?

Select a group of students who would benefit from some support with responding to implied meaning. First of all, explain the difference between explicit meaning and implied meaning. Next, choose one or two of the quotations from the table. Re-read the pages on which the quotations appear, in order to put the quotations into context. Then ask the students the questions for these quotations that appear in the table. Encourage the students to explain their responses by referring closely to the language of the quotations.

5

Koro's changing impression of Kahu

When Kahu is born, Koro is deeply disappointed because tradition says that the leadership of the tribe must be passed on to a male. Koro is cruel to Kahu, turning her away whenever she expresses her love for Koro.

Carefully re-read the extracts below from *The Whale Rider*. You will notice that some of the phrases are underlined. Your task is to use the boxes to write down what you think each of the quotations tells us about Koro's feelings for Kahu. You will notice that one of the boxes has been completed as an example.

Extract 1

On Kahu's part, when she first met Koro Apirana, it must have been love at first sight because she dribbled all over him. Porourangi had walked through the door with his daughter and Nani Flowers, cross-eyed with joy, had grabbed Kahu for a great big hug. Then she put Kahu in Koro Apirana's arms before he could say 'No.'

'Oh no,' Koro Apirana said.

'A little dribbling never hurt anybody,' Nani Flowers scoffed.

'That's not the end I'm worried about,' he grumbled, lifting up Kahu's blankets.

This phrase shows that Nani expected Koro to be reluctant to hold the baby, and so she gave it to him quickly. She must have expected Koro to be reluctant because he had already told Nani how disappointed he was that Kahu was a girl.

Page 25

Extract 2

Under these conditions, the love which Kahu received from Koro Apirana was the sort that dropped off the edge of the table, like the breadcrumbs after everybody else has had a big meal. But Kahu didn't seem to mind. She ran into Koro Apirana's arms whenever he had time for her and took whatever he was able to give.

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6 Koro's feelings towards Kahu

Introduction

When Kahu is born, Koro is deeply disappointed because tradition says that the leadership of the tribe must be passed on to a male. Koro is cruel to Kahu, turning her away whenever she expresses her love for Koro. It is not until the end of the novel that Koro eventually realises how important Kahu is to the tribe. In fact by the end of the novel we can see that Koro actually has a great deal of respect for Kahu.

Activity

Your task is to produce a piece of analytical writing, which explores the way Koro feels about Kahu, his great granddaughter. You need to show how Koro dismissed Kahu for a long time, but eventually accepted her as the person who would secure the future of the tribe. You must make very close reference to the text in order to support your point of view.

Planning

Structure your essay so that you:

- First, write an introductory paragraph which outlines the change that takes place in Koro's attitude towards Kahu.
- Next, deal with the way Koro originally ignored Kahu, and was extremely rude to her.
- Afterwards, show how and why Koro's attitude towards Kahu changed.
- Finally, sum up your ideas in a conclusion.

The following quotations will be useful for your essay, but you will not want to use all of them. Only use the quotations that you think are the most useful. You will notice that for each quotation there are some notes which might help you to use the quotation in your essay.

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Koro's feeling's towards Kahu

Page	Quotation	Comment
12	The trouble was that Koro Apirana could not reconcile his traditional beliefs about Maori leadership and rights with Kahu's birth.	This is the key problem for Koro. However, what is the problem?
30	'Go away,' Koro Apirana would thunder.	How old was Kahu at this time? What effect does the verb 'thunder' have?
41	'Go. Get away from here,' he repeated.	How old was Kahu at this time? What effect is created by having the word 'Go' on its own in a sentence?
65	'Go back,' he said. 'Go away. You are of no use to me.'	What is Koro referring to when he says that Kahu is 'of no use'? Do you think this is a cruel thing to say?
67/8	For the rest of that evening the seat beside Nani Flowers remained empty, like a gap in a row of teeth.	This describes the empty seat during the end of school concert. What does the simile 'like a gap in a row of teeth' suggest about Koro's absence?
98/9	'When it dies, we die. I die.' 'No, Paka. And if it lives?' 'Then we live also.'	Why is this brief conversation between Koro and Kahu relevant for your essay?
107	The old man understood. He raised his arms as if to claw down the sky upon him.	We can see a change in Koro's attitude towards Kahu. What has Koro understood? What does the simile 'as if to claw down the sky upon him' have?
117	'I should have known that she was the one,' Koro Apirana said.	What does Koro mean when he says 'She is the one'? For what?
120	Oh, yes, grandchild. Rise up from the depths of your long sleep. Return to the people and take your rightful place among them.	What does Koro mean when he refers to 'your rightful place'?
121	'You're the best grandchild in the whole wide world,' he said. 'Boy or girl, it doesn't matter.'	How does this comment relate back to the quotation from page 12, at the top of this table?

Further study areas

While this novel is based in Maori culture, and deals with Maori mythology, it is still a novel about the relationships within a family.

The following study areas provide ideal opportunities for creating interesting and stimulating activities:

Author's craft: Explore the use of two narrative perspectives. Most of the story is told by Rawiri, but some of the more fantastical content of the novel is presented in the third person.

(Author's craft: Yr7 R12; Yr8 R10; Yr9 R9)

Analytical writing: Produce a piece of analytical writing which considers whether the women of the Whangara tribe are treated with the same respect as the men.

(Analytical writing: Yr7 S13, Wr18; Yr8 S9, Wr16; Yr9 Wr16)

Informative writing: Produce a piece of informative writing, exploring the culture within which the novel is set.

(Informative writing: Yr7 S13; Yr8 S9, Wr10; Yr9 Wr9)

Collaborative drama: Act out any of the conversations between key characters: Koro and Nani Flowers; Kahu and Rawiri; Kahu and Nani Flowers. The focus should be on maintaining character.

(Collaborative drama: Yr7 S&L16; Yr8 S&L16; Yr9 S&L14)

Independent research / Information writing: Research the social conditions of the Maori people over the last one hundred years. Produce a poster to illustrate what you discover.

(Independent research: Yr7 R1, Wr10; Yr8 R2, Wr10; Yr9 R2, Wr9)

Personal view: This novel has been turned into a popular film. Would you have recommended the novel to have been turned into a film? Why?

(Personal view: Yr7 Wr19; Yr8 Wr16; Yr9 Wr13)

Reading for pleasure

Some students will enjoy the mythical elements of the Whangara tribe. Other students will enjoy learning about a completely different culture. Another novel that is set in a different culture but has a mythical element to it is *Keeper* by Mal Peet, in which a South American boy becomes a world famous goalkeeper having been coached in the Rainforest by a ghostly figure. Another novel that explores a different culture is *The Garbage King* by Elizabeth Laird. This novel focuses on the plight of children living on the streets of Addis Ababa. It follows the story of Mamo, an orphan who is sold as a slave, and Dani, a rich boy who runs away from home to escape his father. Strong female characters can be found in *The Other Side of Truth* by Beverley Naidoo and *Dovey Coe* by Frances O'Roark Dowell.