

WHAKAARI

Social Sciences

Level 1-2 Places and Environment and Identity, Culture and Organisation.

Students will gain skills, knowledge and experiences to:

- Understand how the past is important to people. (L1)
- Understand how time and change affect people's lives. (L2)

This sits alongside the guideline Te Takanga o te Wā with the connected themes Mātauranga and Te Hekenga Nui.

Notes for teachers

Drama is a way of creatively engaging with younger students. Stories told through drama can be used to teach new concepts, reinforce those previously encountered, and provide students with a shared prior knowledge. If younger students are unable to interpret complicated texts, drama is another way to learn important information. Using drama in the classroom enhances interest and connects to a younger student's natural sense of play.

Learning outcomes

When participating in drama to enhance learning in Māori History, students can be expected to:

- Ask probing questions to elicit more information.
- Share their thinking in a group discussion.
- Make observations and draw conclusions.
- Participate and contribute in learning experiences to show their understanding of Māori history.

A movie in your head

You are going to describe an historical event that is relevant to your class. You may want to write your own script or adapt an historical account. Begin by having the students in a quiet space where everyone can hear.

Start with an introduction to set the scene:

Close your eyes and listen to a story. It's a special story because it happened right where we live.

While I read the story, I will ask questions like "What can you see?" or "What can you hear?"

You don't need to answer out loud, you just need to think about it in your head and keep your eyes shut. That means that you will use your imagination and your story will be different from everyone else's.

Now close your eyes and listen...

Continue with your story, trying to be as descriptive as you can. For example:

You are now standing in a bush, surrounded by tall trees. Tuatara are scuttling through the undergrowth and pīwakawaka chirp as they flit from tree to tree. Look around you, what else can you see? Can you see any people, perhaps a mountain or even a giant feathered bird, taller than any man?

There are many follow up activities for this exercise. Students can list all the things they saw and heard. They can draw or paint what was in their head and make a class book out of it. It could be made into a

movie. As with most narrative, this is work that creates a shared experience for the students. It is presented in a familiar format and can be referred back to when needed.

Hot seat

A hot seat activity is a great way to present a more personal view of an historical event. Choose a person who took part in an historical event in your area. The person you represent could be a leader, or a child, or a warrior, depending on which perspective you want to portray. Seated in front of your class, take on the character you have chosen.

Tell the students a story about that person's life and the situation they were in (a hapū, a whānau or a war party for example.)

Students can ask questions of that character about their involvement in historical events or decisions, focussing not just on the facts, but on personal reactions and feelings too. This can be revisited when they want to know more.

Building inspector

Visit a landmark or building. Explore it with the students, encouraging them to interpret the landmark, its age, who used it, why it is there, what the distinguishing features are and why it is important. Then get the students to show some of the main features of the landmark or building, using their bodies in a freeze frame. See if the other students can guess what is being represented and give a fact that they know about it.

As follow up to the visit, continue to role play what life was like when that place was built or when people first lived there. Start by asking the students some questions to lead their thinking: "What do you think life was like there 100 years ago?"; "What kind of jobs did people do?" Then get groups to freeze frame some of their ideas and ask the other groups to guess again. For example, if the students have identified that there were horses and carts at this time, then ask, "Can you make a picture for me of people looking after the horses and carts?"

Meet the leader

Children of this age find fictional characters still very believable and can become involved with a character. As with the hot seat, choose a person who was involved in an historical event, but do not tell the students about them. Then construct a landmark in your classroom with the students. This could be something from early Māori history, like a pātaka from a fortified pā, or it could be a replica of a local landmark. Whatever you choose needs to be representative of the time and place that you are focussing on. It also should be big enough that the children have a physical feeling of both its importance to your area and its presence in the classroom.

Find or make objects that will fit in and around your structure that will give a clue about what it is and what place in history it has. These could be everyday implements of the time, photographs or special taonga or heirlooms. These need to be placed in or around your structure at random times throughout your unit of study. With them should be a letter, written by the character you have chosen, addressed to your class. All of these objects and letters will be like clues that go together to form a whole picture. The children will then write back to the character, with questions or thoughts, and a correspondence can begin.

The element of surprise and fantasy is what will engage students into this. Students will want to look to see if a new object has appeared and will want to know what the letters say.