



THE BOOK AND BEYOND:

An educator's guide for exploring children's and YA literature

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OF NEW ZEALAND

Title: The Adventures of Tupaia

Author(s): Courtney Sina Meredith

Illustrator(s): Mat Tait

The aim of The Book and Beyond is to inspire an interest and passion for books and reading. This section is for your thoughts, questions and notes about different aspects of the book and to consider how you might frame discussion with students.

The book

Physical object

Overlarge for this format, to accommodate the amazing illustrative detail of the narrative. The cover is hardback, and the glossy feel/finish ties in with and emphasises the stars/night sky of the cover illustration. Its size also makes it ideal for reading aloud.

Design & cover

The cover commands attention—a combination of the angle, posture, position, gesture and calm assertiveness of Tupaia in front of Captain Cook, who stands stiff and serious. This draws you to Tupaia and creates interest in him and his relation to Cook. The deep teal/green tones of the sky, inky island silhouettes and figures in contrast to the gentle orange of the light, highlights and stars.

Illustration

Select, deliberately limited colour palette of 3 to 4 colours. High interest layout with multiple layers—switching between beautiful sweeping page spreads, often with main scene and breakout spaces/images seamlessly connecting with the text and story elements. Turquoise and green endpapers show a repeated albatross silhouette symbolic to the navigators' (Tupaia/Taiata/ancestors) use of nature/birds and journeys.

Characters

The book centres around Tupaia— from French Polynesian island Ra'iātea, he was a high priest, ocean navigator, artist and holder of sacred wisdom, teacher and learner. Endlessly curious, he and his apprentice Tataia accompanied Banks and Cook on the Endeavour, where he was a cultural and linguistic translator—a bridge between the crew of the Endeavour and the Māori they encounter in NZ/Aotearoa.

Plot

Opens with Tupaia's narration— in verse—of growing up, his passion for navigation, skill and status, forming a critical overlay to the pivotal events that follow—meeting and journeying with Cook and Banks to and around NZ/Aotearoa—the land his ancestors talked of? The increasing action of their encounters and their shared sadness helping shape Cook's travels, then passing on his knowledge to Taiata in preparation for his death.

Setting

Begins on the Great Marae of Taputapuātea on the island of Ra'iātea where Tupaia grew up, learning the sacred wisdom of ocean navigation from the high priests, the warriors, fisherman and nature. The story then follows Tupaia's long Pacific voyage where he shares his sacred knowledge of navigation and the islands with Banks and Cook. Then we travel to the Endeavour's NZ landing sites where the first encounters took place.

Theme & message

- Understanding the events of the past through alternative/non-western/pre-European viewpoint
- Looking at the past to better understand the present
- Spirit of discovery and kinship
- Cultural differences and communication
- Power and connection of Pasifika people to stars, sea, nature

Language

Mix of dramatic narrative prose and verse, and visual language of the images, comic techniques. Italics are used to signal Tupaia's voice in the opening and closing. These sections are poetic, set out in verse. The words draw beautiful imagery, rhythm and balance. Language is rich, with Pasifika names/concepts and a glossary to aid our understanding of those.

Mood & feeling

Slow, gentle pace in opening the story, where sections are poetic, rhythmic. Shifts to a faster pace with an urgent tone in language and visually in illustrations, with comic style segments for the first encounters and eventually violent interactions.

Genre & format

A non-fiction illustrated narrative, or illustrated non-fiction, it might also be seen and described as a graphic novel, which can include non-fiction.

The beautiful illustrations laid out in such a free flowing non-traditional layout—shifting from large form visuals to comic strip makes for a distinctive and compelling book within this genre.

The inquiry

Rich question(s)

This section is for creating and exploring questions that might guide an overall inquiry for a particular book. These questions might be inspired by ideas in the book section and/or personal responses and/or the NZ Curriculum and/or available resources.

How and why do people explore?

How and why are some stories told, recorded, documented and some are not?

Why is history worth knowing?

What can a map tell us?



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Make connections

The aim of The Book and Beyond is to inspire an interest and passion for books and reading. This section is designed to help students use the book as inspiration to share, wonder, question, and explore ideas, possibilities, connections, feelings, experiences and other viewpoints — either alone or together.

Personal

Explore

Teacher's Notes available from publisher's Allen and Unwin suggest tasks and questions that connect to inquiry leaning and support English, Technology and Social Sciences learning areas.

<https://www.allenandunwin.com/browse/books/childrens/The-Adventures-of-Tupaia-Courtney-Sina-Meredith-and-Mat-Tait-9781988547145>

Dig deeper

Find out more by using our Curiosity Card 'Waka hourua' to spark your inquiry, further explore images, questions and ideas linked to navigation and voyaging of this time.

Download it here:

<https://natlib.govt.nz/schools/teaching-and-learning-resources/teaching-tools-resource-guides/curiosity-cards-for-inquiry/set-2/waka-hourua-tmcc2>

Write or draw

Tupaia and Taiata's story ends all too soon and feels sad and tragic. Imagine that they didn't get sick. What could an alternate ending be?

Read more

Read the next in the series

Read another book by the same author / illustrator

The Heading Dog Who Split in Half: Legends and Tall Tales From New Zealand (Potton & Burton)/Michael Brown and Mat Tait

Read another book with the same idea/topic/ genre

Learn more about Graphic novels and how to use them to engage students with reading:

<https://natlib.govt.nz/schools/reading-engagement/childrens-and-youth-literature/graphic-novels>

Listen to an audio version of the book

Social (Share your experience)

Talk with your family/whānau

Encourage and support students to talk to family and in class:

What is your/your family's story of arrival to New Zealand?

Do you know your pepeha/mihi? Could you map the journey/family tree/ancestors?

Book a class visit

We are a nation of voyagers, the last landmass on Earth to be settled.

Beginning with the ancestors of Māori, we have all navigated here and call this place 'home'.

Check out the free school programme Voyager Nation: Navigating Together for a shared class experience:

<https://natlib.govt.nz/he-tohu/learning/school-visits/school-programmes/voyager-nation-navigating-together>

What connections can you make to yourself, other texts, the world?

Text to self

Text to text

Have you seen other images of these first encounters before?

Look at this Curiosity Card for Tupaia's perspective.

Joseph Banks bartering with a Māori for a koura or crayfish. Watercolour and pencil artwork by Tupaia, 1769. <http://bit.ly/2RVyqhq>

Text to world

NZ Curriculum

This section is intended as a prompt for thinking about how the book might relate to the NZ Curriculum. For example, is it a story about cultural diversity? What language, symbols and text tell the story?

Learning areas		Principles		Values		Key Competencies	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> English	<input type="radio"/> Maths & Statistics	<input type="radio"/> High expectations	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Future focus	<input type="radio"/> Excellence	<input type="radio"/> Community & participation	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Thinking	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Relating to others
<input checked="" type="radio"/> The Arts	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Science	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Treaty of Waitangi	<input type="radio"/> Learning to learn	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Innovation, inquiry, curiosity	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Ecological sustainability	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Using language, symbols & text	<input type="radio"/> Participating & contributing
<input type="radio"/> Health & PE	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Social Sciences	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Cultural diversity	<input type="radio"/> Community engagement	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Diversity	<input type="radio"/> Integrity	<input type="radio"/> Managing self	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Languages	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Technology	<input type="radio"/> Inclusion		<input type="radio"/> Equity			