



# Using Dramatic Structures

ACCESS THE ARTS EXEMPLARS ONLINE AT [www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/arts/](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/arts/)

LEVEL 1 2 3 4 5

## Parihaka

### THE LEARNING CONTEXT

This teacher's intended outcomes were for the students to:

- select and use techniques and conventions to represent the themes of a poem
- organise a performance space that portrays symbolic interactions between Māori and Pākehā at the time of Parihaka
- reflect on how their drama work has shaped their understanding of current socio-political events.

In four one-hour sessions, the students structured performance pieces based on their interpretations of a poem about the historic events that took place at Parihaka in the 1880s. This exemplar shows parts of the first two sessions.

Together, the students read the poem "Parihaka Grieving" by Alistair Te Ariki Campbell. They discussed its possible meanings and its potential for drama. They also considered both the historical and contemporary contexts of Māori–Crown relationships.

The class was then divided into small groups. Each group chose lines from the poem on which to base a series of frozen images. They selected appropriate conventions with which to link and structure the images for performance.

They also used simple props as symbols. After each group had presented its work, the students reflected on how the drama had enriched and deepened their understanding of the history of Aotearoa New Zealand.

### Teacher-student conversations

Discussing the placement of the Māori women:

Teacher: Why do you think this group have placed the Māori women on the floor?

Simon: It draws our attention to them.

Teacher: Why do they want us to focus on them?

Simon: So that we can get a sense of how they feel.

Teacher: What have they done to heighten the women's feelings?

Therese: Their facial expressions are important to us, but it's also the tension in their arms. Their eyes are all angry.

Teacher: If we were to light this image, where would you focus the light?

Therese: I think I'd want it on Rona's hands. The way they are stretched out, pleading, with the rest of her in darkness. That would show the despair of losing land.

### WHERE TO NEXT?

The next learning steps for these students could be to:

- reflect on how the performance structure and their improvisations have provided insights into the events at Parihaka
- plan a structured sequence that incorporates all the groups' performance pieces into a whole-class work
- compare and contrast their improvisations with how the themes could be explored using different dramatic conventions.

### CURRICULUM LINKS

*The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum*

#### Achievement Objectives

##### Developing Practical Knowledge in Drama (PK)

Students will select and use dramatic elements, techniques, and conventions for specific purposes and explore the use of relevant technologies.

##### Developing Ideas in Drama (DI)

Students will initiate ideas and individually and collectively develop and refine drama for specific purposes.

##### Communicating and Interpreting in Drama (CI)

Students will present and respond to drama and describe how dramatic elements, techniques, conventions, and technologies combine to create form and meaning.

*The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum*, page 44  
[www.tki.org.nz/r/arts/curriculum/statement/pg44\\_e.php](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/arts/curriculum/statement/pg44_e.php)

#### NCEA (National Certificate of Educational Achievement)

Achievement Standards:

AS 90007: Drama 1.2 Use elements and conventions to devise, structure and perform a drama.

New Zealand Qualifications Authority (2001).

### REFERENCES

Alistair Te Ariki Campbell (2001). "Parihaka Grieving". In *Parihaka: The Art of Passive Resistance*, ed. T. Hohaia, G. O'Brien, & L. Strongman. Wellington: Victoria University Press.

Ministry of Education (2000). *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.



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## Parihaka

**WHAT THE WORK SHOWS:** The students selected and used a number of techniques, conventions, and props to interpret a poem. They reflected critically on how their discussion and performances had deepened their understanding of Māori–Crown relationships.



### Progress Indicator

#### Using Dramatic Structures

Refines work that is episodic and thematically structured (PK, DI, CI)

The teacher and the students read the poem together. The teacher questions the students, seeking to explore the poem's themes and to establish a context for their improvisations. The students respond with their interpretations of the poem and their feelings about the injustices described.



The students work in groups to negotiate ideas and plan how they will represent the themes of the poem. They discuss the use of different techniques and conventions and how, with the use of props, these will symbolically represent their ideas.



### Progress Indicator

#### Using Dramatic Structures

Refines work that is episodic and thematically structured (PK, DI, CI)

The students continue to work in groups. While one student narrates selected lines from the poem, the others link their five frozen images by using selected conventions. They use narration and canoning\* to shape their performance. They also use simple props, such as a blanket and a stick, as symbols. The students' strong facial expressions convey the themes of cruel injustices and the resulting suffering.



### Progress Indicator

#### Responding to Drama

Critically examines how elements, techniques, conventions, and technologies combine to create form and meaning (CI)

Before this clip, the teacher questions the students about how they have used elements, techniques, and conventions to shape their work. The exemplar "Busted" (level 4) is an example of a teacher using questioning in this way. In this clip the students reflect on their learning in, through, and about drama. For Letitia, taking on a role (being in someone else's shoes) has helped to shape her understandings about the events at Parihaka and current issues in Māori–Crown relationships, such as the importance of land ownership.

The images and video clips in this exemplar are taken from the Ministry of Education video *Telling Our Stories: Classroom Drama in Years 7–10*, which is being distributed to schools later in 2004.

#### \* Canoning

A movement and vocal convention that involves layering movement and/or voice for visual effect or aural effect. One person begins the movement or sound, which is then repeated by others in turn, or the sound or movement may ripple through the group.