

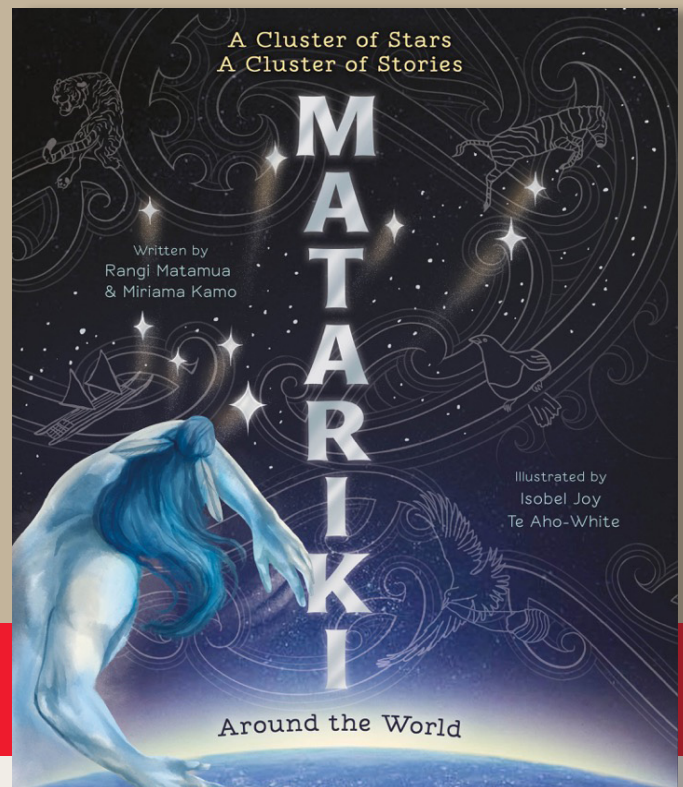
Matariki

Around the World

By Rangi Matamua & Miriama Kamo

Illustrated by Isobel Joy Te Aho-White

- Reading • Writing • Thinking Skills •
- Social Studies • Science • Art



Synopsis

The Matariki star cluster holds great importance for Māori and the people of Aotearoa New Zealand, but this cluster is seen and celebrated across the world. From times of old, it has been used to guide people from many different lands, and it goes by many different names, such as *Makali'i*, *Pleiades*, *Mao*, *Krittika* and *Subaru*.

Beginning with the creation story of Ranginui and Papatūānuku, the book introduces the Māori gods and Maramataka, the lunar calendar, before going into detail about the Matariki cluster and each individual star as they are known by the Māori people of Aotearoa. The second half of the book provides examples of the stories told about the same star cluster in other cultures around the world: the Cook Islands, Tahiti, Hawai'i, Australia, Japan, China, India, Africa, Greece, Scandinavia, North and South America.

The book is beautifully and soulfully illustrated and includes a glossary and index.

About the Authors and Illustrator

Rangi Matamua is a New Zealand indigenous studies and Māori cultural astronomy academic of Tūhoe descent. He is the first Māori to win a Prime Minister's Science Prize, and is a Fellow of the Royal Society Te Apārangi. Rangi holds extensive knowledge about our skies, star clusters, galaxies and planets. He is a fifth-generation Māori astronomer (tohunga kōkōrangī) on a mission to disseminate star lore left to him by his tīpuna, Te Kōkau and Rāwiri Te Kōkau. "Knowledge that is not shared is not knowledge," his grandfather told him.

Miriama Kamo (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Mutunga) is an award-winning journalist. She is the anchor of TVNZ's flagship current affairs programme *Sunday* and has worked on many of TVNZ's key programmes, including Māori current affairs programme *Marae* and *1 News*. She is also a keen writer. Her first children's book with Scholastic was the popular *The Stolen Stars of Matariki*. "Our relationship to Matariki demonstrates the power that mātauranga Māori has in informing our survival over hundreds of years and shaping our society today," she says.

Isobel (Izzy) Joy Te Aho-White (Ngāti Kahungunu ki te Wairoa, Kai Tahu) is a freelance graphic artist and illustrator with a passion for the natural world and te ao Māori. She specialises in symbolism and metaphor, and her work is influenced by mythology and folk tales, botanical illustration and life experience. "I've always had an interest in stories that are passed through generations, how they evolve, and where there are similarities and differences across cultures," she says.

Writing and Illustration Style

Matariki Around the World is a collection of Matariki stories, as told by various cultures. With an emphasis on the experience of Matariki in Aotearoa New Zealand, the book begins with Ranginui and Papatūānuku, and the creation of the Matariki cluster by Tāwhirimātea. Information is given on Māori gods, the Maramataka (lunar calendar) and early Pacific navigation.

An evocatively illustrated spread is dedicated to each whetū (star), where the significance of the star and the role it plays in welcoming in the Māori New Year is fully explained. Additional non-fiction information is provided in side panels and captions.

An exploration of Matariki stories from other cultures begins with a world map. A fully illustrated spread (sometimes two) is used to share the stories of each land. This rich social studies resource compares and contrasts Matariki beliefs, traditions and celebrations around the world. Herein lies the strength of the book – the reader begins in Aotearoa New Zealand and then extends out into other lands, creating a sense of universal connection and understanding.

The information is well researched and interesting. Written in an informal conversational style, it's almost like having a chat with an aunty. The vibrant watercolour illustrations add depth and meaning to the text. This comprehensive collection of Matariki stories is supported by a contents page, glossary and index.

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

During the shared sessions, encourage students to ask questions to clarify their understanding of characters and events. Have them make predictions and inferences and relate these to their own experiences or prior knowledge. Read the passages aloud and/or have students read alongside or by themselves.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

Look at the front and back cover and read the blurb.

- What do you think this book is going to be about?
- Why are some parts of the cover shiny? How does this enhance the design?
- What do you think the man on the cover is doing?
- What are some other names for the Matariki cluster?
- Is this book fiction or non-fiction or both? How can you tell?
- What parts of the world do the stories in this book come from?

Matariki Comprehension Questions

- What has the Matariki star cluster been used for since the beginning of humankind? (p.9)
- Which god crushed his eyes in his hands and threw them into the sky, creating the stars of Matariki? (p.12)
- What is Maramataka? (pp. 16-17)
- Why were the stars of Matariki and other stars important to early Pacific navigators? (p.18)
- How many stars are there in the Matariki cluster? What are their Māori names? (pp. 20-21)
- What is the Māori word for 'star'? (p.22)
- What does the rising of the Matariki cluster signify in Aotearoa New Zealand? (p.22)
- Which star is known as 'te kaiwhakahaere' (the conductor)? (p.22)
- What is the name of the star that guides spirits across the night sky? (p.24)
- The growing of food, such as kūmara, is associated with which star? (pp.26-27)
- Which native bird (now protected) was tastiest in winter? (pp.28-29)
- Which star is associated with birds and food grown above ground? (pp.28-29)
- Māori look to which star for predictions on freshwater fishing for the year ahead? (pp. 30-31)
- Which star took care of ocean fishing? (pp. 30-31)
- If Waipunarangi was bright and clear in the winter sky, what could you expect? (p.32)
- What does Ururangi tell us about? (p. 34)
- If you wanted to send a wish or dream up to a star, which star would it be best to send it to? (p. 36)
- Why can some people see more stars in the Matariki cluster than others? (pp.40-41)



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Matariki Around the World Comprehension Questions

- When does Matariki rise in the Cook Islands? (pp.42-43)
- Which Pacific country divides the year into two parts, according to whether or not the Matariki stars are visible? (p.44)
- *Makali'i* is celebrated in which Pacific Island? Why are fights and arguments put aside at this time? (p.46)
- What do the Wurundjeri people of south-eastern Australia believe that the seven stars of *Karatgurb* used to be? (pp.48-49) Why did they travel into the sky? (pp.48-49)
- Which two countries both tell stories about a hunter who chases seven star sisters across the sky? (p.50)
- What does 'indigenous' mean? How many different indigenous nations are there in Australia? (p.51)
- What is the name of the Matariki cluster in Japan? Hint: It's also the name of a type of car. (pp.52-53)
- What does the name *Amaterasu* mean? (p.54)
- The Matariki cluster forms the 'hairy head' of which mythical creature in the sky over China? (p.56)
- In which country does the son of the Matariki cluster have six faces? (p.58-59)
- What is it time to do when the Matariki stars rise in southern Africa? What does the name *IsiLimela* mean? (p.60-61)
- According to the Greeks, the seven sisters in the Matariki (*Pleiades*) cluster are whose daughters? (pp.62-63)
- What does the illustration on pp.64-65 show? Where did this story come from?
- Who was Freyja and what are her 'hens'? (pp. 66-67)
- Which countries are known together as Scandinavia? (p. 66)
- Many cultures portray the Matariki stars as female, but some see them as male. Name one Native American tribe who describe the stars as brothers. (p.68)
- The ancient Aztecs called Matariki *Tianquiztli*. What does this mean? (p.72)
- Which South American people saw Matariki as a *huaca*, or spirit, connected to the wellbeing of animals? (p.73)

Activities

ACTIVITY 1: BECOME A LEGENDARY STORYTELLER

Write your own legend about the stars in the Matariki cluster. You could base your legend on one of the stories in this collection or you could create your own characters and plot.

How many stars are in your cluster? Who are they? How did they get to be in the sky?

Remember to give your legend a title and use plenty of describing words (adjectives) and action/doing words (verbs) to bring your legend to life.

ACTIVITY 2: SET GOALS THIS MATARIKI

Using pp.20-21 and pp.74-75 as a springboard, review what each star in Matariki represents in Aotearoa New Zealand. Then think of a personal goal that connects to each star. You've got a whole year to achieve your goals, so make a plan and tick off each goal as you complete it.

You can use some of the suggestions from the example below or come up with your own goals that are meaningful to you.

Matariki: Do something nice for your mum, aunty or grandma to show your appreciation of them.

Pohutukawa: Learn about your whakapapa or create a family tree.

Tipuānuku: Plant a small garden at home or at school or learn how to make kūmara soup.

Tipuārangi: Plant a tree for each member of your whānau or make a bird feeder.

Waiti: Join in or organise a stream/river clean-up day in your community.

Waitā: Go on a beach clean-up day with your whānau.

Waipunarangi: Save rainwater in a container to use for watering plants.

Ururangi: Learn about wind-powered energy or make and fly a kite.

Hiwa-i-te-rangi: Think about something you would like to change or develop in your life or a hope you have for others or the planet. Send your wishes up to Hiwa-i-te-rangi.



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ACTIVITY 3: CREATE YOUR OWN STARRY NIGHT

Research the famous painting *The Starry Night* by Vincent Van Gogh. Create your own vision of the first sight of the Matariki stars rising before dawn with paint or pastels. Can you recreate the swirling energy and light that Van Gogh's painting is famous for?

ACTIVITY 4: BECOME AN ASTRONOMER

Research to find out more about the whetū Puanga (the older brother of Matariki) or the Matariki cluster. How far away is it from Earth? How old are the stars? How big are they? What colour are the stars and what does this mean? Present your findings using Google Slides.

ACTIVITY 5: WEAVE A MATARIKI STAR

Weave your own Matariki star from harekeke (flax) or from paper.

Learn how to do it here: <https://lifesbounty.co.nz/2018/07/weaving-a-flax-star-harakeke-whetu-for-matariki/>

Written by Frances McBeath



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