

Teacher Notes for 'The little Kiwi's Matariki'

Synopsis

The little Kiwi is fast asleep in her burrow. A special beam of moonlight shines right down her burrow tunnel. She wakes, and realises it is time... but for what? Hurrying out into the night, she wakes each of her friends from their mid-winter slumber.

'Kia tere! Hurry!' she urges them.

Weka, with his empty tummy (puku tiare), Ruru with her grandchildren (mokopuna), Tūi with his songs and Katipō with her silken web are all soon rushing along behind the little Kiwi.

'AEEEE! ROARR!'

The friends come to a sudden stop. But as Katipō reassures them, it is only the breath of Tāwhirimātea, God of the wind.

The little Kiwi leads her friends through the pīngao and onto the beach. It is pre-dawn. They wait, and watch. As the moon slips away behind the hills, the constellation of Matariki rises for the first time, in the north-eastern sky.

'Haere i te ata tū, ka puta mai ngā whetū Matariki!'

whispered little Kiwi,

'The light comes,

and the stars of Matariki!'

Matariki? It's a time for celebration! A time to share food (kai), family (whānau), music and dance... and fun! And that is exactly what the friends do.

This gentle tale about celebrating Matariki, the maori New Year, finishes with an explanation of Matariki – it's origins, traditions and how it is celebrated today. The constellation is also shown, with the maori names for each star. The text contains some simple words in Te Reo Maori alongside the English equivalent.

About the book creator.

Nikki Slade Robinson is a long-time illustrator and author. She has illustrated well over 70 titles. As author-illustrator, 'The little Kiwi's Matariki' is her 10th children's book.

She has worked with many mainstream and educational publishers as well as providing commercial illustration to a wide range of clients.

Some of her titles have been picked up for release to overseas markets such as North America and China. Other titles have been dramatised as live performance in both NZ and Australia.

Writing Style

'The little Kiwi's Matariki' is written in a simple, carefully crafted style. There is a repeated phrasing or 'chorus' that increases in length as each new character is introduced.

A unique feature of this text is the combination of English and Te Reo Maori. This gives the opportunity to learn and carry Te Reo Maori into the reader's own life...

'Kia tupato! Be careful!'

The text is laid out to flow as one with the stunning illustrations that so accurately capture the feel of a night time scene in NZ coastal bush.

Shared learning and Discussion Points

- The little Kiwi is woken by a moonbeam. How does she know there is something special about this particular night? Do you think the moon shines into the little Kiwi's burrow every night? (pg 2)
- Why do you think the little Kiwi wants to wake her friends up? How do you think each creature felt, when they were woken up by the little Kiwi? (whole book)
- What do you think is trailing behind Katipō? (pg 16 - 27) Why do you think the author-illustrator chose to hide this object until the end of the story? (pg 28 - 29)
- Where is the moon looking on each page of the story? Why do you think the author-illustrator drew the moon this way? (whole book)
- How do the illustrations show the gradual change from bush to beach? Can you name one of the types of trees shown? What is its maori name? (whole book)
- Why is the little Kiwi in such a hurry? What may happen if she walked slowly instead of running fast? (whole book)
- Looking at the cover, what clues can you find about the story inside? Where do you think the story is set? (cover)
- What made everyone stop suddenly? What happened when the little Kiwi stopped? How do you think everyone felt? (pg 20 - 21)
- What made the little Kiwi brave enough to step onto the beach after hearing a scary noise? (pg 22 - 23)
- What does Matariki celebrate? Is Matariki celebrated all over the world? (pg 28 - 29)
- What do you notice about the colours used in the illustrations? Are the background colours similar or different to the character colours?
- In this story, what were the four ways the characters planned to celebrate Matariki? (pg 28 - 29)

Activities

1: Different languages

Write a list of the Te Reo Maori words that you can find in 'The little Kiwi's Matariki'. Write the English translations alongside.

Can you choose some other words from the story, and find the Te Reo Maori translation?

What is te reo for

*song

*spider

*spider's web

*dance

*sleep

*flying

*good morning

Make a poster and put it where students can see it.

You can also make a memory card game. Write each Te Reo Maori word on a card, and its English equivalent on another card. Use a small picture clue on the cards to help students match the cards correctly. Shuffle the cards, place them face down on a table, and take turns turning over 2 cards to find matching pairs. The winner has the most correct matching pairs.

Encourage use of the Te Reo Maori words in the classroom. Maybe have a word of the day, or week!

Different Celebrations: New Year

Discuss how different cultures celebrate the New Year. Does every culture celebrate it on the same date? How are celebrations different?

Make a calendar, and mark as many different cultural New Year dates as possible. Discuss how the various New Year dates may tie in with seasonal changes. Remember seasons are different in the northern hemisphere!

Find out more about the legends and traditions of Matariki in New Zealand.

Together, investigate sites such as

<http://www.tepapa.govt.nz/Education/OnlineResources/Matariki/Pages/overview.aspx>

but check their various sections first to make sure they are appropriate for your students.

What were the four main ways of celebrating Matariki in this story? Get your students to design a Matariki poster that focuses on one of these ways to celebrate. The poster could inform people of Matariki's history, or advertise a

celebratory Matariki event. Remember to have a short, bold headline (title), a clear eye-catching picture, and any necessary information such as the time, place and date, or key message.

Different Mediums: The little Kiwi play

Ensure the students are familiar with the book 'The little Kiwi's Matariki'. Assign a student to each character, including a narrator and several mokopuna for Ruru. Discuss the actions needed to help tell the story. You could add more dialogue to the story – for example create speaking parts for the mokopuna. How would the Kiwi actor move, to act out waking up Weka?

Decide where the beach would be, and the bush, and work out a path between the two.

With the book in hand, act out the play. This could be presented to the rest of the class, or school.

Written by Nikki Slade Robinson.