



AWATEA

AWATEA'S
TREASURE

AWATEA AND
THE KAWA GANG

For Teachers

I would suggest that students' activities and discussions should be based on students' own choices and that they choose at least one activity from each of:

Share
Investigate
Wondering

Students should explore each one in some depth and share and discuss their thoughts at intervals with a group of students.

For Students

I wanted to write books like those I loved most when I was between eight and fourteen years old. I read lots in those days, but books like *Awatea's Treasure* were few and far between. I also wanted to write books that would come alive in teachers' hands as they read to you. I hope that works.

Answer at least one question from each section:

Share
Investigate
Wondering

for each book. Go as deep as you can.

Also, try some of the opportunities for extra discovery suggested at the end.

1 Share

1

There are some pages I love to read aloud more than others. I always practise these first by myself. When you have read the book, or books, see if you can find a few pages that sound good when you read them aloud.

I want my audience to be engaged, so I use expression and the characters' voices as I hear them in my head. I want the listeners to put themselves in the story, laugh, be scared, be curious. I have the MOST FUN when I am reading to kids!

- a. Practise doing some reading yourself. Use all the expression and voices you come up with to engage your listeners.
- b. Record yourself to hear what you actually sound like. You might want to do this more than once. You could even add sound effects.
- c. You might want to work with more than one person in places where there are conversations.
- d. Try reading your passage to a friend or group and sharing it with others, your teacher or even the class. (It doesn't have to be a long piece.)
- e. Make it FUN! If you enjoy it, so will your audience.

2

I wrote a song to go with these stories, and it helps set the mood – especially if you want to scare people! You can listen to the [song here](#). You could use this to introduce your reading. The chords are easy – Dm and Am – if you can get hold of a guitar.

2 Investigate

The characters and the settings created something solid for me to work with. I used a mixture of memories from when I was a kid and imagination to tell the stories once I had the characters and settings in my head. Some parts of the stories are almost true, some are a gross exaggeration, and some are totally made-up.

I was worried that the two settings – Nan and Pop's house, and Mangokuri – would confuse the reader. But as the writer, I got a bit bored with only one setting, so I added more.

1

What do you think? Does it work for you, having the story go from 'the homestead' and then back to 'Mangokuri' all the time? Why, or why not?

If you were Awa, which setting would you prefer to be in? Why?

If you are working with a group, you could discuss this, giving your own reasons for your thinking.

2

Can you find a word or a phrase that you think describes these characters?

Awa
Kim
Nan
Pop
Tui
Tai
Carrot
Ma Rumble
Pa Rumble
Tredget
Toss
Mrs Carol

A secret about Tui: in real life, Tui is a Down syndrome girl. I don't say so in the stories, but I want you to guess she has something special. Do you think she really sees Mrs Carol?

I am writing the third and last book in the Awatea series right now. I think Tui might get to see Mr Carol, but he is really scary! Seriously scary. Would this be too scary for you? Shall I write it like that or soften it so he is just a shadow of a ghost? Mrs Carol is a kind ghost, but Mr Carol will not be! You can email me at fraserarawhata@gmail.com

3

Wondering

I think that animals have a special intelligence that many people don't recognise. Carrot uses words to express himself often. I used to have a pet myna bird in my class when I was teaching. His name was Scruffy, and he had about eighteen words and noises; some had meanings, like 'Meow, lookout!', which meant a cat was nearby.

1. Do you think Carrot is actually talking and making conversation?
2. Is there an animal or bird you wish you could have a conversation with? What would that conversation sound like? This could be a short comic strip with speech bubbles.
3. There are a few things in the stories that you might like to research. I have endless wonderings about these things. What are your wonderings?

For instance:

- a. Ambergris is rare and produced by only some sperm whales. Why? How?

I researched ambergris and became fascinated with sperm whales as a result. We don't really know how deep they dive or how long they stay down so deep under the sea. It is dark down there, so how do they find their prey?

- b. Do you think humans understand the intelligence or spirituality of other creatures?

Which animals are the most intelligent, do you think?
Why?

Are they sometimes wiser than us in some ways?

- c. What is our connection with many of these creatures, such as whales and dolphins for instance? Is there some kind of understanding between us?
- d. What is our cultural connection with animals? How did our ancestors relate to different species hundreds or thousands of years ago? Have we become locked into our own self-importance and lost touch with animals?
4. Would you like to live back in the days of the Awatea stories? Or would you prefer these days?

What do you think are the main differences between life now and then? This could be done on a 'plus/minus/interesting' chart with columns for then and now.

Thanks for reading *Awatea's Treasure* and *Awatea and the Kawa Gang*. I enjoyed writing them so much that I had to start another book to finish the series because there is a bit more to tell you.

You can ask me questions or send me comments at fraserarawhata@gmail.com

Opportunities for Extra Discovery

Drama

- Freeze-frame favourite parts from the stories in a small group
- Act out a passage with dialogue

Dance

- Carrot – the flip-top-head incident; attack of the kamikaze gang
- Tai in the tapu area
- Awatea after the storm
- Gathering seaweed

Visual arts

- Old Mrs Carol
- What Tui sees and no one else can
- Storm in a tree hut, rehutai, waves and rocks
- Gather pāua shells and draw them; draw eels
- Patterns of wind and weather; patterns of wind and weather left on sand
- A rockpool, a feather – observe the detail
- Sunrise in a tree hut

Music

- ‘Ooo, arrr, opera!’ Write a keyboard improvisation for this
- Old Mrs Carol song
- Birdsong (like a tūi or a riroriro)
- Write a piece for Tāwhirimātea or Tangaroa
- Record your work

Science

- Investigate:
Construction of feathers;
Animal intelligence theories;
Sea leopards;
How magpies and harrier hawks were introduced to Aotearoa New Zealand; what species, e.g., waxeye, were blown over to this country and colonised it;

Whales, sperm whales; where ambergris comes from; how it is created; what we know about the deep oceans of the world; a whale’s observations over the last 300 years or while travelling across our planet;

- Try cooking and eating seaweed or taro; grow taro

Technology

- Make a comparison of Awa’s time and now, including what technology inventions we have and how they have changed our lives
- Investigate hīnaki, craypots, shanghai
Make a hīnaki or craypot; use it!
- Medicine in Awa’s time and now; rongoā and its uses; how Nan uses the bush and sea as a major source of healing
- Compare food in Awa’s time and now, e.g., there were no freezers, so people salted and smoked food to preserve it; cooking over a fire with natural ingredients
- Investigate how iodine is made from seaweed; make some iodine; make some kawakawa balm and use it

You get the idea!

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