

## INTRODUCTION

Māori is the indigenous language of our country. It has been spoken here in New Zealand for approximately 1,000 years. It is also a modern language, spoken now by over 130,000 people of all ages on a daily basis. The language is most commonly used in Māori homes, at marae, and at Māori language pre-schools and primary schools, although it can be heard (and seen in writing!) in a range of other settings.

Furthermore, the Māori language is part of our cultural heritage as New Zealanders. We all use the Māori language to describe the environment around us and the world that we live in. There are several hundred Māori words in regular use in the ordinary speech of all New Zealanders. The most common examples include place-names, and the names of animal and plant life, including;

Kiwi	Tōtara	Taupō
Weka	Rata	Waikato
Pūkeko	Kauri	Wai-rarapa
Kakapo	Mānuka	Porirua.

We also use the Māori language to identify ourselves as New Zealanders on the world stage, with unofficial national anthems like *Pōkarekare Ana* and *Ka mate Ka mate* (the All Black haka).

The Māori Language Commission is charged with the task of promoting the Māori language to all New Zealanders, and encouraging its use as widely as possible. This is something that we consider to be very important, and we are seeking your help to promote our language to future generations of New Zealanders as a normal part of the cultural landscape of New Zealand.

With your help, we hope to show our children how they can contribute to the growth of the Māori language as a living language, and as a part of New Zealand's cultural landscape by developing and promoting positive attitudes to our indigenous language.



## WHY DOES THE MĀORI LANGUAGE NEED THIS KIND OF SUPPORT?

In the past, a great deal of misinformation about the Māori language was put about. As a result people that spoke Māori were sometimes subjected to some ill-informed and misguided policies and decisions.

There were many instances where Māori speakers were disadvantaged by these misguided policies and decisions. The best known example was the active discouragement of the Māori language in New Zealand primary schools and play-centres for many years. This also had a subsequent carry-over effect into some Māori homes and communities, where Māori parents stopped passing on their language to their children because they had been told that it would be a handicap to the children's future. This is the best-known example, but there are a number of other examples in different sections of New Zealand society.

All in all, the misinformation and misguided policies created a negative environment for the Māori language. It is difficult for a language to flourish and grow in such a discouraging environment.

On the other hand, the Māori Language Commission believes that if the majority of New Zealanders and New Zealand institutions have generally positive attitudes to the Māori language, based on accurate and up-to-date information, this is likely to reinforce positive attitudes among Māori speakers and encourage them to make greater use of the language.

Unfortunately, some misinformation about the Māori language still crops up in debate and discussion. With your help, we would like to lay some of these myths to rest among our future generations.

## SOME COMMON MYTHS ABOUT THE MĀORI LANGUAGE

- **Learning Māori will hinder the ability of children to speak English**

It is possible – and indeed, common – for children to learn two languages simultaneously provided that adequate time and support is available to the learners. It is also useful to remember that over half the people in the world – more than two billion people! – are bilingual.

- **Māori is an archaic language that can't cope with modern New Zealand life.**

The Māori language, like all living languages, is constantly expanding and adding new words to its vocabulary. Recently, the Māori Language Commission published *Te Matatiki*, a dictionary of 5,500 contemporary Māori words, that cover everything from kitchen appliances to space exploration.

- **The Māori language is not useful in an economic sense**

It is often said that speaking Māori won't get you a job! This is, in fact, not true. There is an increasing demand for people with high-level Māori language skills in a range of professions, including teaching, the civil service, the legal profession (especially through the Waitangi Tribunal), broadcasting, librarianship, and translation and interpretation. Furthermore, it seems likely that the demand for Māori speaking staff will continue to grow exponentially as the number of Māori speakers increases.

- **Māori is a dying language anyway, so why bother?**

Māori is often referred to as a dying language, but this is a false description. In fact, the number of people that speak Māori is growing



rapidly through the success of Māori language pre-schools and primary schools. The Māori Language Commission estimates that the current population of 130,000 Māori speakers will almost double in size in the next fifty years.

The language is being used in an increasing number of new domains, including television, science and the Internet.

- **But I don't want to be forced to speak Māori**

The Māori language is not, and has never been, a compulsory subject at any level of the education system in New Zealand. The Māori Language Commission does not advocate compulsion, preferring instead to promote positive attitudes to the language and respect for individuals language choice.

- **But I don't know any Māori people (or there aren't many Māori in this area)**

In a small island nation like New Zealand, we are all neighbours and we will come into contact with each other in many places, and we will interact in many ways. There are now also many new programmes on Television and radio that can help promote and foster understanding of Māori language and culture.

## SO MUCH FOR THE MYTHS, BUT WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

The Māori Language Commission recognises that teachers have an absolutely critical role in the growth and development of our children. We believe that you can help our children to develop positive attitudes to the Māori language and its place as a normal part of New Zealand life. You can do this by providing them with accurate and up-to-date information about the language, and by providing an environment where open discussion and awareness are fostered.



We have listed some simple and practical activities below that you can undertake with our children to provide a platform for thinking about the place of the Māori language in our society. The key point to remember is that studying Māori in this way should be FUN.

**It is important to remember that it is not necessary for us all to become fluent in the Māori language to support and promote it. There are many small-scale things that we can do to increase our own knowledge of Māori, to promote it and to normalise its status in our society.**

### 1. Labelling Objects

You may want to begin by labelling some of the items around the classroom with their Māori names, and by using these Māori words from time to time. This will serve to teach our children that one object can have two names; an English one and a Māori one. You may find a Māori-English picture dictionary useful in this regard.

## **2. Māori Vocabulary in the Classroom**

In addition to using Māori labels, you may also wish to use some other Māori vocabulary in the classroom from time to time, for classroom management and activities. A short list of appropriate vocabulary has been included in appendix one.

## **3. Encouraging the correct pronunciation of Māori names and words**

Encourage your students to always use the correct Māori pronunciation when they are using Māori names and words in the classroom and elsewhere. In this regard, you are of course the most important role model!

The correct use of our names is an important part of our self-esteem, and by encouraging our students to use correct Māori pronunciation we can help them to become more aware of, and sensitive towards, the issues involved and to respect other students and their cultures.

## **4. Māori posters**

There are a number of contemporary and attractive posters promoting the Māori language that are readily available from the Māori Language Commission that will brighten your classroom and provide positive information and encouragement.

In addition, you may wish to incorporate a Māori alphabet and number frieze into your classroom structure.

## **5. Adopting a Māori name**

You may wish to adopt a Māori name for your organisation, based on the traditional Māori place-name of the area where you live. This will serve a similar purpose to the first suggestion, and may help

children to develop a sense of “place”. Check out some of the local history books at your library for information about the original Māori place-names.

## **6. Māori role models**

You may wish to invite some Māori role models into the classroom to (a) talk to the children about what the Māori language means to them, and (b) show the children that “real people” use the Māori language and value it as part of their social make-up. These role models may be members of the local community, or more well-known personalities (DJs from the local Iwi radio station, for example).

## **7. Māori festivals and galas**

You may be able to take your children to Māori language concerts, galas and festivals that are held from time to time in your area. Participation in these events will expose the children to the use of the Māori language as an ordinary medium of communication. It will also help them to appreciate that some people use Māori regularly, about a wide range of topics, and that speaking Māori is fun.

## **8. Māori radio and television**

You can incorporate some Māori language radio and television (or video) programmes into your classroom activities from time to time. Your local iwi station should have programming details for radio programmes with appropriate content for your needs, and television listings should give some idea of what programmes might contain appropriate content.

## 9. Fostering a relation with Kōhanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori

You may wish to initiate working relationships with local Kōhanga Reo or Kura Kaupapa Māori. The relationships may involve exchanges and shared activities between pupils, and/or shared ideas and professional development among teachers.



## 10. Waiata and mihi

Children enjoy singing and dancing in any language, and using waiata may be one way of introducing some Māori language into the classroom environment. You may also wish to introduce the children to mihi, or ritual and formulaic greetings. A number of books and tapes containing children's songs in Māori have been produced and are generally available from bookshops and libraries.

## 11. Māori language games

It may be possible to incorporate some Māori language games into classroom activities, including simple crosswords and word-finds, a Māori *trivial pursuits* type game, Simon Says (using the simple directional language included in appendix 1), Bottles and Caps and other language oriented games. Some games are available on the Māori Language Commission homepage at (address), and on other Māori Internet sites.

## 12. Reading to your children

You may wish to read to your pupils, as a classroom activity, some New Zealand children's literature that contains Māori vocabulary and phrases.

# CONCLUSION

You may feel from time to time that the use of the Māori language in this way is simply tokenism. However, it is important to remember that the greater use of the language and increasingly positive attitudes will lay the foundations for the normalisation of the status of the Māori language as an integral part of our cultural landscape.

**EVERY CONTRIBUTION THAT WE MAKE,  
NO MATTER THE SIZE,  
MAKES AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION  
TO THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT  
OF OUR LANGUAGE.**



# APPENDIX 1

## SOME SIMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL LANGUAGE

E tū	Stand up
E noho	Sit down
Haere mai	Come here
Hoki atu	Go back ( <i>to where you came from</i> )
Turituri	Be quiet
Hoihoi	Be quiet
Homai te ...	Give me the ( <i>see page 10 for list of nouns</i> )
Pekepeke	Jump
Tō ringa ki runga	(Put) your hand up
Hope	Hands on hips
Pōkai ō ringaringa	Fold your arms
Pōkai ō waewae	Cross your legs
Whiri ō ringaringa	Fold your arms
Whiri ō waewae	Cross your legs
Hurihuri	Turn around
Whakamārōrō	Stretch
Takoto	Lie down
Pakipaki	Clap ( <i>kotahi pakipaki = one clap</i> <i>(rua pakipaki = two claps, etc)</i> )
Titiro	Look
Whakarongo	Listen
Hongihongi	Smell
Kōrero	Speak
Whakahokia te ...	Put the (item) back ( <i>see page 10 for a list of nouns</i> )
Waiho te ...	Leave the (item) alone ( <i>see page 10 for a list of nouns</i> )
Kei whea te ...	Where is the (item) ( <i>see page 10 for a list of nouns</i> )
He (noun)	A, an, some ( <i>i.e. he āporo tēnei – this is an apple</i> )

## SOME COMMON MĀORI NOUNS

Upoko	Head	Maramataka	Calendar
Makawe	Hair	Tiwhikete	Certificate
Taringa	Ears	Reo Irirangi	Radio
Whatu	Eyes	Pouaka Whakaata	Television set
Tukemata	Eyebrows	Pikitia	Picture
Ihu	Nose	Mā	White
Waha	Mouth	Pango	Black
Paparinga	Cheeks	Whero	Red
Kauae	Jaw	Karaka	Orange
Korokoro	Throat	Kōwhai	Yellow
Poho	Chest	Kākāriki	Green
Ringaringa	Arms, hands	Kahurangi	Blue
Waewae	Legs, feet	Parauri	Brown
Puku	Stomach	Tama	Boy
Nono	Buttocks	Kōtiro	Girl
Pene rākau	Pencil	Tangata	Person
Pene	Pen	Tāne	Man
Pukapuka	Book	Wahine	Women
Tīoka	Chalk	Tamaiti	Child
Kuaha	Door	Rangatahi	Youth
Karaka	Clock		
Kai	Food		
Inu	Drink		
Wai	Water		
Tūru	Chair		
Tēpu	Table, desk		
Rorohiko	Computer		
Pēke	Bag		
Rākau	Trees		

*(and wooden  
objects generally)*

## SAYING HELLO

Kia ora

Hello, good health

Tēnā koe

Hello to one person,  
thank you to one person

Tēnā kōrua

Hello to two people,  
thank you to two people

Tēnā koutou

Hello to lots of people  
(more than three),  
thank you to lots of people

Kei te pēhea koe/kōrua/koutou?

How are you to one person/two  
or more/three or more?

E pēhea ana koe/kōrua/koutou?

How are you to one person/two  
or more/three or more?

Kei te pai ahau/māua/mātou/

E pai ana ahau/māua/mātou

I/we two/we three or more  
(am/are fine)

Āe

Yes

Kao/Kāore

No

Tērā pea

Maybe

He Taonga te Reo

The Māori Language is a Treasure

Tōku Reo, Tōku Mana

My Language, My Mana

## COUNTING IN MĀORI

1	Tahi	
2	Rua	
3	Toru	
4	Whā	
5	Rima	
6	Ono	
7	Whitu	
8	Waru	
9	Iwa	
10	Tekau (Tua-ngahuru)	
11	Tekau mā tahi	Tekau (10) Mā (+) Tahi (1)
12	Tekau mā rua	Tekau (10) Mā (+) Tahi (1)
20	Rua tekau	Rua (2) Tekau (10)
21	Rua tekau mā tahi	Rua (2) Tekau (10) Mā (+) Tahi (1)
25	Rua tekau mā rima	Tekau (10) Mā (+) Rima (5)
30	Toru tekau	Toru (3) Tekau (10)
31	Toru tekau mā tahi	Toru (3) Tekau (10) Mā (+) tahi (1)
38	Toru tekau mā tahi	Toru (3) Tekau (10) Mā (+) Waru (8)
40	Whā tekau	Whā (4) Tekau (10)
50	Rima tekau	
60	Ono tekau	
70	Whitu tekau	
80	Waru tekau	
90	Iwa tekau	
100	Kotahi rau	Kotahi (1) Rau (100)
101	Kotahi rau tahi	Kotahi (1) Rau (100) Tahi (1)
111	Kotahi rau tekau mā tahi	Kotahi (1) Rau (100) Tekau (10) Mā (+) Tahi (1)
225	Rua rau rua tekau mā rima	Rua (2) Rau (100) Rua (2) Tekau (10) Mā (+) Rima (5)
1000	Kotahi mano	Kotahi (1) Mano (1000)
1020	Kotahi mano rua tekau	Kotahi (1) Mano (1000) Rua (2) Tekau (10)
2354	Rua mano toru rau rima tekau mā whā	Rua (2) Mano (1000) Toru (3) Rau (100) Rima (5) Tekau (10) Mā (+) Whā (4)