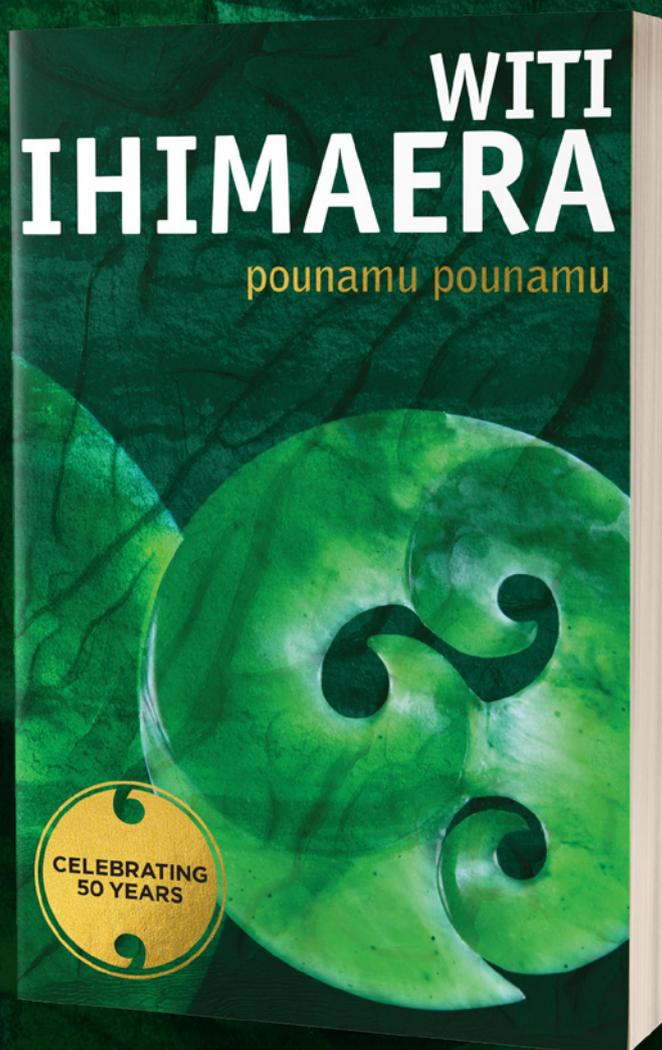




Pounamu Pounamu

TEACHER NOTES



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By Witi Ihimaera

BEFORE READING

Mihi to Witi Ihimaera

“We define ourselves by the stories we tell about ourselves, and that’s my business” – Witi Ihimaera



Witi Ihimaera (Te Aitanga-a-Mahaki, Tūhoe, Te Whānau-ā-Apanui) is a highly respected writer and *Pounamu Pounamu* is a significant piece of Aotearoa New Zealand literature. First published in 1972, it was Ihimaera’s first published book, and the first published by a Māori author. It is significant because Witi Ihimaera wrote from his own life experiences as an observer to, and experienter of colonisation in the Māori-Pākehā world. Distinguishing the Māori/Pākehā experience in Aotearoa New Zealand. The vivid semi-autobiographical stories in this collection not only explore and celebrate what it is to be a New Zealander, they do so from an entertaining, engaging, and loving Māori perspective.

Witi Ihimaera’s ability to weave and blend the realms of fiction and non-fiction are markers of his incredible writing. *Pounamu Pounamu* engages the reader during a time of 1960-70s era of civil rights and the challenging of the status-quo and a time of the urban migration of Māori from their *papa kainga* (original home, home base) to larger cities. *Pounamu Pounamu* intersects these events with the essential themes of *whānau* (family), *aroha* (love), and *manaakitanga* (caring for others).

Witi Ihimaera’s *Pounamu Pounamu* continues to act as a thread between past, present, and the aspirational future for Aotearoa New Zealand. Each time you read *Pounamu Pounamu* in a lifetime, there will be different stories that will speak to you and different lessons to take away.

The ākonga in your classroom are fortunate to have the opportunity to encounter this text in such a supportive way.

INTRODUCTION: THE BIOGRAPHY OF THE BOOK

Read the Introduction: The Biography of the Book together. Then ask ākongā reread the excerpts below and consider the questions that follow. They might respond orally or in written form.

'So-o, mokopuna, what great wisdom did the Pākehā teach you to-day!' 'Another nursery rhyme, Nan,' he answered. 'This one was about a little girl called Miss Muffet who sat on her tuffet eating curds and whey. Along came a spider and sat down beside her and...' the boy wanted to scare Teria... 'frightened Miss Muffet away, boo, Nan!' She stood her ground. No Little Miss Muffet she. 'Who is Miss Muffet?' she asked. 'What is a tuffet! What are curds and whey? And what a silly girl to be frightened of a spider! Why didn't she say kia ora, hello, to it and put it out of harms way?'

When he was older, however, the boy saw that, in fact, his story had not stayed within its frame, the traditional European fairytale, and was trying to get...somewhere else... In the end the princess does not wait for a prince to come along and save her. She takes her destiny into her own hands and marries... The taniwha.

One day during library period, the class was given a short story to study. The story was an anthology of New Zealand stories by New Zealand writers. All but one of them were Pākehā writers, and the story the boy read was about a Māori village just like Waituhi. But the representations of Māori were so disturbing that the boy thought: 'Here we are, most of the class is Māori reading this...this tūtae story...what is our teacher *thinking!*'

1. What might schooling have been like for Witi Ihimaera and other Māori growing up in New Zealand in the 1950s?
2. How does Ihimaera navigate the culture clashes he encounters?
3. What does it mean, when Ihimaera vows to '...ensure a Māori whakapapa of story that would exist with the Pākehā whakapapa of story to replenish the future'
4. Why is it important for young people to experience learning that reflects their identities, languages, and cultures?

KEI HEA WAITUHI?

Locate Waituhi and Whangara on a map.

If you have Māori ākonga in your class who know where they whakapapa to, they can be invited to indicate those rohe on the same map, or, ākonga might pinpoint a place of significance or their place of upbringing.

You might discuss:

1. The diversity of places the class has come from
2. The unique experiences people might have because of the places they come from
3. How all experiences can be stories
4. How Ihimaera used Waituhi as the centre of the world he still writes about today and why that was so impactful (in relation to the excerpts explored previously).
5. Privileging the knowledges and stories of the places we are from

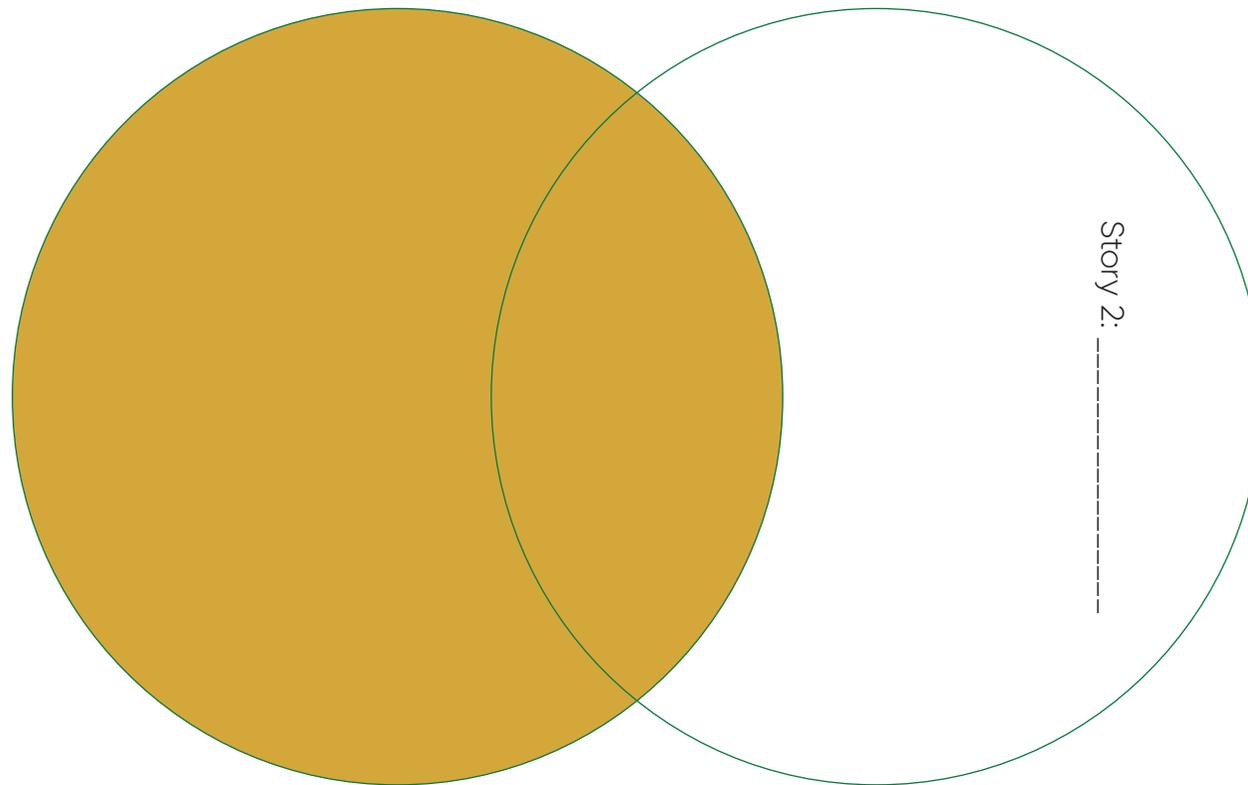
During Reading: Ngā Pōtae o DeBono/De Bono's Six Thinking Hats

For each short story read:

Te pōtae mā (white) Facts/Recall	Te pōtae whero (red) Feelings/Inference	Te pōtae kōwhai (yellow) Positives/Inference
Te pōtae pango (black) Challenges/tensions/ inference	Te pōtae kakariki (green) Creativity/applied	Te pōtae kikorangi (blue) The big picture/applied

After Reading: Form perceptive personal responses to independently read texts, supported by evidence.

Select your favourite two stories from Pounamu Pounamu and compare and contrast the stories to complete the Venn Diagram below:



Use your Venn Diagram in the previous task to complete the questions below:

I picked the stories....	I picked these stories because...	The similarities across the two stories included...	The theme/s these similarities demonstrate is/are...	Two quotes from each story that support my thinking about the key themes are...

Select your favourite story from Pounamu Pounamu and write a personal response that might include:

- discussing how and/or why the text has affected your ideas or views
- explaining why a particular feature of the structure or style of the text caught your attention and the effect that had on your understanding
- discussing how the text made you think about connections with your own life, the world, or other texts.

AHAKOA HE ITI, HE POUNAMU

This whakataukī means 'Although it is small, it is precious'. Witi Ihimaera has filled this book with many small but precious stories. Think about the people in your life, that may have made small but positive and significant contributions to your world view, achievements, or sense of self.

Design a pounamu/taonga for them in the space below. Write about the design of your pounamu and why you have chosen to gift it to this particular person in your life. You might like to research pounamu designs **here** to get some ideas.



PRODUCE A PIECE OF CREATIVE WRITING: ONE SUMMER MORNING

One of the beautiful things about Witi Ihimaera's Pounamu Pounamu is the way he writes about life's simple moments. Write to describe a snapshot or point in time, of a typical summer morning.

Are you getting ready for school? Or is it the holidays and you are choosing which T-shirt to pick up off the floor before grabbing your controller and headset to start gaming? Do you have a part time job to rush to? Or, are you waiting for some cousins to pick you up before heading to the wharf to do some manus into the cool water?

Think about...

- The language/s you use (English, Te Reo Māori, gagana Samoa, Hindi etc.)
- Vocabulary selection that helps to create 'atmosphere'
- Using different sentence lengths.
- Effective use of...you guessed it...punctuation!
- Selection of events. What is your starting point and what is your end point? It shouldn't be a 12 hour recount, but rather, a snapshot of a particular moment.
- What you are sharing about you, your life, culture, identity, experiences.