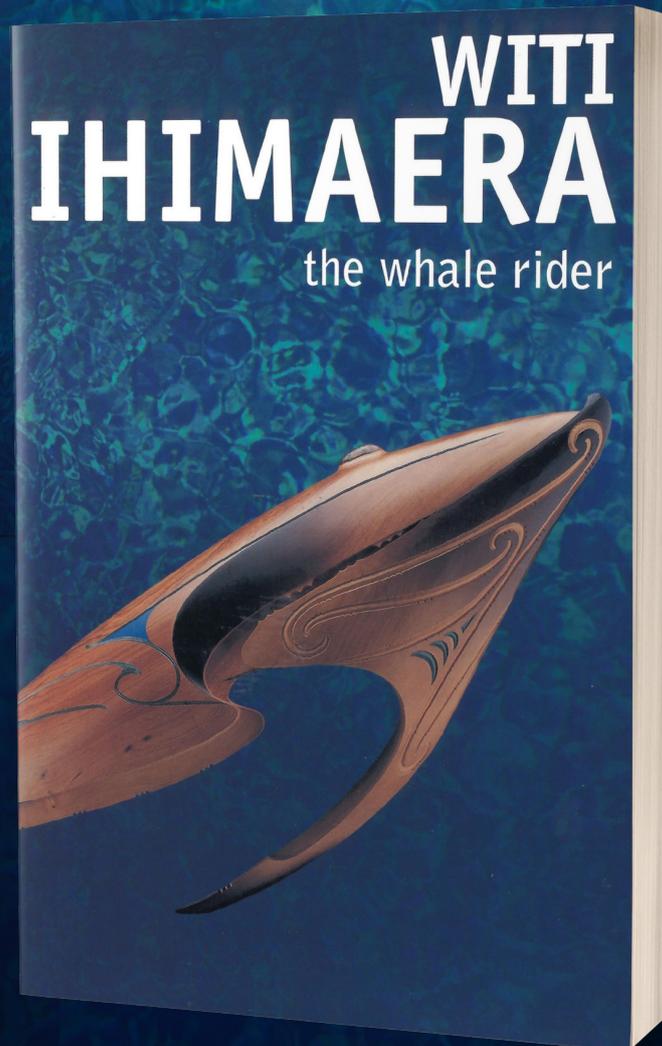




# The Whale Rider

## TEACHER NOTES



ISBN: 9780143011392

Imprint: Raupo

Format: Paperback (also available as an ebook,  
audiobook and a te reo Māori translation)

Pages: 192

**By Witi Ihimaera**

## BEFORE READING

### Storying around the story:

These discussion prompts might be given to ākonga/students in small groups:

- What are the different roles and responsibilities in your whānau?
- What expectations do your whānau have of you and do these align with the expectations you have for yourself?
- What shapes our expectations for the roles and responsibilities that exist in our whānau?
- Are there times where expectations for roles and responsibilities between generations do not align? What might be some reasons for these tensions?

### Inspiring leaders:

Ask ākonga to choose a leader who inspires them and why. What are the qualities they admire? Are there any outstanding achievements? Are there any particular challenges this leader has overcome?

Challenge ākonga to work in pairs/small groups to create a poster/role play/google slide deck/tiktok video/instagram post, introducing their inspiring leader.

### Consider:

- How many leaders did your ākonga choose that were from Aotearoa New Zealand?
- How many leaders identified as female?
- How many leaders were people of colour?
- How many leaders were younger than 30?

## Māori/English Word Match:

Below is a list of kupu Māori and their English translations. Witi Ihimaera seamlessly weaves both of these languages together in this novel. Ākonga will work in small groups to cut, mix, then match and paste each pair of words. Doing this in small groups, ākonga have the opportunity to discuss and justify their matches. The answers in the glossary included at the back of the Whale Rider text.

Mana	Prestige	Ae	Yes
Manaaki	Hospitality	Ahau	I, me
Manawanui	Brave	Ao	World
Marae	Communal point of settlement	Aotearoa	New Zealand
Mauri	Life principle	Aroha	Love
Moana	Sea	Arohanui	Great love
Moe	Sleep	Haere	Girl
Moko	Tattoo	Haka	Children
Mokopuna	Grandchild	Haramai	Mourn
Noho	Sit, remain, stay	Hawaiki	Traditional homeland of the Māori people
Mako	Shark	Hine	For of address to a girl
Whakarongo	Listen	Hoā	Partner or friend
Wheke	Octopus	Hongi	Press noses in greeting
Whenua	Land/ground	Hui	Gathering
Haka	War dance	Pito	Birth cord
Poutama	Steps	Ia	He, she, him, her
Putiputi	Flower	Ika	Fish
Rā	Sun	Iwi	Tribe
Rangatira	Noble leader	Kaha	Strength
Rangi	Sky	Kai	Food
Tama	Boy	Kainga	Home
Tamahine	Girl	Karakia	Prayer
Tamariki	Children	Karanga	Call
Tangi	Mourn	Ko wai?	Who?
Taniwha	Water monster (or guardian)	Join everything together, blend it together, let it be done.	Hui e, haumi e, taiki e!
Tipuna	Ancestor	Koro	Old man (affectionate), grandfather
Kuia	Old woman (affectionate), grandmother	Wahine	Woman
Wai	Water	Ope	Expedition
Whaiaipo	Sweetheart	Ora	Alive, well, healthy
Whakapapa	Geneology	Pai	Good
Waiata	Song	Paka	Bugger

Kupu Māori	English Word	Words from my own language that have a similar meaning (if you speak a language other than Māori or English!)

## DURING READING

### Introducing the text:

It is important to tell ākongā directly, what they will be reading about. This supports ākongā to begin activating their prior knowledge in preparation for new learning.

Say to ākongā: The Whale Rider is a story a young Māori girl named Kahu, who is determined to fulfill a destiny her koro/grandfather cannot accept. The story is told through alternate narrators (story tellers). They are the legend teller and Kahu's Uncle Rawiri.

As ākongā read or listen (audiobook available **HERE**), they can respond to these questions orally, or as written responses.

### *Prologue: The coming of Kahutia te Rangī*

1. What did the whale rider wish for the final spear?
2. How much time had passed until the spear was needed?

### *Two:*

1. From what perspective is this chapter written?
2. How did the human gain the bull whale's trust?

### *Three*

1. Who is Kahu?
2. From whose perspective is this chapter written?
3. Koro Apirana has big feelings about Kahu's birth. Can you name the feelings and why he might be feeling this way?

### *Four*

1. Who has Kahu been named after?
2. Why was this a problem for Koro Apirana?
3. What is the significance of Nanny Flowers burying Kahu's birth cord in Whangara?

### *Five*

1. What do the words ululation and impetuously mean?
2. Who is the bull whale yearning for?

### **Six**

1. What was the second name given to Kahutia Te Rangi?
2. Describe the relationship between Kahu and Koro Apirana using evidence from this chapter to support your opinion.

### **Seven**

1. List 5 things that was taught about whales in Koro Apirana's night class
2. What does Rawiri suspect of Kahu in this chapter? Why?

### **Eight**

1. What reasons does Koro Apirana suggest for the loss of whales at Whangara?
2. Rawiri says, "I guess we thought she was still grieving about being growled at, but we know better now." What are some predictions you have for chapters 9-21?

### **Nine**

1. What has caused the herd to change their course of travel?
2. This book was published in 1987. Read this article <https://mch.govt.nz/50-years-new-zealand-governments-pacific-nuclear-protest> What connections does Witi Ihimaera make between this story and to what was happening at the time in Aotearoa, NZ?

### **Ten**

1. Do you agree or disagree with Rawiri's statement: "But sometimes love becomes a power game between ambitions that parents have for their children and the ambitions children have for themselves." Why/why not?
2. What ambitions does Rawiri have for himself? What role does he play in his whānau?

### **Eleven**

1. Why does Rawiri decide to return to Aotearoa?
2. What does Rawiri imagine the clouds to look like?

### **Twelve**

1. Read the fable of the sword and the stone <https://beechwoodprimaryschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Yr2-Sword-in-the-stone-story.pdf> Why does Porourangi make reference to this story in this chapter?
2. Why do you think Kahu persists in trying to gain Koro Apirana's approval?

### **Thirteen**

1. What important object did Kahu retrieve in this chapter? What is the significance of this object?
2. Why might Nanny Flowers not believe Koro Apirana is 'not ready yet'?

### **Fourteen**

1. This chapter is told in two parts. Can you identify when in the timeline of this story these two parts are told from?
2. Where do you think the herd will go next?

### **Fifteen**

1. What happened at Wainui?
2. Why does Rawiri say to keep Kahu home from school?

### **Sixteen**

1. Who has arrived at Whangara beach?
2. Do you think Koro Apirana can save the whale? Why/why not?

### **Seventeen**

1. Why does Kahu make the decision to go to the whale?
2. Who does the whale believe Kahu to be?

### **Eighteen**

1. What does Koro Apirana realise in this chapter?
2. Where do you think the bull whale will take Kahu?

## ***Epilogue***

### ***Nineteen***

1. What does the old mother whale realise in this chapter? What does the bull whale realise?
2. What lesson do you think the final spear, Kahu was to teach her tribe?

### ***Twenty***

1. Where was Kahu found three days later?
2. What signs that Kahu was the chosen one, does Koro Apirana acknowledge that he missed?

### ***Twenty-one***

1. How does Koro Apirana feel about Kahu now?
2. Imagine life after the hospital, what happens next? What happens to each character after they all return home from hospital?

## AFTER READING

### Creating a visual text

Ākonga will choose one-two characters from the book and use the template below to create a visual text to demonstrate the depth of understanding of these characters. Ākonga might also include their favourite quotes in the speech bubbles provided. Ākonga might be given the opportunity to share their visual texts with a friend or within a small group.

For ākonga who require additional support, they can use the speaking/writing frames below to support their oral or written sharing:

The character I chose to depict was \_\_\_\_\_.

I chose this character because \_\_\_\_\_.

I chose this \_\_\_\_colour/symbol/pattern/image/pattern\_\_\_\_ to represent \_\_\_\_\_.

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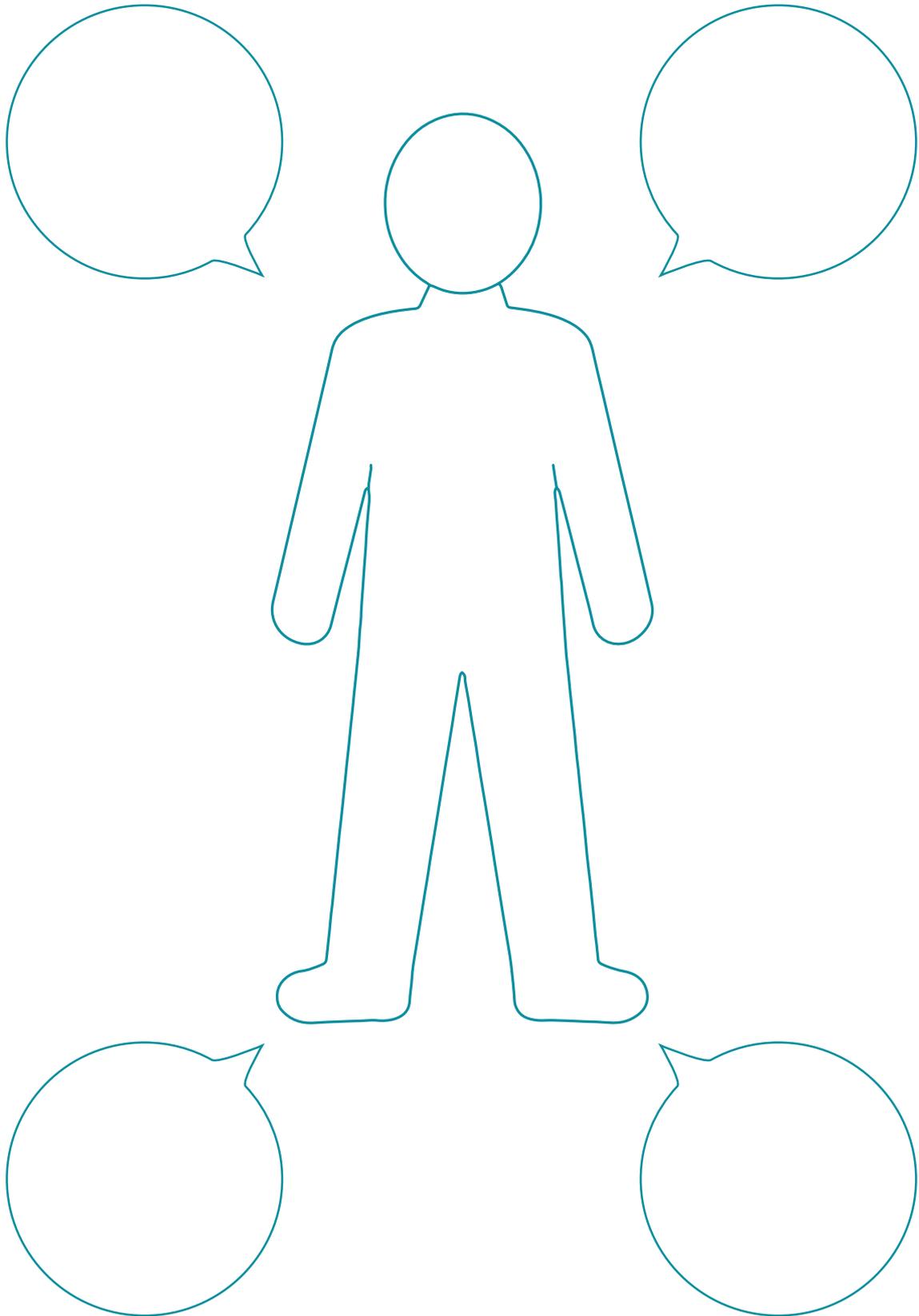
I chose this \_\_\_\_colour/symbol/pattern/image/pattern\_\_\_\_ to represent \_\_\_\_\_.

My favourite quote was, “\_\_\_\_\_.” Because \_\_\_\_\_.

I would describe this character as \_\_\_\_\_ because in the book it says \_\_\_\_\_.

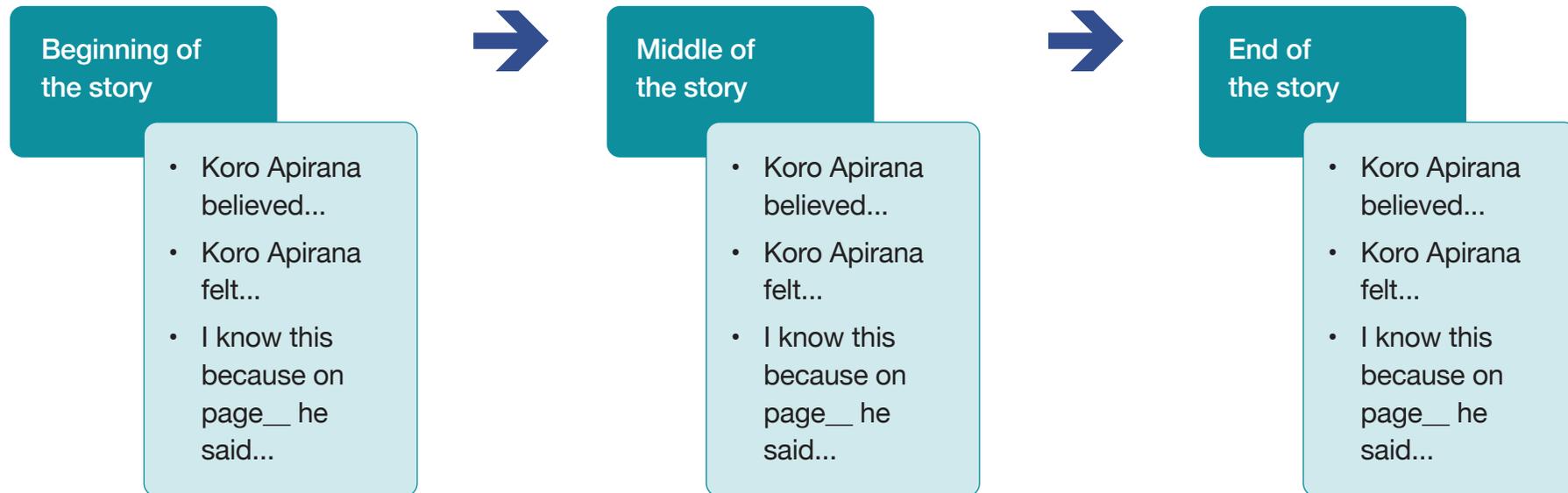
I would also describe them as \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_, because in the book it says \_\_\_\_\_.

Name of character: \_\_\_\_\_ by: \_\_\_\_\_



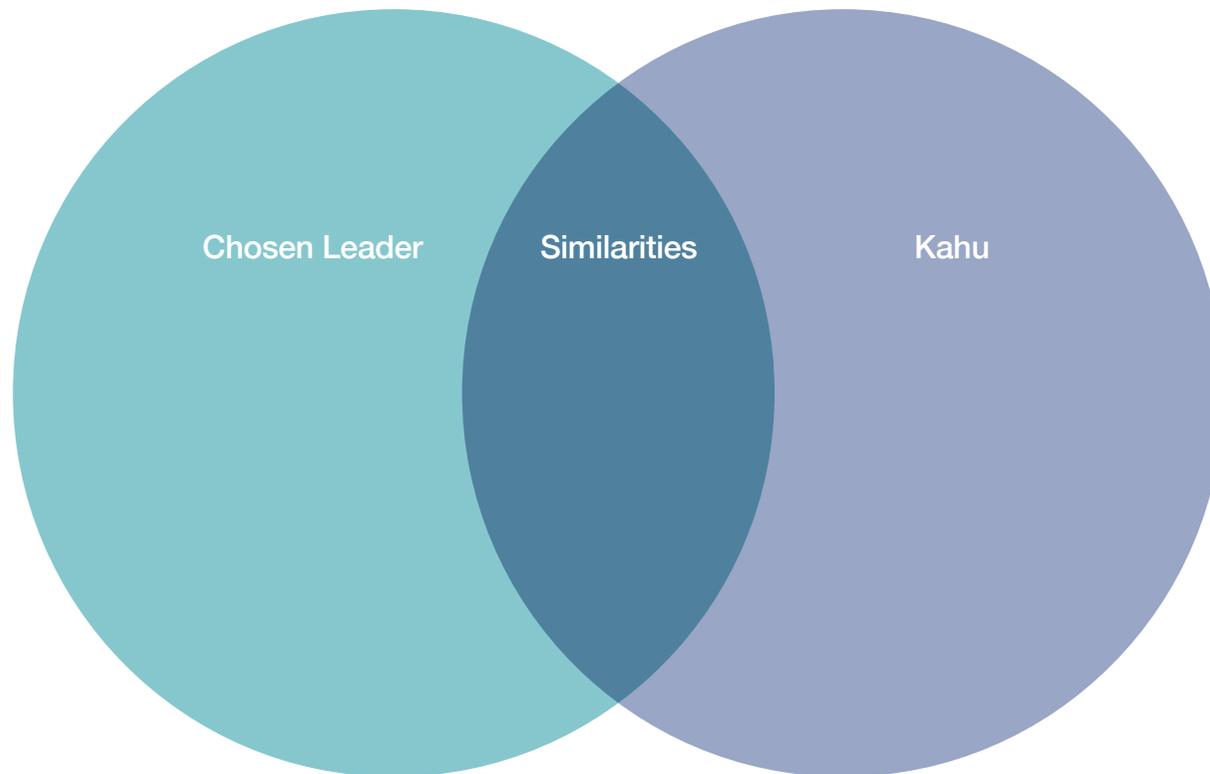
## Producing formal writing: Koro Apirana's character development

Koro Apirana goes through a big shift in beliefs in this book. Ask ākonga to complete the story timeline below to indicate which events were the catalyst to his change in belief.



**Producing formal writing: What is leadership?**

Before reading *The Whale Rider*, ākongā may have shared about their own inspirational leader. Take time now, to compare those leaders with Kahu from the story. This Venn Diagram will act as a ‘plan’ to inform an information piece about ‘Rangatiratanga’ or ‘Leadership’.



## Construct and deliver an oral text: Say-It!

Read about the Say-It! Speaking strategy [here](#).

	A	B	C
1	You are Nanny Flowers. Say why you wanted Kahu's birth cord buried at Whangara.	You are Kahu. Say why you love your Koro Apirana.	You are Rawiri. Describe all the reasons why you knew Kahu was special from the time she was a baby.
2	You are Koro Apirana. Say why you found it hard to acknowledge Kahu as a leader.	You are Kahu. Say how you were feeling as you mounted the whale.	You are Nanny Flowers. Say why you choose to stay with Koro Apirana, even when he makes you so frustrated!
3	You are Koro Apirana. Say what you were feeling and thinking when you saw the pod of beached whales.	You are the bull whale. Explain how your fate and that of Kahu's are intertwined.	You are Porourangi. Say why you wanted to name your baby Kahutia Te Rangi.

## Produce formal writing: Final thoughts

Below are key themes from the book, *The Whale Rider* from Witi Ihimaera. Choose one theme and write about how Ihimaera supported the development of these themes in this story.

Theme one: "Always look to the horizon, pursue my dreams, and not let anybody or anything stop me from fulfilling my destiny."

Theme two: Anyone can be a leader.

Theme three: Humans should have respect for nature and the natural world.

Theme four: Being open to change is a good thing.