

DESCRIPTION

In this key a moment in history is recreated and students imagine stepping briefly into that time and place. The key:

- brings history alive and allows students to experience some sense of what life at that moment might have been like
- has built-in features that ensure a sense of distance and protection from difficult or raw topics
- does not use simulation to pretend the context is real, or expect students to 'act out' events or 'pretend' to be people from the past; instead, it supports a brief experience of enactment as the starting point for inquiry
- can be used at any point during a history study to enhance the students' understanding and to provide a context for using and applying their growing knowledge

PLANNING

- Decide on the moment in history you are going to explore with the students and create a context.
- Prepare a resource to start the session – this might be an image (a photograph, a painting, a map, etc), a piece of text (a letter, a narrative, an extract from a textbook), a video or an audio recording.
- Write a short narrative that introduces the context.
- You might want to rearrange the classroom to make more space, or use the school hall.

METHOD



- 1 Start the session by using the resource (photograph, painting, map, etc) you prepared in advance.
- 2 Introduce the historical context to the students using the short narrative.
- 3 Ask the students to imagine being someone alive at the time. If the context involves characters who are actual historical figures, consider inviting students to imagine being someone else from that moment in time.
- 4 Ask the students to represent their thoughts and ideas in the form of writing (lists, etc) or drawings. Give them support and access to historical information if necessary.
- 5 Discuss their ideas, gently correcting any misunderstandings. Be prepared to talk about the different use of language, vocabulary and terminology used at that time, and discuss how we might view historical events differently using a 21st-century perspective.
- 6 Ask the students to come together, leaving their images and/or writing on the desks.
- 7 Set the students a task inside the fiction, holding them in a moment as if they are people in a picture. Be careful about the language you use: invite them in and protect them from feeling silly (especially important for older students).
- 8 Give feedback on the picture by describing what you see (avoiding explicit interpretations), and encourage reflection.
- 9 While they are still representing the people in the picture, ask the students to think ahead – on something that will add tension, and reflection on what it might have been like for these people, at that time.
- 10 Ask the students to voice the thoughts of the people in the picture.
- 11 Bring the students out of the picture and discuss their thoughts and reflections on what they are beginning to appreciate about that time. Once again, be careful to protect them into the discussion – don't interrogate them.

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EXAMPLE 1 CHARLES KETTLE ARRIVING AT AHIMATE

KEY
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- 1 Start the session by using the resource you prepared in advance: "I'd like to read you some words. They were written 180 years ago. They're from a diary written by a man as he travelled by waka (canoe) in an area of Aotearoa New Zealand he had never visited before: 'When Maoris (sic) are travelling their custom is to fire a salute just before reaching a pah, to intimate their approach, accordingly about a mile below the pah Hahimate (sic) we went on shore, when the natives I had with me fired three rounds from their double barrelled guns; in a short time a native came round the bank of the river to see who we were. As soon as he saw E Ahu he threw down the tomahawk he had in his hand, and rubbed noses with him.'"
- 2 Explain the context and give the students more detail: "These words come from the journal of a 21-year-old Englishman, Charles Kettle*. He wrote them in 1842. Kettle was working as a surveyor for the New Zealand Company, a group of aristocrats and business leaders from Britain who wanted to colonise Aotearoa New Zealand and set up English-style settlements across the country. He was travelling in the Manawatū region to try and understand how the river system worked." An image of waka travel could be shown here.* "Kettle writes how his group was greeted at Ahimate Pā (settlement) by a man he names as Kurupu, and invited to stay. They ate a meal ('of potatoes, kumeries (sic), karakas, and porridge' according to his journal), briefly crossed the river to visit another pā, and returned to spend the night." Extracts from Charles Kettle's diaries* could be shared here with the students.
- 3 Set the students a task to imagine being someone from that moment. The context involves characters who are actual historical figures, so invite students to imagine being someone else from that moment in time:

"Perhaps you'd like to imagine yourself as someone from this moment of history – someone from Kettle's party or someone who lives at Ahimate Pā and is witnessing the visit. If you're one of those travelling with Kettle, you're tangata whenua (indigenous: what Kettle called 'native') and you've been hired for your skills in navigation, your physical strength, and your local tribal connections, which allow you to broker relationships. You know this is Kettle's first visit, so everything is new and he needs all the information and support he can get. You're there to help him find his way, and to forge a smooth pathway in relationships with neighbouring hapū. If you're someone who lives at the pā you'll be interested to hear about the proposed surveying and what it would mean for you. More immediately, you might also be keen to trade for items carried by the survey party."

- 4 Ask the students to represent their thoughts and ideas in the form of writing or drawings: "Let's take a moment to draw or write down what your group needs from the other, or is keen to learn more about." Students might identify navigation, shelter, food, items of clothing, writing implements, new foods, weapons, knowledge or language. Give them support and access to historical information if necessary.*
- 5 Discuss the students' ideas. Confirm those that are backed up by evidence and gently put right any historical inaccuracies, e.g. "Yes, they would have been interested in exchanging food. Kettle's diaries mention gifts of flour."
- 6 Ask students to come together: "OK, leaving your writing and drawings aside for a moment, I wonder if we might come together here in the middle of the room."
- 7 Set the students a task inside the historical moment, holding them in a moment as if they

are people in a picture: "Could I ask you, just for a moment, to imagine it is the following morning at Ahimate Pā. Charles Kettle and his group are about to depart. The rangatira (chief), whom Kettle names as Kaharoa, has agreed to take them further up the river by waka (canoe). But Kettle wants the use of a second waka. He's bargaining with the people of the pā, offering some of his belongings in return for use of one of their waka. Let's imagine someone was there that morning and took a pen and ink sketch of the moment. What would this sketch look like? What would the artist want to portray? We'll place these chairs to represent Kettle and the rangatira. Who else would be in this image? What would they be doing? Some might be right in the heart of the negotiation, others looking on. How would they communicate their response to Kettle's request? Would everyone have the same view? Even though they would have someone to interpret for them, I imagine body language and gestures will be important."

- 8 Give feedback on the imagined sketch through describing what you see, avoiding explicit interpretations. For example: "Here's someone with an arm outstretched, pointing at something. And here's one who stands alone, eyes scanning the horizon."
- 9 While they're still representing the people in the sketch, ask the students to think ahead – on something that will add tension and reflection on what it might have been like for these people, at that time: "I wonder what these

people of the pā were thinking to themselves as the surveyor and his party departed that day. Some no doubt welcomed the newcomers – more people to trade with and technologies to supplement their own. Others might have had some uncertainties about the prospect."

- 10 Ask the students to voice the thoughts of the people in the picture: "As I walk through the figures in the sketch, we'll hear your ideas about the thoughts, fears, hopes and dreams of the people of Ahimate Pā in that moment. I'll pass through a couple of times, and we'll see what comes up." Walk through the group, maintaining silence and allowing students to speak without any pressure. Close with these words: "Kettle wrote in his journal that it was not a simple matter to obtain a second waka, And while we can't know for sure, we have heard here perhaps some of the reasons why. However, after some bargaining the goal was achieved, and Kettle and his party, accompanied by Kurupu and Kaharoa, travelled up the river to Te Āpiti (Manawatū Gorge). The people of the pā went back to their lives, knowing they had welcomed and supported their guest."
- 11 Invite the students to discuss their thoughts and reflections on what they are beginning to appreciate about that time: "So, let's gather together and think about what we just experienced. What did you make of that? What do you suppose might happen next? Kettle's diaries* could be shared with students.

KEY
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EXAMPLE 2 CHILDREN WORKING IN 19TH-CENTURY COAL MINES



- 1 Start the session by using the resource you prepared in advance. "I'd like to show you a picture. It's a print, made nearly two hundred years ago."*
- 2 Introduce the context to the students using a short narrative: "Conditions in the mines were terrible. Children as young as seven were expected to work twelve-hour shifts, often in complete darkness, without any regard for their safety. Some of the children worked as 'trappers', opening and closing wooden doors to let air through the tunnels. Others worked as 'drawers', dragging heavy carts along the tunnels with chains around their waists. Others dug coal using picks and shovels."*
- 3 Ask the students to imagine being someone alive at the time. "Could I ask you to imagine, for a moment, what it might have been like for these children. What sounds they might have heard, what thoughts might have passed through their minds, what they imagined in the long hours, often alone, in the dark."
- 4 Ask the students to represent their thoughts and ideas in the form of writing. Give them support and access to historical information if necessary. "Please take up a pencil and write what comes into your mind, as if you are the child in the mine. For example, 'As I sit here, all alone in the dark, I can hear the chip, chip, chip of pickaxes and the rattle of chains...'"
- 5 Discuss their ideas, gently correcting any misunderstandings. Be prepared to talk about the different use of language, vocabulary and terminology used at that time, and discuss how we might view historical events differently using a 21st-century perspective.
- 6 Ask the students to come together, leaving their writing on the desks.
- 7 Set the students a task inside the fiction, holding them in a moment as if they are people in a picture. "Could I ask you, working in small groups, to step into this time and create more images like the one on the board, showing what it was like for children working in the mines. It might be children working at the coalface, or opening and closing the heavy wooden doors, or travelling down into the pit on the shaky lift."
- 8 Give feedback on the picture by describing what you see (avoiding explicit interpretations), and encourage reflection: "It looks here as if this child is ready to drop. I wonder how long they've been down here in the dark. Here's a group, huddling together, it must have been cold at the bottom of the mine." Etc.
- 9 While they are still representing the picture, ask the students to think ahead – on something that will add tension, and reflection on what it might have been like for these people, at that time. "I wonder what they hoped for. Did they even have hope or did they think it was always going to be like this for people like them, as it had been for their mothers and fathers before them?"
- 10 Ask the students to voice the thoughts of the people in the picture: "As I walk past, can you speak their thoughts, like voices in the dark?" Walk slowly among the students gently encouraging them to find the words of the children in the mine.
- 11 Bring the students out of the picture and discuss their thoughts and reflections on what they are beginning to appreciate about that time. Once again, be careful to protect them into the discussion – don't interrogate them: "Why do you suppose the owners of these mines sent children down into the darkness? Why did their families let them go? Was there no one to protect them?" Etc.

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DEEPENING REFLECTION

Reflection is vital for students' learning, so every time you use a key, or sequence of keys, remember to include time for students to think about, talk about, write or draw about what their learning has been. Here's a list of four strategies you can use to take critical reflection beyond a simple discussion. These strategies almost feel like keys in their own right, except they don't stand alone and don't involve moving into an imagined world. Think of them as ways of consolidating the learning. Try adding one or more of these at the end of your sequence. They add a welcome sense of ritual and seriousness, and provide evidence of students' thinking for assessment purposes.

- * **Find an essence** Invite students to come up with a six-word poem or statement that sums up their response to the context. Share the poems or statements with the group, and discuss.
- * **Mark a moment** Invite students to stand somewhere in the space where they experienced an 'aha' moment, received assistance from another student, or grappled with a tricky idea. Share the moments with the group, and discuss.
- * **Think again** Invite students to think critically with questions such as: does this sort of thing happen today / in real life? Whose perspective have we focused on, and why? Whose stories did we not hear today? And who else might have a perspective on what we've been learning – what would their views be? Invite reflection on personal learning by asking: what could we take away from our story to use in our own lives?" Invite reflection on how particular groups have been depicted during the session, particularly if this tended towards archetypes or stereotypes: what stereotypes did we play into? What did our story say about ... [insert reference here]? How does this compare with what we see in other stories and the wider world? Ask: what are you left wondering about? What questions do you have? Is there anything else we should talk about before we close?"
- * **Speak some wisdom** Invite students to gather in a circle – standing is often best as it adds to the sense of ritual. Introduce an object or artefact that represents a character from the context you've explored. Invite students to give advice to the character, speak as the character (if appropriate), or give a short reflection on what they have learned from the character. To keep things safe, make it clear that it's OK to pass. Hand the item around the circle from person to person. Close the activity with your own words. Carefully put the item away.

We would love to hear how you use this key in your teaching

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