



LEVEL 1 2 3 4 5

A Kid Called John

ABOUT THE INTRODUCTION

The Learning Context and Integrating Reading and Writing have been combined and expanded as a single introductory sheet (A4) accompanying the seven character exemplars. This shared introduction suggests the approach James's teacher may have taken to working with the class on character writing. It also suggests ways in which teachers can integrate their classes' work on character writing with reading.

Teacher-student conversations

After James had jotted down details about his chosen character

Teacher: You say that your friend did a lot of "bad things". What do you mean by that? Can you be more specific?

James: He ate other kids' lunches and crashed go-karts.

Teacher: Could you include those details in your writing? It will give us much more of an insight into John's character.

James: I've got other examples, too.

After the first draft

Teacher: I love this sentence: "He wasn't smart but he outsmarted everybody."

James: Yeah, he was just like that.

Teacher: It's a clever use of words. I've read sentences that work like this one before – some published authors use this technique.

WHERE TO NEXT?

To move James towards the next learning step, the teacher could help him to focus on:

- sentences: using a variety of sentence beginnings (as his sentences currently tend to begin with "He");

- language features: exploring the inclusion of direct speech;
- spelling: ensuring that the writing is ready for publication;
- grammar: exploring some aspects of sentence construction (for example, "I wasn't really friend's but he always made himself friendly").

The teacher could do this by:

- modelling the points that James needs to work on in group or individual learning sessions, which could include exploring examples of how other writers have managed them;
- continuing to give James specific feedback in conferencing times.

CURRICULUM LINKS



Level 4: Writing Functions

Poetic Writing: Students should write on a variety of topics, shaping, editing, and reworking texts in a range of genres, expressing ideas and experiences imaginatively and using appropriate vocabulary and

conventions, such as spelling and sentence structure.

Levels 3 and 4: Reading and Writing Processes

Exploring Language: Students should identify, discuss, and use the conventions, structures, and language features of different texts, and discuss how they relate to the topic.

Thinking Critically: Students should discuss and convey meanings in written texts, exploring relevant experiences and other points of view.

English in the New Zealand Curriculum, pages 35–36



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A Kid Called John

STUDENT'S FIRST DRAFT

When I was a kid I met a kid called John. He was a short little fella with sandy brown hair and muscles to boot. He wasn't smart but he outsmarted everybody.

He always was a little ~~rascal~~ ^{rascal}. Always ready to make a joke out of somebody or chase a girl or ~~tease~~ or maybe eat his and somebody else's lunch.

He use to like to run around kindly and tip over the trough or push people toofast in the go-karts and crash them.

I wasn't really friend's but he always made himself friendly, then he got to serious and started doing things like nicking off during kindly and running down to the beach or smashing a window and framing someone else.

After a while I stopped being friendly with him and went to school. He moved to Auckland and got hit by a car playing chicken and I haven't heard from him since.



Poetic Writing: Character

LEVEL 1 2 3 4 5

What the Work Shows

With a strong personal voice, James has provided us with enough snippets of specific detail and personal anecdotes to understand the essence of his kindergarten friend. His deliberately conversational and colloquial tone suggests that he is talking directly to the reader.

STUDENT'S FIRST DRAFT

DEEPER FEATURES

Voice

Sustains sincerity of voice in the portrayal of a character.

Ideas

Supports main ideas with substantial illustrations and evaluations.

Structure

Shapes ideas for a particular effect.
Organises ideas into paragraphs.

Sentences

Uses a variety of sentence structures and lengths, including short sentences to maintain the pace.

Vocabulary

Selects a range of vocabulary to suit the audience and purpose, such as “nicking”, “rascal”, and “fulla”.

Language features

Uses language features cleverly to amplify content and appeal to the audience (for example, “He wasn’t smart but he outsmarted everybody” and “smashing a window and framing someone else”).

When I was a kid I met a kid called Jhon. He was a short little fulla with sandy brown hair an muscles to boot. He wasn’t smart but he outsmarted everybody.

He always was a little rascal. Always ready to make a joke out of somebody or chase a girl or too or maybe eat his and somebody else’s lunch.

He use to like to run around kindy and tip over the trough or push people too fast in the go-kart’s and crash them.

I wasn’t really friend’s but he always made himself friendly. Then he got to serious and started doing things like nicking off during kindy and running down to the beach or smashing a window and framing someone else.

After a while I stopped being friendly with him and went to school. He moved to Auckland and got hit by a car playing chicken and I haven’t heard from him since.

SURFACE FEATURES

Spelling

Demonstrates understanding of basic sounds and spelling patterns in written English.

Punctuation

Uses appropriate punctuation independently, especially apostrophes and commas.

Grammar

Uses most grammatical conventions accurately.