



# Poetic Writing: Character

LEVEL 1i 1ii **1iii** 2 3 4 5

## Grandad Works at a Milk Factory

### THE LEARNING CONTEXT

Because The Learning Context and Integrating Reading and Writing sections for the character exemplars are so closely related, they have been combined in a shared introduction, which applies to all the character exemplars. It suggests the approach Kieran's teacher may have taken to working with the class on character writing. It also suggests ways in which teachers can integrate character writing with reading.

### Teacher-student conversations

The teacher and Kieran talked as Kieran wrote:

- Teacher: I love the way you have described his hair "circling his head".
- Kieran: And the shiny bit in the middle.
- Teacher: Yes! I can see him in my mind now – you have given me a picture. What do you like about him?
- Kieran: He's nice 'cos he lets me help him. And he's got Sky.
- Teacher: How could you say that he's nice?
- Kieran: Um, kind?
- Teacher: Maybe. You've given me a clue that he's kind. Next time we write about a character we will have a look at ways we can explain how we feel about someone.

### WHERE TO NEXT?

To move Kieran towards the next learning step, the teacher might help him focus on:

- Voice
- include personal response to observations.
- Ideas
- develop supporting detail or comment further.
- Language features
- begin to use imagery and other features where appropriate.
- Spelling
- work at specific spelling errors/patterns ("circling", "watch").

This could be done by:

- modelling texts with examples of these language features
- discussing and identifying language features that writers use for effect
- "walking Kieran through" the experience in order to focus on detail
- giving specific feedback against these teaching points.

### CURRICULUM LINKS

*English in the New Zealand Curriculum*

#### Level 1: Writing Functions

**Poetic Writing:** Students should write on a variety of topics beginning to shape ideas

#### Levels 1 and 2: Reading and Writing Processes

**Exploring Language:** Students should explore choices made by writers, and identify and use the common conventions of writing and organization of text which affect understanding.

**Thinking Critically:** Students should identify and express meanings in written texts, drawing on personal background, knowledge and experience

### REFERENCE

Ministry of Education (1994). *English in the New Zealand Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.



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**WHAT THE WORK SHOWS:** Kieran has paid considerable attention to detail in describing his grandfather. The reader is given a visual image, as well as being able to imagine the relationship Kieran has with his grandfather.

Student's first draft

### Deeper features

#### Voice

Records observations of character, suggesting personal feelings.

#### Ideas

Selects details, from close observation, that have some significance to the portrayal of the character.

#### Structure

Demonstrates some sense of sequence: physical description, behavioural characteristics.

#### Sentences

Uses range of simple and compound sentences.

#### Vocabulary

Extended use of content words; precise adjectives, strong verbs.

#### Language features

Focus on physical description and detail of the character's environment and behaviour.

He has greyish white-ish hair  
surculing his head. The top  
of his head is shiny where  
there is no hair. He's quite  
fat and wears a buttoned shirt  
and pants. He works at a  
milk factory. He's got a  
berry bush at the back  
of his garden. He likes  
having beers at the pub.  
He lets me watch sky and  
help him pick berries.

[He has greyish white-ish hair circling his head. The top of his head is shiny where there is no hair. He's quite fat and wears a buttoned shirt and pants. He works at a milk factory. He's got a berry bush at the back of his garden. He likes having beers at the pub. He lets me watch sky and help him pick berries.]

### Surface features

#### Grammar

Sentences constructed correctly.

#### Spelling

Most spelling correct. Incorrect words are carefully constructed.

#### Punctuation

Understanding of capital letters and full stops.

Uses apostrophes correctly for contractions.



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