



LEVEL | li 2 3 4 5

## Crocodile Fight

### THE LEARNING CONTEXT

This teacher continually encouraged her students to develop written statements supported with reasons, for example, by modelling sentences containing “because”, “but”, and “so”. Her goal was to develop their metacognitive thinking.

She used this approach to introduce argument writing to the students. She asked them to orally generate “because” sentences based on the story of the three little pigs, for example: “The wolf was mean because ...”. She also modelled writing the sentences.

This piece is a response to John Burningham’s book *Would You Rather?*, which contains a series of scenarios that encourage readers to make and justify decisions, for example: “Would you rather your house was surrounded by water ... or by a jungle?”

The students discussed several scenarios. The teacher challenged them to come up with opposing viewpoints, for example: “I want my house to be surrounded by a jungle because then I can swing on the jungle vines. But a lion might come out of the jungle and eat me.” The discussions were lively and detailed because the scenarios captivated and excited the students. The teacher continued to model the orally generated “because” sentences in writing.

The students then had to select a scenario from the book and draft a “because” sentence based upon it.

### Teacher-student conversations

#### Before Keynan’s first draft

Teacher: Fighting a crocodile sounds dangerous. Why would you want to do that?

Keynan: Because I do.

Teacher: Have you seen anyone fight a crocodile?

Keynan: Yeah, on a video where that guy hunts crocodiles.

Teacher: Did he win?

Keynan: Yeah.

Teacher: What happened afterwards?

Keynan: He got a girlfriend.

Teacher: You could write about that.

#### After Keynan had read his draft to the teacher

Teacher: Let’s look at these two words [“get”, “girl”]. Can you notice anything about them?

Keynan: Yes, those letters are not the right way round.

Teacher: I’m pleased you’ve noticed that because, remember, your goal at the moment is to get letters round the right way.

### INTEGRATING READING AND WRITING

Classroom reading programmes provide opportunities for students to respond to other people’s persuasive

writing. They need to read or be read to. The teacher can ask whether they have been persuaded and, if so, to give reasons for how the writer accomplished this.

“Reading to” programmes provide opportunities for oral language development, especially in forming ideas and reasoning, which may be transferred to writing.

### WHERE TO NEXT?

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

- metacognition: by challenging the thinking behind his ideas so that he can see other consequences of his choice;
- spelling:
  - by selecting the one-syllable words that are almost right and promoting the correct spelling
  - by encouraging him to use classroom resources to spell words such as “fight”
  - by emphasising the blends in words such as “friend”
  - by getting back-to-front letters right, which could be reinforced by having the student also use the computer when writing.

Contexts for such learning could include:

- frequent teacher modelling of writing, particularly argument writing;
- regular individual conferencing;
- the instructional reading programme.

### CURRICULUM LINKS

#### Level 1: Writing Functions

**Transactional Writing:** Students should write instructions and recount events in authentic contexts.

#### 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 organisation of text which affect understanding.

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

*English in the New Zealand Curriculum, pages 35–36*

#### Te Whāriki links

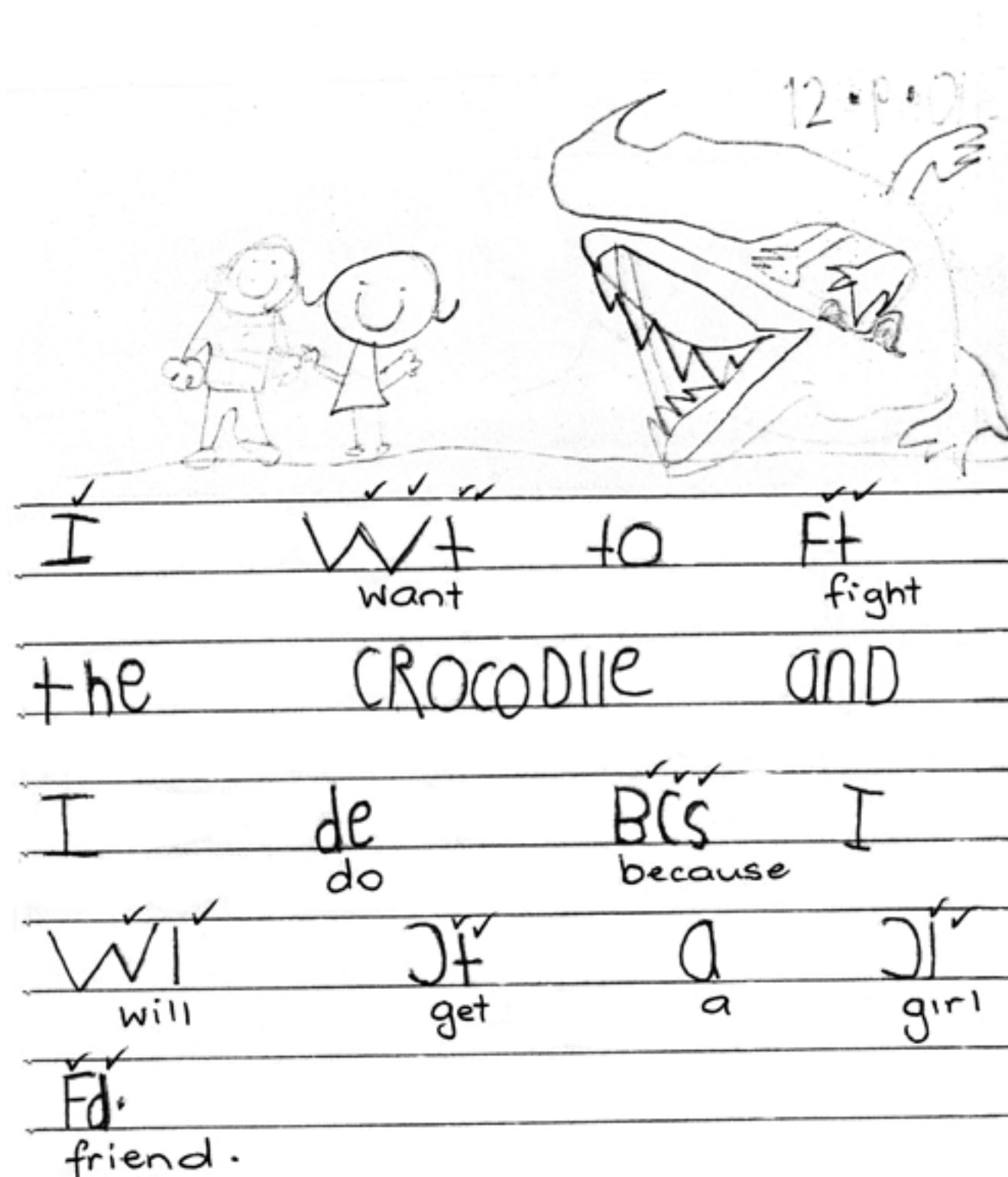
See Strand 4, Communication, goals 2 and 3, and the associated learning outcomes for knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

*Te Whāriki, pages 76–79*

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## Crocodile Fight

STUDENT’S FIRST DRAFT





# Transactional Writing: Argument

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## What the Work Shows

Keynan supports a definite opinion with a strong personal reason. His piece is an original and humorous response to literature.

STUDENT'S FIRST DRAFT

### DEEPER FEATURES

#### Ideas

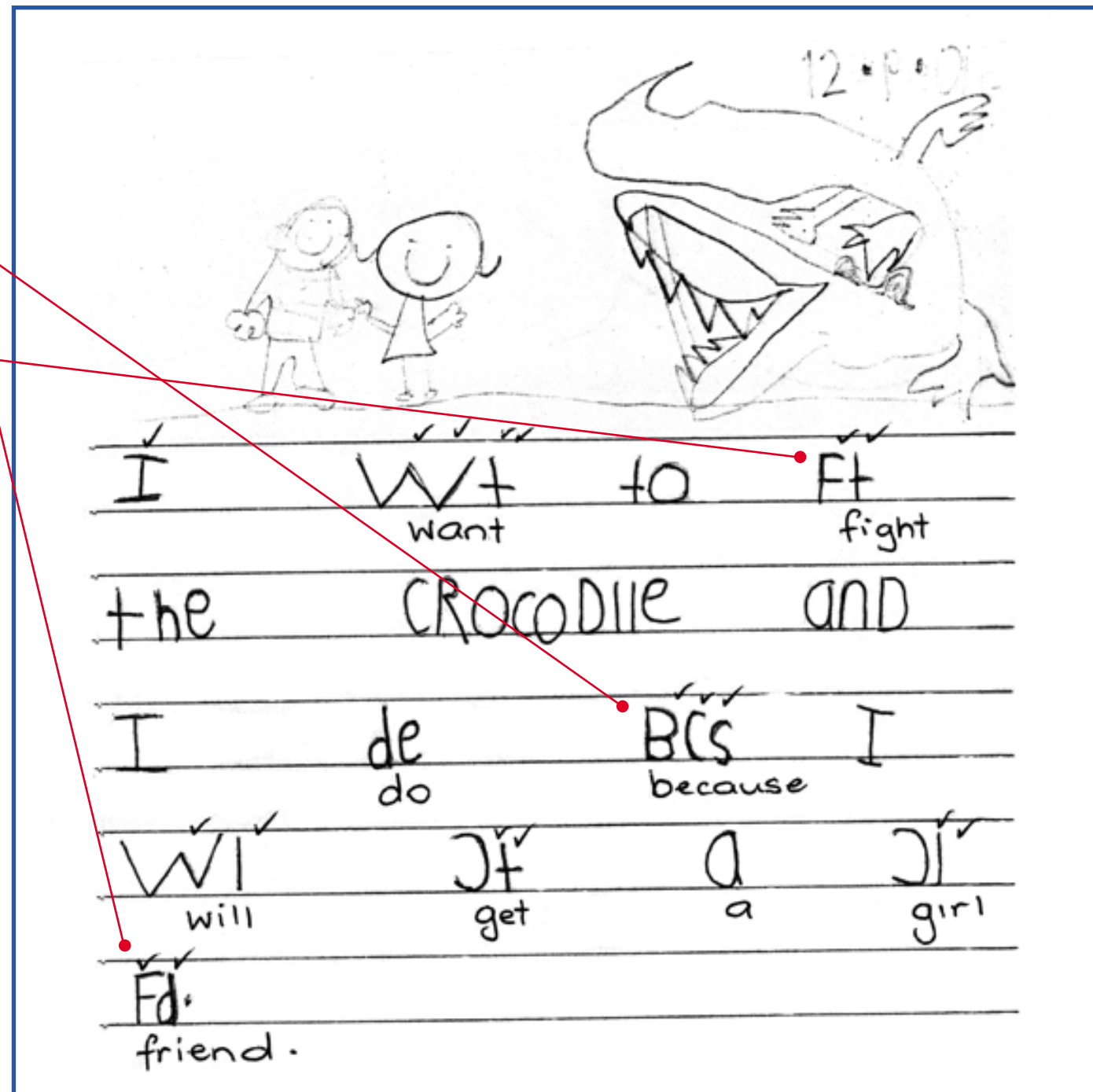
Attempts to convey an opinion with some reasoning evident.

#### Sentences

Crafts a simple sentence into a complex sentence.

#### Vocabulary

Attempts to use some key content words and some high-frequency words.



I wt to Ft the CROCODlle and I de BCS I wl gt a gl Fd.

I want to fight the crocodile and I do because I will get a girlfriend.

### SURFACE FEATURES

#### Punctuation

Experiments with capital letters and full stops.

#### Spelling

Attempts to identify some letter sounds, generally initial letter sounds.

Approximates common spellings.

#### Layout

Displays a strong sense of directionality.

Leaves space between words.

### REFERENCES

Burningham, John (1994). *Would You Rather?* London: Red Fox.

The first page of this exemplar has been slightly shortened to fit. To see the fuller version, go to [www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/eng/](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/eng/)