

# AFTER TWO YEARS AT SCHOOL

## THE READING STANDARD



**After two years at school, students will read, respond to, and think critically about fiction and non-fiction texts at the Turquoise level of Ready to Read (the core instructional series that supports reading in the New Zealand Curriculum).**

## KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF TEXTS AT TURQUOISE LEVEL

Texts at Turquoise level have been designed with characteristics that include:

- some settings and contexts that may be outside the students' prior knowledge but can easily be related to it;
- a mix of explicit and implicit content that provides opportunities for students to make simple inferences;
- illustrations that support the meaning and may suggest new ideas or viewpoints;
- mostly familiar words, but some new topic words and descriptive language that are supported by the context (for example, the text may include synonyms, definitions, or explanations) and/or by illustrations;
- some visual language features such as labelled diagrams, inset photographs, and bold text for topic words that are linked to a glossary;
- a variety of sentence structures, including compound sentences and a few complex sentences, so that students are required to notice and use punctuation as a guide to phrasing and meaning;
- frequent use of dialogue and more than one character speaking on a page.

These characteristics support the development of reading behaviours that are described on pages 10–11 and illustrated on the fold-out pages here.

# AFTER TWO YEARS AT SCHOOL

## ILLUSTRATING THE READING STANDARD

**The King's Birthday** by Dot Meharry; illustrated by Philip Webb

*This text is levelled at Turquoise 1.*

In this humorous narrative, the King is upset because nobody seems to have remembered his birthday. The illustrations are rich with clues about what is really happening, but the King remains oblivious until he sits down to his royal lunch. This story has a traditional fairytale structure, starting with a problem, continuing with a series of events similar to each other (as the King tries to find out if anyone has remembered his special day), and finishing with a happy ending.

This is a sequel, with lots of humorous links, to *The Hole in the King's Sock* (levelled at Orange), which is also available as a big book. This means that students are likely to be very

familiar with the characters, setting, and fairytale-like text structure before they read this Turquoise text.

Some key challenges are the "royal" vocabulary and the use of compound and complex sentences running over two or three lines.

*The following example highlights the sorts of reading behaviours teachers could expect to observe in students who are meeting the standard. Sometimes these behaviours will be in response to teacher prompts and questions, and sometimes they will be spontaneous as the students notice and respond to the ideas in the text. These behaviours may be during the first or subsequent readings and discussion.*

The student uses the speech marks and commas to clarify the sequence of events in this challenging sentence. They can explain why "is" is in italics.

The student notices "birth" in the familiar word "birthday" and/or the "ate" rime to help them work out "birth date".

The student uses a range of strategies to decode and work out the meanings of unfamiliar words. For example, they may split the word "banquet" into syllables, make connections to the idea of lunch, notice that "banquet" is followed by the word "hall" (twice) and "table", and/or make connections to any direct or indirect experiences of banquets.

The student can use evidence from this text and *The Hole in the King's Sock* to make further inferences about the personalities of the King and Queen.

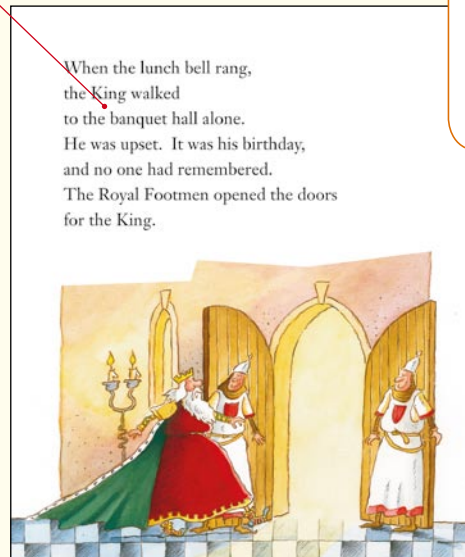
When the student reads the text aloud, for example, for Readers' Theatre, their phrasing and intonation indicate that they are reading with understanding (and enjoyment).



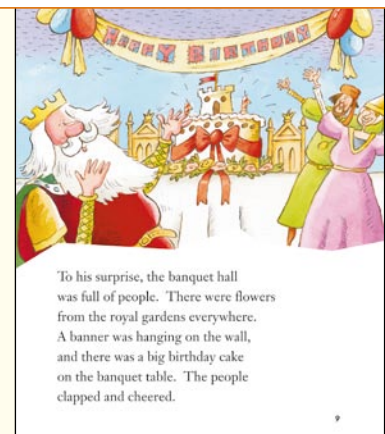
The student uses the commas, and conjunctions such as "where" and "as", to keep track of the sentences that run over two or three lines.

The student puts together clues (such as what they already know about the King and the Queen from *The Hole in the King's Sock*, the fact that it really is the King's birthday, and the fact that no one is mentioning it), to predict that something odd or surprising is going to happen. The student adjusts and refines their predictions as they notice new information.

The student can give an example of something that helped them make and adjust their predictions or inferences as they read.



The student expresses an opinion about how the King is feeling after the surprise has been revealed, making connections to their own feelings about surprise birthdays or about people pretending to forget special occasions.



# AFTER TWO YEARS AT SCHOOL

## ILLUSTRATING THE READING STANDARD

**Inside the Maize Maze** by Sharon Holt; photographs by Anthony Russell

*This text is levelled at Turquoise 2.*

This non-fiction text begins with an explanation about what mazes are, continues with a recount about a child's experience of navigating a maze, and ends with a brief report about a maze within a school playground.

Photographs, captions, definitions, and explanations provide support for working out the meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary.

The big idea in this text is that people throughout history have enjoyed the challenges that mazes provide.

Students are likely to be familiar with the concept of mazes before reading this text, either through their direct experience of mazes or through reading the humorous Ready to Read text *The Gardener's Maze* (levelled at Green).

*The following example highlights the sorts of reading behaviours teachers could expect to observe in students who are meeting the standard. Sometimes these behaviours will be in response to teacher prompts and questions, and sometimes they will be spontaneous as the students notice and respond to the ideas in the text. These behaviours may be during the first or subsequent readings and discussion.*



The student makes connections between the photographs of mazes and the question from the narrator to activate their own prior knowledge and/or experience of mazes. They may comment on (evaluate) the fit between the information about mazes and what they already know.

The student, with some teacher prompting, makes connections between the information on these pages, the cover and title, and the direct address to the reader by the child narrator to predict that the child is going to relate her experience of being in a maze.

The student can make connections between the pieces of information on this page to explain why the maize maze looks as it does in the inset photograph.

There's a maze at Marton near where I live. I went there with my friends. This maze is made of **maize**. Maize is a plant that looks like corn. A maize maze lasts for only six months. The maize is planted in October and is cut down in April. Then it's used to feed farm animals.

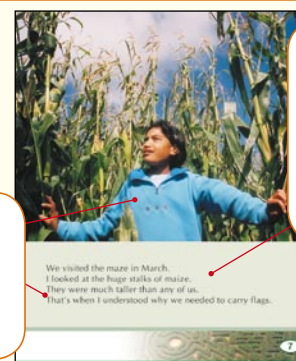
The student uses the bold print for "maize" to notice how this new word is different from the now-familiar word "maze". The student uses the definition in the following sentence plus the photographs (and possibly their prior knowledge) to build their understanding of what maize is.

The student draws on text features, such as the short sentences, the repetition for effect, the multiple photographs per page, and the thought bubble to help them imagine (visualise) what it would be like inside a maize maze.



The student uses information from the text and photograph to infer what the flags are for and that they will need to be tall.

The student uses the photograph and the following sentences to clarify the meaning of "stalks".



The student uses the information in the text, plus their own experiences of mazes and puzzles (including any indirect experiences, for example, from reading *The Gardener's Maze*) to infer why people like mazes even though they can get lost and may need help.



The student can discuss how the author helps the reader to imagine what being in the maze is like, for example, the way the narrator shares her feelings, the use of exclamation marks (on pages 11 and 12) for impact, and the repetition that emphasises the feeling of being lost.