



Ngā Atua i te Taiao

The Māori Gods in the Environment

What teachers need to know

This is Lesson 3 in a series of three lessons about kaitiakitanga. See [Overview](#).

The purpose of this activity is to think about the effect of carbon emissions from an environmental perspective using te ao Māori as a context for visualising the natural environment. The atua (Māori gods) can be seen as elements of our natural environment.

You may need to familiarise yourself and your ākonga (students) with the meanings of some terms and concepts such as mauri, kaitiakitanga, manaakitanga and citizenship, ngā atua and hot seating. See [Overview](#) for terms and concepts, as well as picture books and links to pūrākau (stories) about atua, you could use in your classroom.

Teacher preparation:

- Read through this resource.
- Gather equipment – buckets, cups, water for warm up activity.



10 mins

Learning intentions – students will:

- Use the drama convention ‘hot seating’ to investigate how others may feel about an issue.
- Use storytelling and metaphor to explain the effect of carbon emissions on our environment.

Success criteria – students can:

- Explain how elements and living things of the natural world are affected by carbon emissions locally and globally.



New Zealand Curriculum Achievement Objectives:

The Arts – Drama:

Level 2 – Developing ideas:

- Develop and sustain ideas in drama, based on personal experience and imagination.

Level 3 – Developing ideas:

- Initiate and develop ideas with others to create drama.

Level 4 – Developing Ideas:

- Initiate and refine ideas with others to plan and develop drama.

English – from Te Mātaiaho – The Refreshed New Zealand Curriculum:

Know, Understand, Do:

Years 4-6: Progress outcome for English by the end of year 6.

Do – Te whakamahi rautaki ki te whai māramatanga | Comprehending and creating texts:

I can use writing as a tool to think about, record, and communicate experiences, ideas, and information.

Years 7-8: Progress outcome for English by the end of year 8.

Do – Te whakamahi rautaki ki te whai māramatanga | Comprehending and creating texts:

I can use the codes and conventions of different modes and text types for effect in the texts I compose.

Education for sustainability concepts:

- Interdependence.
- Participation for change.
- See [Education for sustainability](#).





Warm-up activities

Share these whakataukī and sayings with your class and play Fill the Bucket. These activities show that we can all make a difference, especially when we all work together. Even if our part seems small, we can collectively achieve big things and solve big problems.

- He iti hoki te mokoroa nāna i kakati te Kahikatea.
The mokoroa (grub) may be small, but it cuts through the Kahikatea.
- The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.
- Small things make a difference – it only takes a pin to burst a balloon.

Fill the Bucket

A game to show many hands make light work.

You need:

10 buckets and enough plastic mugs for 1 per person (about 20).

Activity:

- The teams have to transport the water from the “pond” to another bucket which is going to be used to “put out a fire”.
- Each team has a minute to carry out the task.
- At the end measure how much water altogether they were able to collect to put out the fire.

Set up:

- Fill 5 buckets to be the water resource (pond) – one for each team.
- Set up the other 5 buckets – one for each team – to take the water to.
- Set the teams up to reflect a growing number of people and capability, i.e. number of mugs:
 - Team 1: 1 person, 1 mug
 - Team 2: 4 people, 2 mugs
 - Team 3: 7 people, 4 mugs
 - Team 4: 10 people, 5 mugs
 - Team 5: 13 people, 7 mugs

Reflecting on the activity:

- Who made a difference – who contributed to putting out the fire?
- Which team contributed the most?
- How did they achieve that?
- How could we collect even more water in the same time?
- How could we collect it with less individual effort?
- Let's try some of these solutions.
- Think, pair, share which way was most efficient and why.

Possible discussions:

- In the team there may have been arguments over turns or children bumping into each other in the group. This may have slowed things down.
- Hopefully there would have been some encouragement and enthusiasm in the group.
- Having more people all doing a little bit should have meant the job was done quicker.
- The student doing it on their own may have been able to work without hindrance but may have felt disheartened and the job will take a lot longer.



Hot seating with atua i te taiao

1. Explain what [Hot Seating – Drama Resource](#) is to the class. Watch the video in this link or use this definition:

Hot seating is an interactive drama technique where a character, eg, a character from a story or a person from history, is interviewed or questioned by others about their background, behaviour and motivation. This allows for deeper exploration of their ideas, attitudes and perspectives.

2. Allocate character roles of the following elements:
 - Ranginui – the sky
 - Papatūānuku – the Earth
 - Tāwhirimātea – the wind/air
 - Tāne Mahuta – the forest
 - Tangaroa – the waterways and oceans
 - Birds, insects, animals that the students would see or relate to.
3. Role play or discuss the effects of people travelling to school in cars. Ask the above characters to respond to how they feel or would react to the carbon emissions put out by cars.
Eg. How do you feel about the carbon dioxide from cars?
4. Role play or discuss what it is like when people walk, bike, skateboard or scooter to school. Ask the characters to respond to how they feel or would react to the lack of carbon emissions from cars.
Eg, How do you feel about people walking, scooting or biking?
Do you feel better when there are less carbon emissions?
5. Using the drama technique of Hot Seating to interview one of the elemental atua or animals to investigate how carbon emissions affect them and how it affects what they do. These could be direct effects like polluting the air locally or indirect effects of global warming like the polar bears losing their habitat.
Eg, Tēnā koe Ranginui. Welcome to our school today.
Can you please tell us how you feel about....?
6. Discuss how the choices we make about travelling to school affect the natural world.
How does it affect people locally and globally?
7. Summarise the effects of carbon emissions on the natural world.
8. Record the people (or groups of people) and things that might be affected by lots of cars at the school gate.

Further activities, resources and links

- To download the Overview, and other lessons in this theme, visit:
 - Kaitiakitanga Lesson 1: [Te hanga i te Rerekēatanga \(Making a Difference\)](#)
 - Kaitiakitanga Lesson 2: [Te Mauri i taku Hapori \(Mauri in my community\)](#)
 - Kaitiakitanga: [Tirohanga Whānui \(Overview\)](#)
- Or visit the theme: [Carbon and climate – digital kete.](#)