

Supporting literacy development in the Visual Arts classroom



This resource is aligned to the New Zealand Curriculum (2007) and provides support for the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy in preparation for the NCEA Co-requisite. It aims to support those students who are using the NCEA qualification pathway.

The 2007 New Zealand Curriculum specifically acknowledges the importance of literacy in the key competencies related to language, symbols and text.

These state that ākonga will:

- » use language, symbols and text in the production of their own art
- » understand and use the discipline-specific language of art as they engage with the concepts and epistemic knowledge involved in the artmaking process.

The key competencies thinking and relating to others are also relevant to literacy, as ākonga in Visual Arts need to:

- » think about why conventions are used, and which conventions can be used for a particular outcome
- » develop thinking and literacy during the artmaking process as they communicate and interpret meaning
- » inquire, self-reflect, analyse, and make decisions through the creation of art as a process that generates thinking
- » engage in collaborative artmaking
- » communicate with an audience
- » have an understanding of the social context art makers draw from when making work.

The [NCEA Literacy standards](#) are composed of a reading and a writing strand, each of which has its own Big Ideas. These are unpacked by the Significant Learning statements, which connect to the key competencies identified above. Learners of Visual Art need to critically read complex information, use specific vocabulary, and understand their intended audiences. They also need to communicate information in ways appropriate to the discipline.

The Literacy Pedagogy Guide (LPG) for Visual Art below takes the [Big Ideas](#) and [Significant Learning](#) and poses two questions:

- » *What does literacy look like in Visual Art?*
- » *What can I do as a teacher of Visual Art?*

The LPG is not exhaustive, but illustrative of small but effective steps that any teacher of the Visual Art can target, trial and ultimately embed in their teaching practice.

Visual Arts Literacy Pedagogy Guide

Reading



	Significant Learning	What can this look like in Visual Art?	What can I do as a teacher of Visual Art?
Big Idea 1: Learners make sense of written texts	Ākonga use: » a processing system to decode and comprehend text. Readers develop expertise in using sources of information and comprehension strategies to make sense of text. » knowledge of text structures and features. Readers develop their knowledge of text features and use this to navigate and understand texts. » vocabulary knowledge. Successful comprehension depends on understanding most of the meanings of the words in the text.	Visual sources of information include: » artworks » advertisements » posters » graphics » films and animations Written sources include text types such as: » descriptions of procedures/processes » descriptions of art movements » webpages » recounts of artists' lives. Information needs to be researched (from written texts and webpages). Subheadings are important signposts of content. Visual Art requires knowledge of specialised vocabulary and . often abstract terms such as 'aesthetic'. Many of these terms have Greek or Latin origins. The meaning of terms in Visual Art can differ from everyday use, for example, medium. Within Visual Art, there are three tiers of vocabulary to focus on: » Everyday or high frequency words which ākonga must have a knowledge of. These make up the majority of texts. » AWL words are frequent and important across all learning areas. (See the Academic Word List or AWL). » Discipline-specific vocabulary (or technical words) which are less frequent and important within a subject or learning area.	Share strategies for reading and understanding texts, for example, annotations made in workbooks or abstracts, displayed alongside an artwork. Model how to skim a text quickly to get an idea of what it is about using questions. For example, in a text about an artist and their work, does the text provide information about: » the artist's intent and influences » the processes involved » the materials used. To support ākonga to build their vocabulary, they can: » circle the words they don't know » underline the words they have some understanding of » use a Visual Arts Glossary and Te Reo Terms for Visual Arts to support understanding » create a class glossary of keywords that is added to throughout the year, and display this on the wall Use an effective vocabulary learning sequence. This could look like this: inquiry, explicit instruction, repeated opportunities to practice, metacognition. Use vocab grids or vocabulary frame flashcards of key words, or their word family and synonyms. Display an art glossary of keywords on the classroom wall.

		AWL words are frequent and important across all learning areas while disciplinary words are frequent and important within the subject or learning area.	
Big Idea 2: Learners read critically.	Ākonga: » develop a critical awareness that enables them to consider who wrote a text, for whom, why, and whether it may have purposes that are not immediately apparent.	Creators and authors have different purposes. Types of texts in Visual Art can be informative, persuasive or interpretative, and include: Informative text: » information reports » procedures » explanations Information reports are descriptions of characteristics or features, for example, for artworks from a specific time period. Procedures present the steps required to carry out a process such as the development of a design brief, or proposal..They explain how something should be done. Explanations explain sequential steps in a process; They explain how something has come to be. Persuasive text includes, » expositions » discussions. Expositions use supporting evidence to argue a point, or that a specific course of action should be taken. Discussions consider two or more perspectives before making a decision. Interpretative responses allow learners to make judgements of their interpretation of an artwork or artworks. Multimodal texts work in partnership to make meaning between the visual and the verbal.	Support learners to scan the text for clues as to the author, text type, purpose and intended audience. Unpack vocabulary, phrasing and identifiers for each text type to determine the purpose of a text, for example, to inform or persuade. Explore literature and perspectives on art. Discuss the lens being applied, for example, is it a eurocentric lens? Discuss the forms of artwork and the tikanga behind these, as well as the use of symbolism and the narratives behind the symbols. Explore the principles and elements of Māori art: » Tātai rahinga (arrangement by scale) » Tātai mokowā (spatial connectedness) » Tātai hikiwaru (disrupted symmetry) » Tātai hangarite (arrange symmetrically) » Tātai whakapapa (proximal tiki arrangement) » Mana wahine (female element) » Tātai manawa (heart pulse) » Te Tinana (the body) » Te Manaia (the profile figure) » Te Takarangi (the spiral) » Te Taura (the pattern) » Te Ata (light) and Te Atakau (Shadow) Use this chart to support the interpretation of elements of Māori art. Encourage students to develop an understanding of the artist's background and influences. These questions can be used as a starting point. Use a thinking tool like de Bono's OPV (Other People's Views) to consider an artist, writer or viewer's point of view. Provide ākonga with the opportunity to describe a selected feature choice within an artwork and to explain the impact this has on the viewer. For example, a colour choice and the emotive response. Use a graphic organiser to unpack key features.

			Introduce the interplay of the verbal and visual aspects of multimodal texts using a graphic organiser , explore what each aspect shows or tells, and how together they deliver a broader message.
Big Idea 3: Learners read for different purposes.	Ākonga: » are clear about their purpose for reading and have appropriate strategies to meet that purpose » understand and use ideas in texts » locate and evaluate the ideas and information within and across a range of print and digital texts to meet their purpose.	Ākonga identify their purpose for reading and use a skim and scan approach to determine the usefulness of the text. Learners are able to select which texts require closer reading. Ākonga understand the ideas within a text. Ākonga evaluate the reliability of sources and make decisions about the accuracy, authority behind, and/or bias within sources. Ākonga are able to interpret written texts, as well as those that are multimodal.	Discuss with ākonga and model how to read texts they encounter. Students need to ask questions before, during and after they have read. Support ākonga to predict content from titles and draw on prior knowledge. A KWL chart can support this. A summary on predicting is provided in Tricks, Tips, and the Benefits of Pre-Reading Text. Support ākonga to read text closely by: » recognising any emotive vocabulary » analysing reader-oriented features e.g. you, we » recognising indicators of process or procedures e.g. 'first', 'then', 'next' phrasing » unpacking explanatory language e.g because, this is due to, in response. Develop ākonga strategies for 'reading' visual texts e.g. Describe / Analyse / Interpret / Extrapolate.

Writing

	Significant Learning	What can this look like in Visual Art?	What can I do as a teacher of Visual Art?
Big Idea 1: Learners write meaningful texts for different purposes and audiences.	Ākonga: » use strategies within a writing process to plan and create texts » select content, text structure and language choices appropriate to purpose and audience » select and use vocabulary that is specific to their topic, purpose and audience » revise and edit their work.	The writing process for ākonga includes planning for writing at multiple levels. When planning, direct ākonga to consider content, structure and language choice. The text type selected should be based on the purpose of the writing and its intended audience. The writing process should be iterative to allow for monitoring and review. Text types in Visual Art can be informative, persuasive or interpretative, and include: » Informative texts such as: › reports › procedures › explanations. » Persuasive texts such as: › expositions › discussions. › interpretative responses Vocabulary knowledge involves conceptual understanding of abstract nouns, and knowledge of academic word families. Ākonga need to understand how register, purpose and audience affect word choice.	Encourage ākonga to start by thinking about RAFT (Role, Audience, Format, Topic). The following questions can guide this approach: » Who are you as the writer? Yourself? A character? (Role) » Who are you writing to? Yourself? A classmate? The artist? A visitor to the art gallery or exhibition? (Audience) » What are you writing? What text type? A letter? A report? An explanation? A reflection? (Format) » What are you writing about? (Topic). Before writing, help ākonga to develop and clarify their ideas by: » using T-Charts to contrast design principles and visual elements across works of art » co-creating timelines of art periods or specific events in an artist's life » using tools such as concept frames to deepen learners' conceptual understanding » provide opportunities to discuss ideas in pairs or with small groups before students write. » using activities such as 10x2 or See, Think, Wonder. Provide opportunities for ākonga to develop their ideas visually, before writing. For example, ākonga can draw pictures to illustrate perception or interpretation of ideas, annotate these pictures and use this as a basis for their writing. Support ākonga to explore language use by: » generating word family members with ākonga » providing phrasing examples to support ākonga with delivering their ideas. Here is a list of Sentence Starters with subheadings for use by writers. » plotting key words on clines, e.g. when discussing colour: bright, light, faded, shaded, moody, dark Provide ākonga with opportunities to plan their writing with templates that match the text type. Provide or co-construct checklists for ākonga plan, revise and edit their work. Here is a checklist for explaining an activity or process.

Big Idea 2: Learners use written language conventions appropriately to support communication.	Ākonga: » develop their expertise in sentence construction, grammar, punctuation, spelling, word choice.	Sentence structures, including: » simple sentences » compound sentences that use coordinating conjunctions, e.g. 'but', 'as' or 'yet', which allow the reader to unify two related points often for greater detail. » complex sentences, e.g. those that use 'because' or 'while' to combine two different but connected ideas. Challenges related to grammatical structure include: » Nouniness, which refers to the number of elements that precede and follow a noun, for example: [The use of chiaroscuro, the interplay of light and dark to guide the viewer to a series of focal points] can be seen in this work. » This is a factor in lexical density. » High lexical density, which refers to the high ratio of content words (nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs) to function words (pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions etc). » Modal verbs, which are important ways to signal how certain a writer is about a claim: › deduction e.g. the use of pattern in this way 'may mean' that the artist wanted to... › expectation e.g. the composition of the features of the work 'will mean that' viewers will be drawn to the foreground initially... » Other features: › punctuation marks are meaning-making devices. › spelling has an impact on the reader.	When giving feedback on writing, draw attention to how noun phrases communicate specific meaning - by the adjectives (premodifiers like vibrant or subtle) before the head noun and phrases or clauses after the head noun (postmodifiers) e.g. the vibrant colour choice (head noun) for the subject matter (post modifier) in the works of Xoe Hal (post modifier). Generate word families including noun, verb, adjective, adverb e.g. e.g. abstract, abstracted, abstraction. Expand learners' knowledge of understanding word families for general academic words e.g. context, contextualise, contextualised. Manipulate <u>collocations</u> – words that co-occur most frequently e.g. colour scheme rather than colour strategy. Model deconstructing and reconstructing sentences so learners can see what complex sentences and their parts do. Generate or co-construct lists of topic specific vocabulary, particularly those that are difficult to spell. Provide ākonga with a focused glossary of terms. Encourage learners to mark words for later checking. Checking can be for spelling or for the intended meaning. Provide ākonga with a proofreading/editing checklist that includes a focus on punctuation.
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