

CURRICULUM ACTIVITY: Years 7–8 Nature and Environmental Awareness

Older Ākonga guide younger peers (Tuakana–Teina) in planting native species or restoring a habitat, demonstrating techniques and explaining care. Younger tamariki follow guidance while contributing ideas. Te Taiao is demonstrated as mentoring that supports knowledge, care, and shared responsibility for nature.

Tikanga Practices: Te taiao is portrayed within this scenario through:

- Listening, as tamariki tune in to the sounds of flowing water, birds, and wind, recognising the rhythms and voices of Te Taiao.
- Observation: tamariki notice patterns, textures, and movements in the environment, seeing beauty and diversity in natural treasures.
- Exploration opportunities for tamariki to engage their senses and to make new discoveries, learning about the habitats and mauri of living things in and around the water.

Kaiako: Questions for Reflection

1. How do you empower tuakana to guide and support teina in caring for the natural environment?
2. In what ways do you ensure mentoring relationships reflect reciprocal learning and shared responsibility?
3. How can you embed long-term projects that nurture sustained engagement with te taiao?

NGĀ KUPU O TE TAI AO Words Associated to Te Taiao

Ngā Tangata Tiaki Guardians	Ngā Manu Birds	Hīkoi Excursion
Te Taiao Natural World	Ngā Pēpeke Insects	Haruru Sea rumbles
Awa River	Ngāi Kīrehe Fauna	Tūātea Breaking waves
Tātahi Beach	Ngāi Tipu Flora	Kōmiro swirling water
Hāroto Rock pools	Ngā Rākau Trees	Arawaru rapid sounds
Pūroto Lagoon	Haumākū damp, moist	Hou sound of water
Kōhatu Stones	Ngā Huruhuru Feathers	Ngā Kota shells
Kōhiwi Skeleton	Rāpihi Rubbish	Repo swamp, bog

RERENGA KŌRERO – Phrases

1. **Titiro mai ki tēnei anga.**
Look at this shell/skeleton.
2. **Ka pēhea te rongō?**
What does it feel like?
3. **Ki ō whakaaro, nō hea tēnei mea?**
Where do you think it came from?
4. **Ka hoki ō mahara ki tētahi mea, ki tētahi wāhi rānei kua kitea e koe?**
Does it remind you of anything or any place you have been?
5. **Ka ahu mai tēnei taonga i hea?**
I wonder where this came from?
6. **Ka kite i tōna āhua/ka rongō i tōna tangi.**
Can you see its shape/hear its sound?
7. **E pai ana kia pā atu?**
Is it safe to touch?
8. **Me pēhea tātou e tiaki/ e whakaruruhau i tēnei taonga?**
How can we look after it/ keep it safe?
9. **Ka pēhea te kakara?**
What does it smell like?
10. **Ki ōu whakaaro i ahu mai tēnei taonga i hea?**
How do you think it got there?



Scan for pronunciation support

Ngā Taonga Whakaako Tikanga Māori – Theory and Practice

Primary School Contexts



UC
UNIVERSITY OF
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Te Kāhui Pā Harakeke
Child Well-being
Research Institute

Ako
AOTEAROA

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TE TAIAO

The Natural World (Excursions)

Te Taiao refers to the natural world — all living and non-living things, including the land, sky, waters, forests, animals, and people. It is a deeply interconnected system where everything has mauri (life force) and must be cared for with respect and balance. In te ao Māori, different aspects of Te Taiao are connected to atua Māori (spiritual guardians), such as Tāne Mahuta (atua of the forest), Tangaroa (atua of the sea), Ranginui (sky father), and Papatūānuku (earth mother). Understanding and protecting Te Taiao is a key part of kaitiakitanga (enacting acts of guardianships or being custodians), helping tamariki learn to care for the world around them.



Scan to find out more about these resources



CURRICULUM ACTIVITY: Years 1–3

Nature and Environmental Awareness

Tamariki explore the school playground or garden, noticing birds, plants, and insects. They share their observations with peers. Te Taiao is applied as tamariki learn to appreciate and respect the natural environment.

Tikanga Practices: Te taiao enables exploration and engagement:

- Through **aroha**, tamariki show kindness and care toward birds and plants, learning that all living things deserve respect and gentle interaction.
- Using **mōhiotanga**, tamariki share what they notice in the garden, building early understanding of how the environment changes and responds to their care.
- Guided by **whanaungatanga**, tamariki work together outdoors, learning to cooperate and share discoveries while strengthening relationships with each other and with nature.

Kaiako: Questions for Reflection

1. How do you encourage tamariki to notice and talk about the natural world around them?
2. In what ways can you model appreciation and care for living things?
3. How do you use local spaces (e.g., garden, playground) to foster curiosity and respect for te taiao?

CURRICULUM ACTIVITY: Years 4–6

Nature and Environmental Awareness

Tamariki explore a local park, documenting observations and discussing ways to care for plants and animals. They reflect on how human activity affects the environment. Te Taiao is enacted as tamariki connect learning with practical environmental custodianship.

Tikanga Practices: Te taiao is explored through:

- Through **mātauranga**, tamariki explore local parks, observing how people, plants, and animals interact, deepening knowledge about caring for ecosystems and balance.
- Guided by **kaitiakitanga**, tamariki discuss ways to protect living things, recognising their role as guardians who sustain natural wellbeing for future generations.
- Using **wānanga**, tamariki record and reflect on human impact, developing thoughtful discussions that link environmental observation with responsibility and community action.

Kaiako: Questions for Reflection

1. How do you guide tamariki to connect their observations in nature to human impact and responsibility?
2. What experiences can help tamariki understand relationships between people, plants, and animals?
3. How can you integrate te taiao learning with local curriculum or inquiry projects?

