

Mokopuna



Mokopuna is about Mary and Sam. Mary lives in middle-class suburban New Zealand. After befriending a Māori boy at her school, Mary becomes curious about Sam's culture and its relevance to her. Mary has a Māori father and Pākehā mother, while Sam lives with his Māori nan. Mary is intrigued by Sam and his culture, and by beginning to enquire about him, she begins to ask questions about herself. But when Sam turns his curiosity onto her, it soon becomes clear that Mary is not quite ready to embrace her own roots.

Writer/director: Ainsley Gardiner

Producers: Glenis Giles, Ainsley Gardiner

Drama / 11 minutes / Rated G contains coarse language / 2008

Theme: Identity

Key Competency: Participating and Contributing

ABOUT THE FILM:

Mokopuna is a story about the question of identity in an indigenous culture. Who are we? How do we fit in? But it is also a film that presents the same question to a non-indigenous, non-minority audience, because searching for identity is a journey we all go on. This story reflects the director's own emotional journey when she first, and quietly, became aware of this curiosity for identity in herself.

ABOUT THE DIRECTORS:

Ainsley Gardiner has produced short and feature films, television series and commercials. As well as practical skills in production, she has experience in script development and selection, editing and post production and a passion for creative producing. *Mokopuna* is her first foray into dramatic writing and direction.

www.nzfilm.co.nz/film/mokopuna



EXPLORING CHARACTER

Enquiry Question:
What defining features make people the same or different?

■ WHOLE CLASS:

- + Although these two children are at the same school, they don't seem to know each other very well. Why do you think that might be?

■ GROUPS:

- + What is it about this boy that makes Mary so curious?
- + Do you think those characters are mostly the same or mostly different? Make a double bubble map to compare the two characters.

■ INDEPENDENT:

- + *Write to explain:* Do you think these characters are mostly the same or different?
 - * *Support for less able: Use this writing frame to help you write:*
I think these characters are different because...
They are the same because...
Therefore, I think they are mostly (the same/different) because...

■ WHOLE CLASS:

- + *Discuss your decision:* Do you think they are mostly the same or mostly different?



EXPLORING THEME – IDENTITY

Enquiry Question:
How does our culture impact on our daily life?

The girl in the story refers to herself as a half-caste, because she has a Māori father and a Pākehā mother. She is interested in the boy and his life because he is the only other Māori child in her otherwise Pākehā school. When we look at her life and how her family is depicted, do you think she has much experience in Māori traditions and protocol?

■ GROUPS:

- + Are the two main characters treated the same at school? Why do you think this would be? Do you think their culture plays a part in this? Is it important we learn about our cultural heritage? Why do you think this? Where we learn about our cultural heritage – at school, at home, at other places?
- + Who do you think had a better understanding of their culture and the culture of others in this story? Did any character seem to show this?
- + What do we know about our own culture?

■ INDEPENDENT:

- + What parts of your culture make you special? Do you have special traditions or activities in your family that make you special?



EXPLORING NARRATIVE

Enquiry Question:
How can we use the information in the film to help make sensible predictions?

This story begins with the main character, a young girl beginning to wonder about herself and intrigued by a young Māori boy at her school. She is fascinated by him and how he lives.

■ WHOLE CLASS:

- + Write a brief recount of the events in the story.
- + We don't find out until the end of the story that Mary's father is Māori. Why do you think the filmmaker kept this hidden from us at the start of the film?

■ GROUPS:

- + What do you think the girl was hoping to achieve by going into the boy's house?

■ INDEPENDENT:

- + By the end of the story, the girl has talked to Sam. What do you think the girl in the story will do next?



EXPLORING KEY COMPETENCIES – PARTICIPATING AND CONTRIBUTING

Enquiry Question:
What groups can we belong to in our community?

Participating and contributing is about how we take an active role in society. It is also about us having a sense of belonging in our community and in society.

■ WHOLE CLASS:

- + Do you think Mary feels a sense of belonging in the Māori community? What evidence from the film makes you say that?

■ GROUPS:

- + Which cultural groups were reflected in this film? Which cultural groups are reflected in our school?

■ WHOLE CLASS:

- + What things happen in our school to help celebrate the different cultures in our school?

■ GROUPS:

- + What other kinds of groups can we be part of in our community (e.g. sports, clubs, the arts, etc)?

■ INDEPENDENT:

- + *Write to describe:* Write about a group that you are part of. Describe the group and what makes them special and different.