



Hoea te Waka, piki te mātau

## MAHINGA KAI - WHAKATOKI

Mahinga kai (literally “to work the food”) relates to the traditional value of food resources and their ecosystems, as well as the customs involved in producing, gathering, and protecting these resources.

Māori proverbs pertain to activities in everyday life and are a way of passing on wisdom.

These Whakataukī exercises are designed to aid discussion and observations about the environment and how things are done. We have chosen some examples that you may use, but you might substitute local whakataukī, or proverbs that your students contribute.

## Mahinga kai - Whakataukī background reading

### Mahinga Kai - Whakataukī

Whakataukī are traditional Māori proverbs. They relate to activities in everyday life of traditional Māori people, such as: life living as a community, the home environment, aspects of Tikanga (Māori customs), harvesting times for collecting kai, how to conduct oneself, historical and ancient events.

These were composed by observations and interactions of the environment and made analogies to life and people. Although whakataukī may be of a traditional nature, they are still very much applicable today and in everyday life.

Here is a whakataukī for Rangatahi to think about before going out on a waka:

*‘Mā te tika o toki, o te tangarere, me te tohu o te panaho, ka pai te tere o te waka I ngā momo moana katoa’  
‘By designing and shaping the keel of the waka to perfection, your canoe will overcome obstacles’*

Whakamārama - Explanation:

- Small and steady steps to perfection
- Little steps at a time will overcome any challenge.

This whakataukī can also be put into the context of the obstacles we face in Marine Science (our waka), we want to perfect the knowledge pertaining to our environment so that we can understand and potentially overcome challenges that we are facing e.g. the over-exploitation of our fishing resources. How do we create a fishing quota to ensure that we are leaving enough behind for future generations?



## WHAKATOKĪ

In relation to this whakataukī, consider these questions:

- What did you like or dislike about the whakataukī above?
- Do whakataukī have important messages?
- Are they effective ways to pass on environmental messages? Why or why not?
- Do they mean the same thing to everyone?
- How could they be used to raise awareness of mahinga kai and kaitiakitanga?
- Have you seen or heard of any whakataukī before? If so, where?



## Mahinga kai - Whakataukī activity

### A. Marine Whakataukī – what they mean to you

1. Photocopy the list of examples, or use ones relevant to your region.
2. Read the whakataukī and think about their meanings.
3. Discuss in small groups what you think they mean.
4. How do they relate to the marine environment?
5. Write your explanation on the page or illustrate it.
6. Share your thoughts with the wider group.

### B. Marine Whakataukī – what they mean to others

1. Photocopy the cards and cut them out. You could also make up cards with your own local examples.
2. Read the whakataukī and think about their meanings.
3. In a small group match the whakataukī with the written explanation.
4. How do they relate to the marine environment?
5. Do you agree with the explanation or do you think it has a different meaning.
6. Share your thoughts with the wider group.

### C. Marine Whakataukī – creating our own history

1. Think about an important message that you would like to share with others about caring for the marine environment.
2. It may be about a specific animal or habitat or place or it may be a more general message.
3. In a small group write your own whakataukī to deliver that message.
4. Share your whakataukī with another group and compare your interpretations.
5. Share your thoughts with the wider group.



## WHAKATOKĪ

<p><b>‘Mā te tauihu o tōu waka, e ū te waiora Kia mahue atu, ngā mea whakahirahira i roto i te koriparipo’</b></p> <p><i>‘May the prow of your canoe, cleave the waters of life and leave in its wake, mighty deeds’</i></p>	
<p><b>‘He moana pukepuke e ekengia e te waka’</b></p> <p><i>‘A choppy sea can be navigated.’</i></p>	
<p><b>‘Na tōu kahawai ngako nui, te aroaro tahuri kē’</b></p> <p><i>‘Tis the fatness of your fish that causes you to turn away (from us)’</i></p>	
<p><b>‘Ko te hamama popoia te tangata, e kore e mau te ika’</b></p> <p><i>‘If a man yawns whilst fishing he will be unsuccessful’</i></p>	
<p><b>‘Ka timu te tai, ka pao te tōrea’</b></p> <p><i>‘When the tide recedes, the seabird (oyster catcher) then strikes’</i></p>	



## WHAKATOKĪ

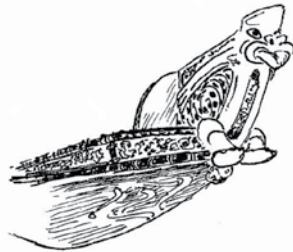
<p><b>‘E moe ana te mata hī tuna, e ara an ate mata hī aua’</b></p> <p><i>‘When the eyes of those who fish for eels are closed, the eyes of those who fish for the yellow mullet or herring are open.’</i></p>	
<p><b>‘Taria atu e koe ona tai timu, ona tai pari’</b></p> <p><i>‘Wait until the tide has ebbed and flowed’</i></p>	
<p><b>‘He manako te koura I kore ai’</b></p> <p><i>‘Wishing for the crayfish won’t bring it’</i></p>	
<p><b>‘Ka pū te ruha ka hao te rankgatahi’</b></p> <p><i>‘When an old net is worn out it is cast aside and a new net takes its place’</i></p>	
<p><b>‘Ki ngā whakaeke haumi’</b></p> <p><i>‘Join those who can join sections of a canoe’</i></p>	



# WHAKATOKĪ

**‘Mā te tauihu o tōu waka, e ū te waiora  
Kia mahue atu, ngā mea whakahirahira i roto i te  
koriparipo’**

*‘May the prow of your canoe, cleave the waters of life  
And leave in its wake, mighty deeds’*



Whakamārama/explanation:

Wherever you go, whatever you do in your life's journey, make sure that you are the best you can be, and do whatever you can for the betterment of our land and people.

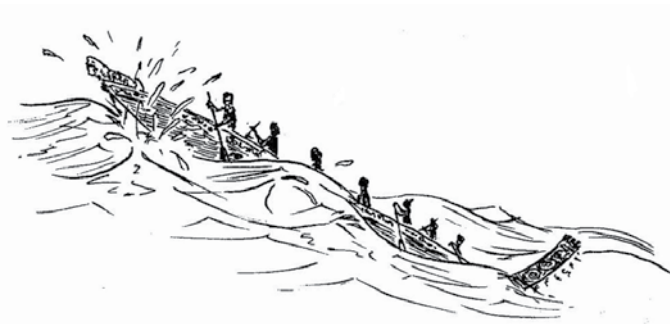
- Live life with purpose.

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**‘He moana pukepuke e ekengia e te waka’**

*‘A choppy sea can be navigated.’*



Whakamārama/explanation:

Even the toughest challenges can be worked through.

- Don't give up, keep going!

*Hoea te Waka, Piki te Mātau*



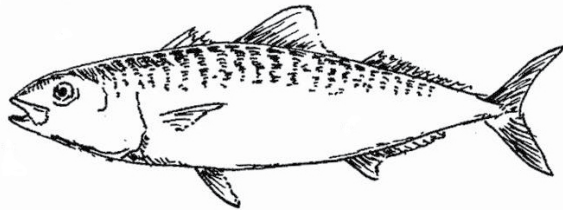
*Hoea te Waka, Piki te Mātau*



# WHAKATOKĪ

**'Na tōu kahawai ngako nui, te aroaro tahuri kē'**

*'Tis the fatness of your fish that causes you to turn away  
(from us)'*



Whakamārama/explanation:

The wealthy scorn of poor estate. An alternative interpretation is that of a woman who accepts gift from her lover but does not respond to his love.

- Stay humble. Share and give back.

Hoea te Waka, Piki te Mātau



**'Ko te hamama popoia te tangata, e kore e mau te ika'**

*'If a man yawns whilst fishing he will be unsuccessful'*



Whakamārama/explanation:

A saying which is applied to a person who has not persevered enough to finish what he has begun. If he gets tired of it, it will never be completed!

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Hoea te Waka, Piki te Mātau





# WHAKATOKĪ

**'Ka timu te tai, ka pao te tōrea'**

*'When the tide recedes, the seabird (oyster catcher) then strikes'*



Whakamārama/explanation:

This relates to an ancient battle near Moeraki in which Parakiore escaped. The tide was out allowing for a quick escape and his speed was likened to the actions of the oystercatcher.

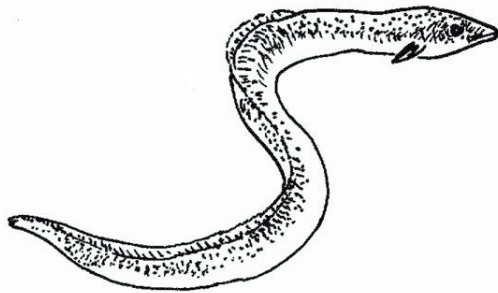
- Pounce on opportunities as they come! Strike when the iron is hot!

*Hoea te Waka, Piki te Mātau*



**'E moe ana te mata hī tuna, e ara an ate mata hī aua'**

*'When the eyes of those who fish for eels are closed, the eyes of those who fish for the yellow mullet or herring are open.'*



Whakamārama/explanation:

Some people sleep during the siege, while others are watching; they who keep awake prevent the pa from being surprised by the enemy.

The fisherman sleeps, but the watchman is awake (applied to watchfulness in war time, also to wakeful people and early risers).

*Hoea te Waka, Piki te Mātau*



*Hoea te Waka, Piki te Mātau*



# WHAKATOKĪ

**'Taria atu e koe ona tai timu, ona tai pari'**

*'Wait until the tide has ebbed and flowed'*



Whakamārama/explanation:

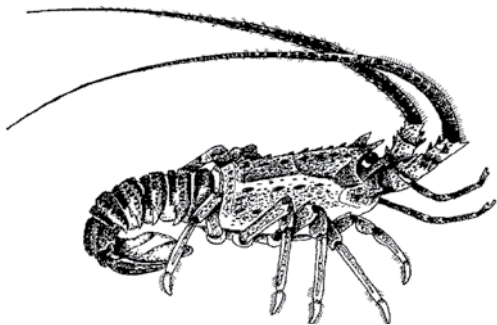
- All in good time.
- No need to rush some things.

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**'He manako te koura I kore ai'**

*'Wishing for the crayfish won't bring it'*



Whakamārama/explanation:

The saying arose through an amusing incident. The chief Hikairo took refuge in his Pā and a member of a raiding party exclaimed "there goes a fat meal for us". The proverb was the reply of Hikairo.

- You have to go out and work for something if you want it.
- You want it, work for it

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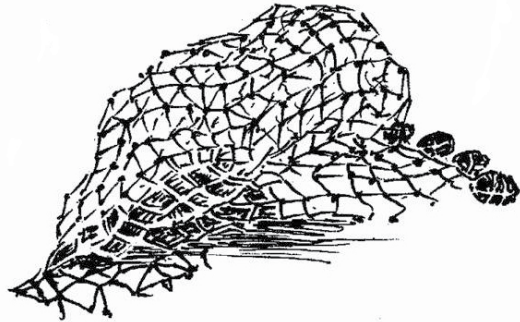
*Hoea te Waka, Piki te Mātau*



# WHAKATOKĪ

## 'Ka pū te ruha ka hao te rankgatahi'

*'When an old net is worn out it is cast aside and a new net takes its place'*



Whakamārama/explanation:

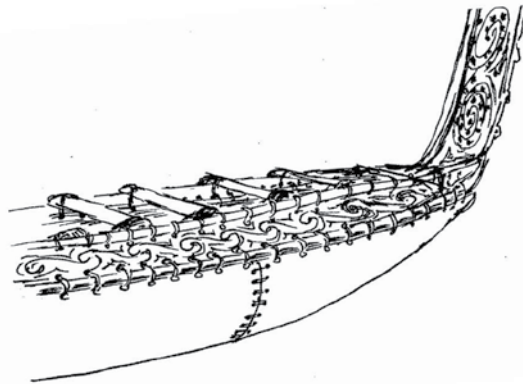
- When the present generation fades away the rising generation will take its place.
- New age practices require new knowledge to face new practices.

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## 'Ki ngā whakaeke haumi'

*'Join those who can join sections of a canoe'*



Whakamārama/explanation:

Some large canoes consist of two or three sections, and joining them together requires considerable skill.

This proverb serves as a metaphor that one should seek leaders who are able to weld diverse groups into a successful combination.

- Look for a leader who can bring groups together.

*Hoea te Waka, Piki te Mātau*



*Hoea te Waka, Piki te Mātau*

