

Māori artforms unique to Aotearoa: A beginner’s guide to basic knowledge of traditional Māori artforms for ākonga

OVERVIEW:

This resource is an introduction to treasured artforms unique to Aotearoa. The New Zealand Curriculum emphasises the importance of contexts in which artworks are made, viewed and valued. It is therefore essential that foundational art education in Aotearoa for teachers and students includes an exploration of artforms indigenous to this place.

The basic knowledge covered in these resources will provide students from a range of cultural backgrounds some understanding of the appearance and meaning inherent in Māori traditional artforms. This resource could also be used as professional development for teachers who are new to teaching art in New Zealand.

Older students will benefit from considering questions around appropriation of indigenous artforms and developing their own philosophy as artists related to this. This resource is also designed to spark students’ interest in artforms from their own diverse cultural backgrounds.

The activities within this resource can be adapted by teachers for use across level 1 – 7 of the N.Z. curriculum and linked to practical knowledge that incorporates students’ cultural milieu.

ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES:	New Zealand Curriculum – Visual Arts Levels 1-3	
<p>Te Whāriki – New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum Strands</p> <p>Strand 2: Belonging – Mana Whenua</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> links with the family and the wider world are affirmed. ākonga feel comfortable with customs and regular events. <p>Strand 4: Communication – Mana Reo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ākonga experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures ākonga discover and develop different ways to be creative and expressive. 	Communicating about art:	Students will explore and describe through discussion the different ways in which meaning is communicated in a range of artforms.
	Understanding contexts of art:	Students will investigate the purposes of different types of whare from past and present cultures and identify the contexts in which they were made, viewed and valued.
	Practical knowledge:	Students could explore elements of colour, shape and the conventions of symbolism in an associated practical art project
New Zealand Curriculum – Social Sciences Levels 1-3	New Zealand Curriculum – other links	
<p>Level 1: Understand how places in New Zealand are significant for individuals and groups.</p> <p>Level 2: Understand how cultural practices reflect and express people’s customs, traditions, and values. Understand how places influence people and people influence places.</p> <p>Level 3 Understand how cultural practices vary but reflect similar purposes. Understand how the movement of people affects cultural diversity and interaction in New Zealand.</p>	<p>Mathematics – patterns (see links in appendix to N.Z. Mathematics resources at the time of publishing)</p> <p>Art History – developing understanding of indigenous artforms to discuss evolution over time and appropriation of indigenous artforms</p> <p>Technology – characteristics of technology</p> <p>English - Communicate ideas using oral, written and visual language features to create meaning</p> <p>Science – building a whare and early Maori measurement (links in appendix).</p>	

WHAT IS A MARAE?

[Features of a marae \(2.5mins\)](#) [Tūrangawaewae \(2.5 mins\)](#)

After watching these short clips briefly discuss what a marae is and what happens there in your own words.

Where is your tūrangawaewae? Do you know anything about your ancestors and where they lived?

[Pōwhiri on a marae \(10mins\)](#)

- Which part of the marae is the 'battleground of words'?
- Have you ever been a part of a traditional pōwhiri? (maybe at school, a public event or a marae you are associated with)
- Does your family have a specific place or places where they come together to celebrate special events, discuss important issues or resolve disagreements?
- Where are the places you go to when someone passes away?
- If you have guests that visit your home do they ever bring a koha (gift) and what is it?
- If guests are visiting do you provide them with kai (food) at some point?

Use your general knowledge and the online [Māori Dictionary](#) to find the meaning of these words you have just heard and match them up to their definition!

1) Pōwhiri	A) Welcoming ceremony
2) Manuhiri	B) Guest to the marae
3) Tangata whenua	C) People from that marae
4) Kaikaranga	D) Caller
5) Wharenuui	E) Meeting house
6) Marae ātea	F) Area in front of the meeting house

MĀORI WHARE –

Can you draw a symbol to show the purpose of these whare?

Wharenuui,	Whare kai	Whare wānanga	Whare whakairo	Whare paku

He aha te *tāe* o tōu whare? What is the *colour* of your house?

TE WHARENUI (WHARE WHAKAIRO / WHARE TŪPUNA)

“When you enter a whare, you are not entering an ordinary building, but the body of an ancestor, whose arms (maihi) are outstretched, ready to embrace you.” *[reference](#)

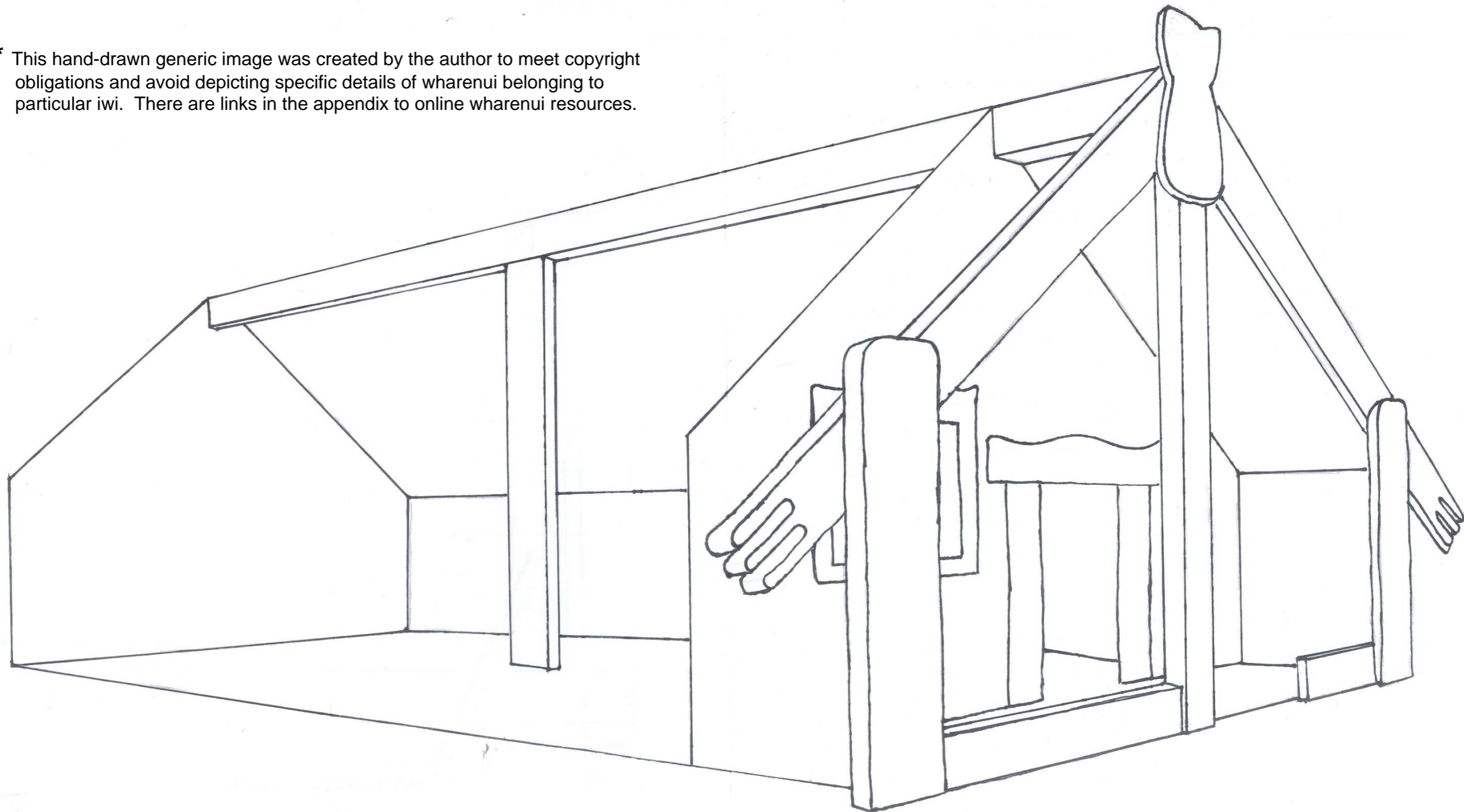
These types of whare are very special for this reason and because they are commonly adorned with a range of unique and treasured Māori artforms.

Label the different parts of the wharenui diagram overleaf using the resources provided, class discussions and/or online research.

Tekoteko	Carved figure at the apex of the barge boards, usually representing a kaitiaki or ancestor the whare is named after.	Pou tokumanawa	Centre ridgepole of the whare, referred to as the ‘heart-post’ and a significant place in the whare
Koruru	Below the tekoteko, usually represents a direct descendant of the ancestor	Roro	Front end of a meeting house, the covered verandah area or porch.
Maihi	Barge-boards under the tekoteko that represent the arms of the ancestor	Pou mua	Front post of a meeting house supporting the tāhuhu
Raparapa	Ends of the maihi, often carved to represent fingers of the ancestor.	Paepae	Space or seating for orator for public speaker
Amo	Upright supports of the lower ends of the maihi at the front of a meeting house	Whatitoka	Whare doorway, often with an especially carved slab over the door of a whare whakairo called a pare
Tāhuhu	Main ridge-beam or ‘spine’ connecting the heke	Matapihi	Whare window which can also have a pare above it
Heke	Rafters - also can be symbolic of the ribs, often adorned with kōwhaiwhai patterns	Poupou	Poupou – the carved posts or figures representing the ancestor’s various descendants.

TE WHARE TŪPUNA This could be an opportunity to visit a whare in your local context through making connections with the iwi in your area, gaining permission to study and reproduce artworks in their care. Otherwise there are many excellent generic online resources and images* to support students' learning.

* This hand-drawn generic image was created by the author to meet copyright obligations and avoid depicting specific details of whareniui belonging to particular iwi. There are links in the appendix to online whareniui resources.



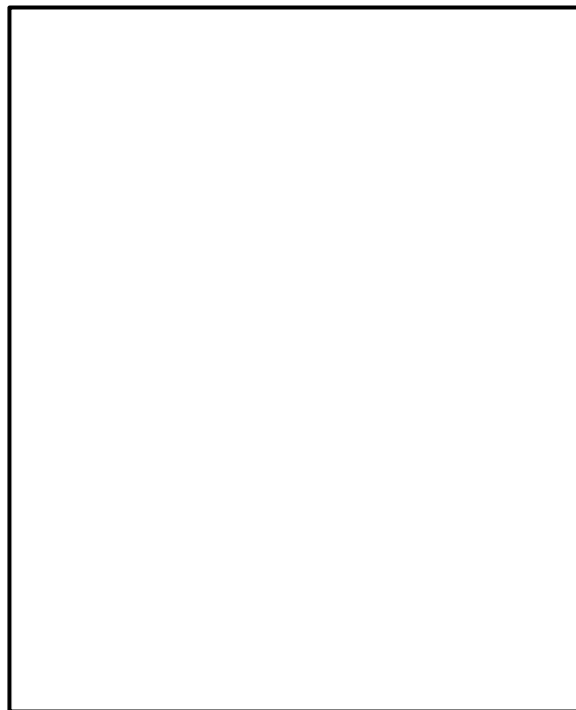
Describe the shape of the whareniui and what each part of the building represents.

TRADITIONAL MĀORI ARTFORMS COMMONLY FOUND IN A WHARENUI

A page for visual and written notes from class discussions & research* (*see appendix for useful links on each artform).

Kōwhaiwhai

Draw a section of a selected pattern



Media (what is it made of?)

Techniques (how was / is it made?)

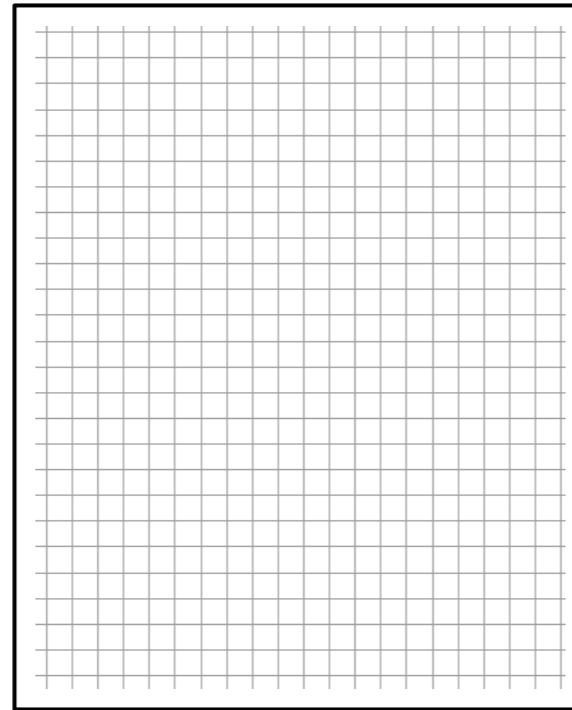
Colours / shapes:

Location in the whare:

Symbolism / meanings:

Tukutuku

Use the grid provided to record a design.



Media (what is it made of?)

Techniques (how was / is it made?)

Colours / shapes:

Location in the whare:

Symbolism / meanings:

Whakairo

Add a detailed close-up of the whakairo that interest you.



Media (what is it made of?)

Techniques (how was / is it made?)

Colours / shapes:

Location in the whare:

Symbolism / meanings:

COMPARING WHARENUI CONTEXTS – traditional / contemporary.

Provide students with two images of marae / wharenuui:

- 1) Rongomaraeroa at Te Papa created by Cliff Whiting.
- 2) Another image that aligns with traditional colours, artforms and motifs (they could reflect on a wharenuui studied for the previous activity).

If students have not used a Venn diagram before, explain how these are used to compare and order thoughts or data.

Either working individually or collaboratively in groups, students can create their own Venn diagram.

For each of the statements below students are to consider what is different and what is the same for each marae / wharenuui.

ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF ARTWORKS

Are traditional or contemporary colours, shapes, materials and techniques used in these whare / marae?

What materials have been used to create the artforms and how have the patterns, shapes and imagery been selected and arranged?

What aspects of traditional artforms can you see in both examples?

ALL ARTWORKS HAVE A CONTEXT - these taonga exist in two different places / spaces how do they compare?

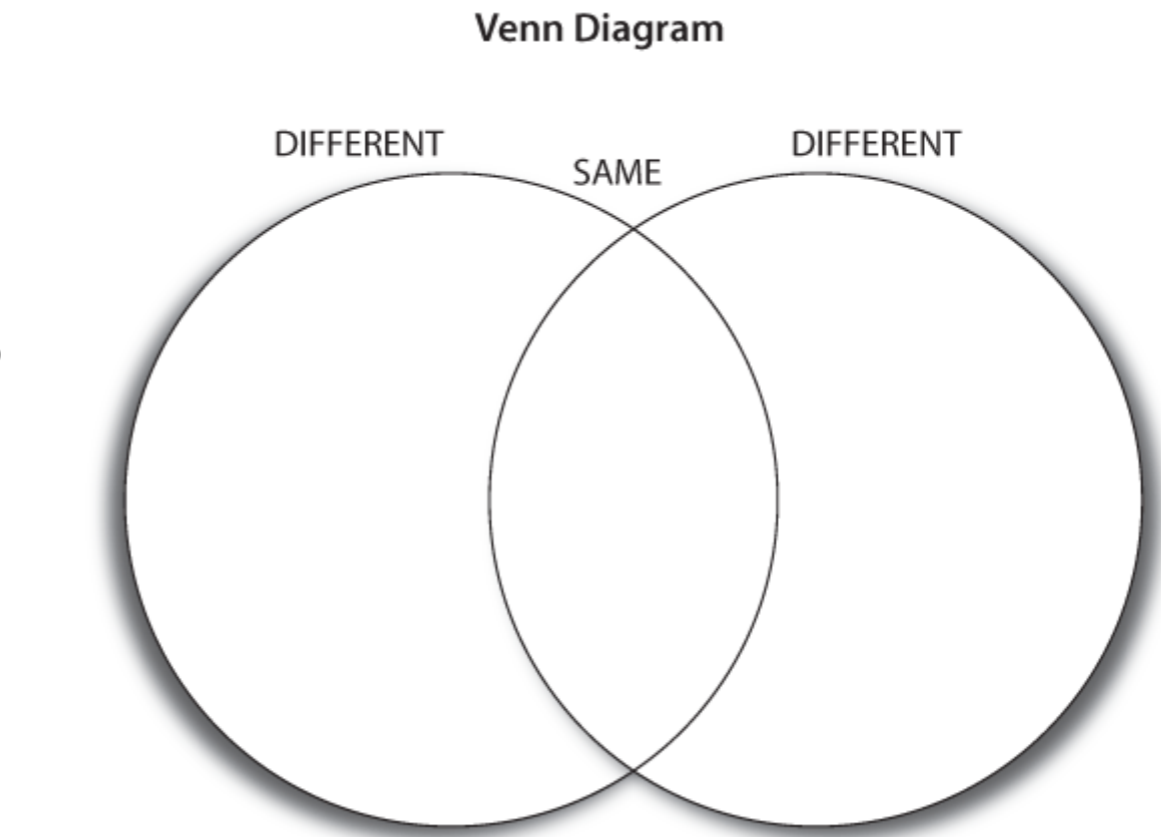
Physical context– Geographical / Environmental

Where is the whare / marae located? Who gets to see it and why?

Is the artwork related to (or created from) the environment?

Cultural / Religious context–

Do the whare / marae incorporate any religious or cultural icons / symbols / meanings?



Historical context–

Are the artworks a reflection of social or historical events or changes?

Artistic purpose

Why were these artworks - made – is it in response to art traditions, cultural practices or are there other reasons?

CONTEMPORARY MĀORI ARTIST: compared to traditional artforms - examples.

<p>TITLE: SERGEANT TANE AND THE ARMY MARCHING BAND. How does this title relate to the artwork?</p>		<p>Attach photocopy or printout of artwork here</p>	<p>WHAT PARTS OF THIS ARTWORK REMIND YOU OF EUROPEAN CULTURE OR ART?</p>
<p>WHEN WAS THE WORK MADE?</p>	<p>CAN YOU FIND OUT HOW BIG THE ACTUAL ARTWORK IS?</p>		<p>WHAT PARTS OF THIS ARTWORK REMIND YOU OF TRADITIONAL MĀORI CULTURE OR ART?</p>
<p>DESCRIPTION - What is the artwork a picture of?</p>			
<p>SHAPES – What kind of shapes are in the work and how are they put together?</p>			
<p>ARTIST: REUBEN PATTERSON</p>			<p>WHAT DO YOU THINK? about appropriation of traditional art forms and cultural symbols by contemporary artists?</p>
<p>LIST THE COLOURS THAT ARE USED IN THE ARTWORK.</p> <p>WHY DO YOU THINK THE ARTIST USED THESE COLOURS?</p>	<p>WHAT MATERIALS DID HE USE TO MAKE THIS ARTWORK?</p> <p>HOW DID HE USE THEM TO MAKE IT LOOK LIKE THIS?</p>		

Appendix of helpful links:

WHARENUI - alternative images / worksheets for wharenuui:

Non-commercial:

[Te Ara – meeting house](#)

[Cybersoul the marae](#)

[Wikimedia Commons](#) – wharenuui porch

[Wikimedia commons](#) – whare, outer parts

Commercial:

[Twinkl – marae](#)

[Teachers Pay Teachers](#) – My marae visit

[Inspire me](#) – A3 poster

Other Marae /whare information:

- [Waitangi – Stories from the wharenuui](#)
- [The journey to Te Papa marae](#) -
- [TKI – Marae te reo resources](#)
- [The story behind the world's oldest surviving whare](#)
- <https://kupu.Māori.nz/set/Marae>
- Literacy NZ [whare tūpuna](#)
- Te Noho Kotahitanga Marae - [an architecture classroom to us](#) (360 degree video)
- [Reawakening the treasury wharenuui](#) -the [treasury wharenuui](#)
- [Science learning hub](#) – good image and info on measurement
- [Te Takinga Pataka](#) – video about a storehouse – Tales from Te Papa
- Glen Holmes School [student blog about parts of the marae](#)
- [Marae explained](#) by people outside New Zealand
- History of Auckland University's [Waipapa Marae](#) – a great overview of how a marae was conceived, built and how it now functions in the community and the [fale for Pacifica studies](#) – a good comparison to discuss
- [Quizlet](#) – parts of the wharenuui
- [Quizlet](#) – parts of the meeting house with images
- <https://www.pinterest.nz/visartsonline/maori-art-resources/>

KŌWHAIWHAI

Arts Online [kōwhaiwhai poster](#)

The Dowse – [kōwhaiwhai video](#)

[NZ math's](#) - kōwhaiwhai activities

NZ Math's – [I spy symmetry!](#)

TUKUTUKU

Arts Online [tukutuku poster](#)

ChCh libraries – [tukutuku panels](#)

NZ Math's – [tukutuku patterns](#)

[Poutama – symbol for learning](#) but good visuals of process

WHAKAIRO

Arts Online [whakairo poster](#)

[Clive Fugill – master carver](#)

The current “Bob Ross” [of Māori carving](#)

CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS

For comparison with traditional artforms.

Arts Online Pinterest page- [Maori artists](#).

A series of [8 mini art documentaries](#) about well-known Ngāi Tahu artists.

The dynamic tension between [customary and contemporary art](#).

ENGLISH

<https://www.anzliterature.com/feature/poutokomanawa-the-heartpost/>

SCIENCE

[Building a wharenuui](#)

[Early Māori Measurement](#)

TEACHER READINGS

[Mataatua Wharenuui: Te Whare I Hoki Mai](#)