

# Māori Gods



**Approach:** One to one  
**Focus:** Interpreting symbolic elements.  
**Resources:** Prompt card, 3 pictures.

**Level:** Year 4 and year 8

**Questions/instructions:**

**Show prompt card.**

This is Tangaroa, the Māori god of the sea. You can tell this is the god of the sea because he has a fish tail, hair like seaweed and is blue and green like the sea.

**Māori Gods Prompt Card**

This is a Māori god of the sea.

The picture shows he is the god of the sea because of:

- the fish tail,
- the seaweed hair,
- and the blue and green colours like the sea.





**Show picture 1.**

1. What do you think he is the god of?

*[Tawhiri-matea  
 – god of wind/storms/  
 weather/clouds/rain]*

name and 'god of'  
 both correct

'god of' correct but  
 not name

% responses	
y4	y8
0	1
42	58

2. How does the picture show that?

*[judged in relation to student's answer to 1]*

appropriately argued, using  
 multiple features

appropriately argued,  
 using one feature

46	66
43	30

**Show picture 2.**

3. What do you think he is the god of?

*[Tumatauenga  
 – god of man/people or  
 war/fighting]*

name and 'god of'  
 both correct

'god of' correct  
 but not name

0	0
19	28

4. How does the picture show that?

*[judged in relation to student's answer to 3]*

appropriately argued, using  
 multiple features

appropriately argued,  
 using one feature

35	47
46	39



**Show picture 3.**

5. What do you think he is the god of?

*[Rongomatane/Rongomaraero  
 – god of peace/happiness or god of  
 gardening/farming/agriculture, kumara/arts]*

name and 'god of' both correct

'god of' correct but not name

% responses	
y4	y8
0	0
3	14

6. How does the picture show that?

*[judged in relation to student's answer to 5]*

appropriately argued,  
 using multiple features

appropriately argued,  
 using one feature

34	54
52	36

<b>Total score:</b>	8-12	5	13
	6-7	24	40
	4-5	36	27
	2-3	28	17
	0-1	7	3

**Commentary:**

Students at both year levels showed substantial ability to reason using visual cues but little prior knowledge of these images.