

Trend Task: Porridge

Approach: One to one
 Focus: Interpretation and inference
 Resources: Video recording on laptop computer

Year: 4 & 8

Questions / instructions:

We will start this activity by listening to a story called "Porridge".

Click the *Porridge* button.



VIDEO VOICEOVER:

[Boston, Michelle (1996). "Porridge." *School Journal*, 3 (3), 28-30]
 I don't like porridge. Well, it's okay but I wouldn't offer to eat it - ever. My sister, Anna, though - she hates it! Simple as that. Hates it!
 Now, usually in winter, my mother gives us porridge for breakfast. Or she did until last week...
 "You need something warm in your tummies as you walk to school," she says.
 I make porridge edible by spooning golden syrup on it. The syrup collects in a soft lump in the middle, swirling out in little trails and the milk gets sweet and warm. But really, all the sweet stuff can't disguise the thick, grey goopiness of porridge. I find the faster I eat it, the easier it is to swallow. When porridge gets cold it turns to concrete.
 Last Friday was a grey, drizzly, winter morning. Mum gave me my porridge and, when my sister was finally dressed, she got hers too. We spooned extra syrup on it while Mum was making Dad a cup of coffee. I finished mine while Mum was doing our lunches - the usual peanut butter for me and Marmite and cheese for Anna. While I brushed my teeth, I could hear Mum reminding Anna for the five hundredth time to hurry up and eat her porridge. I read my book to Mum while my sister played with the golden syrup and her spoon, mixing the whole lot into a grey, soupy mess.
 Finally, Mum shouted at her. "You're not going to school till you're finished!"
 "But Mum, it's yucky," Anna whined.
 I finished packing my bag. Mum sat down and began to collect a spoonful of the cooling, grey goo to feed to Anna. My little sister clamped her mouth shut. Mum yelled. Anna grizzled but still without opening her mouth. The crosser Mum got, the wider and redder Anna's eyes grew. Huge tears rolled down her cheeks - but she still wouldn't open her mouth.
 "Now!" said my mother in that voice that promised she would NOT give in. I had learned long ago that I never win a battle with my mother. Oh, it might seem like I'm winning but Mum's an expert.
 I quickly picked up my bag, kissed Mum on the cheek and took off for school. Like I say, I've never won a battle with Mum. But Anna...
 About a quarter past nine, while I was heading up the date in my story book, I looked out the window. Running in through the gates was my little sister. She had a white note in her hand. Her eyes were still red and her mouth was firmly closed... We haven't had porridge since then.

At the end of this story the boy said that he saw his sister Anna running in through the gates with a white note in her hand. Her eyes were still red and her mouth was firmly closed. He also said that they hadn't had porridge since then!

1. What do you think happened with Anna and her mother after Anna's brother left for school?

Anna kept her mouth shut, refused to eat porridge

% response
2006 ('02)
year 4 year 8

24 (23) 34 (38)

Mum kept trying to get Anna to eat porridge

22 (20) 23 (21)

Anna won in end

32 (13) 50 (23)

2. What do you think might have been written in the note that Anna was carrying?

apology for Anna being late

41 (46) 39 (52)

explanation/excuse for Anna being late

54 (51) 69 (68)

3. Why do you think they haven't had porridge since then?

Mum decided it was too much hassle

47 (25) 61 (42)

Mum doesn't want to upset Anna so much

7 (7) 12 (7)

Total score:

4-7 18 (13) 31 (25)

3 27 (18) 35 (22)

2 25 (25) 20 (27)

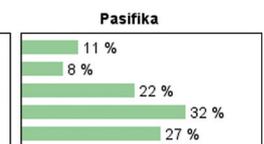
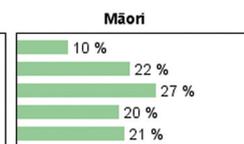
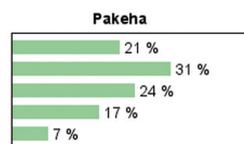
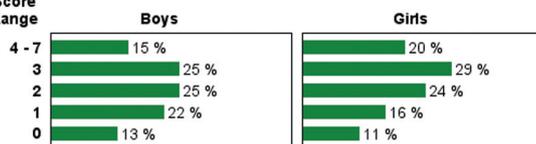
1 19 (25) 10 (19)

0 12 (19) 5 (7)

Subgroup Analyses:

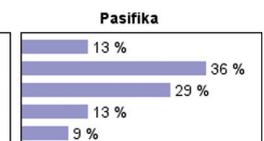
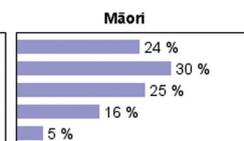
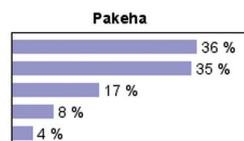
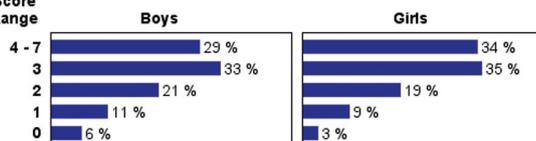
Year 4

Score Range



Year 8

Score Range



Commentary:

Most students in years 4 and 8 were able to give at least one good response to each of the questions posed requiring that an inference or prediction be made about the story. Some students were able to elaborate on their responses, indicating a richer understanding of the events. Pakeha students scored higher than Māori or Pasifika students; gender differences were small, slightly favouring girls. Solid growth was seen on this task from year 4 to year 8. Both year 4 and year 8 students scored a little higher in 2006 than in 2002.