

Approach: One to one  
 Focus: Retelling a story  
 Resources: Story card - *Tusk The Cat*

**Questions / instructions:**

You are going to read a story called 'Tusk The Cat'. It is about a cat that goes missing. Read the story to yourself. If there are any words you get stuck on, I can help you. When you have finished reading, tell me by saying 'Finished' and then I'll ask you to tell the story to me.

**Give the student the story card.**

When Corbin Anderson gave me Tusk, he said he was the runt of the litter and would probably always be small and easy to look after. But he was wrong. Very, very wrong.

Tusk grew into the biggest cat I have ever seen. He had enormous ears and razor-sharp teeth. His claws could rip your skin to shreds without even trying. He was the blackest of cats. And he was fierce.

Tusk soon became the boss of our home. He sat in Dad's favourite chair, the one nobody else ever sat in. And if Tusk didn't get his tea on time, he would sharpen his claws on our brand new couch.

His favourite game was to hide under my bed and wait until it was my bedtime. Then he'd jump out and grab an ankle with both claws. Hard. And no matter how much I yelled and shook my leg, he just would not let go.

I wasn't the only one he attacked either. Before anyone could hang the washing on the clothes line, we had to trick Tusk to go inside. He was so greedy, it was easy to fool him.

We'd bang a spoon on the side of the cat food tin, and he'd go racing inside. Then we'd run out, slamming the door behind us. Mostly it worked, but sometimes it didn't, and I've got the scars to prove it.

Our family probably used more plasters than anyone else in New Zealand.

One day, we noticed that none of us were covered in plasters and Dad had been able to sit in his favourite chair. We tried to think of the last time we had seen Tusk the fierce attack cat, and we worked out that it had been at least a couple of days.

Something was wrong. Tusk had never missed a meal in his life. Never! We looked everywhere but we couldn't find him.

I felt sad and wanted to be alone - so I went to my secret hut. As I was fighting my way through the flax that hid the entrance, I felt the most awful pain in my ankle.

I looked down, and I saw three black balls of fur attached to my ankle. Each fur ball had enormous ears and razor-sharp claws and looked very fierce indeed. Suddenly I realised that I'd found Tusk, and I'd found Tusk's family too. Three kittens. And one of them was a little runt.

Even though my leg was bleeding and I was in terrible pain, I couldn't help smiling and laughing. I could see that our family was in for a world record in plaster using.

And I'd learnt something too. Something really important. Never trust boys called Corbin Anderson when they give you a runty kitten and tell you it's a tomcat.

Start reading the story to yourself now.

**When the student says 'Finished', remove the story card before the student begins to retell.**

Now tell me the story so that I get a good understanding of what it's about and what is happening.

**Retelling of story:**

- Tusk was the runt of the litter & was expected to remain small.
- Tusk grew into a big, fierce cat.
- Tusk became the boss of the home.
- Tusk was greedy.
- Tusk attacked family members/they used lots of plasters.
- Tusk went missing.
- Family missed Tusk & looked for Tusk.
- Tusk was found with three kittens/had had a family.
- The kittens were fierce too - just like Tusk.

	% responses	
	y4	y8
<b>Number of key points mentioned:</b>		
7-9	2	18
6	8	21
5	14	23
4	20	21
3	17	10
2	19	3
0-1	20	4

	% responses	
	y4	y8
<b>Extent to which story was retold with additional features:</b>		
comprehensively	3	10
substantially	14	33
moderately	33	34
little/not at all	50	23

	% responses	
	y4	y8
<b>student indicated understanding that Tusk is a female cat</b>		
	5	14

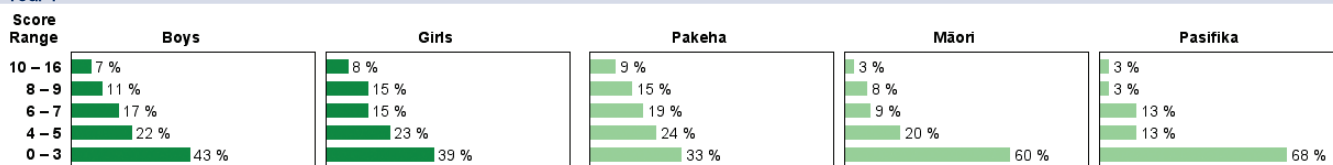
	% responses	
	y4	y8
<b>Coherence of story:</b> (hanging together in logical order; beginning, middle, end; makes sense)		
very high	3	16
quite high	17	44
moderate	34	28
low	46	12

	% responses	
	y4	y8
<b>Total score:</b>		
10-16	8	33
8-9	12	25
6-7	17	24
4-5	22	12
0-3	41	6

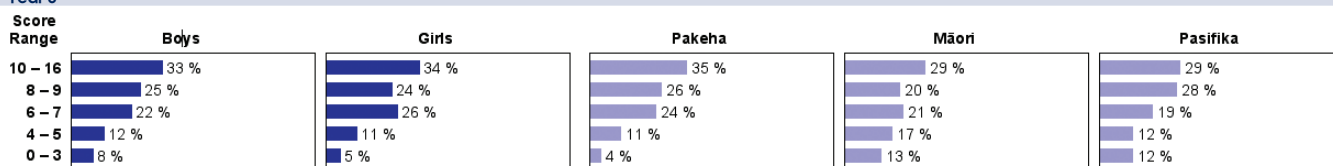


**Subgroup Analyses:**

**Year 4**



**Year 8**



**Commentary:**

This was a difficult reading passage for many year 4 students, particularly Māori and Pasifika students. Among year 8 students, performance patterns were similar for all five subgroups of students.