

# Ngati



This New Zealand Film Study Guide was written by Cynthia Thomas, who has 20 years' teaching experience. It has been designed as a starting point for teachers who wish to put together a unit based on Goodbye Pork Pie.

There are currently five New Zealand Film Study Guides available - An Angel At My Table, Forgotten Silver, Goodbye Pork Pie, Ngati, Sleeping Dogs. More titles are planned for 2003.

To purchase a copy of these New Zealand movies, contact the distributor, Stage Door Video.



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## NEW ZEALAND FILM STUDY GUIDE

The following are activities based on the achievement objectives presented in the Ministry of Education document, "English in the New Zealand Curriculum".

NEW ZEALAND FILM

COMMISSION

TE TUMU WHAKAATA TAONGA





WRITTEN LANGUAGE

**WRITING poetic**

As a class, brainstorm a list of words suggested by images in the film, or have each student contribute an adjective, noun, verb and adverb to a box. Pull the words out randomly and list on the board. Students use these words (or forms of them) in that order, to write a poem suggested by the film.

- > Write a letter to a friend about your imaginary holiday in Kapua.
- > Write a letter as either Ropata to Tione, or Tione to Ropata, that they might have wanted the other to read before Ropata's death.
- > Write a fitting piece about Ropata for the In Memoriam or Obituary section of the newspaper.
- > Write an alternative ending for the film.

**WRITING expressive**

**RESPONSE**  
Write down your feelings in response to the following statements or questions. You may refer to both the film and your own experiences.

- > Ngati is a touching film.
- > I learned something from watching Ngati.
- > Ngati is about as far removed from Once Were Warriors as it is possible to get.
- > It's good to see New Zealand on screen.
- > This film would have no relevance to foreigners.
- > There is little sense of community in our urban areas.
- > Ngati shows that it is possible to address important issues in a gentle, non-confrontational way.
- > The way Ngati has been scripted and filmed reflects the nature of the community being filmed.
- > Ngati is almost a documentary.
- > Ngati is full of humour – in the script, in the characterisation and in the plot.

**WRITING transactional**

Write a review of the film for a magazine.  
Design a tourist brochure for Kapua.  
Research one of the following topics (all related to the film).  
Try using the KWL format.

ie.	WHAT I KNOW	WHAT I WANT TO KNOW	WHAT I LEARNED

**TOPICS**  
Maoritanga • marae protocol (manuhiri, karakia, whaikorero, waiata etc) food / hangi / kai moana • tohunga / mate Maori family / community / ancestry / whakapapa / iwi / hapu / runanga / tangata • whenua / turangawaewae / kuia / kaumatua / tipuna / oral tradition • life / death / tangi / wairua / tapu / urupa • mana • 1940s New Zealand • Film Reviews of Ngati • Leukaemia Te Maori exhibition • Maori presence on NZ TV • Maori Education History of New Zealand Film • John O'Shea • Rural/urban drift

These texts may be useful  
Cairns, B. & Martin, H. Shadows on the Wall – A Study of Seven NZ Feature Films, Longman Paul, Auckland 1994. Horrocks, R. On Film II, Heinemann, Auckland 1980. Partridge, D. & Huges, P. Flicks – Studying Film as Text, OUP, Australia 1992.

CORAL LANGUAGE

Using your knowledge of tikanga Maori, write a leaflet aimed at tourists and monocultural New Zealanders, aimed at educating them about the Maori way of life.

Script Ngati as a documentary.

**PERSONAL reading**

Read and review one or more works by Maori writers, or writers dealing with Maori issues, for example, Patricia Grace (Patricia Grace's Potiki deals with a small, coastal community dealing with death and change), Witi Ihimaera, Noel Hilliard, Craig Harrison.

Close Reading - See Viewing tasks.

**SPEAKING / LISTENING interpersonal**

**CONTINUUM**  
As your teacher calls out the following statements, physically place yourself on a continuum, from strongly disagree, through neutral, to strongly agree. For each statement, pair up with someone who disagrees with your stand. Discuss your viewpoint with that person.

- STATEMENTS**
- I cannot relate to events shown in this film.
  - This film is moving.
  - The bad outweighs the good in this film.
  - This film has messages for us.
  - This film deserves a remake.
  - This film is almost as realistic as a documentary.
  - This film would be spoiled by sex or action scenes.
  - City life is better than country life.
  - It is important for minority and indigenous cultures to make their own movies.
  - Ngati tells of a community going through a healing process

Brainstorm what makes this film especially New Zealand.  
Is it totally New Zealand?  
Could it be relevant to other cultures?

In groups, on a large sheet of paper draw around a group member to create an outline of a major character. Inside the body, brainstorm and write down all the words you can think of to describe his character / personality (eg for Greg - uninvolved, racist, naive, supportive, willing to change, superior etc). Inside and around the head area, brainstorm and write down all the words you can think of to describe his feelings (eg separate, superior, amazed, grateful etc). Outside the body, brainstorm and write down all the external influences on him (eg friendliness of locals, support of Doctor, feelings for Judy, realisation of ancestry etc). Pin your sheet to the wall for others to read and comment on.

**Circle Talk:** Students form two circles with equal numbers. One stands inside the other, facing outward. The outer circle face the middle. Students talk to each other on various topics for a preset time, before one circle moves clockwise, so that all students experience a series of partners with whom to share their thoughts.

- TOPICS might include**
- My favourite part of the film was ....
  - My least favourite part of the film....
  - I thought the character ..... was ...
  - I thought ..... was the best actor because ....

VISUAL LANGUAGE

- I thought ..... was a poor actor because ....
- The things I learned were .....

In groups, talk about the different groups into which the characters fit – eg Maori community; Pakeha community members; the newcomer; Pakeha bosses. Design a diagram to show how they interrelate or are separate. Display for the class.

**SPEAKING / LISTENING using Text**

Read your alternative ending to the class.  
In pairs, script an interview with a main character exploring their motivation, then present it.

**PRESENTING**

- > Design a poster advertising the film.
- > Design a collage representing one or more important ideas in the film.
- > Storyboard a promotional preview for Ngati.
- > Draw a diagram showing your community links? (How isolated or connected are you?)

**VIEWING (and Close Reading)**

Following teacher instructions, storyboard your favourite scene.  
**READING FILM**  
View the tangi sequence, from the shot of the empty classroom to the shot of Tione and Uncle Eru sitting outside the whare runanga (approximately 8 minutes), and answer the following questions.

- How does the film maker use sound to create emotion
- in the shots of the classroom, through shots of people arriving and commiserating?
  - in the shots of food preparation, Tione and Iwi talking and the tohunga's whaikorero?
  - in the shots of the burial and Tione remembering Ropata?
  - in the transition to the shots following those - of the beach, food preparation and singing / eating?

- > What is the purpose of the series of (often shorter) shots of people arriving at the home, and later of people at the burial?
- > What is the effect of the use of sub-titles while the tohunga speaks?
- > What is the tohunga's message, in your own words?
- > What types of shot does the film maker use to create the flashback of Tione and Ropata playing in the surf? Is this sequence effective? Why / why not?

List the shots that you think show Tione coming to terms with Ropata's death, and explain why you chose them.

- What does this sequence show the viewer about Maori tikanga in terms of
- marae protocol
  - views about life and death
  - the community
  - prayer and song.
  - food.

- > What is the effect of the use of high angle shots of the classroom, arrival on the marae, and the burial?
- > Discuss the tone and effectiveness of this sequence, mentioning type of shot, shot duration, dialogue / sound.

Watch the sequence again, without the sound. List all the facts and emotions conveyed by type and composition of shots, and editing. Are they used effectively? Watch again, this time with the sound. List the things that music and dialogue add to the sequence.

Ngati has a 3 Act Structure involving three equally important plot strands – the arrival and education of Greg, the threatened closure of the freezing works, and Ropata's illness and death. Brainstorm important incidents in each section of the film, then plot them as three lines on a plot graph showing incidents and how they intersect with other plot strands

OR  
Have students allocate the following events to one of the acts, or allocate one event to each student and have them place themselves in one of the three Acts.

Greg arrives, Ropata's illness, freezing works may close, Greg gets to know the people, Greg starts to understand the people, Iwi is offered some control of sheep station, Greg / Judy find out about Greg's mother, Ropata dies, Iwi and Uncle Eru help Tione, Iwi made independent manager of sheep station, Sally and Iwi solve freezing works problem, Greg plans to return OR  
Sequencing – Jigsaw Groups : Groups choose one plot strand each (ie the arrival and education of Greg, the threatened closure of the freezing works, Ropata's illness and death) and make a list of important events that take place. New groups are then formed, with at least one member of each previous group as members. Individuals then tutor the rest of the group about their original topic.

**SEQUENCING**  
Plot : Students put plot items in order (or write their own series of incidents, which others then order) then put them in a flow diagram.

**IN GROUPS, COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING 3 LEVEL GUIDE.**  
Level 1 : Reading On The Lines  
Tick the statements which focus on what the film maker shows in this film. When you've made your decisions, discuss your reasons with your group.

- Tione cannot break his ties of friendship with Ropata
- the Greg who arrives in Kapua is a racist
- Greg's father wanted to get rid of him for the holidays
- Tione is upset when Ropata dies
- Greg decides to stay in the community

Level 2 : Reading Between The Lines  
Tick statements which you think mean what the film maker meant in this film. Discuss your choices with your group and be prepared to justify them.

- the Kapua community have to face the conflict between the old way of life and the new
- the acceptance of the community help to heal Greg's racism
- Greg's father sent him to Kapua for a purpose
- Iwi and Uncle Eru both played a part in helping Tione come to terms with Ropata's death
- Greg only decides to stay in the community because he learns his mother was Maori

Level 3 : Reading Beyond The Lines  
Tick the statements which you think the film maker would support. Be ready to give your reasons when you discuss your choices.

- it is important to build bridges between the old way of life and the new, between the old and the young
- racism is learned
- the "power of one" can be achieved – there can be change when members of the community work together
- coming to terms with death is a part of life
- change is inevitable – it is the way that we deal with it that is important