How well do we know our language?

Activity 1: New Zealand Place Names

Research into New Zealand place names, either original Maori place names, or those given since European discovery and settlement, reveals many aspects of interest about our history and our social and cultural heritage.

1. Many Maori names have a geographic origin, reflecting the local environment or topography. Examples include:

   Manga
   Nui
   Puke
   Roto
   Wai
   Whanga or wanga

   Find three examples of each of these and give their meanings.

2. Find four examples of placenames beginning with **Kai**. Explain why the names are associated with kai (food).
3. What are alternative or early names for:

Akaroa
Inglewood
Maungakiekie
Napier
Naseby
Otakou
Queen Charlotte Sound
Southland
Stewart Island
Ranfurly

4. How did these towns or places get their names?

Arthur’s Pass
Bell Block
Carterton
Dannevirke
Eketahuna
Featherston
Greymouth
Haast
Hamilton
Invercargill
Johnsonville
Kerikeri
Lilybank
Mackenzie country
Masterton
Ninety-Mile Beach
Norsewood
Otane
Palmerston
Quail Island
Rotoiti
Shannon
Taumarunui
Taylor’s Mistake
Upper Hutt
Vogeltown
Whareroa
Young Nick’s Head
5. Divide the names listed in 4. above into those that have their origin in New Zealand and those that were ‘imported’? How does Hamilton differ in origin from Masterton or Carterton?

6. Which is the longest place name in New Zealand? How many letters does it have?

7. Hypocoristics and place names:

Hypocoristics are pet names or abbreviated forms of words, sometimes known as diminutives. What are the correct placenames for these hypocoristics:

Cardie
Dunny or Dunners
Gissy
Heke
Kune
Murch
Palmy
Queens
Rags
TK
P-town
T-town
Wellywood

8. Why are these places remembered?

   a. Bastion Point
   b. Opononi
   c. Tangiwi
   d. Whirinaki

9. Which one of the following names is used most often in New Zealand to name places and aspects of the New Zealand environment?

   a. Palmerston
   b. Victoria
   c. Wairoa
   d. White
10. Which New Zealand locations or placenames would be most closely associated with these terms:

a. crib
b. naati (sometimes ngati)
c. kiekie
d. Maori huntaway and German doggie
e. pakahi
f. tomo

Resources:

Think carefully about the resources you will use.

How do you know that your resources are reliable? What will you do to ensure that your information is reliable?

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