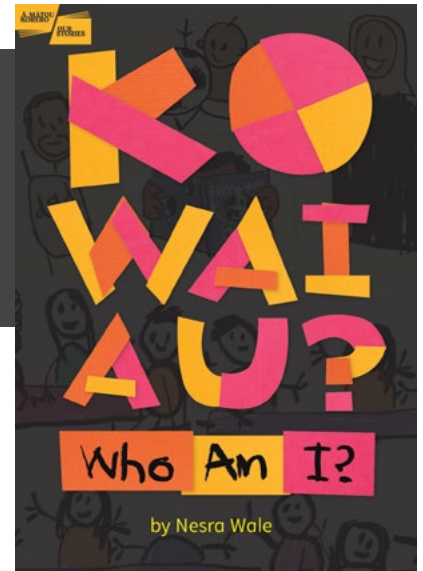


Kaiako Support Material

Ko Wai Au? / Who Am I?
by Nesra Wale



Ko Wai Au? / Who Am I? is one of a series of picture books intended to support, reflect, and celebrate the Muslim community of New Zealand. The series focuses on wellbeing, resilience, diversity, and inclusion and is intended for use with children in early learning settings and at Level 1 of The New Zealand Curriculum.

Ko Wai Au? / Who Am I? is inspired by the Māori construct of a pepeha, an introduction that explains a person's connections to their people and place. In this book, the traditional pepeha structure has been adapted to focus on universal dimensions of identity, such as affinity with family and friends and preferences for food and activities. The text is intended to prompt thinking about how the various dimensions combine to make each person unique and special.

This book promotes wellbeing and inclusion by showing an Aotearoa New Zealand where differences are celebrated and by supporting the notion that “we must learn about others so that they are no longer others”. It provides the opportunity to include and normalise elements of Muslim culture and te ao Māori, while recognising an ever-diversifying Kiwi culture. *Ko Wai Au? / Who Am I?* opens the door for discussions about identity that will foster children's appreciation of people's similarities and differences.

We hope that *Ko Wai Au? / Who Am I?* will support children who are migrants or refugees and those who have bicultural or multicultural backgrounds to celebrate and feel proud of their unique identity. This includes children who were born here and who belong to multiple cultures, as well as those who have travelled here from another country and must reconcile their evolving identity in a new environment.

When sharing the book with children, your purpose and approach will vary depending on the group. However, the first time you read the book, it is likely that you will focus on enjoyment and understanding. In subsequent readings, prompt the children to make deeper connections with Abdiraman and share their thoughts about what makes them who they are and the importance of valuing what each person brings with them.

Reading books together and discussing them fosters children's oral language, social and emotional development, self-concept, and sense of belonging. It's not always necessary to read the whole book at once. You could read and discuss just a few pages and/or illustrations. See Te Whāriki Online “[Talking together: Te kōrerorero](#)” for more on this.

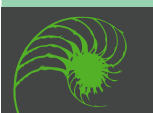
Your learning community will have its own ways of thinking about, talking about, and making real the values and messages in this and the other stories. You could incorporate the following ideas in your talk and your planning around the story.

Curriculum links

Whether you work in an early learning or school setting, this book offers rich opportunities for learning across the curriculum.



In terms of **Te Whāriki**, the book connects most strongly to the principles of **Empowerment | Whakamana** and **Holistic development | Kotahitanga** and the strands of **Wellbeing | Mana atua** and **Belonging | Mana whenua**.



In terms of **The New Zealand Curriculum**, the book connects most strongly to the competencies of **managing self, relating to others, and participating and contributing** and to the following sub-strands of the Health and Physical Education Curriculum: **personal growth and development, personal identity, relationships, and identity, sensitivity, and respect**.

Read *Ko Wai Au? / Who Am I?*

Prepare for the reading by practising reading it aloud, checking your use of voice and gesture, and thinking about the prompts you might use. Check your pronunciation of the words in Arabic and te reo Māori and any other words or names that you are not familiar with. You could listen to the audio version for help with pronunciation. Consider what you know about your learners so you can include them in the talk.

Briefly introduce the book.

- *This book is called Ko Wai Au? / Who Am I? It's about a boy called Abdiraman and all the things that make him who he is. Let's find out what he has to tell us.*

As you read, use questions and think-alouds to prompt connections and foster empathy. Aim to make this a conversation, but keep the story moving.

- *You have a little brother, don't you? Do you think he might want to play netball with you one day?*
- *I like orca, too, but those poor penguins!*
- *Abdiraman thinks football is better than rugby. What do you think? What is your favourite game? Is there a sport you don't like?*
- *Yum! That looks good! Have you tried it before?*
- *Can you guess why Abdiraman's favourite colour is blue?*

Encourage the children to go beyond the story by sharing their thoughts, feelings, and personal stories.

- *What sort of person is Abdiraman? Do you think you would like him?*
- *Abdiraman can speak two languages – and some te reo! Can any of us do that?*

Talk about the book

Use a map or globe to find out where Somalia is in relation to New Zealand. Expand on this to find connections between the children and other parts of the world.

- *Abdiraman's grandparents live in Somalia. Do you know where that is? How far away is Aotearoa from Somalia? Let's find out.*
- *Epeli is a Fijian name, so his family probably came from Fiji. Where is Fiji? How far is that country from New Zealand?*
- *Does anyone have whānau living in another country? Can you show us where? How do you keep in touch?*
- *Has anyone lived in another country? Can you show us where it is? How long does it take to get there?*

Talk about the things in Abdiraman's life that the children will find familiar and those that will be different (keeping in mind that these things will vary for each child). Draw on your knowledge of your learners, being careful not to make assumptions about their knowledge or their willingness to share personal information.

- *Has anyone tried halwa before? Where do you think you could get some? Could we try making it?*
- *I don't know what a qamis is. Do you? What can you tell from looking at the picture? How could we find out more?*
- *What do you think halal means? What is Ramadan? What do people do in a mosque?*

Talk about Abdiraman's friends and how we know they come from different places and cultures. If the names are unfamiliar to the children, practise saying them. Talk about the benefits of having a group of multicultural friends and how we can respect each other's cultures and beliefs.

- *Where do your friends come from? What cultures do they come from?*
- *What's good about having friends from different places and cultures?*
- *What languages do you and your friends speak? What's good about being able to speak more than one language?*

Take action to strengthen individual identity and group belonging

The children could make their own *Ko Wai Au? / Who Am I?* posters, drawing the images themselves or creating a collage as Abdiraman does in the book. Afterwards, they could display their work and talk about interesting or unexpected things they found out about each other. Encourage the children to give positive feedback.

The children could play Guess Who. One child is the leader. Some children leave the room. The other children close their eyes and the leader selects a person to come back in and hide under a blanket. The children then ask the leader questions to work out who is hiding.

Conduct a statistical investigation. Start with a class survey to collect data on topics such as things we like or don't like, favourite animals, and who lives with us. Compile the data to create a pictogram. Talk about what the pictogram shows and write some sentences to sum it up.

Play My Favourite Things. Give each child a sheet of paper divided into four sections labelled "My favourite game", "My favourite food", "My favourite toy", and "My favourite place". Have them draw something in each section. The children then sit in a circle around the pictures and guess who drew which picture. You could innovate on this game with different labels that might include where the children are from and their strengths.

Give the children a timeline template based on the image of a pathway or a river. Have them draw or mark the key moments in their lives. These could include when they were born (and the place), a special family occasion, when they met their best friend, or when they achieved something that made them proud. Use one of the children's timelines to model how to ask polite questions about what the pictures represent and to find something you have in common and something different and interesting about the person.

Talk about friendship, and how it's nice to build connections and meet new people. Talk about the sorts of things you might say when introducing a person to someone else and what those people might say to each other. Have the children do a role play where they introduce Abdiraman to a friend and then the three children get to know each other.

Put the children in two concentric circles facing each other. Play a speed friendship game where they have thirty seconds to tell each other their response to a question you ask. When they have answered, they step in opposite directions to talk with a different person. Questions might include:

- *Where were you born?*
- *What is your favourite story?*
- *What kind of animal would you like to be? Why?*
- *What do you want to be when you grow up?*
- *Who is someone you look up to?*

Collectively, use the information in the book to outline Abdiraman's whakapapa. Then give the children opportunities to tell their own story and share their whakapapa. This could be in the form of their own book, a self-portrait, a poster, a family tree, or a pepeha. If you choose to construct a pepeha, make sure you construct your own as well – and make sure that children's whānau are involved in the process and comfortable with this activity. Both Sparklers and the Junior Journal have items on pepeha that provide useful starting points. Children could video themselves presenting their pepeha and share it with their whānau.

If possible, invite a member of the Somali community to talk about traditional Somali clothing and have the children try on some of the clothes. The person could also teach the children how to write their names in another language or about the beadwork and weaving that are part of East African art. The children could use paint, pastel, crayon, or beads to recreate a design of their choice.

A visitor might also help run a workshop on how to make one of the dishes Abdiraman enjoys, such as mendasi, halwa, or sambusa. Enjoy eating the food together. The children could repay any help they receive by learning and performing a Somali song.

Look at Abdiraman's name written in Arabic. Talk about what the children notice and share some interesting facts about the Arabic language. For example, it is written and read from right to left and it is written in calligraphy as a form of art. This could lead to an inquiry into the question: *Why do many Muslims learn the Arabic language, even if it's not their first language?*

Show the children the picture in Faraan Sayed's (2015) article illustrating the most common Arabic word for love – "hubb". Explain that the word comes from the same root as the Arabic word for seed ("habba") and links to the idea that love can grow into something beautiful. The children could then inquire into the word for love in other languages (see also *Arohanui* in the list of resources at the end of this KSM). Challenge them to find these words by asking people they know at school, home, and in the community rather than looking online. The children could create an artwork that brings all the words together in one place.

Sparklers describes a game called Common Ground in which everybody stands in a circle. The game's leader calls out a question ("Who likes ...?") and those who answer yes run into the centre of the circle. The game shows how we can have things in common that we don't know about or don't notice. In *The Same Game*, children play this game to resolve a situation where people had felt excluded. Your children could play the game, and you could then use ideas from the book's teacher notes to deepen their thinking about the value of diversity and the importance of inclusion.

The group could create an artwork that reflects their shared identity. Have the children present their artwork to their friends, whānau, and the wider community.

Where to go to for more information

Te Whāriki Online draws together research, digital resources, and examples to support early learning kaiako in implementing a rich curriculum for all children. See especially the sections on “Identity, language, and culture”, “Self-management and regulation”, and “Talking together: Te kōrerorero”.

He Māpuna te Tamaiti is intended to help support children’s social and emotional competence, engagement, and learning.

For Each and Every Child is a bilingual picture book explaining the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in child-friendly language.

Sparklers offers a range of activities to support children’s wellbeing, including suggestions for how to foster identity, inclusion, kindness, and friendship.

A few surprising facts about the Arabic language (Faraan Sayed, British Council, 18 December 2015) provides useful information about the Arabic language.

The Same Game (Ministry of Education, 2019) is available on Social Sciences Online. It is accompanied by audio and teacher notes.

Arohanui is a book designed to help children recognise, appreciate, and identify with different perspectives. It is available in English and te reo Māori, along with audio versions and KSM, from **Te Whāriki Online: books to foster belonging**.

“**Pepeha**” and “**Tōku Pepeha – My Pepeha**” are Junior Journal items you might use to support children to write a pepeha (*Junior Journal 53*).

These resources will help you to explore Somali art and music:

- **Precious Mats Showing off Visual and Craft Skill**
- **Making Woven Art Without Tools: Somali Elders Teach Traditional Finger Weaving for the Public**

The Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand is a federation of several regional New Zealand Muslim Associations. Its site includes contact details for Islamic centres in New Zealand.