



# 1 Making myths

**Your writing aim for this unit:** To shape your own story using the basics of a well-known myth

**Writing objectives for first language English**

In this unit, you will:

- create and control effects by drawing on your own vocabulary
- experiment with different ways of structuring and presenting texts for different audiences and purposes.

**Writing and Use of English objectives for second language English**

In this unit, you will:

- use past, present and future simple tenses
- learn verbs for direct speech
- spell common vocabulary correctly – use capital letters for proper nouns.

**Key terms that you will learn:**    myth    legend    moral    quotation



## How can I use a myth to develop an interesting story?

Why is it that old **myths** and **legends** are retold many times in book form or in plays or in films? Can you think of old legends or myths from your own culture which have been retold for modern audiences? Were they told in the same way – or were things changed or developed?

### Key terms

**myth**: a traditional story which often explains powerful events and may feature supernatural elements

**legend**: also a traditional story, but may be considered historically true

## Effective stories based on myths or legends

A good retelling of a well-known myth or legend should:

- *develop the basic plot or key moments of the original story*
- *keep the core themes and ideas, which may include a **moral** or message*
- *develop the characterisation of the main character*
- *use direct speech to give the story more immediacy.*

### Key term

**moral**: a lesson about how to behave (or not to behave!)

## Reading

The following extract comes from a story based on the Hawaiian legend of Kalea, a young princess on the island of Maui. In this extract, her father asks what she thinks of the **suitors** who have come to request her hand in marriage.

- 1 As you read the text, think about these questions.
  - a How does the writer make the reader interested in Kalea?
  - b How does the situation turn out for her?

## Kalea, Princess of the Waves

'Well,' **said** my father, sitting in his high-backed chair. 'Which one of the great chiefs will you choose? What about the Chief of Hana?'

I didn't reply. Above us, I could see the highest mountain on the islands, the volcanic **Haleakala**, shrouded in grey cloud. A storm might be coming. This was rare but it matched my mood: I didn't want any of the old men my father had proposed. Since early childhood, I had had the freedom of the island, swimming in the emerald sea, chasing my brother **Kawao** over the golden sand. I knew deep down that I had been spoilt and couldn't remain a child forever, yet marrying some chieftain from another part of the island was the last thing I wanted to do. My father's face darkened like the sky above the swaying palm-trees.

'Kawao,' he **sighed**, gesturing at my brother who was sitting on a long log, trying to keep out of the argument. 'Make her see sense!'

'It's true, Kalea,' he said. 'Father is right. Our kingdom is under threat. You **have** a chance to marry the Chief of Hana. It **will unite** our two families and keep the peace.'

'Keep the peace?' I **scoffed**. 'If I ever marry it will be to a prince who loves the sea and surf as much as I do, not to some boring old law-maker! For now, the only husband I want is my **onini**.'

So saying, I **raced** out, clutching my surf-board under my arm and headed along the winding track that led to the beach. Even before I reached it, I could hear the waters of the Auaa Channel surging wildly under the breath of the south-wind, the *kona*. My heart leapt as I saw the giant waves, falling in a froth of emerald and silver.

I plunged into the surf and lay flat on my board, paddling away from the shore. Here was my home, the place I cherished dearly for the pull of the current, the taste of the salt and the

Key language features

- past, present and future tenses
- speaking verbs
- proper nouns that require capital letters

sun bronzing my limbs. No one in my father’s kingdom commanded the waves as I did. Even now, under the darkening skies, I did not want to return. All my thoughts were on the next big wave, the one that would carry me like a flying horse through the air.

When the perfect one came, I stood up on the board and allowed the billowing water to lift me. Suddenly I was racing along, the wave curving over me, challenging me to go faster than ever before. But just as I reached my highest speed, I heard a crack of thunder. A spear of lightning arrowed from the sky. For a split-second, I lost my concentration. I wobbled and tottered around. Could I stay standing, or would I be swept away, pulled under the churning waters? I flung myself onto my front and clutched the board with my hands. At that moment, the giant wave exploded over me, and sent me hurtling for the shore. All I could do was hang on for dear life. The sloping beach hit me like a wall.

Where was I? The breath had been knocked out of me, and I lay on my back gasping, staring at the black clouds that raced across the sky. I’d made it! Half-conscious, I stared again. The clouds seemed to be forming themselves into a face, a shape, a body. A body! Could I be imagining it? My heart pounded. It was a young man, a handsome man. He was in a canoe, furiously plunging his oar into the waves.

But then the image vanished. The black clouds dissolved and the sky turned an instant blue. I gradually pulled myself up. My brother appeared, running onto the beach.

‘Are you hurt, Kalea?’ he cried, his face creased with worry.

‘No, Kawao,’ I said, slowly, looking at the volcano which was now as clear as a charcoal drawing. ‘Everything is fine.’

Mike Gould

Glossary

- suitor**: someone who seeks to marry another person
- onini**: Hawaiian word for surfboard
- charcoal**: burnt, blackened stick used for drawing

How the text works

Do you remember what makes a good retelling of a myth? Here is how the writer made it work. He:

- has taken a single moment from the myth and developed it
- has developed the character of Kalea through thoughts, speech and action
- has kept the core ideas – Kalea’s defiance, and love of the sea
- has helped the reader experience the scene as it happens with direct speech and descriptive details.



Text analysis



1 What do you think are the key ingredients of a good story? Jot down three to four ideas. (For example, is it important to know how a character feels?)

Reading closely

2 Here are the basic plot details as they might be written in a simpler version of the original myth.

*Kalea refused to accept any of the Chiefs her father suggested and preferred to spend time surfing.*

How is the 'new' version different? What star quality is added to the original to make it shine?

For each of these basic plot 'stars', copy and add at least two things provided by the author, such as new characters, details about other people, use of speech, etc.

- 3 Based on what you have found out, which of these would be *correct* statements about all the additional information the writer includes?
- a There is a volcano on the island called Haleakala.
  - b Her father wants her to marry the Chief of Hana.
  - c Her brother doesn't support his father.
  - d Kalea says her true husband is her surf-board.
  - e Kalea doesn't show any interest in marrying anyone.
  - f Kalea saves herself by lying flat on her surfboard.
  - g She tells her brother what she saw in the clouds.
- 4 This passage is made up of the island setting, Kalea's feelings, and the behaviour of people around her. Each of these things means that the writer has had to choose suitable vocabulary.
- a The writer uses lots of words related to the sea and its force. Complete these sentences explaining what each word or phrase means.
    - i If water is *surging* it means it is \_\_\_\_\_.
    - ii If a wave is *curving* it means it is \_\_\_\_\_.
    - iii If your breath is *knocked out* of you it means that \_\_\_\_\_.
    - iv If you are *hurtling*, it means you are \_\_\_\_\_.

Speaking to her father



Surfing in the sea



Lying on the beach





- b** We see how Kalea speaks and acts and how others respond to her. Match the following verbs or adjectives from the passage to the word/phrase that is closest in meaning in each case.

**i** (my father) *sighed*

*stated roughly*      *breathed out sadly*  
*inquired cunningly*

**ii** his face *creased* with worry  
*lined*      *red*      *pale*

**iii** My heart *pounded*  
*thumped*      *clattered*      *shook*

- c** Kalea reflects on her situation at various times. Working with a partner, find these phrases and discuss what each one means.

**i** it *matched my mood*

**ii** the *last thing I wanted to do*

**iii** I *cherished dearly*

- d** The writer uses a number of powerful similes or metaphors to describe the setting and the events.

**i** Kalea describes being carried by a wave 'like a flying horse'. In what way is this an effective comparison?

**ii** What description does the writer use to describe the lightning bolt that comes down? Why is it effective?

### Thinking about the text

The text is mainly about Kalea but we also find out about other characters and about the island as a whole.

- 5** Think carefully and then answer these questions.
- a** When Kalea says 'I knew deep down that I had been spoilt', what does that suggest about her parents?
- b** Why do you think Kalea's father turns to her brother when she won't reply? Choose one of these options:

**i** He thinks Kawao will be able to make her understand the situation.

**ii** Kalea always listens to her brother and does what he says.

**iii** Kawao likes the Chief of Hana and thinks Kalea will like him too.

- c** At the end of the passage, Kawao appears on the beach to check on his sister. What evidence is there in the passage that he is not as bold as his sister? Think about:

**i** what Kalea says about herself

**ii** what Kawao does – or doesn't do.

### React to the text

- 6** Work in pairs and discuss these questions.

- a** What impression do you get of Kalea based on this passage? Write a paragraph together in which you:
- explain what sort of person she is
  - include at least one **quotation** or example to support what you say.
- b** Why do you think the author includes the final idea of the vision Kalea sees in the clouds? What does it add to the story?
- c** How would you feel if you were in the same situation of surfing and a storm coming?
- d** In what way do you think the extract is effective in making Kalea come to life as a character? Think about whether the writer tells us how she feels, and what we find out about her as a person.

### Key term

**quotation:** words chosen from the passage that you use in your own writing. You must place them inside quotation marks or inverted commas (for example, *Kalea seems slightly disrespectful to her brother when she 'scoffed' at his comments.*)

Use of English

Later in the unit you are going to write your own version of an Indian legend.

Revision: past, present and future simple tenses

Grammar presentation

Simple tenses can be very effective in stories. It is useful to remember how to use them.

- 1 Complete the sentences with the verbs in the box. Then check your answers by looking back at the story on pages 10–11.

raced      will unite      came  
headed      led      stood      have

- a You \_\_\_\_\_ a chance to marry the Chief of Hana.
- b It \_\_\_\_\_ our two families and keep the peace.
- c So saying, I \_\_\_\_\_ out, clutching my surf-board under my arm and \_\_\_\_\_ along the winding track that \_\_\_\_\_ to the beach.
- d When the perfect one [a wave] \_\_\_\_\_, I \_\_\_\_\_ up on the board...
- 2 Which verbs in Activity 1 are irregular?

Tip

Make sure you know the different forms of the irregular verbs in English. You can find a table of irregular verbs on the internet or in a dictionary.

- 3 Choose the most appropriate tense to complete what the characters from the story on pages 10–11 say.
- a 'And tomorrow I go / I'll go surfing as usual,' said Kalea.
- b 'All you ever want / will want to do is / was to go surfing,' Kalea's father said.
- c 'I am / was worried about you when I see / saw the storm. That's why I run / ran down to the beach to find you,' Kawao told her.
- d 'I don't understand / didn't understand why you didn't marry / won't marry the Chief of Hana,' her father said.
- e 'When I meet / I'll meet a man who loves / will love the ocean like I do, then I think / I'll think about getting married,' Kalea insisted.
- 4 Complete the summary of the legend of Kalea with the correct tense of the verbs in brackets.

In the legend, Loale, the chief on Oahu (a) \_\_\_\_\_ (kidnap) Kalea and (b) \_\_\_\_\_ (take) her to the mountains far away from the sea. After several years, she (c) \_\_\_\_\_ (long) to go surfing so she (d) \_\_\_\_\_ (beg) Loale to let her be nearer the ocean. 'I (e) \_\_\_\_\_ (not stay) here any longer. I (f) \_\_\_\_\_ (demand) to be allowed to go to the coast,' she told him, so he (g) \_\_\_\_\_ (let) her go. Once there, she immediately (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (borrow) a surf-board and (i) \_\_\_\_\_ (begin) to demonstrate her skills. 'I (j) \_\_\_\_\_ (show) these locals how it's done,' she thought. A local chief called Kalamakua (k) \_\_\_\_\_ (see) her and was captivated by her talent and her beauty (l) \_\_\_\_\_.



Vocabulary: speech verbs

Vocabulary presentation

When you use direct speech in a story, you should try to vary the verbs you use to mean 'say' or 'ask' as much as possible.

5 Here are three speech verbs from the extract on pages 10–11. Match them to their definitions i–iii.

a 'Kawao,' he *sighed*, gesturing at my brother who was sitting on a long log

b 'Keep the peace?' I *scoffed*.

c 'Are you hurt, Kalea?' he *cried*, his face creased with worry.

i say something mockingly or showing no respect

ii call out loudly

iii say something while breathing out to express sadness or impatience

6 Which verb is most descriptive?



- 7 What do the following speech verbs mean or how would you use them? Use a dictionary if necessary.
- a call

b whisper

c growl

d yell

e suggest

f admit

g scream

h wonder

- 8 Here are some direct speech sentences from the Kalea story. Complete them with the person in brackets and a verb from Activities 5 or 6.
- a 'Kalea, watch out!' \_\_\_\_\_ (Kawao)

b 'Why don't you use my board?' \_\_\_\_\_ (a surfer)

c 'I suppose you're right,' \_\_\_\_\_ (Kalea)

d 'What do you want?!' \_\_\_\_\_ (Kalea's father)

e 'I don't know what to do with you, Kalea,' \_\_\_\_\_ (her father)

Punctuation: capital letters for official titles

Punctuation presentation

For official titles (royalty, heads of state, nobility and military titles), we use a capital letter for the title when it goes before the name (*President Morgan, Prince Muhammed, General Yuwen*). When the title doesn't replace the name, we don't use capital letters (*five presidents, a prince, all the generals*).

- 9 Correct the mistakes with capital letters in these sentences.
- a All the Captains saluted the Generals.

b The Duke and duchess of Cambridge are visiting Malaysia.

c I've never met the President or prime minister of any country.

d The sultan of Johor and sheikh Abdullah are meeting next week.

e This is Hassan. He's a Commander in the navy.

Guided writing

A local English-language magazine has posted the following message to its readers:

WORLD MYTHOLOGY SERIES

We are inviting our readers to submit myths and legends from around the world.  
You must write your own version of the story but it must be a modern adaptation.  
You can write part of the story.  
Send your entries to our email.

You have decided to submit your own version of part of this Indian legend.

Mahabharata

The Indian epic *Mahabharata* includes a story about the preparations for the Kurukshetra War, a struggle for power between two groups of cousins, the Kauravas and the Pandavas. Two opposing princes were gathering huge armies so they both went to see Krishna, the king of Dwarka. Krishna was wise, but he also had a strong, experienced army of 10,000 men and his help would be crucial to either side. Krishna was asleep (some say he was pretending to sleep) with his usual smile. Duryodhana of the Kauravas arrived first and sat at Krishna's feet, but as he waited he thought about how superior he was to Krishna, so he moved and sat by Krishna's head. Arjuna, who was a follower and great admirer of Krishna's, arrived and immediately went to stand by his feet as a sign of respect.



When Krishna woke up, he told the princes that he would give one of them his army. To the other he would only give his moral support, refusing to fight. Since Arjuna was younger, Krishna gave him the first choice and he immediately opted for Krishna's support. Duryodhana, foolishly, thought that Arjuna had made the wrong choice and was delighted to have Krishna's army.

Write the part of the story after Duryodhana enters Krishna's room to find him asleep.

Think/Plan

- 1 Work in pairs. Generate ideas for your stories using the questions to help you.
  - a What does Duryodhana do when he enters the room? Why do you think he does this? What is he thinking?
  - b Why is Arjuna's behaviour different? What is he thinking?
  - c Why do you think Arjuna immediately chooses Krishna to be on his side?
  - d How does the episode show Krishna's wisdom and Duryodhana's foolishness?



- 2 Now organise your ideas. Use a timeline to put the events and conversations in order.

### Tip

You could use the star quality strategy (as on page 12) to plan the main plot points.

### Useful language

**Linkers:** *After that, Before long, Soon enough, After a while, All of a sudden, With that*

**Speech verbs:** *answered, commented, cried, scoffed, inquired, replied, called, yelled, whispered, sighed, growled, suggested, admitted, screamed, wondered*

**Modal verbs:** *That may be but..., It could have been..., It must be..., Maybe I should..., I might/could be...*

### Write: getting started

Since you're only writing part of the story, there's no real need for an introduction or beginning, but it will help the reader if you start in a logical way. Decide from which point in the story you are going to start.

### Write the first part of the story, following your notes.

- 3 Here are some ideas. Choose one and follow these steps.
- As Krishna was taking his usual afternoon nap, Duryodhana walked in.
  - Duryodhana sat at the end of Krishna's bed.
  - Duryodhana was fed up but all he could do was wait.
    - Describe the event that begins the story and conditions the other actions.
    - Using direct speech, write Duryodhana's thoughts as he waits for Krishna to wake up.
    - Describe what Duryodhana decides to do.

### Write: description

- 4 Write the next part of the extract. Arjuna now arrives.
- First, describe what Arjuna does when he walks in.
  - Describe the scene around Krishna's bed.
  - Explain what happened when Krishna woke up.
  - Write the conversation in which Duryodhana and Arjuna try to convince Krishna to join their side.

### Things to remember when writing an interesting story

- Take a single moment from the story and write it in more detail.
- Keep the core ideas in the story.
- Develop the characterisation through direct speech, their thoughts and actions.
- Use modal verbs of possibility to speculate about situations that occur in the story.
- Vary the speech verbs that you use with the direct speech.

### Check your first draft

### When you have finished writing, review your work.

- 5 Work in groups.
- In pairs in the group, read your stories aloud. You and your partner can role-play the dialogue between you.
  - Discuss the stories in your group – try to be helpful and suggest ways to improve them.

### Now write a second draft of the story.

### Peer assessment

*Maybe you could add ...* Tell your partner one thing they could add to their story to improve it.

Independent writing

Write an adaptation of a myth or legend of 250–300 words. Write at least three paragraphs.

Choose a myth or legend that you know or rewrite one of the myths in this unit.

Follow these stages.

**Stage 1** Generate ideas. Work in groups and share myths or legends that you already know. Make notes and choose an episode in the story that you can write more about.

**Stage 2** Put your ideas into a plan, using a timeline or stars.

- Who are your main characters? What are they like?
- What is (are) the main piece(s) of action in the story?
- Where will your extract begin and end?

**Stage 3** Write your story in paragraphs, following your plan. Use the checklist to make sure your myth or legend is interesting!

Writer's checklist: myths and legends

- Have you described a specific moment in the story?
- Have you developed the characters through dialogue, thoughts and action?
- Have you kept the core ideas in the story?
- Have you used direct speech with a variety of speech verbs?
- Have you used different tenses to tell the story?

Editor's checklist

Check

- that your ideas are organised into paragraphs
- your spelling and use of capital letters
- punctuation, especially in direct speech
- that the grammar is correct – past, present and future tenses, subject–verb agreement.

Final draft

Once you have completed your story, post it on your blog or the school website. Use the checklists above, or go back through the unit, to see if you have applied all the skills you have learned.

Check your progress

I can:	Needs more work	Almost there	All done!
generate ideas and plan part of a myth or legend using a timeline or stars			
develop characters through dialogue, thoughts and actions			
use a variety of simple tenses			
use direct speech and a wide variety of speech verbs.			