

SOCIAL STUDIES

IST403

A FUTURE FOR HARAKEKE



This topic is about how people have used harakeke (New Zealand flax).

Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum Level 4: Understand how exploration and innovation create opportunities and challenges for people, places and environments.

In this topic you will:

- discover different ways people have used flax over time
- identify how flax-stripping machines affected the use of flax
- use a line graph to follow changes in flax exports over time.

Your teacher will be looking at how you:

- described different uses of flax
- explained why the use of flax has changed over time
- suggested ways flax can be used in future
- did some research or practical work with flax.

CONTENTS

1. Useful plants
2. Hurrah for harakeke
3. A treasured resource
4. Trading flax
5. The flax industry
6. Falling markets
7. Harakeke today
8. Showtime
9. Your choice

Self-evaluation

Checklist

Answer guide

HOW TO DO THIS WORK

Spend about 8 hours on this booklet.

IF YOU SEE



Try the activity on your own, then check the answer guide to mark your work.



Turn on your CD.



Your teacher will assess this.

FOR THIS BOOKLET YOU WILL NEED:

- IST403 CD.

1: USEFUL PLANTS

This booklet is about harakeke, New Zealand flax. It grows all over New Zealand, in swamps, on mountain sides, by the sea and in people's gardens. New Zealanders see so much of it they often don't realise that it is one of New Zealand's most important plants.

Read the first extract on the CD Supplement as you listen to the CD.

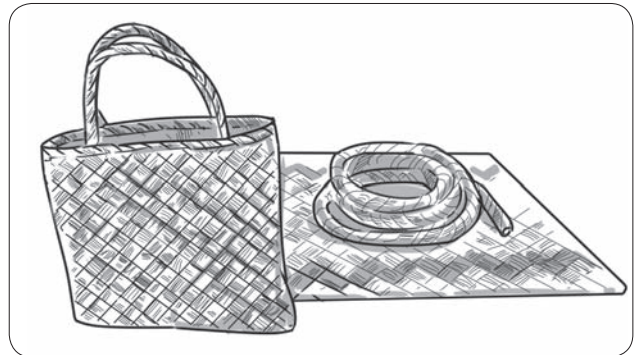


'This is IST403 ...'

1A

Three places where I have seen harakeke (flax) growing are:

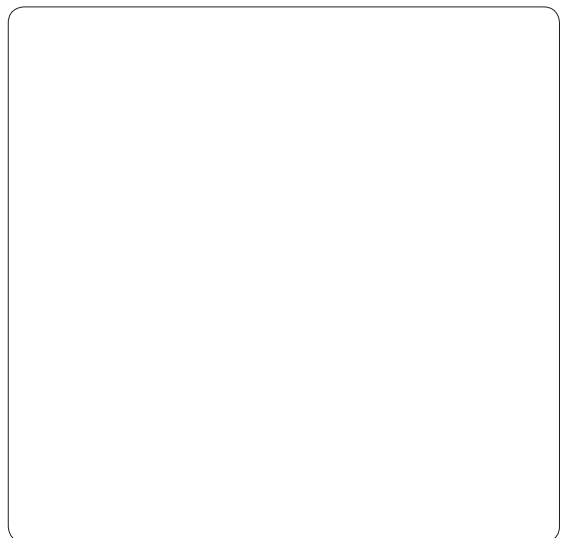
-
-
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1B

Three things I have seen made from harakeke (flax) are (draw or write):

-
-
-



Your teacher will check your work.



An 1800s photograph of chiefs of the Makea-Karika tribe of Rarotonga, clad in bark cloth (tapa).

When the first Polynesians came to New Zealand about 800 years ago, they didn't know anything about harakeke. They knew about plants that grew in hot tropical climates.



Read from the Supplement as you listen to the CD. 'Imagine living in a place ...'



Useful tropical plants

Pacific Island plant	Parts that are used	What they are used for
Coconut palm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • •
Pandanus vine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Paper mulberry tree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •



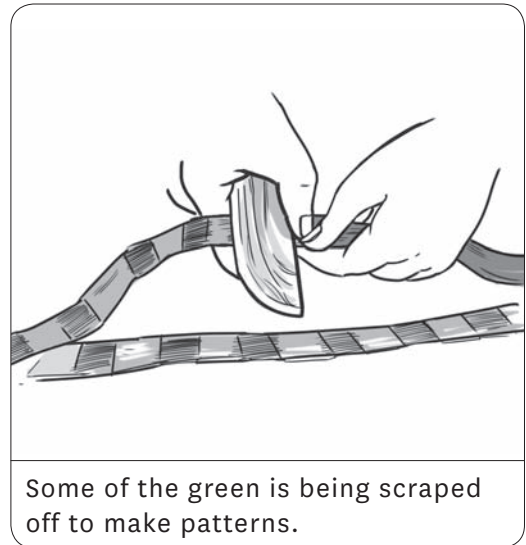
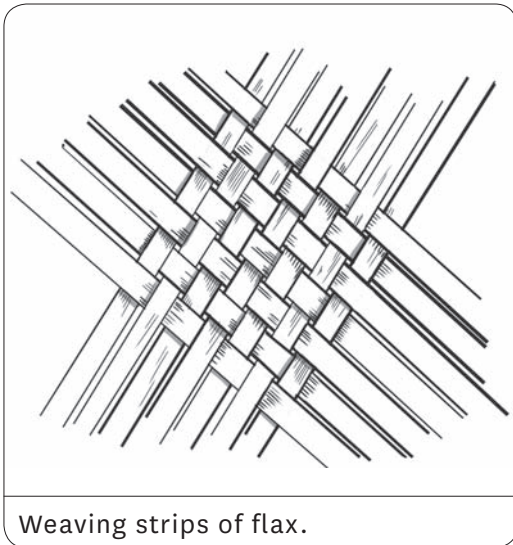
Check the answer guide.

2: HURRAH FOR HARAKEKE

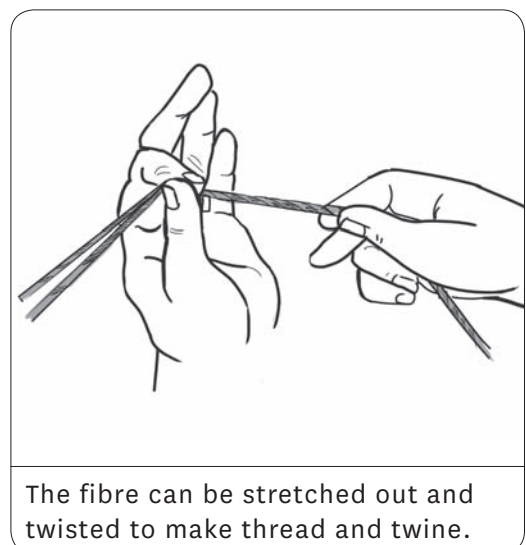
When the first Pacific people stepped ashore in New Zealand, they looked around for the plants they needed. The news was not good. There were no coconuts, no pandanus vines and no paper mulberry trees. How were they going to make clothes for themselves? How were they going to make rope or string to lash their canoes together? What could they use for fishing nets or baskets?

Then they discovered harakeke.

Many things can be made from flax leaves.
The leaves can be cut into strips.



The soft green part of the leaves can be scraped off leaving the muka (fibres).



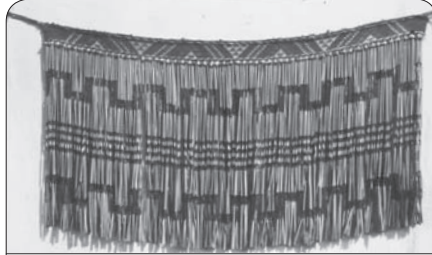
Read the Activity 2 extract on the CD Supplement as you listen to the CD.



'Activity 2 It was not long ...'



Weaving kono (small basket).



Piupiu (skirt made from strips of flax).



Weaving a tāniko border using flax thread.



Weaving kete (flax kit).



Hīnaki (eel pot).



The chief is wearing a kaitaka (cloak) made of woven muka (flax fibre). Can you see the tāniko border?



The woman is wearing a pihepihe made from long strips of flax.

2A

Fill in the chart. Use the pictures to help you. The first one is done for you.

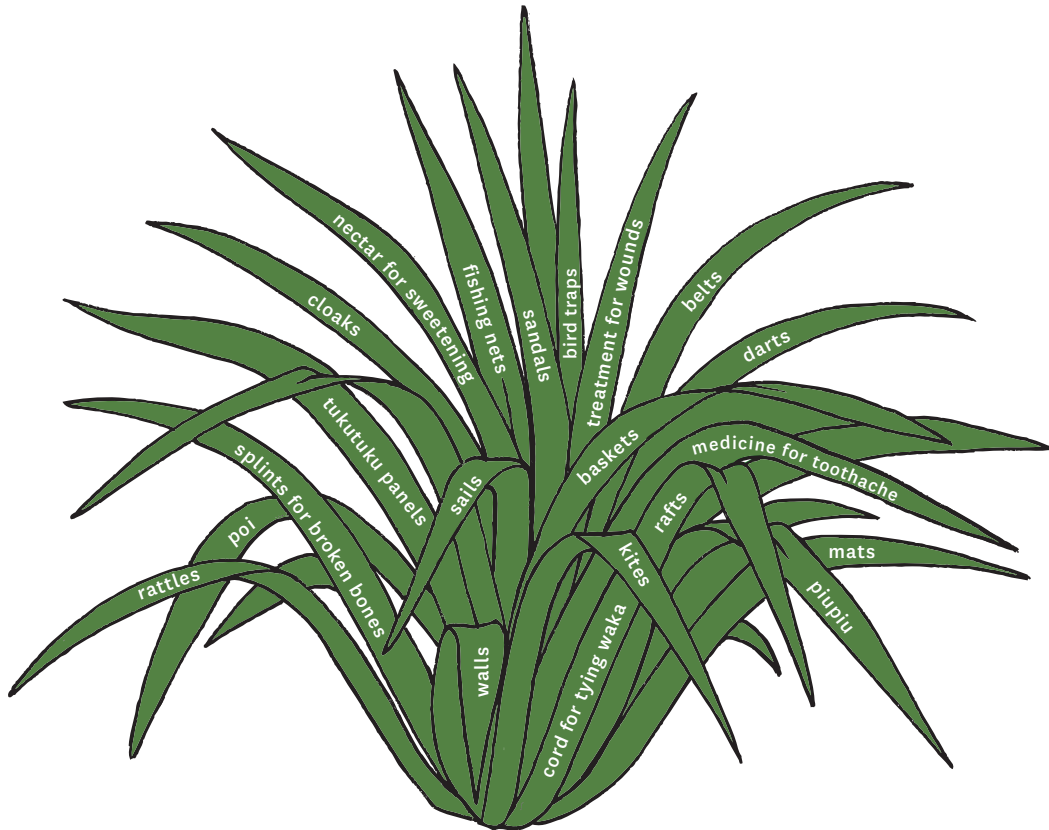
	Was it made from strips or fibre?	What was it used for?	Why was it made from flax?
Kono (small basket)	Flax strips.	For collecting food. For holding food.	It was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong • easy to weave • easy to carry • available.
Hīnaki (eel pot)			
Piupiu (skirt)			
Kaitaka (cloak)			



Check the answer guide.

2B

Māori people used harakeke to meet many of their basic needs. Here are some ways it was used.



Sort the ways Māori people used harakeke under the basic needs headings on the chart.

Food	
Home/ shelter	
Clothing	
Health	
Transport	
Entertainment	



Check the answer guide.

3: A TREASURED RESOURCE



Harakeke was very important to the early Māori people. The more they found out about it, the more useful it became. It turns up in some of their most famous stories.

Read the first Activity 3 extract on the CD Supplement as you listen to the CD.



'Activity 3 Māui and the Sun God ...'



1. What does Māui use harakeke for?

.....
.....

2. What does the story tell you about harakeke?

.....
.....

A valued taonga

Flax didn't just mean clothes, baskets and other useful things to Māori. It meant much, much more.

Read the second Activity 3 extract on the CD Supplement as you listen to the CD.

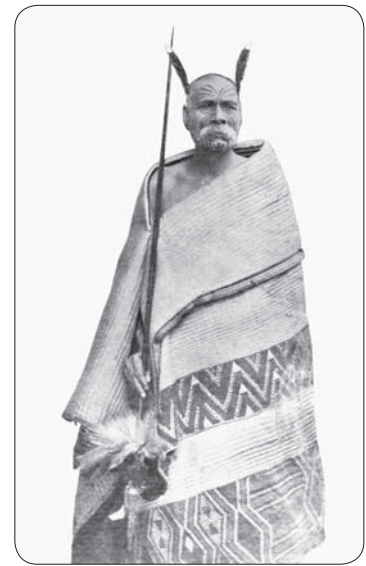


'Māori valued harakeke ...'



This photo was taken in the nineteenth century. It shows a Māori rangatira (chief). Why might his cloak be important to this man?

-
-
-
-
-



ATL



This photo was taken in the twentieth century. Why might this cloak be important to Hine?

-
-
-
-
-



ATL



Check the answer guide.

Māori people showed respect for the harakeke plant and for weaving skills. They still do.



3D

Suggest a reason why you think Māori people might have these rules about working with harakeke.

Ways to respect harakeke	Reasons
Use only the outside leaves of the plant. Do not damage the leaves of the centre.	
Harakeke should not be cut at night or in the rain.	
Children must not touch or step over harakeke that is being woven, or the leftover pieces.	
Workers must not eat while working with harakeke.	



Check the answer guide.

4: TRADING FLAX



A valuable resource

Harakeke was extremely important for the early Māori. It would have been hard for them to survive without it.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, European ships started visiting New Zealand. They wanted timber, food and fresh water, whales and seals. They also wanted harakeke.

Flax fibres are long and strong, and last well. They were very good for making:

- ropes and sails for sailing ships
- strong sacks to carry trading goods
- carpet backing.

People all over the world wanted flax products and paid good money for them. Flax soon became New Zealand's biggest export. Bales of fibre went to factories in Sydney and London.

4A

Māori cut harakeke to use for their own needs. Why did the first Europeans who visited New Zealand want it?



Check the answer guide.

The harakeke trade

Māori wanted muskets, blankets and other European goods. Europeans wanted harakeke. Māori cut and hand-stripped the flax. They exchanged the flax fibres for European trade goods.

European traders made a lot of money selling flax bales from New Zealand. The effect of the flax trade on Māori was not so good.

Europeans expected Māori to cut and strip flax for them. This took a lot of time and effort. A hard-working person could prepare one kilo of fibre in a day. The traders wanted to buy it by the tonne.

Māori worked long hours in the flax swamps and got very tired. But they had to trade flax for muskets. If they didn't have muskets, they'd be killed by Māori tribes who did.

They neglected their gardens. When they were tired and hungry, they got sick. They caught European diseases like influenza and measles and began to die.

The flax trade affected Māori in other ways too. They didn't have as much time to make cloaks, ropes and mats for themselves. They used their flax earnings to buy European goods.

Read the Activity 4 extract on the CD Supplement as you listen to the CD.



'Activity 4 In the nineteenth century ...'



Look carefully at the picture and answer these questions.

1. Three things made from harakeke in this picture are:

-
-
-

2. One of the men is wearing a woollen blanket. Two reasons why he might be wearing this instead of a cloak are:

-
-
-



ATL



Check the answer guide.

4C

Look carefully at the picture and answer these questions.

1. What materials have been used to make the house?

-
-
-



2. What materials have been used to make the women's clothes?

-
-
-

3. The women are preparing harakeke to make a piupiu. Why might they still want clothes made from harakeke?

-
-
-



Check the answer guide.

4D

Draw arrows to match each fact with its consequence.

Fact	Consequence
Flax grew in all parts of New Zealand.	Many Māori died in tribal wars.
Māori traded flax for muskets.	Māori died with measles and influenza.
Māori neglected their old way of life.	European ships traded all around New Zealand.
Traders brought European diseases.	Māori bought goods they used to make for themselves.



Check the answer guide.

5: THE FLAX INDUSTRY

During the 1800s there was a big demand for harakeke all over the world. The flax traders could sell as much as they could get.

The trouble was they could not get enough. There was plenty of harakeke but flax stripping was very hard work. By the 1860s few Māori would do this work because wages for flax stripping were very low.

The flax stripper machine

Flax was New Zealand's main export but each year the country was selling less. The problem was solved with the invention of the flax stripper machine in 1868.



'Activity 5 The problem of flax stripping ...'

5A

Choose a caption for each photo and write it underneath.

Laying the fibre out to dry.

Taking the flax to the mill.

Bundling the fibres into bales.

Making flax fibre into cloth.

Working on the flax stripping machines.



ATL



ATL

1.

2.



ATL

3.



ATL

4.



ATL

5.



Check the answer guide.



1. Why would people be glad to have a flax mill in their town?

.....
.....

2. What might Māori weavers think about the stripping machine?

.....
.....



Check the answer guide.



1. Which flaxie (worker in the mill) job would you have liked to do? Why?

.....
.....

Your teacher will check this answer.

A mixed blessing

Flax processing had gone from being a useful village craft to being an important factory industry.

Flax mills were built in places with lots of harakeke, like Foxton. These towns became prosperous because there was a lot of work and people earned good wages.

New Zealand could produce lots of flax fibre cheaply at flax mills. It sold this for good prices all over the world. New Zealand prospered.

Māori people stopped stripping flax by hand because they couldn't compete with cheap flax from the mills. Many Māori villages suffered because they lost this important source of income.



1. Write two things that were good about flax mills.

.....
.....

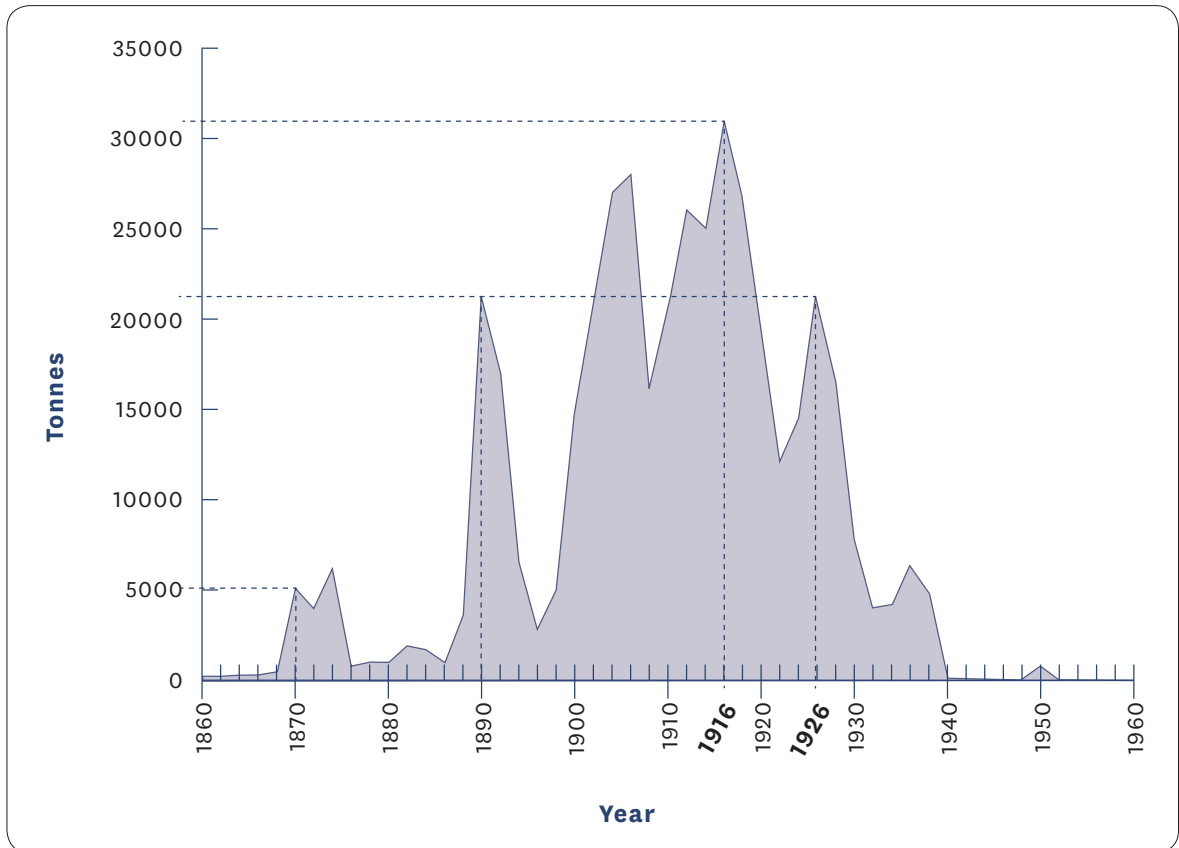
2. Write one thing that was bad about flax mills.

.....



Check the answer guide.

6: FALLING MARKETS



Flax stripping machines were being used in many parts of New Zealand by about 1870. Over the next 70 years, flax was a very important export, earning New Zealand a lot of money overseas. Then the flax industry began to die. Follow the graph as you listen to the CD.

Read the Activity 6 extract on the CD Supplement as you listen to the CD.



'Activity 6 Look at the graph ...'



1. What year was the most flax exported?
2. What was the first year that no flax was exported?



Check the answer guide.



1. What difference would it make to the flaxies when the exports went up and down?

.....

.....

.....

.....



Check the answer guide.



1. What could the New Zealand government do with the money it earned from selling flax to other countries?

.....

.....



Check the answer guide.



Some things that changed the flax industry	What happened to flax exports? Circle the correct answer.	
1870s - New flax stripping machines meant flax could be stripped more quickly.	Flax exports	UP/DOWN
1880s - More flax fibre was needed overseas for rope making.	Flax exports	UP/DOWN
1890s - Sailing ships were being replaced by steam ships so less rope was needed.	Flax exports	UP/DOWN
1900s - Flax fibre was needed overseas for countries at war.	Flax exports	UP/DOWN
1910s - A lot of flax fibre was needed during World War I.	Flax exports	UP/DOWN
1920s - There was a shortage of flax because of the yellow leaf disease.	Flax exports	UP/DOWN
1930s - The Great Depression meant there was not much buying and selling going on.	Flax exports	UP/DOWN
1940s - A little flax fibre was used in New Zealand but none was exported.	Flax exports	UP/DOWN



Check the answer guide.

7: HARAKEKE TODAY

After the flax industry died, people lost interest in flax. You couldn't make money out of it – not easily, anyway! Many young Māori couldn't see the point in learning old weaving skills. There was a danger that some types of flax would die out.

In recent years the art of flax weaving has been coming back. Groups of Māori weavers have worked hard to preserve the weaving techniques their ancestors used. Weaving skills and traditions are often handed down within a whānau.

Māori weavers still make many beautiful kākahu (cloaks) and hieke (rain capes), like the one in the photograph. Some experts strip muka (soft fibres) from flax leaves using mākoi (mussel shells). They make cloaks using traditional materials like muka and feathers. Others use a mix of flax and modern fibres.

It takes at least 12 months to make a cloak. Overseas buyers pay big prices for them. But some skilled weavers make cloaks only for their family and friends.



This is a hieke (rain cape).

7A

1. What might each of these people feel about the hieke in the photograph?

A Māori weaver

.....
.....
.....
.....

A museum worker

.....
.....
.....
.....

A wealthy overseas buyer

.....
.....
.....
.....

Rene Orchiston

Today's weavers are grateful to Rene Orchiston. She's always loved flax. She remembers her father using it on the farm to tie things up and she used to watch Māori women weaving with flax. But she often saw them using poor materials and she wanted to make sure that they had a better kind of flax for their weaving. Listen to Rene reading what she has learnt about harakeke and what she's done to help weavers of the future.

Listen carefully to the CD. This interview is not on the CD Supplement.



'Activity 7 I'm Rene Orchiston ...'



1. Write what Rene Orchiston did to save harakeke.

.....
.....

2. What did she do?

.....
.....

3. Why did she do it?

.....
.....

4. How did she do it?

.....
.....

5. Who helped?

.....
.....



LOUISE SCHICK

Rene Orchiston and
Diggeress Te Kanawa



Check the answer guide.

New uses for harakeke

Rene Orchiston made sure all the different types of harakeke survived. In recent years people are discovering again just how useful this plant is.

Patricia, Grant, Margaret and Donal talk on the CD about why flax is important or useful to them.



As you listen to the CD, match each person to the facts in the boxes below.



'Activity 7 Patricia is learning ...'

<p>1. Name</p> <p>Flax is a traditional Māori medicine. It has antiseptic and antifungal properties. We use flax seed oil to make soap, hand cream and shampoo. The hand cream heals cuts and scratches, so farmers like it.</p>	<p>2. Name</p> <p>Hybrid flax is a plant bred from two different kinds of flax plants. Hybrids have striped leaves and come in different sizes and colours.</p> <p>You can earn good money growing hybrids for New Zealand and overseas markets.</p>
<p>3. Name</p> <p>Flax looks really good in people's gardens. The new hybrids are really pretty. They attract native birds like tuis.</p>	<p>4. Name</p> <p>Weaving helps relieve stress. It helps people get rid of anger. You can use flax to create something that is beautiful. You must treat flax with respect.</p>



Check the answer guide.



Name one or two people in this lesson who are interested in harakeke for each of these.

- Conservation reasons
- Health reasons
- Traditional skills reasons
- Spiritual reasons
- Commercial (money-making) reasons



Check the answer guide.

8: SHOWTIME

8A

Revise your work on harakeke before you do this assessment activity.

Changes over time

How was harakeke used at each of these times? Write your answers in the boxes beside the pictures.

Early New Zealand



How early Māori used flax

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-



When Europeans first came

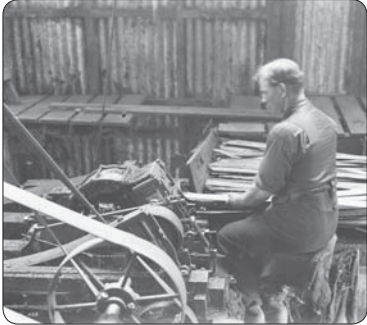


Māori sold flax fibres because ...



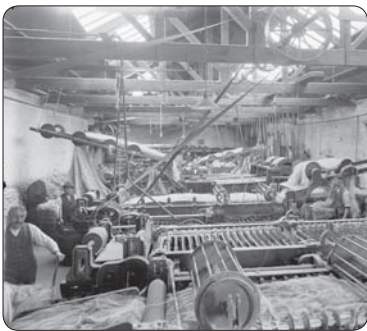
Europeans needed flax to make ...

The flax industry days



ATL

The flax stripping machines changed ...



ATL

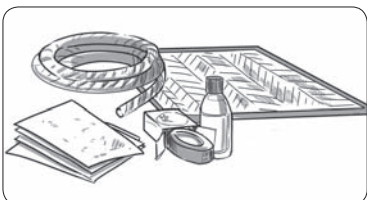
Flax was sold overseas to make ...

Today



ATL

Flax is used today for ...



Your teacher will assess this.

9: YOUR CHOICE

9A

Choose one of the following:

- Ask someone who uses flax to tell you what they do.
- Ask someone to show you how to make something simple with flax.
- Find out about what someone in your whānau has made with flax.
- Design something you could make with flax.
- Look up the Internet to find out about flax.
- Make a flax headband (tīpare) or flax flower (putiputi) using instructions on the Internet (see the websites below).
- Create a poster showing the old or new uses of flax (or both).

Choose one of these ways to tell about what you did.

- Talk on tape or CD.
- Send an email to your teacher.
- Draw or write.
- Send your headband or flax flower to your teacher.
- Create a poster.

Do it!

Interesting websites

1. www.christchurchlibraries.com
2. www.teaohou.natlib.govt.nz
3. www.flaxworks.co.nz
4. www.wikipedia.org



Your teacher will assess this.

SELF-EVALUATION

IST403: A FUTURE FOR HARAKEKE

Self-evaluation: Circle/highlight one box in each row that tells how well you think you did.

Area of work	Not Attempted	Had a go	Succeeded	Did very well	Did an excellent job
Activity 8A		I tried to give some examples on how people used flax differently over time.	I gave some examples of how people used flax differently over time.	I gave good examples of how people used flax differently over time.	I gave excellent examples of how people used flax differently over time.
Activity 8B		I thought of 1-2 ways of using flax in the future.	I thought of 3-4 ways of using flax in the future.	I thought of 5-6 ways of using flax in the future.	I thought of more than 6 ways of using flax in the future.
Activity 9		I tried to find out more about harakeke.	I found out more about harakeke and returned my work to my teacher.	I found out quite a bit more about harakeke and returned my work to my teacher.	I found out a lot more about harakeke and returned my work to my teacher.

Something I did well:

Something I can improve:

CHECKLIST

- I have completed all the self-marked activities.
- I have marked my answers.
- I have completed all of the teacher-assessed tasks.
- I have filled in the self-evaluation page.

The activity that I enjoyed most in this booklet was

because

.....

.....

.....

The activity I enjoyed least in this booklet was

because

.....

.....

.....

Supervisor comment

.....

.....

.....

Teacher comment

.....

.....

.....

ANSWER GUIDE

These answers are a guide. You may have thought of other answers for some questions.

1C

Pacific Island plant	Parts that are used	What they are used for
Coconut palm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trunk • shells • leaves • coconuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building • bowls and jewellery • roofs, baskets, mats • food and drink
Pandanus vine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leaves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thatched roofs • baskets • mats
Paper mulberry tree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tapa cloth, clothes and mats

2A

	Was it made from strips or fibre?	What was it used for?	Why was it made from flax?
Kono (small basket)	Flax strips.	Collecting food. Holding food.	It was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong • easy to weave • easy to carry • available.
Hinaki (eel pot)	Fibre.	Catching eels.	It was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong • good in the water • light.
Piupiu (skirt)	Strips.	Clothing worn by men and women to keep warm.	Flax: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • looked good • was available.
Kaitaka (cloak)	Fibre.	To keep warm. To show mana (rank).	The close weave makes it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • warm and beautiful • soft to wear.

2B

Food	bird traps, fishing nets, baskets, nectar
Home/ shelter	mats, walls, tukutuku panels
Clothing	cloaks, piupiu, belts, sandals, headbands
Health	toothache, wounds, broken bones
Transport	sails, rafts, waka cord
Entertainment	kites, darts, poi, rattles

3A

1. Māui uses harekeke to make ropes and a strong net.
2. Harekeke fibres are very strong.

3B

The cloak:

- shows his rank
- has taken a lot of skill and time to make
- has traditional ancestral patterns
- might have special powers
- feels good when it is worn.

3C

Hine's cloak:

- reminds her of her ancestors
- has taken a lot of time and skill to make
- it might be made by her
- makes her feel good wearing it
- may show her rank or mana.

3D

Ways to respect harakeke	Reasons
Use only the outside leaves of the plant. Do not damage the leaves of the centre.	This helps the plant to keep growing. Young, new leaves get the chance to grow.
Harakeke should not be cut at night or in the rain.	The leaves are more brittle and harder to work with when they are wet. They may cut your skin.
Children must not touch or step over harakeke that is being woven, or the leftover pieces.	They may damage the harakeke or the thing being woven. They should learn respect for the craftsman's work and for harakeke. The harakeke may be wasted. Time may be wasted.
Workers must not eat while working with harakeke.	Food or drink will be spilt on the work. The work is precious and should be looked after.

4A

They wanted it to make strong ropes and canvas. These were used a lot on sailing ships. They could sell harakeke fibre for good prices in Sydney and London.

4B

1. Things made from harakeke in this picture are:

- mat
- clothing
- whare (house)

2. He might be wearing a woollen blanket because:

- it is warm
- it was given to him
- he likes how it feels
- he didn't have to wait for it to be made.

4C

1. The house is made from:

- wood
- glass
- nails.

2. The clothing is made from:

- wool
- cotton
- leather.

3. Maybe they:

- want to keep up their skills with harakeke
- like working with harakeke
- still like to wear them for special occasions
- can show others how they make the traditional clothes.

4D

Fact	Consequence
Flax grew in all parts of New Zealand.	Many Māori died in tribal wars.
Māori traded flax for muskets.	Māori died with measles and influenza.
Māori neglected their old way of life.	European ships traded all around New Zealand.
Traders brought European diseases.	Māori bought goods they used to make for themselves.

5A

1. Taking the flax to the mill.
2. Working on the flax stripping machines.
3. Laying the fibre out to dry.
4. Bundling the fibres into bales.
5. Making flax fibre into cloth.

5B

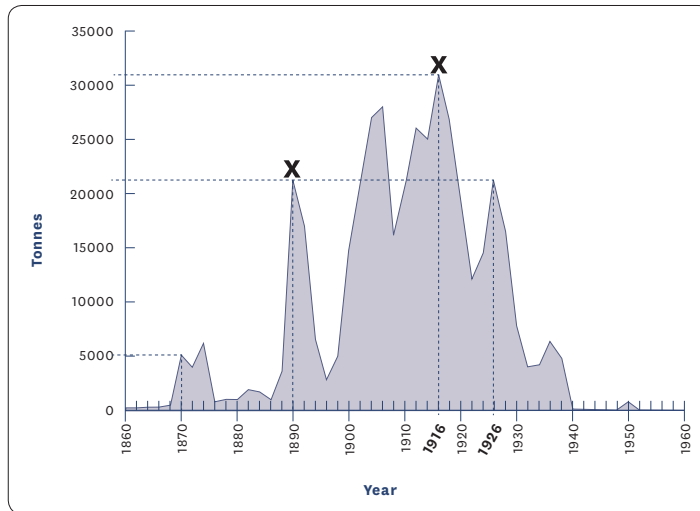
1. There would be work for the local people.
2. The Māori weavers might think the machines were great because they could strip flax so quickly. They might think they were no good because the fibre is spoiled and not good for fine weaving.

5D

1. People who lived in towns with flax mills could work for good wages.
New Zealand could produce a lot of flax fibre to sell overseas.
New Zealand earned a lot of money from flax exports.
2. People in Māori settlements could not earn money by stripping flax themselves.
Some Māori families had less money.

6A

1. 1916
2. 1940



6B

When exports were up, there would be more work for flaxies.
 When exports were down, mills might close and there would be fewer jobs for flaxies.

6C

1. It could buy things New Zealand needs from other countries.

6D

Some things that changed the flax industry	What happened to flax exports?	
1870s – New flax stripping machines meant flax could be stripped more quickly.	Flax exports	UP/DOWN
1880s – More flax fibre was needed overseas for rope making.	Flax exports	UP/DOWN
1890s – Sailing ships were being replaced by steam ships so less rope was needed.	Flax exports	UP/DOWN
1900s – Flax fibre was needed overseas for countries at war.	Flax exports	UP/DOWN
1910s – A lot of flax fibre was needed during World War I.	Flax exports	UP/DOWN
1920s – There was a shortage of flax because of the yellow leaf disease.	Flax exports	UP/DOWN
1930s – The Great Depression meant there was not much buying and selling going on.	Flax exports	UP/DOWN
1940s – A little flax fibre was used in New Zealand but none was exported.	Flax exports	UP/DOWN

7A

A Māori weaver

I'm proud of my work.

I would like one of my whānau (family) to wear this.

It's taken me a long time to make but it's worth it.

A museum worker

We'll have to look after such a beautiful cloak.

This is a precious (taonga) treasure.

This should be on display so lots of people can see it.

A buyer from overseas

In my country, people haven't seen anything like this.

This is worth a lot of money.

7B

What did she do?

She collected and preserved traditional flax plants from around New Zealand.

Why did she do it?

There was a shortage of special varieties for weaving. She wanted Māori women to have the kinds of flax they needed for their weaving.

How did she do it?

- She collected plants by visiting marae, learning from the women and exchanging plants with them.
- She planted over 60 varieties at her home in Gisborne. Later she donated her collection of flax plants to the government.

Who helped?

- The Māori women at the marae.
- Diggeress Te Kanawa and her mother.



1. Grant
2. Margaret
3. Donal
4. Patricia



- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| • Conservation reasons | Rene Orchiston, Donal, museum worker |
| • Health reasons | Patricia, Grant |
| • Traditional skills reasons | Te Aue Davis, Māori weaver, Rene Orchiston, Patricia |
| • Spiritual reasons | Patricia |
| • Commercial reasons | Grant, Margaret, overseas buyers |

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Photo: Diggeress Tekanawa and Rene Orchiston in cloaks at Te Kuiti, © 1989 Louise Schick from Rene Orchiston's private collection. Used by permission.

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Photo: Women's outfit made out of flax, World of Wearableart Awards Show 2008, Andrew Gorrie, Dominion Post, AGOR0228_243934.

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