

Reading Comprehension — How Māui Tamed the Sun

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How Māui Tamed the Sun

Long ago, when the world was young, the sun raced across the sky far too quickly. The days were short, and the people could not finish their work or cook their food before darkness fell. They grew tired and hungry, and they began to despair.

But Māui, the clever and daring demigod, would not accept this. "We will catch the sun," he told his brothers, "and make it slow down." His brothers were afraid. The sun was fierce and blazing hot — how could anyone hope to catch it? Yet Māui was determined, and at last they agreed to help.

Working together, they wove long, strong ropes from flax. They travelled by night, far to the east, to the great pit from which the sun rose each morning. There they set their trap, hiding behind a wall of clay to shield themselves from the heat.

As dawn broke, the sun climbed from the pit — and Māui's ropes snared it fast. The sun struggled and roared, but Māui and his brothers held on with all their strength. Māui struck the sun again and again until, exhausted, it finally agreed to move more slowly across the sky.

From that day on, the days were long enough for people to hunt, cook, work and rest. And so, the legend says, it was the courage and cleverness of Māui that gave us the long days we enjoy.

Questions

1. Why was the short day a problem for the people? (2 marks)
2. What did Māui decide to do about the sun? (1 mark)
3. What did Māui and his brothers make their ropes from? (1 mark)
4. Find and copy a word in paragraph 2 meaning "brave or bold." (1 mark)
5. Why were Māui's brothers afraid? (2 marks)
6. How did the brothers protect themselves from the sun's heat? (1 mark)
7. What kind of person is Māui? Use evidence from the text. (2 marks)
8. What does this legend try to explain? (2 marks)
9. Summarise the legend in order: the problem, the plan, and the result. (3 marks)

Answer Key / Mark Scheme

1. The days were too short, so people could not finish work or cook before dark; they grew tired and hungry.
2. Catch the sun and make it slow down.
3. Flax.

4. "daring."
5. The sun was fierce and blazing hot, so catching it seemed impossible / dangerous.
6. They hid behind a wall of clay.
7. Clever, brave and determined — he refuses to accept the problem and persuades his fearful brothers to help.
8. Why the days are long enough for people to live and work — it explains something about the world.
9. Problem: the sun raced too fast, days were too short. Plan: Mui and his brothers wove flax ropes and trapped the sun at its pit. Result: the beaten sun agreed to move slowly, giving long days.