Teacher notes

Matariki is the Māori name for the star cluster also known as the Pleiades. When it rises in the north-east just before dawn in midwinter, it marks the start of the Māori New Year. Since 2022 Matariki has been a public holiday in Aotearoa New Zealand. In 2027 the holiday is on **Friday 25 June**.

The three principles of Matariki

Matariki Hunga Nui

Remembering those we have lost since the last rising of Matariki.

Matariki Ahunga Nui

Celebrating the present and giving thanks for what we have, together.

Matariki Manako Nui

Looking to the future and the promise of a new year.

Using this pack

- **Fact cards:** print on card, cut out, and use for matching games, group research or a class wall display.
- **Colouring pages:** suit early childhood and junior classes; older students can label each star with what it looks after.
- **Finding Matariki:** share with whānau so tamariki can look for the cluster before dawn in late June and early July.
- **Word list and word search:** build te reo Māori vocabulary for the season. Practise the macrons: they change the meaning of words.
- **Remember, celebrate, look ahead:** a reflective writing and drawing sheet linked to the three principles.
- **Take-home sheet:** simple ideas for whānau to celebrate together.

A note on tikanga

Matariki traditions differ between iwi and hapū. Some iwi, including those of Taranaki and Whanganui, celebrate the new year with the star Puanga (Rigel) instead, because Matariki is hard to see from their area. Where you can, connect with your local iwi, hapū or marae for the stories and tikanga of your rohe.

Sources

Professor Rangi Mātāmua, *Matariki: The Star of the Year* (Huia Publishers); Te Papa Tongarewa (tepapa.govt.nz); Te Kāhui o Matariki and Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage; Employment New Zealand (public holiday dates). The names and meanings of the nine stars follow Professor Mātāmua's published work.

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