



What's the story?
The Encyclopedia of New Zealand



**Te Ara
Encyclopedia of New Zealand
Guide for Contributors**

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1. Introduction

I am delighted that you have agreed to contribute to Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand. Te Ara will be organised under nine major themes:

New Zealanders – the arrival and settlement of the people.

Earth, Sea and Sky – marine life, people and the sea, natural resources, and shaping forces such as geology and climate.

The Bush – New Zealand's landforms, fauna and flora.

The Settled Landscape – agriculture, horticulture and related activities and lifestyles.

Trade and Exchange – the economy, business and city life.

Connections – social groups, families and communities.

Nation – systems of government and symbols of national identity.

Daily Life – popular culture, sport, recreation, customs and habits.

Creativity – arts, culture, invention and innovation.

A Places theme is also being prepared over the course of the project, with in-depth entries on twenty-two major regions.

I believe this is a hugely important project that will make a long-term contribution to the culture of New Zealand. Thank you for helping us to make it a reality.

*Jock Phillips
General Editor*

2. The principles of Te Ara

Based on current knowledge

The Te Ara entry is designed to take users to the frontiers of received knowledge about a subject. Entries should take account of recent research and discoveries and different perspectives.

Interdisciplinary approach

The following issues should be taken into account in entries:

- The New Zealand situation in comparison with the international context
- The history of the topic compared with the current situation
- The geographical/regional context
- The human/social dimension
- Simple and clear explanation of relevant technical and scientific concepts.

Extensive Māori content

You will need to think about whether your subject has a distinctive Māori dimension and how this can be included in the entry. All entries with extensive Māori content will be available both in te reo Māori and in English.

A multimedia experience

Internet publication allows users to move from words to images, films, sounds or other documents. We want other media to add real intellectual, as opposed to merely decorative, value. We urge you to think about the relationship between words and graphics, and provide us with suggestions for various media to be used in conjunction with the text.

New Zealand focus

Te Ara is not a general reference work, but focuses exclusively on New Zealand. It will therefore explore aspects of this country that make it different from other places.

Diversity of opinion

Where there has been scholarly debate about your topic or diverse interpretations of it, you should indicate this, even if only briefly. If it is difficult to convey the range or complexity of debate within the word allocation, you may wish to suggest the inclusion of digitised papers or articles of significance as resources.

1966 *Encyclopaedia*

A H McLintock's 1966 *Encyclopaedia* is online as part of the new Encyclopedia's website, and we will link to it where appropriate, as many entries are still relevant and useful. It is important, however, that your entry can stand alone without need for reference to the 1966 *Encyclopaedia*, as eventually Te Ara will be published in a print volume, which will not include the 1966 entries.

Accuracy

Te Ara will be used for checking facts. Its credibility depends on a high level of accuracy. Please ensure that the entry you supply is as accurate as possible. Your name will appear on your entry.

Originality

Your Te Ara entry must be an original piece of work. It is not acceptable to recycle word for word your previous published work.

Standards

Entries that do not meet Te Ara standards as set out in this guide may be returned for amendment. It is highly desirable to ensure your entry is reviewed by another expert before you submit it.

3. Format and structure of entries

To see how Te Ara entries are structured, go to www.TeAra.govt.nz and explore the site.

The entry

The entry should be divided into subentries, ideally between 250 and 600 words long. Each subentry should have a short, straightforward heading which describes the content of the text that follows. The subentry should be further divided into sections, each with a short heading.

Please do not make cross-references to other parts of your entry or to other Te Ara entries in the text. We will add links to related entries as part of our in-house editorial procedure.

Topic boxes

Topic boxes are designed to convey small pieces of interesting information in a lively and engaging way. These may be quotations from first-hand accounts, quirky anecdotes or fascinating facts. There should be one or two per subentry. Each topic box should contain ideally about 40 and certainly no more than 80 words, and should make one strong point.

Note that the word allocation for the entry does not include topic boxes.

4. Style of entries

Audience needs

Because Te Ara must appeal to a wide range of audiences, you should write your entry in a straightforward, approachable style that can be easily understood by a high school student. The language level should be similar to that of a newspaper. You should aim to answer readers' likely questions, which are often quite basic.

Writing for the web

Web users want information quickly and easily. They scan for their key words, then skim any text that looks promising. If the text is clear and relevant, they might print it out and read it in full. Use words people are likely to search for in the headings and the text.

Break the text into manageable chunks:

- Short sentences – 20 words or so
- Short paragraphs – 1-4 sentences
- Bullet points – for lists or processes

Clarifying the topic

What is the central message for the subentry? Stick to the topic. The first two paragraphs should hold the most important information. It is helpful to use a topic sentence (summarising the central idea) at the start of each subentry or section. The rest of the text expands on this.

Improving readability

- Reduce the difficulty level of vocabulary – avoid words with three or more syllables when shorter words will do.
- Use plain, everyday words. If technical terms must be used, they should be clearly explained in context. An exception is the use of names for flora and fauna: the scientific, Māori and common names should all be given.
- Use concrete examples.
- Quotations may be useful to illustrate or summarise points, but please avoid lengthy or excessive quotation. Quotes should be no longer than 100 words. (Please give full footnotes for the original source of quotations.)
- Use the active rather than the passive voice.

5. Resources

A wide range of resources, including diagrams, graphs, maps, drawings, photographs, paintings, cartoons, sound clips, moving images, interactives, biographies from the online *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, and documents of various kinds will accompany the entry. Their purpose is not just illustrative – they must have information value and add to what has been written. In many cases they will eliminate the need for detailed descriptions and explanations in the text.

Resource form

If you know of the existence of suitable resources or have ideas of how the entry could be illustrated, please record your suggestions on the resource form so we can follow them up. These resources may already exist (for example, old photographs), or they may need to be specially created (for example, new maps or tables). If you have created and/or own an appropriate resource such as a diagram or photograph, please let us know.

A small team of Te Ara staff is responsible for locating resources, assessing their suitability, ordering them and dealing with technical and copyright issues.

If you have any queries about resources please contact Shirley Williams, Team Leader Resources phone (04) 496 6351, e-mail shirley.williams@mch.govt.nz.

6. Footnotes and bibliography

Footnotes

You should provide footnotes for quotations, facts, assertions and major arguments in your entry and topic boxes. Footnotes provide authority for the entry and help us in our editorial work. They may also be referred to in future. However, only footnotes for direct quotations will be published. As regards style, we prefer footnotes to references in the body of the text.

Bibliography

Please supply a full bibliography of published and unpublished sources used in preparing the entry. Please indicate with an asterisk (*) up to six sources that make a significant contribution to the topic, so that these can be included in the 'further reading' published as part of the entry. These should ideally be recent secondary sources, directly relevant to the topic of the entry. The further reading list is to assist readers who want to explore the topic in more depth.

Websites

In addition to the bibliography, please indicate up to six websites that provide sound information on the topic. We require the URL, the title of the site and a brief description of its contents.

Research material

Please send in any photocopies of items from inaccessible sources, such as manuscripts or newspapers not held in Wellington, or notes you have taken during your research. We keep a file on every entry and will retain this material for future reference, as well as using it in the course of preparing Te Ara.

7. Deadlines and word allocations

Deadlines

It is essential that we receive your entry by the agreed deadline. Our editorial processes will take some time, and we will be dealing with a large number of entries, which compounds any delays. If circumstances beyond your control make it impossible for you to meet your deadline, you should contact us as soon as possible so that it can be renegotiated.

Word allocations

There are several reasons why it is important you stay close to the commissioned length for your entry:

- There needs to be a balance in terms of the space given to various topics. Entry lengths are assigned after extensive consultation, and the General Editor must ensure that this balance is maintained.

- Concise expression is an expected feature of an encyclopedia, whether in print or digital form.
- Te Ara will eventually be published in book form, where space is limited.

If, after starting work on your entry, you consider the word allocation should be revised, please contact us to discuss the matter.

8. What will happen next?

Once your entry has been received and accepted by the General Editor, your payment will be actioned. Te Ara staff will then prepare your entry for publication following a standard process:

- The entry will be checked and amended as necessary.
- Resources will be chosen and obtained, and captions for them will be written.
- Relevant DNZB biographies will be identified and captions linking them to the entry will be written.
- The entry will be edited.
- A 'short story' – a summary of the entry for younger readers – will be written.
- The entry will be designed for the web, and uploaded to our staging server prior to live publication.

A link to the edited and designed entry with its resources will be sent to you for your comments before publication.

9. Checklist

Before you send in your entry, please check the following things:

- Your entry is close to the commissioned length (topic boxes are additional to this allocation) – see section 7
- You have divided the entry into subentries with headings – see section 3
- You have supplied topic boxes – see section 3
- You have filled out the resources form and enclosed it with your entry – see section 5
- You have provided footnotes and bibliography, have asterisked up to six bibliography items, and have indicated up to six useful websites – see section 6.

Thank you for participating in the Te Ara project!