



## Connect / Me Whakawhanaunga

Strengthening relationships and feeling close to and valued by others, including at school, is critical to boosting student wellbeing.

Help your students connect with their local environment and connect with the people around them, such as their whānau/family and whakapapa/genealogy, by running these activities with your classroom.

### Discover your pepeha:

A pepeha is the traditional way Māori [introduce themselves](#). It's a way of letting people know where we are from and who we are. It links us to our whakapapa, features of the natural world and the places we are from or feel connected to.

Connecting to who we are and where we're from is a great way to learn more about our whānau and about each other, and to celebrate New Zealand's unique culture and history.

#### **Activity 1:**

As a class, discover the name of the of the iwi/tribe, hapū/sub-tribe, maunga/mountain, awa/river and moana/sea of the area your school is in. This may include finding Māori names or translations where the English name is more widely-known.

#### **Activity 2:**

Ask each student to [create a pepeha](#), one that helps them explore who they are, what places are special to them and where they are from. "Home" might mean different things to different students – they might connect to where they were born, where they currently live or a place or places their parents or ancestors have come from. There is no right or wrong answer so encourage your students to share the places and people that are meaningful to them.



### Activity 3:

Each student [learns their pepeha](#) and [introduces](#) themselves in te reo Māori. This is something students can have fun with, no matter what culture they are from! In some cases, students might have multiple pepeha that link them to their whānau in New Zealand and/or across the world. Learning pepeha is a chance to celebrate whānau, learn some te reo Māori and think about the places and people we are most connected to.

There are many ways to develop a pepeha. Encourage students to be creative! They can use drawings, or photos, write or speak in te reo or English, create a video, or use any other way they'd like to express themselves (depending on the age and knowledge of students).

### Other 'Connect' activities:

#### Activity 1:

Make cards, posters or art from natural materials such as sand, pressed flowers or leaves. The final product could be given to people in the local community who might not have much contact with nature, such as a local resthome. Bring nature to them!

#### Activity 2:

Ask students to bring in stones from places they feel connected to and use them to make a [class rock garden](#). Students could paint the stones with designs, colours or words about how they connect with nature, or they could paint the stones with inspiring quotes or compliments and gift them to each other.

#### Activity 3:

Create a [classroom korowai/cloak](#). Students can cut out feather shapes and write, draw and design something they love about nature or describe how nature makes them feel. Put all the feathers together to make a classroom korowai!