

The language of the Treaty

The purpose of this activity is to give an introduction to the different understandings of the meaning of the Treaty held by Māori and the British at the time of the signing, and to give participants an understanding of why the Treaty is a controversial issue for some people today. The differences in meanings occurred when two British missionaries, Henry Williams and his son Edward, translated the draft of the Treaty into the Māori language.

Activity 13

Time: 30 – 40 minutes.

Materials: Handout, page 45.

1. Read and find the differences. (ESOL classes may wish to do this as a split reading: give one column to each student to read then explain to their partner who has the other column).
2. **Discuss:** Which do you think is the most important difference?
3. **Further discussion questions:**
 - Do you think Māori would have signed if they had known what the British Government really wanted the Treaty to say? Why / why not?
 - If Māori hadn't signed, how might history have been different?
 - Which Treaty allows for the existence of more than one kind of power?
 - Is it possible to share power (sovereignty) in a country? Do you know of any countries that do this?

Notes

If you wish to go into more detail and look at some of the key words used in the two texts, the following simple explanations may be of use.

rangatira

- A rangatira is a Māori leader.
- In Article 2 of te Tiriti the British agreed Māori would keep the power a rangatira has (rangatiratanga).
- This power gives Māori control over their land, culture, economy and everything else that is important to them.

kāwana

- This word did not come from the Māori language. It was invented because it sounds like the word 'governor'.
- In Article 1 of te Tiriti, Māori agreed to give the British the powers of a governor (kāwanatanga).
- In 1840, the British explained that the Governor was coming to protect Māori land and to keep the peace between Māori and Pākehā.

sovereign

- Sovereign: the king or queen, or the person with the highest power in a country.
- In Article 1 of the English version the British Queen was given the powers of a sovereign over New Zealand (sovereignty).
- Sovereignty is the power a nation has to control its own government.

An additional resource

Below are some of the relevant questions from the Network Waitangi *Questions and Answers* resource. Answers are on the website <http://aotearoa.wellington.net.nz/back/project.htm>

- There are two texts, one in Māori and one in English. Are they both the same?
- Which Treaty is the right one?
- Didn't Māori sign away their sovereignty to Queen Victoria?
- So what did Māori cede under the Treaty of Waitangi?
- Why are there two different versions?

In a nutshell:

Te Tiriti says,



The English version says,



That's quite a crucial difference! It helps explain why the Treaty is still such a controversial topic today.

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There are four parts called articles

	Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The English Version
Article 1	Māori give to the Queen of England the right to have a governor in Aotearoa/New Zealand.	Māori give to the Queen control over all Aotearoa / New Zealand.
Article 2	The Queen agrees that Māori keep their independence and keep control over their lands and everything that is important to them. They give the Queen the right to buy land, if they want to sell it.	The Queen guarantees all Māori rights to land, forests and fishing. If Māori want to sell land they can only sell it to the Queen.
Article 3	The Queen gives Māori the same rights as British people.	The Queen gives Māori the same rights as British people.
Article 4 (spoken promise)	The Governor promised to protect Māori customs and the different religions in Aotearoa/New Zealand.	



Which Treaty?

The Treaty in Māori:
Signed by 512 Māori and by the British Governor on behalf of the Queen.
Recognised in international law.
This treaty maintains Māori authority in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

The Treaty in English:
Signed by 39 Māori.
This is the treaty that Captain Hobson wanted. Recognised by the New Zealand Government.
This treaty gives control to the Crown only.