

Māui

and the Giant Ika



Māori Translations

Ika = fish

Aotearoa = New Zealand

Waka = canoe

Harakeke = flax

Karakia = prayer

Moana = sea/ocean

Kai = food

Kāti = stop

Turituri = be quiet

Aue = an expression of surprise (oh dear!)

Whanau = family

Tangaroa = God of the Sea

Taiaha = Māori spear

Patu = Māori club

Skite is a New Zealand/Australian word that means to boast.



Māori Traditional Stories

Māori traditional stories are often called myths, this means they are set in the past and have magical elements. They contain Māori beliefs about the creation of the universe and the origins of gods and of men.

Natural events, the weather, the stars and the moon, the fish, and the birds are all found in Māori myths.

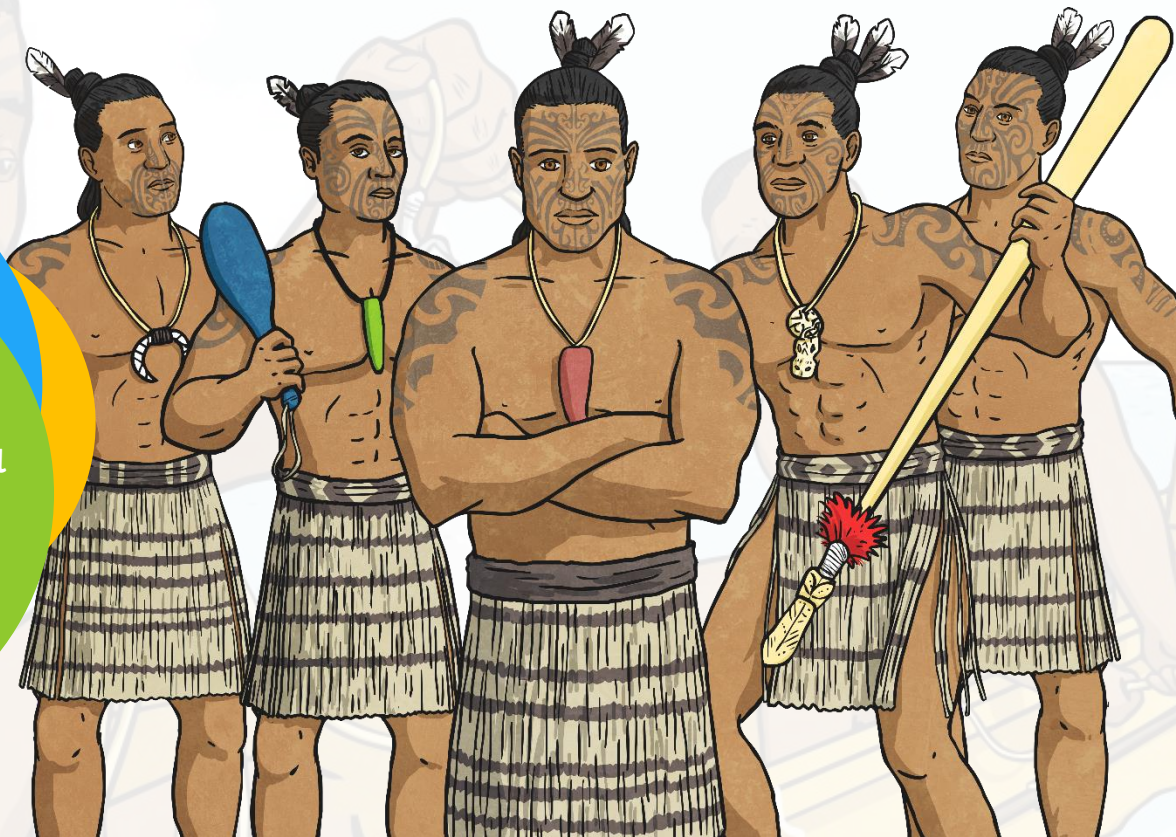


A long long time ago before there was the place we call Aotearoa, there lived a clever demigod named Māui.



Māui dreamed of going fishing with his four older brothers, but whenever he asked they always replied, “No”. They made many excuses.

You're too skinny,
we might think you
are a piece of bait
and throw you
to the fish!



Māui got so angry with his brothers, he started making a plan.

“I’ll show them how good I am,” he thought. “I’ll show them I’m the best fisherman in the land.”





That night while his brothers were sleeping, Māui began carrying out his plan. He sat down and started weaving a strong fishing line out of harakeke.

As Māui wove, he remembered a magical karakia his grandmother, Muri-ranga-whenua, taught him. He repeated the karakia knowing it would give his fishing line the strength of a thousand men.

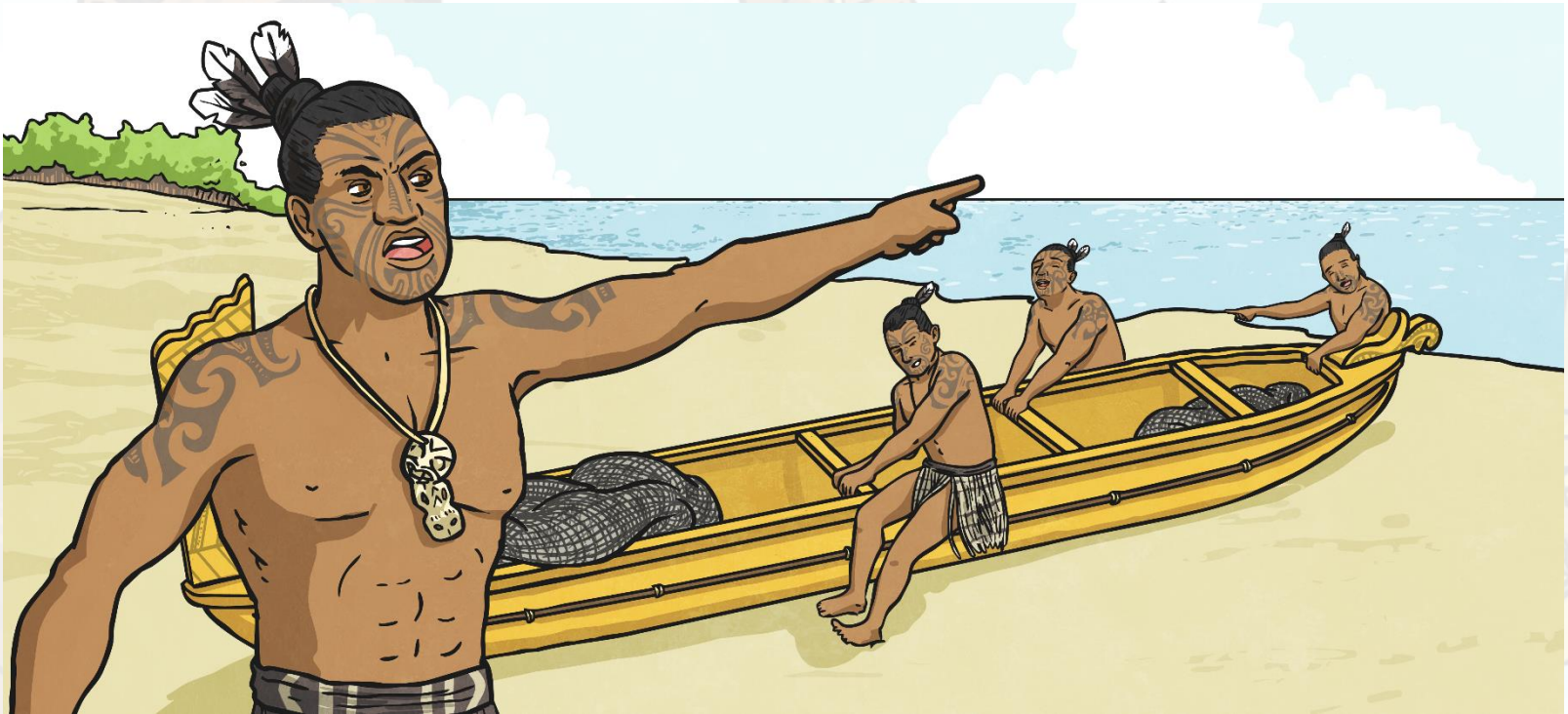
Nights later when Māui had finished weaving his fishing line, he took the jaw bone of his grandmother and bound it to the end of his line. Finally, he was ready to prove his brothers wrong.



Māui woke early before the sun had risen from its slumber; he snuck quietly onto the waka and hid among the nets where his brothers would not see him.



Māui's brothers pulled the canoe into the moana and they noticed how heavy it seemed. They teased each other. "Are you sure you are pulling?" "Did you have too much kai last night?" The oldest brother shouted, "Kāti, stop, turituri, be quiet, get on with the fishing."



When the brothers reached their favourite fishing spot, they stopped and dropped down their anchor. Māui decided this was the right time to surprise his brothers. “I’m here!” he shouted. “Aue!” cried his brothers, “what are you doing here? You trickster!”



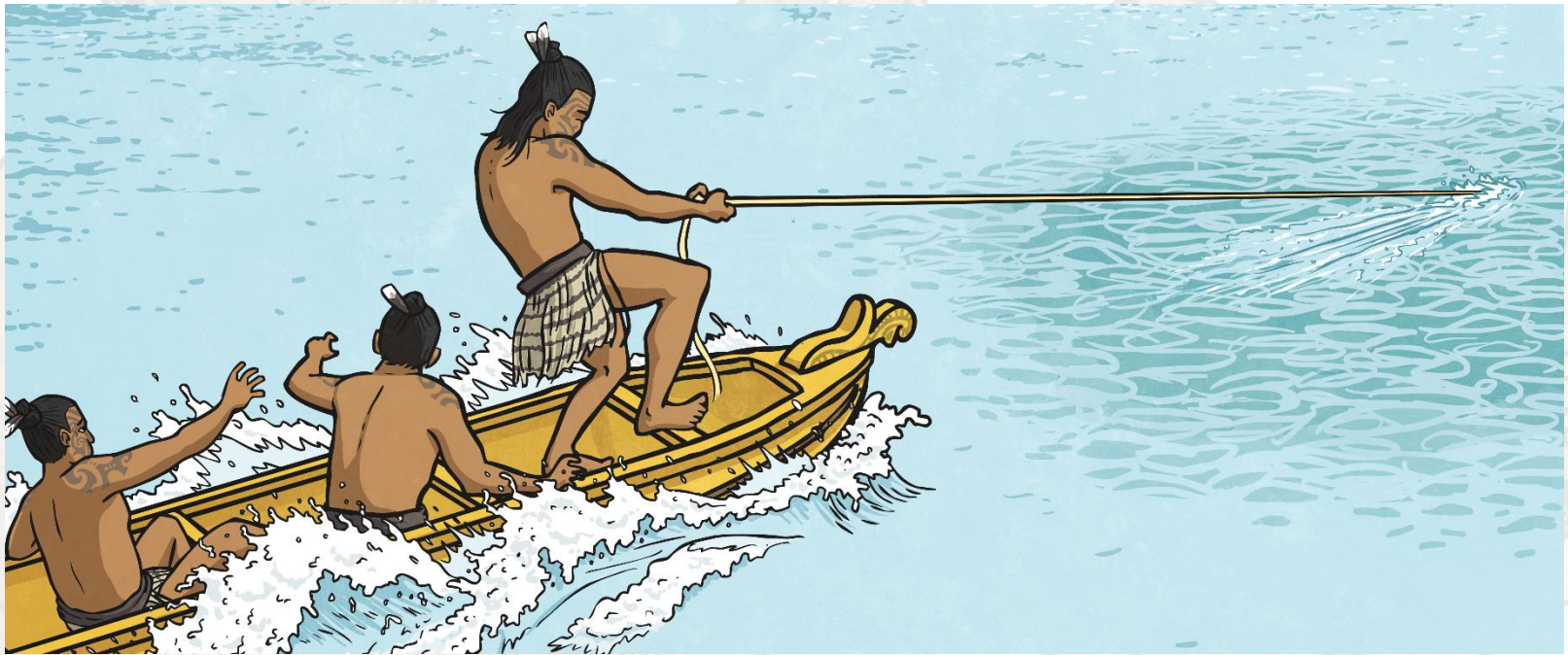
Māui spoke with pride and authority, telling his brothers to lower their fishing lines while he said his karakia. As the words floated in the air, the brothers felt the fish jump on to their lines. They pulled up fish, after fish, after fish. In no time at all, the brothers had a waka full of kai for their whanau.



Māui pulled out his harakeke line with the jaw bone of his ancestor, Muri-ranga-whenua. “Now it is my turn”, he announced. The brothers again laughed at Māui, “Are you tricking us again Māui?” “You can’t catch fish with that!” “Maybe a piece of seaweed if you’re lucky.” They couldn’t hold back their laughter.



Māui ignored his brothers and cast his line far far out into the moana. As it flew through the air, he called out his karakia again, making sure Tangaroa heard his call. The line dropped deep down to the ocean floor. Māui felt a mighty tug and immediately, his line stretched tight.

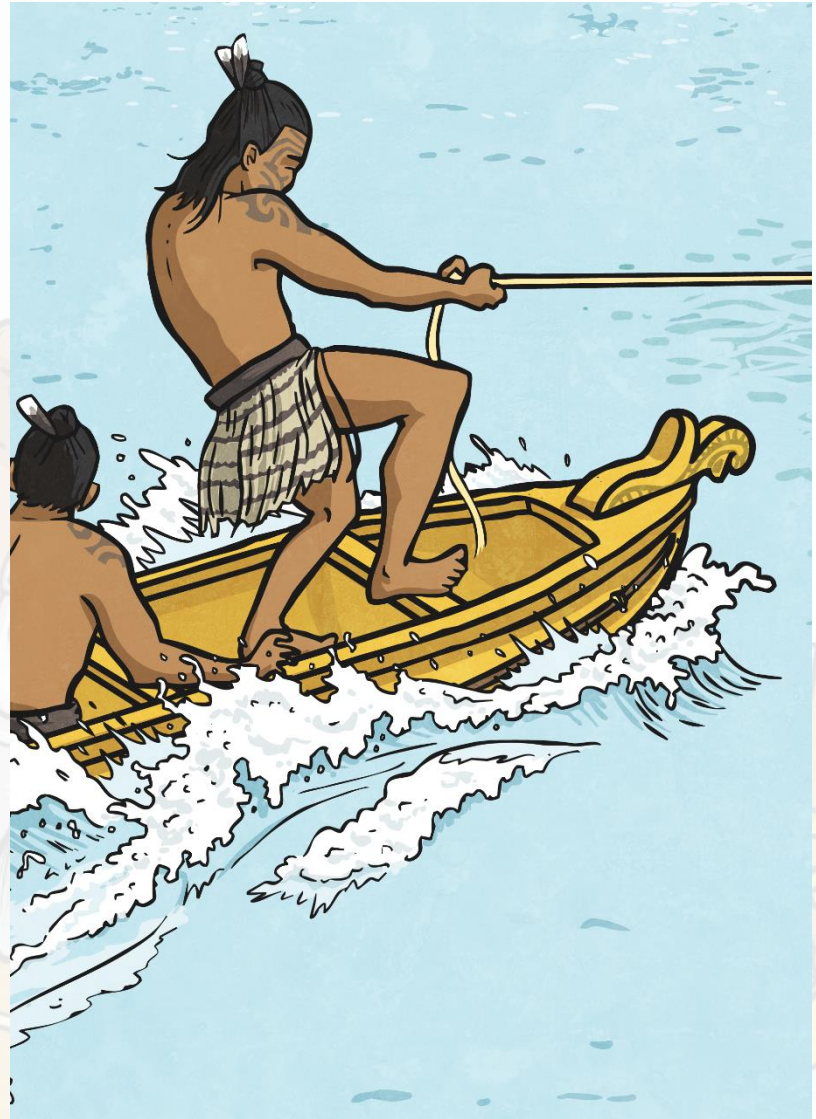


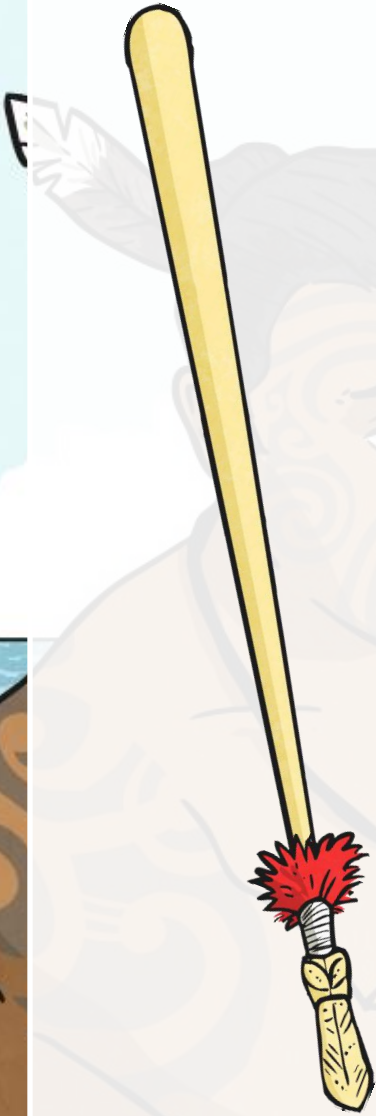
Māui's brothers called out in fear as their waka was dragged across the ocean.

"Aue Māui! Cut the line"

"You'll never pull it in, we'll all be drowned."

The brothers were shaking with fear but Māui stood strong and held the line.





Slowly, the giant ika rose to the surface. Māui's face beamed as he looked at his brothers. However, before he even had time to skite about his catch, his brothers had jumped on the giant fish with their taiaha and patu.

They began cutting away at it, claiming pieces for themselves.

Māui called out in shame, "No, no my brothers." He knew the fish was what their grandmother, Muri-ranga-whenua, had said would be gifted to them.

But his brothers continued chopping and arguing over the great fish.



That fish continues to lie here as land. It is still inhabited by Māui, his elder brothers and their children. Over thousands and thousands of years, the cuts became gullies and mountains, and became part of the landscape of Aotearoa.

The giant fish became known as Te Ika-a-Māui (the fish of Māui), the North Island of New Zealand and his canoe as Te waka-a-Māui (the canoe of Māui), the South Island.

