

**Episode Title:****Teacher:** Rob Wiseman**School:** Pt England**Year Level:** Year 7/8**Lesson Topic:** Reading**Learning intention**

- Read and interpret texts about coats of arms and family symbols.
- Identify how symbols can represent values, history, and identity.
- Reflect on my own family, culture, and personal values.
- Create a personal coat of arms using an AI tool, including meaningful symbolic elements.

Success Criteria

- I can explain what a coat of arms or family crest is and what it represents.
- I can identify symbols and colours that represent important ideas or values.
- I can create a design that meaningfully represents my own identity or family.
- I can explain my choices clearly

Links with the
[New Zealand Curriculum](#)**Phase 3 of the NZ Reading curriculum**
Interpretation and connection

Cultural and social elements in texts — such as values, rituals, ceremonies, symbolism, art, and social roles — reflect the practices, worldviews, and values of the communities and cultures they come from, and help readers understand deeper meanings.

Prior Knowledge

Children have some experience in using AI image generation tools.

Lesson Sequence**Before the Session****Session 1: Exploring the Idea of Symbolism and Coats of Arms****1. Hook (10 mins)**

Show several examples of coats of arms (New Zealand's, school crests, family patches). Ask:

- What do you notice?
- What might the colours, animals, or shapes mean?
- Introduce the topic - Coat of Arms/Family Crest
 - A family crest or coat of arms is a special design that represents a family. It uses symbols and colours to show their history, values, or what's important to them.
- Introduce final create task to get buy in - Show example if you have one

2. Reading Activity (20 mins)

Students read one or two of the texts in small groups or pairs. They highlight or note:

- Key symbols and what they represent



	• The purpose of coats of arms • How symbols can reflect identity and values 3. Discussion (15 mins) Share findings: • How do symbols show who we are? • Are there modern examples (e.g., sports team logos, flags, tattoos, digital avatars)? 4. Extended Discussion (15 mins) ○ The goal is to have natural conversation rather than robotic or forced. ○ Explain that the discussion prompt will require them to think broadly and deeply ○ Prompt: “If the New Zealand coat of arms was redesigned what symbols might you include?” 5. Introduce response to text and design plan (5 mins) 2. Design Planning (25 mins) Students list what their coat of arms might include (e.g., a mountain for strength, a book for learning, waves for family trips to the beach). Encourage them to write a short symbol explanation key (e.g., “The bird represents freedom and creativity”).
During the Session	Session 2: Creating the AI-Generated Coat of Arms 1. Introduction (10 mins) Explain that AI tools create images based on <i>prompts</i> — short pieces of writing that describe exactly what you want. Discuss how writing an effective prompt is like giving clear instructions: the better your description, the greater the detail, the better the result. Show a few examples: • Weak prompt: “Make a coat of arms.” • Better prompt: “Create a modern family coat of arms with a mountain, a wave, and a book, in blue and green colours to show learning and calmness.” Ask students what makes the second one clearer and more effective. Introduce AI prompt checklist and show examples. 2. Writing and Editing Prompts (20 mins) Students use their information from their design plan to write their first prompt. Encourage them to: • Use specific nouns (e.g., “silver fern” instead of “plant”) Add colour and mood words (e.g., “warm gold”, “peaceful blue”) • Include symbol meanings (e.g., “to show courage and kindness”) • Mention the style or tone (e.g., “modern”, “traditional”, “cartoon style”)

	Have them test their prompts in the AI tool (e.g., Gemini, Canva's AI Image Generator, Bing Image Creator, or Adobe Firefly). After viewing their first result, they edit their prompt to improve accuracy — changing words, adding detail, or simplifying where needed. 3. Reflection and Sharing (20–30 mins) Students select their best final image and prepare a short written or oral explanation describing: • What each symbol represents • How their prompt evolved (what they changed and why) • How the final design expresses their family's identity Encourage peer feedback by having students share prompts and discuss what language helped the AI produce the best results.
After the Session	(Optional) Session 4: Laser engraving the Coat of Arms 1. Laser engraving the Coat of Arms Students take it in turns to engrave their finished Coat of Arms using the laser engraver. Ensure they are familiar with using the software and engraver.
Learn Create Share Breakdown	
Learn	• How symbols can represent values, history, and identity • How to write an effective AI prompt
Create	• Coat of Arms that symbolises student's particular family
Share	• Share with peers and online via student blogs
Resources Used	Coat of Arms: Reading session Response to text/design plan Create task The Language of Symbols - Text 1 Coat of Arms text 2 Family crests around the world - Text 3
Reflection	
Reflection on Lesson Sequence	Like my other lessons, I suspect I tried to include too much in this lesson sequence. It ended up taking several sessions to complete, and if I were to do it again, I would simplify it. Having the students engrave their designs was a highlight as they really enjoyed the experience, but it took a lot of time since it was their first attempt. In hindsight, it would have been better to run a separate lesson on how to use the laser engraver before doing the reading lesson. Overall, most students were able to confidently explain what each of their symbols represented and were successful in writing and editing prompts for the AI to generate something meaningful that reflected their family.