

Background

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From 1907 - 2007 the Journal's main function has been to New Zealand children with New Zealand-based reading material, relevant to their lives.

Each year Learning Media publishes around 750,000 copies of the School Journal (in four parts) for the Ministry of Education, catering for children aged from seven to thirteen years.

The *School Journal* was initiated in 1907 by Inspector-General George Hogben to provide New Zealand school children with a free publication containing information on history, geography and civics, replacing the need for several separate textbooks. Until 1939, when the School Publications Branch was formed, the *School Journal* was the Department of Education's sole publication for children. As textbooks and other publications began to be produced, the Journal began printing more New Zealand children's fiction and illustrating it with the work of New Zealand artists.

Many of New Zealand's foremost authors and illustrators had their work published in the *School Journal* during its 100 years. Writers have included Margaret Mahy, Janet Frame, Elsie Locke, James K. Baxter, Witi Ihimaera, Patricia Grace, Joy Cowley, Jack Lasenby, David Hill, Norman Bilbrough; and artists, illustrators and photographers such as Don Binney, Russell Clark, Cliff Whiting, Dick Frizzell, Mervyn Taylor, Gil Hanly, Ans Westra, Gavin Bishop, Bob Kerr, Gus Hunter, and Christine Ross.

Today, the School Publications Branch has become state-owned enterprise Learning Media. The Journal is now one of hundreds of resources published by Learning Media and provided free to schools by the Ministry of Education, but it remains one of the most popular.

