

Kate Sheppard: Leading the way for women

Text by Maria Gill

Illustrations by Marco Ivančić

- Reading • Writing •
- Oral Language • Thinking Skills •



Synopsis

Before 1893, women did not have the vote. They were considered by many to have the intelligence of a child. Then along came Kate Sheppard and other women who believed they were *equal* to men. They believed that the word ‘person’ includes women and that was how it should be worded on the Electoral Bill. This is Kate Sheppard’s story, from being a feisty child brought up in Liverpool, immigrating to New Zealand, and settling – but not conforming – to life in Christchurch. It is also about how she galvanised the women in New Zealand to sign their names on a petition asking for the right to vote, and her determination to keep going with her telegrams, articles and talks after the Bill failed in Parliament two times; how she dealt with the opposition and how she finally won women the right to vote. She paved the way for New Zealand’s first woman in Parliament and New Zealand’s three female Prime Ministers. *Kate Sheppard: Leading the way for women* is the story of an extraordinary woman who changed the world forever.

About the Author

Maria Gill trained as a teacher and journalist and now writes full-time in the northern seaside village of Point Wells in New Zealand. She explored the world while in her twenties, writing journals of her own adventures. On her return, she married and had two children. Maria’s writing career began after completing numerous writing workshops and courses. Two years later she had her first book published in 2005. Since then she has had 57 books published for children and teachers.

In 2016, her book *Anzac Heroes*, also illustrated by Marco Ivančić, won the 2016 New Zealand Book Awards for Children & Young Adult Non-fiction prize, as well as the Margaret Mahy Book of the Year Award. She has also had five other nominations in the New Zealand Children’s Book Awards including *New Zealand Hall of Fame*, which won the 2012 Children’s Choice award in the non-fiction category. Six of her books have been finalists for the LIANZA Elsie Locke Award, and nine have received Storylines Notable Book Awards. Over the years, Maria has taught writing workshops and given author talks at schools around New Zealand and Australia. Visit Maria Gill’s website: www.mariagill.co.nz



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About the Illustrator

Marco Ivančić lives in Wellington and illustrates full-time. This is his fifth book with Maria Gill. His first, *New Zealand Sports Hall of Fame*, shortlisted for the 2015 LIANZA Elsie Locke Award and his artwork received an Honourable Mention. It also shortlisted in the Children's Choice in the non-fiction category at the New Zealand Children's Book Awards, and Storylines selected it as a Notable Book. Their second book, *Anzac Heroes*, won the 2016 New Zealand Book Awards for Children & Young Adult Non-fiction prize, as well as the Margaret Mahy Book of the Year Award. Their third book *Abel Tasman: Mapping the Southern Lands* shortlisted in the 2018 Russell Clark Award for Illustration.

Marco majored in illustration while doing his Massey University Bachelor of Design. He has designed and illustrated book covers, maps and websites for magazines, publishers and companies. Marco has drawn planes, sharks and dinosaurs since the age of four. He became fascinated with computer art in Year 8 and has been creating science fiction illustrations ever since. Visit Marco Ivančić's Tumblr site: www.marcoivancic.tumblr.com

Writing Style

Kate Sheppard: Leading the way for women is a creative non-fiction sophisticated picture book; telling a real story in story-format. It is written in third person and chronologically tells Kate Sheppard's life, focusing on the lead up to women getting the vote.

Maria Gill endeavoured to show the obstacles in Kate Sheppard's path in getting women the vote and how she made other firsts in her life, such as riding a bike and wearing loose fitting clothes without a corset. There are fact pages included at the back of the book to give more information about the events, including a timeline of women's suffrage in New Zealand; a page on the triumphs and tragedies occurring around the world for women; a glossary; and a map of the world showing Kate's journey to New Zealand on the front endpapers, and when each country gave women suffrage on the back endpapers. This takes away the need to explain about something in the text, which would take the reader out of the story.

Illustration and Design Style

On every double-page spread, Marco Ivančić has drawn an illustration depicting a scene in the story. The designer has included archival material, illustrated as newspaper articles, advertisements, telegrams and letters showing the correspondence between Kate Sheppard and politicians, viewpoints of New Zealanders in the newspaper, and advertisements.

For *Kate Sheppard*, Marco used Adobe Photoshop and worked on draft illustrations and sketches for the images. Marco's illustration style is realist, his pictures looking almost photo-like. To ensure his illustrations are historically correct, he researched for photo references for that time frame (19th century). He had to make sure the clothing, technology and interiors of houses were accurate.

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

Prior to sharing the book, ask students to think about stories they've read or seen on television about women getting the vote. In pairs, students can share what they know about the rights of women around the world. As a class, brainstorm some of the words they might expect to see in the book. During the shared reading session encourage students to ask questions to clarify their understanding of the words and ideas in the book. While reading the story, encourage students to make predictions about what will happen next and identify important themes and ideas.

INTRODUCING THE BOOK: COVER

Ask the students to study the front cover and read the back-cover blurb and then ask:

- When and where do you think the story is set?
- What kind of book do you think it is? Is it fiction or non-fiction?
- What experiences do you think the main character will have?
- Can you predict what will happen to Kate Sheppard? Has anyone heard of her before? What made her famous?



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Pages 2-5

- Where did Kate Sheppard grow up and in what era (decade)?
- Why did her brothers not let young Kate play soccer, and how did that make her feel?
- What happened when Kate was 14 years old that changed her family circumstances?
- What did Kate's mother suggest to the family and what was Kate's response? Why do you think she responded that way?

Pages 6-9

- Why did Kate's family travel to New Zealand by ship?
- What type of clothes did women/girls wear in those days, and how would it hinder their movements?
- Why did Kate feel ashamed of her corset?
- Why did the elderly woman feel Kate was not acting like a young lady?
- What did Kate think of Christchurch and who did she meet on one of her walks into town?

Pages 10-13

- Why did Kate get excited when she saw the penny-farthing bicycle? Why would riding a bike mean a lot to women in those times?
- Why did Kate wrench her corset off and not want to wear it again? Could she have worn it on a bike? If not, why not?
- Why did pedestrians react so strongly when seeing Kate riding a bike? And how did Kate respond to them?

Pages 14-17

- Why did Kate get goosebumps while listening to the American woman talking?
- Why did some people protest? What were they worried about losing?
- What is a Temperance Union group and what did they do? (See glossary.)
- Why did men think women didn't want the vote? Why were they so scared of the idea?
- Who took the Women's Suffrage Bill to Parliament and why was that so important?

Pages 18-21

- What do you think 'Members of the House are under petticoat government' meant?
- What were some of the ideas Kate wrote in her pamphlet?
- Why did Kate collect signatures for a petition? What did she hope it would do?
- Why did her husband tell her not to get her hopes up too high?

Pages 22-25

- How did Kate show her anger when the Bill failed and what did she do next? How does that show her resilience after a disappointment?
- How many signatures did Kate get for the second petition, but why was it still not enough?
- Why did Kate feel she would be letting down the women she had spoken to if she gave up?
- How did Kate get the message out to the women around New Zealand?
- What is significant about the phrase 'Tell them the world was made for women too!'?

Pages 26-29

- How long was the roll of wallpaper after she had posted 32,000 signatures on it?
- Why do you think Kate had a good feeling about this petition? How did she show her excitement?
- What happened on the 11th September 1893, and why was it so significant?
- What was the next step after the Bill had been passed into Parliament?
- Which other countries already allowed women to vote?

Pages 30-33

- What did the people who opposed the Bill hope to achieve with their petition? And why did they fail?
- What day was the Electoral Act of 1893 signed?
- Why did Henry Wright and other protesters think women's place was only in the home? Why might they feel threatened?
- Why was Kate's work not finished? What did she still have to do, and why?
- How many women voted in November 1893? Would that imply that most or very few women believed in the right for women to vote?

Pages 34-35

- What did the overseas suffragettes hope to do by inviting Kate to speak in their countries?
- What was significant about the *White Ribbon* paper?
- What other achievements did Kate have during her lifetime?



Pages 36-37

- What was Kate's maiden name and what year was she born? How old was she when she died?
- Who was New Zealand's first woman MP and what year was she elected?
- Who was NZ's first female Cabinet minister and what year did she achieve that?
- Who was NZ's first female Maori MP? What party was she in and what year did she achieve it?
- Who was NZ's first female Prime Minister, and who was the first elected female Prime Minister?

Pages 38-39

- How many female prime ministers or presidents have there been in the world up to 2018?
- When is International Women's Day and how long has it been commemorated?

- How has it changed for women sports competitors over the years?
- What has changed for women in jobs in the military over the last 100 years?
- What does it mean that 'Women have been a catalyst in the fight for equality of race, religion, age and ability, as well as gender'?

Endpapers

- Look at the endpapers at the beginning and end of the book. How are they different and the same?
- What route did Kate take when sailing from England to New Zealand? Is that still the fastest shipping route? If not, why not?
- Look at the dates listed of when various countries first gave women the vote. Which most shocked you? Why?
- Why do some of the dates have an asterisk (*) beside them?

Activities

ACTIVITY 1: THIS VS. THAT

Describe a penny-farthing bicycle and the type of bicycle Kate rode – the 'safety' cycle. Find out more about these, and compare the advantages and disadvantages of the two. If you have a bike (or have ridden one) write down the improvements that make your modern bike easier to ride than the penny-farthing or the 'Safety' cycle.

ACTIVITY 2: WOMEN HEROES

Pick one of the women featured in the timeline and find out more about her life. Write a short story (biography) about her achievements throughout her lifetime.

ACTIVITY 3: WRITE IT!

Write a Readers' Theatre script for the story. [*A Readers' Theatre script is like a play but you don't act nor use costumes or props – you just read it aloud.*] First write a title, then the characters' names, then write the play. For example:

Kate Sheppard: Leading the way for women

Story written by Maria Gill, Play written by _____

Characters:	Kate Sheppard, Kate's brother (Frank), Kate's mother (Mrs Malcolm), Walter Sheppard, Sir Julius Vogel, Narrator 1 and 2
Narrator 1	Growing up in Liverpool, England in the 1850s ...
Narrator 2	was not easy for young Kate Malcolm.
Kate	I want to play football too!
Narrator 1	Kate told her two noisy brothers.
Frank	Don't be a dunce!
Kate	Why can't I play? I've got two arms and two legs – just like you!
Frank	But you're a girl!
Narrator 2	Kate scowled and booted the ball with all her might.
Kate	I'm going to make some changes when I grow up!

[The narrators give extra information that help people understand the story. Note that they don't say everything that is in the book – you will need to leave unnecessary information out.]



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ACTIVITY 4: ACT IT!

Choose one of the Readers' Theatre scripts written about Kate Sheppard in your class. Choose who will be which characters. If you have only six people in your group, consider giving one person two characters to play. For example, Frank and Mrs Malcolm, because they each have few lines. Read it through first, highlighting your parts. Then practise reading it as a group several times, until you no longer stumble over anything. If you don't know how to pronounce a word, ask someone for help. Once you feel confident, act it out in front of the class (and then perhaps the school).

ACTIVITY 5: PLUS, MINUS AND INTERESTING

After reading the story, write a PMI chart (Plus, Minus, Interesting) of the good (Plus), the bad (Minus), and the Interesting (something you learned that you thought interesting) about how women got the vote. Here's a chart to help you out:

PMI on women getting the vote.

PLUS 😊	MINUS ☹️	INTERESTING

Teaching notes by Maria Gill