



Inquire to Learn!

There are many ways in which *Sina and the Eel*/*Fa'a Samoa* can be used as a base for Inquiry Learning. This is just one suggestion.

Session 1

Using the Big Book, share-read *Sina and the Eel*, stopping at natural points for discussion. Draw on the students' prior knowledge of eels, rock pools and sea creatures, Samoa, and coconuts.

Possible Starter Questions for Discussion

Eels: *Who has seen an eel? Where did you see it? What did the eel do?*

Rock Pools: *Sina found the little eel in a rock pool. What other creatures do we sometimes see in rock pools? (Direct the children's attention to the starfish, sea anemones, and seaweed in the rock pool on pp. 2–3.)*

Samoa: *Has anyone been to Samoa? What was the weather like in Samoa? Did you see coconuts growing there?*

Coconuts: *Who has seen a coconut? Can anyone tell us how to open a coconut? What is inside?*

Text and Illustration Based Inquiry Questions

PP. 4–5: *Sina took the little eel home to her fale. Can anyone tell us what a fale is? (A Samoan house.) Is it a good idea to take animals out of their natural habitat? Why/why not?*

P. 4: *In this story, the eel talks to Sina. How do we know that the eel is talking? (Use of speech marks and signifier "said the eel.")*

P. 7: *Does anyone know what Sina is carrying in her basket? (Taro)*

PP. 6–7, 8–9: *The eel was Sina's pet, but it grew too big and too angry. Was keeping an eel as a pet a good idea or not? Why was the eel angry with Sina? Was it OK that it hit her?*

P. 11: *Why do you think Sina buried the head of the eel?*

PP. 14–15: Direct the children to the different ways in which coconut products are being used in the illustration. (Leaves: as a weaving material for baskets and roofs; Trunks: as building material for fale; Coconuts: as a drink and food product)

Further Discussion and Inquiry Extension

Show the children a real coconut and let them handle it. Point out the markings of the eyes and mouth of the eel.

Lead a discussion on how *Sina and the Eel* is a story about how coconut trees came to Samoa. There are lots of stories from different cultures that explain how something came to be. Brainstorm some examples e.g., Maui fishing up the North Island of New Zealand.

Sina and the Eel/Fa'a Samoa

Teacher's Notes continued

Session 2

Using the Big Book, share-read *Fa'a Samoa*, stopping at natural points for discussion. Draw on the students' prior knowledge of Samoa, Samoan culture, Samoan food, tapa and siapo cloth, and markets.

Possible Starter Questions for Discussion and Inquiry

Samoan Greeting: *Does anyone know how to say hello in the Samoan language? It is talofa (Tah-low-faa).*

Location of Samoa/Geography: Look at the map on P. 1 of *Fa'a Samoa* and note the location of Samoa in the Pacific Ocean, and in relation to New Zealand. Discuss how long it takes to fly to Samoa (4 hours from Auckland to Apia). If any of the children have made this journey, invite them to share their experiences.

Population: Discuss the population numbers provided on P. 1 of *Fa'a Samoa* for how many people live in Samoa and how many Samoans make their home in New Zealand. Ask the children if any of them have family living in Samoa. Draw on the children's prior knowledge of Samoan communities in New Zealand, such as South Auckland.

Fale: *How are fale different to the houses we live in? Has anyone been in a fale? What was it like?*

Food: *Which foods on pp. 4–5 have you tried? Which foods would you like to try?*

Samoan Tapa Cloth: *Who has seen siapo or tapa cloth? Has anyone seen it being made? Refer to the photo on the Contents page. Ask, What do you notice about the designs on this piece of siapo? (Help the children to recognize that geometric shapes and repeating patterns are used.)*

Further Discussion and Inquiry Extension

If possible, arrange for the children to experience some Samoan foods, such as breadfruit and taro. It may even be possible to sample dishes such as *oka*, *palusami*, or *sapasui*.

Invite the children to learn more about Samoa and Samoan culture by conducting their own research. Explore Samoan greetings, songs, stories, and clothing.

Locate the Samoan words in *Sina and the Eel/Fa'a Samoa* and discuss their meanings: *fale*, *Fa'a Samoa*, *'aiga*, *matai*, *pola*, *lau*, *afa*, *oka*, *lu'au* and *palusami*, *umu*, *sapasui*, and *siapo*. Invite children to add Samoan words and their meanings to the list.

Learn more about siapo and tapa cloth. Have the students create their own siapo designs on paper using geometric shapes and repeating patterns.