

Name: _____

Period: _____ Date: _____

Whale Rider

- 1) How would you describe Paikea?

- 2) How do the women in the film deal with the sexism of their tribe?

- 3) There are several symbolic meanings in the scene that starts with Koro unsuccessfully trying to use a rope to start an engine. The rope breaks and Koro leaves to find another. Pai ties the rope together and then easily starts the engine. When Koro returns he admonishes his granddaughter, telling her that what she has done is dangerous and that she should never do it again. Some of the symbolic meanings in the scene are stated by Koro while others can be recognized by the viewer. Describe the symbols shown by this scene.

- 4) Why does Porourangi, Koro's first born son and Pai's father, leave home and live in faraway Germany?

- 5) Pai learns how to use the war sticks, the Taiaha, from Uncle Rawiri. Using this knowledge, she defeats Hemi, a boy trained by Koro himself. What is revealed about Pai and her uncle in this episode?

- 6) Hemi's father comes to see his son for a brief part of the ceremony at the school and then leaves with his friends. What does this suggest about the tribe's problems?

- 7) Pai makes an important point that clearly establishes theme in the speech she delivers in honor of her grandfather:

I broke the line back to the ancient ones. It wasn't anybody's fault, it just happened. But we can learn. And if knowledge is given to everyone, we can have lots of leaders. And soon everyone will be strong, not just the ones that have been chosen. Because sometimes, even if you're the leader and you need to be strong, you can get tired like our ancestor Paikea when he was lost at sea and he couldn't find the land and he probably wanted to die. But he knew the ancient ones were there for him so he called out to them to lift him up and give him strength.

What idea in this speech offers the solution to the problem faced by both Koro and the Maori as a whole?

- 8) A rope is seen in the episode in which the villagers try to help the beached whales return to the sea. This is an echo of the earlier symbol of the rope. What idea is conveyed by this scene?

- 9) Uncle Rawiri is an interesting character and in many ways a foil for Paikea. Describe the attributes of this character, how they relate to the themes of the film, and how Uncle Rawiri is a foil for his niece. (*foil = a character which provides contrast to the another, usually the protagonist*)

- 10) In this story, the *Taiaha*, the ability to fight with war sticks, is a symbol. What does it symbolize?