

Whale Rider Discussion Questions

1. Describe the cultural landscape seen in the film. Give specific examples of how the landscape expresses the folk culture of the island.
2. How does the conflict between the grandfather, Koro, and Pai's father, Porourangi, express a threat to the Maori culture?
3. Discuss the cultural forces that compel Pai and her grandfather to believe and act as they do in the film.
4. What role does tradition play in the Maori community depicted in "Whale Rider"? How do characters like Koro and Pai view tradition differently?
5. How does Pai challenge traditional gender roles within her community? What obstacles does she face in doing so?
6. Based on the events of the movie, compare the role of men and women in the Maori culture. Cite specific incidents where gender was a catalyst for conflict.
7. In the film, the grandfather makes a reference to wanting his son to help his people. In what ways do you think the Maori people need help?
8. Discuss the theme of leadership in the film. How does Pai demonstrate leadership qualities, and how do others react to her leadership?

9. Explore the theme of cultural identity in "Whale Rider." How do characters like Paikea navigate their identity within a changing world?

10. Reflect on the ending of the film. What does Paikea's final act symbolize, and what message does it convey about tradition and modernity?

Write 3 Discussion Questions in preparation for our Socratic Seminar.