

How do I say Māori names correctly?

Two helpful tips

1 Phonetics

Use the sounds of NZ English as in the examples on the cover of this pamphlet. If you can say upper, mutter and buddha, you can say Papa, Mata and Kura.

Try these Māori place name *phonetics*:

The 'aka' in Akaroa rhymes with 'tucker'

The 'Ōtā' in Ōtāhuhu sounds like 'or tar'

The 'tangi' in Waitangi sounds like 'tongue ee'

The first part of Wairarapa sounds a bit like 'wider'

The first part of Paraparaumu rhymes with 'judder judder'

2 Break it down

All Māori words break down into *syllables ending in a vowel*. Once you know the vowel sounds, just break any Māori word down. This helps pronunciation. Try saying these Māori names here, slowly at first:

Pa pa to e to e

Ta ra na ki

Wai ma ka ri ri

Ro to ru a

Wha ngā re i

Pa ra pa ra u mu

O a ma ru *or in full*

Te O ha a Ma ru

(if you can, ask a Māori speaker for help)



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Arohatia te Reo

Nau mai. Welcome to ...



This Māori Language Week, we're exploring Māori place names

The landscape of Aotearoa is rich in history. Our Māori place names tell stories of discovery, romance, travel and the deeds of the ancestors.

Use this list of Māori words to interpret and discover the meaning of our Māori place names:

awa	river	e.g. Awatapu
manga	stream	Mangakino
maunga	mountain	Maungataniwha
nui	big	Taumarunui
ngā	the (plural)	Ngāpuna
papa	land	Papanui
rangi	day	Rangitoto
roa	long	Tokoroa
roto	lake	Rotorua
rua	kūmara pit or two	Ruawai
te	the (singular)	Te Puna
tangi	cry	Waitangi (South Island: Waitaki)
wai	water	Waiwera
whanga	bay (or wait)	Whanganui



The Māori Language Week challenge:

Here are three long Māori place names, broken down to help you to learn during Māori Language Week:

Te ahi kai kōura a Tama ki te rangi

The Kaikōura peninsula is where Māui braced his foot while fishing up Te Ika-a-Māui, the North Island. The name means 'the fire that cooked the crayfish of Tamakiterangi.'

Te Rotorua nui a Kahu mata momoe

Kahumatamomoe was the uncle of the Te Arawa chief Īhenga, an explorer. This was the second major lake that Īhenga discovered, and he dedicated it to his uncle.

Taumata whaka tangihanga kōauau a Tamatea ki tana tahu

The longest place name in the world: 'the peak where Tamatea the traveller played his nose flute to his loved one.'

Akaroa (ucker roar) Mana (munner) Matamata (mutter mutter)

Hear some Māori place names being pronounced here:



Takapuna (tucker puna) Taupō (toe paw) Waitaki (why tuckey)