**CHARACTER ACTIVITY SHEET 5**

**WHAT MAKES A ‘HERO’?**

In *Whale Rider*, Paikea’s grandfather, Koro has high expectations for his community and is disappointed that there will be no son and heir to continue as Chief. Even though he loves his granddaughter, he struggles to see her potential as a leader for the community because she is female.

The film *Whale Rider* is based on the book *The Whale Rider,* by Witi Ihimaera. The author explains his sense of Paikea’s character from his own experience. He had taken his daughters to see a number of action films and they asked him why, in all of those films, the hero was a boy was and the girl had either a supporting role to play, or worse, was helpless and in need of rescuing.

He says, 'So I decided to write a novel in which the girl is the hero and I finished *The Whale Rider* in three weeks'. He goes on to say: ‘Pai has become this iconic young girl who is desperately trying to seek her own sovereignty and her own destiny in a male-orientated world.' (Quotations taken from the film’s production notes, at http://www.whaleriderthemovie.co.nz/html/themovie\_prodnotes.html)

**PRESENTATION TASK: ARGUE AND PERSUADE**

Thinking about the way that Paikea acts in the two clips you have seen, and the reactions of her family to her, choose one of the following statements to respond to:

A hero does not need to be a particular kind of person: it is their actions that make them heroic

Representations of young female characters in mainstream Hollywood films are always the same: you have to look beyond the blockbuster to find good role models for young people

Once you have discussed your ideas in small groups, create a presentation that focuses on using techniques of argument and persuasion to argue your case for, or against, your chosen statement. Remember to structure your points clearly, and to use examples to help persuade your audience to agree with your viewpoint.