

History

# Captain Cook



For Middle Primary

## Contents

Captain Cook and Terra Australis 1 .....	Page 3
Captain Cook and Terra Australis 2 .....	Page 4
First Contact with the Gweagal 1 .....	Page 5
First Contact with the Gweagal 2 .....	Page 6
Answers.....	Page 7

Preview

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# Captain Cook and Terra Australis 1

Lieutenant James Cook (see image right) set sail in 1768 from England on a mission for the Royal Society to the islands of Tahiti. His task was to record and observe the movement of the planet Venus as its shadow crossed the Sun.



From Tahiti, James Cook headed west. Cook, who was an excellent cartographer, took the opportunity to map New Zealand, that had been discovered by Abel Tasman in 1642. He was able to confirm that New Zealand had two large islands. His ship, the Endeavour, then turned south-west towards Van Dieman's Land. On April 19th 1770, Lieutenant Cook spotted the eastern coast of Terra Australis.

## Timeline for Cook's exploration of the east coast

### April 20th:

The Endeavour sails north along the coast from Port Hicks to a place that Cook names Cape Howe (see map). He describes this place as, "agreeable and promising ... with green hills and valley covered with wood".

### April 23rd:

First sighting of Indigenous Australians near Ulladulla.

### April 29th:

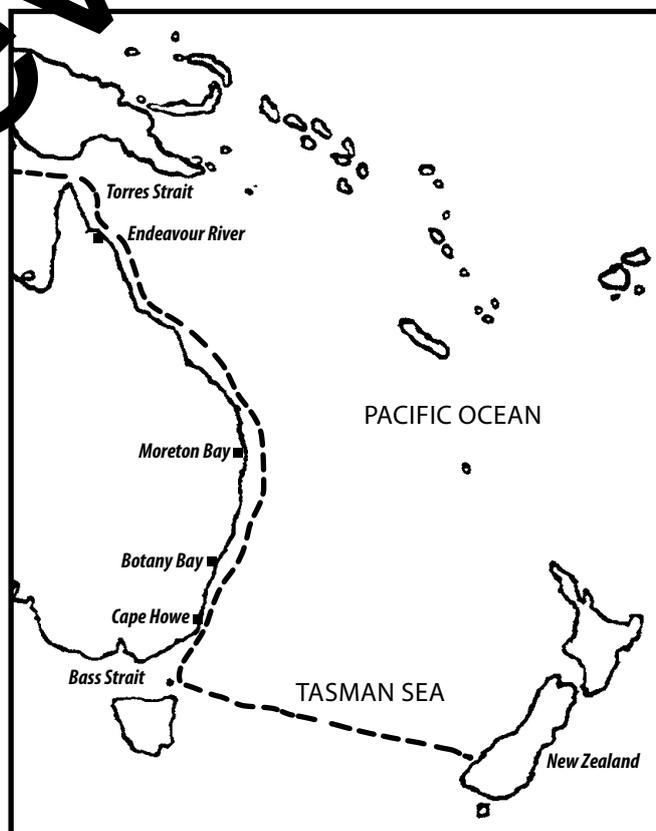
Cook anchors in Botany Bay and comes ashore with crew. First contact with Gweagal Aborigines.

### 11 June:

The Endeavour runs onto reef in the Great Barrier Reef and is badly damaged. Takes seven weeks to repair the ship at the mouth of the Endeavour River.

### 23rd August:

Cook sails into the Torres Strait and leaves Australia behind. He declares Terra Australis a British possession and later names it New South Wales.



*Cook's exploration of the east coast*

## Activity

# Captain Cook and Terra Australis 2

- Lieutenant Cook was chosen to lead an expedition to explore the Pacific region because he was a man of many skills. What skills or abilities did Lieutenant Cook have?

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- Annotate the timeline for Cook's exploration of the east coast of Terra Australis in 1770.



- Discuss the following question with a partner, then write your ideas in the space below. What do you think the Ulladulla people thought when they saw the Endeavour?

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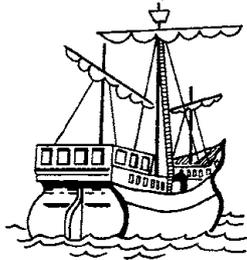
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## Research

- Research places, monuments and buildings in the Pacific region that have been named in remembrance of Cook's achievements. Record them below.

## First Contact with the Gweagal

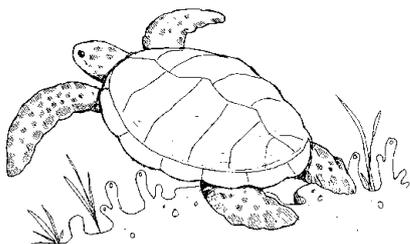
Captain Cook saw signs that people lived along the coast of Terra Australis. On the sandy beaches, he observed canoes and middens of oyster and mussel shells. Smoke from little fires could be seen in the distance. The Endeavour dropped anchor at Sting Ray Harbour (now Botany Bay) on April 29th 1770. Cook wrote in his journal about his first contact with the Gweagal, who lived in this territory →



*Issac Smith jumped out of the boat to be the first Englishman to set foot on the soil of New South Wales. The few natives who were near ran away, except for two who came forward to oppose the landing. A musket was fired over them, and they returned to where they had left their spears. One native threw a stone at the boat, but it was too far away to do any damage. I fired some small shots at him. He ran off to a small hut nearby, picked up a wooden shield and returned to join his friends for another attack. The natives' spears had a gummy substance on the points, we thought was a poison. Another round of small shots was fired, after that the natives retreated slowly.*

James Cook

It took many weeks to repair the Endeavour after it ran on to the reef. Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander used this time to learn more about the local people, who were called the Guugu Yimithirr. Slowly, the two groups began to trust one another. On June 19th 1770, ten Aborigines came aboard the ship for a visit. This is Cook's account of what happened →



*Those who came on board saw our turtle meat and wanted some. They helped themselves to two turtles and dragged them to the gangway, all set to throw them overboard. We stopped them and they became a little troublesome. We did not have any cooked food ready, so I offered them bread to eat. They rejected my offer with scorn and after this they went ashore.... then they all went to a place where some of our people were washing, and where all our nets and a good deal of linen were laid out to dry; here with great determination they again set fire to the grass.*

James Cook

## Activity

# First Contact with the Gweagal

- Imagine what the Gweagal people said to one another when they saw Captain Cook and his crew rowing towards the shore. Fill in the speech bubbles.



- Read Captain Cook's description of his first contact with the Gweagal people at Botany Bay on page 59. Put the events in the right order. The first one has been done for you.

*Gweagal man throws a stone at the boat.*

*Cook's crew think that the spears might have poison tips.*

*The Aborigines prepare for an attack on the Englishmen.*

*Two Aboriginal men threaten Cook's landing party.*

*Isaac Smith is the first sailor to get out of the boat.*

*A musket shot is fired over the Aborigines' heads to scare them away.*

- Read Cook's second journal entry on page 59. Discuss the question below first with a partner. Then write your opinion in the space below.

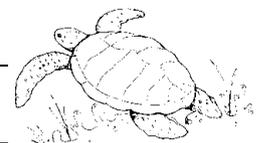
***Should Captain Cook have shared the turtle meat with the Guugu Yimithirr?***

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### Page 4

Cook was a navigator, cartographer, ship's commander and astronomer.

#### Timeline

20th April - Cook sights east coast of Australia at Port Hicks.

23rd April - His first sighting of Indigenous Australians at Ulladulla.

29th April - Cook anchors at Botony Bay. His first meeting with the Gweagal people.

11th June - Cook sails north. The Endeavour is damaged on reef near the Endeavour River.

23rd August - Cook sails home through the Torres Strait. Claims Terra Australis for Britain.

### Page 6

Sequence: 3, 6, 5, 2, 1, 4

Preview