

Tupaia, Isaac & Cook



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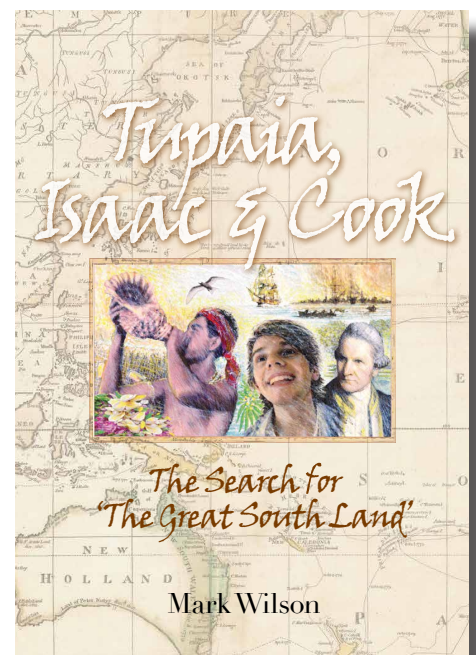
Teachers' notes

Introduction

There are as many mis-truths as there are truths about James Cook and his famous First Voyage of Discovery, including his secret orders to find the mythical 'Great Southern Continent'.

Cook may never have stumbled onto the South East coast of Australia at all, if it had not been for a young Ra'iatean master Navigator named Tupaia. He came on board the ship Endeavour when it was in Tahitian waters, and essentially piloted the ship through much of the Pacific. He facilitated communication with the First Nation peoples they met, particularly in New Zealand, and on more than one occasion, saved Cook and his entourage from being massacred. This book does not document all that

happened on that voyage. It puts into perspective the importance of Tupaia to the voyage that changed the course of history, and altered forever the lives of many people throughout the Pacific.



Activities

Study of History and Society

- Research the role that Tupaia played on Cook's First Voyage of Discovery into the Pacific.
- Discuss the lives of the Tupaia, Cook, Banks and Isaac Smith. What were their roles and what did they do?
- Research the 'Great Southern Continent' and discuss why the British Government wanted Cook to find if it existed.

English Language and Literacy

- Tell the story in the voice of one of the First Nation people that Cook encountered.
- Discuss the narrative style and document how effective this is in telling the story.
- Test your students' comprehension by asking them questions about the visual and written text.
- Students might be encouraged to use critical literacy skills to unearth meaning in this text. What might have happened had Tupaia not travelled with Cook when he left Tahiti?

Visual Literacy

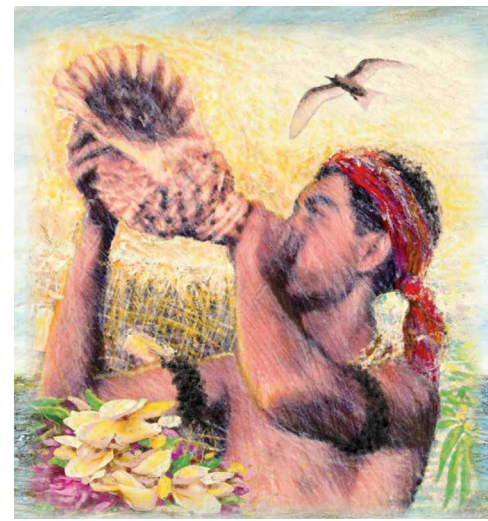
The visual text of a book works with the written text to tell the story using the various parts of the book's design and illustrations, as explored below:

- The cover of a book is an important part of its message. Read the cover and discuss its impact. What is the author suggesting with this image?
- The medium employed in most of the illustrations is acrylic painting on card, which are sometimes photo-realism and other times impressionistic in style. However, there are also some other illustrations done in charcoal, black pen and ink and pencil which appear as if in frames, in the midst of the landscapes. Try to create your own painting in this medium, depicting some scene suggested by this text.
- What are the 'dangers faced at sea' as re-

ferred to in the text, and how has the author illustrated these dangers.

Creative Arts

- Students might paint their own image of the Endeavour. They may choose other images suggested by this text as well. After the works are completed, students can then display the works as an exhibition created in response to this text.
- Create a play depicting the story, highlighting Tupaia's role. Your play might be set against a stage set created by members of the class. They might paint a backdrop using images from the story, or create their own. They could create computer images and project them onto the wall behind the actors
- Create a map of the world as it appeared in 1769. The maps available then were quite different to world maps today. Student could then trace the voyage of the Endeavour.
- Students might study the Australian documentary called 'The Pacific – In the Wake of James Cook', featuring Sam Neil. It highlights the First Nation peoples' side of the story.



Mathematics

- Analyse the various lists: quantities of stores, tools, weapons, livestock and supplies, and how these might reflect the subsequent success or failure of the voyage. In particular, the type of foods Cook and Banks brought on board to control the dreaded disease scurvy.
- An analysis of population statistics ‘then and now’, including migration patterns. See *All of Us* – Jackie French and Mark Wilson (in Bibliography below).
- Discuss deforestation or otherwise since Cook’s time. Could include Aboriginal land management, including clearing for farming. See *Dark Emu* – the picture book version (in Bibliography below).

Further Topics for Discussion & Research

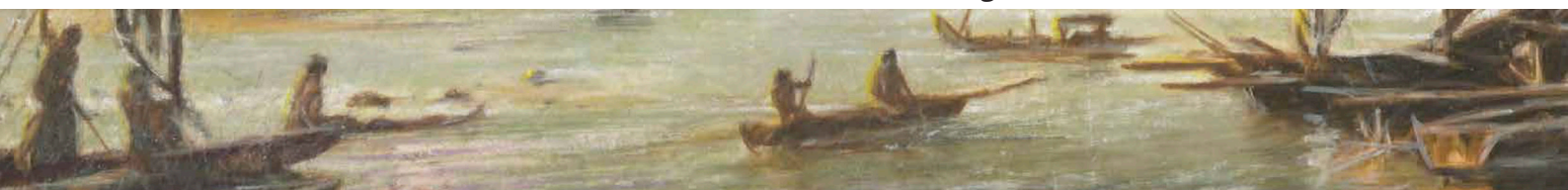
- Bravery is often described as if it consists of fighting battles and fierce heroics. Tupaia shows another type of bravery; how did he do this?
- This picture book story is told not from the point of view of Tupaia or James Cook, but from Isaac Smith’s perspective. Would Tupaia’s memories be of bravery, adventure and heroism as Isaac documented, or of fear, loss, or something else?
- Positive and negative Impact. How did the

First Nation people’s lives change in the years after the voyage of the Endeavour?

- Discuss colonialism in general, and in particular, Britain. Should Cook have claimed the lands he discovered for England, and why? What gave him the right to do this?
- Friendship is often forged in the most unlikely of circumstances and between people who might ordinarily never meet. People from different classes and educational and ethnic backgrounds live and work side by side, thrown together by fate. The relationships between Tupaia and Isaac is suggested in the narrative. Why do you think the two bonded as they did?

Conclusion

The places like Australia that Cook ‘discovered’ were places where people have been living for many thousands of years with their own identity, culture and traditions. These ‘discoveries’ also paved the way for many injustices towards First Nation peoples with tragic results. Hopefully, this narrative will encourage students and readers generally to consider the voyage of Tupaia, Isaac Smith, Cook and the Endeavour in a new light - one that places Cook’s considerable achievements in historical perspective while giving a voice to the First Nation peoples whose lives were changed forever, often with tragic results.



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Videos / Online Resources

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“Tupaia - The Remarkable Story of Captain Cook’s Polynesian Navigator” By Joan Druett.

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