

Captain Cook & European Exploration — Knowledge Organiser

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Key facts

- In 1770, British navigator James Cook sailed up Australia's east coast in HMS Endeavour.
- He mapped the coast and claimed the land for Britain, naming it New South Wales.
- Cook was not the first to reach Australia — First Nations peoples had lived there for tens of thousands of years, and earlier Dutch sailors had seen the coast.
- Cook's reports led to Britain sending the First Fleet 18 years later.

Key vocabulary

- Navigator — a person who plans and steers a ship's course.
- Voyage — a long journey by sea.
- Claim — to declare that land belongs to a country.
- Encounter — a meeting, especially a first one.

Two perspectives

To Britain, Cook 'discovered' new land. But the land was already home to hundreds of First Nations groups. Saying it was 'discovered' ignores the people already living there — which is why historians now describe it as a European encounter, not a discovery.