

European Arrival & Captain Cook in NZ — Knowledge Organiser

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Key facts

- The Dutch explorer Abel Tasman was the first European to sight New Zealand, in 1642.
- British navigator James Cook mapped New Zealand's coast in 1769–70.
- Māori had already lived in Aotearoa for hundreds of years.
- European arrival brought new trade and tools, but also new diseases and conflict over land.

Key vocabulary

- Explorer — someone who travels to learn about new places.
- Navigator — a person who plans and steers a ship's course.
- Encounter — a meeting, especially a first one.
- Colonisation — when people from one country settle and take control of another's land.

Two perspectives

For Europeans, these voyages 'discovered' new lands to map and trade with. But Aotearoa was already home to Māori. As with Australia, historians describe this as a European encounter, not a discovery — and remember that it brought great change, and harm, to Māori.