

HISTORY^{Year 9}

FRENCH AND BRITISH RIVALRY

Worksheet 3

Cook's Secret Instructions

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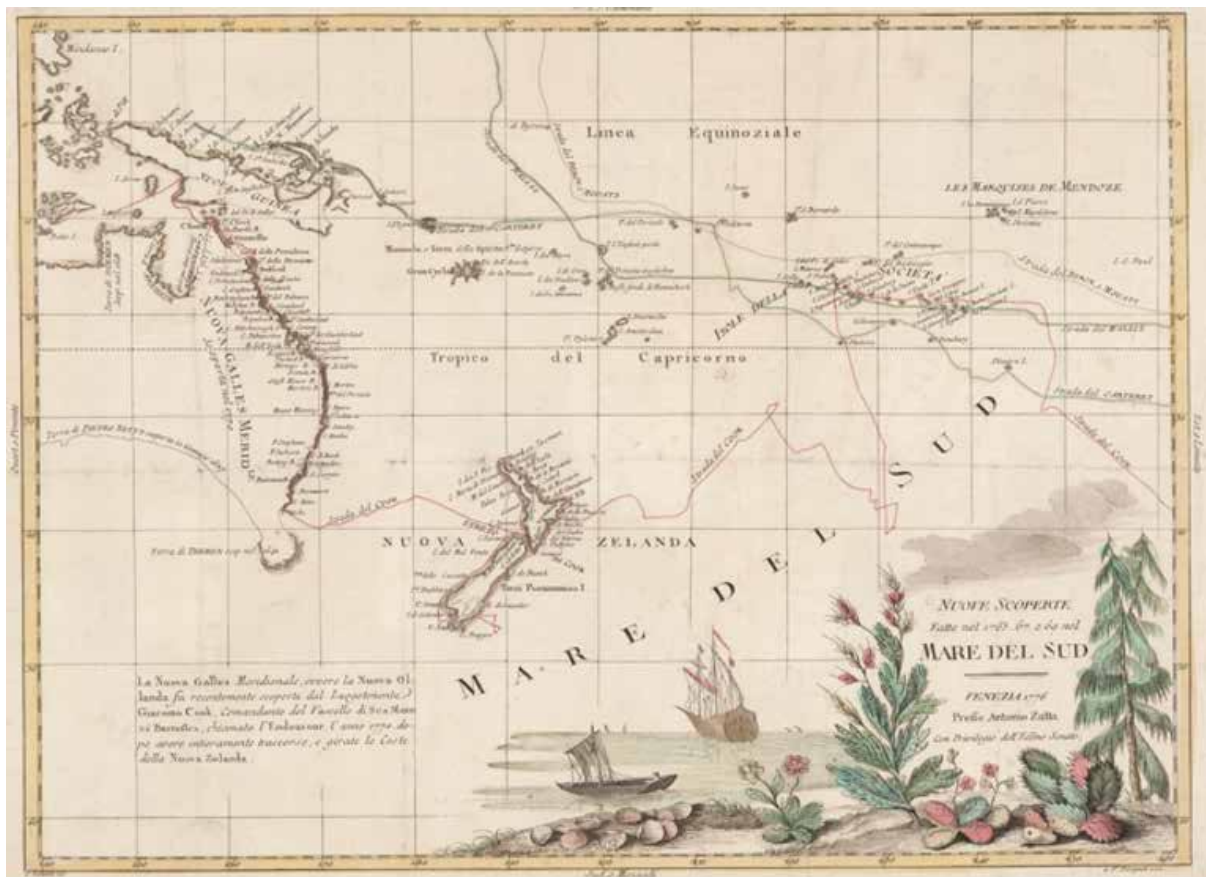
When Cook was ready to leave Tahiti after observing the Transit of Venus, he opened the Secret Instructions from the British Government that gave him his orders about the second part of his journey – to finally decide if there was a Terra Australis Incognita, or Great South Land.

Extracts from Cook's Secret Instructions 30 July 1768

Instructions	Your understanding
Secret Whereas the making Discoverys of Countries hitherto unknown, and the Attaining a Knowledge of distant Parts which though formerly discover'd have yet been but imperfectly explored, will redound greatly to the Honour of this Nation as a Maritime Power, as well as to the Dignity of the Crown of Great Britain, and may tend greatly to the advancement of the Trade and Navigation thereof; and Whereas there is reason to imagine that a Continent or Land of great extent, may be found to the Southward of [Tahiti] You are therefore in Pursuance of His Majesty's Pleasure hereby requir'd and directed to put to Sea with the Bark you Command so soon as the Observation of the Transit of the Planet Venus [from Tahiti] shall be finished and observe the following Instructions.	4.11 Why did the British Government want to discover new places in the Pacific? 4.12 What was Cook to do after leaving Tahiti?
You are to proceed to the Southward [from Tahiti] in order to make discovery of the Continent abovementioned until' you arrive in the Latitude of 40, unless you sooner fall in with it. But not having discover'd it or any Evident sign of it in that Run you are to proceed in search of it to the Westward between the Latitude beforementioned and the Latitude of 35 until' you discover it, or fall in with the Eastern side of the Land discover'd by Tasman and now called New Zeland.	4.13 Look at the map in Source 1. Use an atlas to mark on the map: Latitude 40 Latitude 35 4.14 Mark the route Cook is being told to travel.
If you discover the Continent abovementioned either in your Run to the Southward or to the Westward as above directed, You are to employ yourself diligently in exploring as great an Extent of the Coast as you can carefully observing the true situation thereof both in Latitude and Longitude, the Variation of the Needle; bearings of Head Lands Height direction and Course of the Tides and Currents, Depths and Soundings of the Sea, Shoals, Rocks &ca and also surveying and making Charts, and taking Views of Such Bays, Harbours and Parts of the Coasts as may be useful to Navigation.	4.15 What is Cook to do if he finds land in the area? 4.16 Why would the British Government want this information?

Instructions	Your understanding
You are also carefully to observe the Nature of the Soil, and the Products thereof; the Beasts and Fowls that inhabit or frequent it, the Fishes that are to be found in the Rivers or upon the Coast and in what Plenty and in Case you find any Mines, Minerals, or valuable Stones you are to bring home Specimens of each, as also such Specimens of the Seeds of the Trees, Fruits and Grains as you may be able to collect, and Transmit them to our Secretary that We may cause proper Examination and Experiments to be made of them.	
You are likewise to observe the Genius, Temper, Disposition and Number of the Natives, if there be any and endeavour by all proper means to cultivate a Friendship and Alliance with them, making them presents of such Trifles as they may Value inviting them to Traffick, and Shewing them every kind of Civility and Regard; taking Care however not to suffer yourself to be surprized by them, but to be always upon your guard against any Accidents.	4.17 How is Cook to treat any indigenous people there?
You are also with the Consent of the Natives to take Possession of Convenient Situations in the Country in the Name of the King of Great Britain: Or: if you find the Country uninhabited take Possession for his Majesty by setting up Proper Marks and Inscriptions, as first discoverers and possessors.	4.18 How is Cook to claim it for Britain? 4.19 Will Cook find Terra Australis Incognita there?
But if you shall fail of discovering the Continent beforemention'd, you will with upon falling in with New Zeland carefully observe the Latitude and Longitude in which that Land is situated and explore as much of the Coast as the Condition of the Bark, the health of her Crew, and the State of your Provisions will admit of having always great Attention to reserve as much of the latter as will enable you to reach some known Port where you may procure a Sufficiency to carry You to England either round the Cape of Good Hope, or Cape Horn as from Circumstances you may judge the Most Eligible way of returning home.	4.20 What is Cook ordered to do if he finds any new land after New Zealand?
You will also observe with accuracy the Situation of such Islands as you may discover in the Course of your Voyage that have not hitherto been discover'd by any Europeans and take Possession for His Majesty and make Surveys and Draughts of such of them as may appear to be of Consequence, without Suffering yourself however to be thereby diverted from the Object which you are always to have in View, the Discovery of the Southern Continent so often Mentioned.	4.21 If the mystery continent was not found, what was Cook to do now?

Extracts from Cook's Secret Instructions 30 July 1768



Q. Did Cook find Terra Australis Incognita? What did Cook find?

Museum of Australian Democracy, Documenting a Democracy, Secret Instructions to Lieutenant Cook, 30 July 1768.

Secret Instructions to Lieutenant Cook 30 July 1768 (UK)

