8 Polynesian expansion across the Pacific (c. 700–1756)

8.1 Overview

8.1.1 Links with our times

The sparse landscape of Easter Island, or Rapa Nui, captures the imagination of all who visit the remote island. The greatest attraction is the moai, stone statues that range in height from as small as one metre to one statue, nicknamed 'El Gigante' that is over 20 metres tall. There are some 900 statues peppering the landscape of Rapa Nui and there is still debate over their purpose and relevance. What is not being debated is that the construction and, in particular, movement of these statues led to deforestation of the island and effectively decimated the people and culture that created these imposing figures. The moai on Rapa Nui, therefore, stand as a link to a mysterious past but offer a clear lesson for our present — care for one’s environment is integral to the sustainability of one’s existence.

In this topic you will have the opportunity to learn about the incredible achievements of Polynesian expansion and the complexity of their history and culture.

Big questions

As you work through this topic, look for information that will help you to answer these questions:

1. Identify the role that the environment played in the development of Polynesian societies.
2. Explain how beliefs and values influenced traditional Polynesian society.
3. How important were laws and social structure in traditional Polynesian societies?
4. How can historical sources help us to better understand the Polynesian expansion?

Starter questions

1. What significant facts do you already know about Polynesian culture and societies?
2. How can the construction of moai or other stone sculptures have an impact on the environment?
3. What drives humans to continually explore new lands and regions?
8.2 Examining the evidence

8.2.1 How do we know about Polynesian expansion?
The ancient Polynesian people travelled great distances to settle thousands of islands in the Pacific Ocean. One of the last areas to be settled was New Zealand. Polynesians arrived there about 1000 CE and, within a few hundred years, had developed a unique language, society and culture.

There are many sources that can tell us about the people of the Pacific. Some of the evidence is from myths and legends. Other sources include artefacts such as wood carvings, jewellery, tools and pieces of pottery. Even their language, beliefs and tattoos remain as evidence of their identity and culture.

Before written records
Much of the early history of the first voyagers in the Polynesian region is incomplete. At that time, no written records were kept and so archaeological research plays a vital role in revealing this part of history. Through a variety of evidence that has survived throughout the centuries, historians develop theories about what happened hundreds, and even thousands, of years ago. As new evidence is found, these theories are either supported or will need to be re-examined.

The pottery left behind by the early people of Polynesia provides important information about their expansion across the Pacific. Archaeologists and historians believe that a group of people called the Lapita arrived in the Pacific region over 3000 years ago. The remains of their distinctive pottery provides a record of their movements eastward through the Solomon Islands and into the wider Pacific. One thousand years later, they set sail again, moving east across 3000 kilometres of open ocean. They settled the Marquesas, Tuamotus and Society islands.

SOURCE 1 Pottery left behind by the Lapita people, with its distinctive markings, helps archaeologists and historians trace migration paths across Polynesia.
Between 300 and 800 CE they discovered Easter Island and Hawaii. The distances they travelled were immense — for example, the distance between their settlements in Tahiti and Hawaii is greater than between North America and Europe.

8.2.2 The European perspective
Written records, which appeared only in the last few hundred years, offer historians a very different perspective on Polynesian history. There are many written records and so there is a lot of information available. However, this also provides certain challenges for historians. Much of the written evidence of the Polynesian people was recorded by outsiders, usually Europeans, and so is written from their perspective. Professor John Waiko, a historian from Papua New Guinea, illustrates the problem with this in SOURCE 3. Historians need to be careful when dealing with this type of written evidence.

SOURCE 3 Professor John Waiko’s quote from his book
A history of Papua New Guinea and its neighbours illustrates the problem of seeing history with a single perspective.

Changing history
In recent years there has been a renewed focus on the history of the Polynesian people as seen through Polynesian eyes. This important work is done by the descendants of the very people who first settled the region centuries ago. But, as is the case with all oral histories, it is important to act quickly. When a person dies without the opportunity to record their story, their knowledge and unique perspective on their indigenous history is lost. Oral history is not without its own flaws as it can reveal more about what the informant wishes to record than what actually occurred. The path for the historian is a tricky one; the best process is to balance these sources against one another in order to create a fuller picture of the past.

8.2 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE
1. Using the text and sources in this subtopic, outline how the study of Polynesian history and the use of evidence have changed over time.
2. How do the remains of Lapita pottery (shown in SOURCE 1) help archaeologists trace Polynesian migration across the Pacific?
3. Explain how the artefacts in SOURCE 2 provide archaeologists with evidence of the Polynesian migration across the Pacific.
4. Describe how the written evidence discussed in SOURCE 3 is a ‘one-dimensional’ view of history.

DETERMINING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE
5. Why is the recording of oral histories such urgent work?
6. Identify one value and one problem with using oral history as evidence.
8.3 The Polynesian triangle

8.3.1 Traversing the Pacific

Polynesia refers to the triangular region in the Pacific Ocean bordered by Hawaii in the north, Easter Island in the east and New Zealand in the south. Archaeological evidence suggests the discovery and settlement of the islands within this vast area was planned, and not the accidental result of sailors becoming lost and blown off course. The Pacific explorers were clearly well prepared for long sea journeys because they transported plants such as taro, yam, gourd and kumara, and animals such as rats and dogs. They developed new technology for long-range ocean voyaging and a sophisticated system of navigation. The region of this last frontier of exploration is known as Remote Oceania.

**SOURCE 1** A map of the Pacific Ocean showing migration and settlement in the Pacific islands. The people of the Pacific islands belong to three main cultural groups — Melanesia (meaning black islands), Micronesia (small islands) and Polynesia (many islands).
8.3.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What is meant by the term ‘Polynesia’?
2. How do historians know that the voyages by ancient Polynesians were not accidental?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

   a. Identify three countries in Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia.
   b. Calculate the distance from Hawaii to Tahiti. Establish a context for the distances covered by Polynesian voyagers by naming a location that is the same distance from your home town or city.

8.3.2 A great undertaking

The settlement of the remote islands of the vast Pacific Ocean is one of the greatest stories of exploration in world history because the Pacific islands were the most difficult places for humans to reach. The Pacific Ocean covers one-third of the Earth’s surface and is larger than the Atlantic and Indian oceans combined. The Pacific could contain the total landmass of the Earth and still leave enough room for another continent the size of Asia.

Exploration of the Pacific first occurred on simple boats, or dugout canoes, that brought people across the ocean passages between South-East Asia and New Guinea, Vanuatu and the small surrounding island groups. The Pacific explorers travelled in sail-powered canoes designed with unique features such as a twin hull for maximum storage over very long distances (see SOURCES 2 and 3). These explorers developed an extensive knowledge of stars, weather patterns and ocean currents. They closely observed the animals and birds of the Pacific, following their paths of migration and watching for the tiny clues that pointed them towards land.

SOURCE 2 Double-hulled canoes like this one carried the Polynesian people across the Pacific Ocean. This artwork was created in the twentieth century.

SOURCE 3 The Hokule’a under sail from Hawaii in 1976
As they navigated across the vast distances, they discovered more than 20,000 islands. Most are tiny coral reefs, or the tips of high volcanic peaks jutting out of the ocean depths. These remote islands are separated by hundreds of kilometres of open sea. The navigation of these vast ocean distances remains one of the greatest achievements in human history.

DID YOU KNOW?
In 1976 a group of modern Polynesian seafarers recreated the past when they embarked on the 10,000 kilometre sea voyage between Hawaii and Tahiti aboard a reconstruction of a thousand-year-old Polynesian double-hulled canoe named the Hokule'a. Covering a distance greater than that between Europe and North America, this event supported the theory that the epic voyages across the Pacific were intentional and marked the high point in seafaring achievements of the ancient world.

8.3.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
1. Identify three factors that make Polynesian exploration one of the ‘greatest stories of world exploration in human history’.
2. How did the ancient Polynesians know that there were other lands in their region?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE
3. The scene in SOURCE 2 illustrates the Raiatea islanders sailing their canoes from Raiatea in French Polynesia to New Zealand. Referring to this information, use SOURCE 1 to map out a possible route for this journey.
4. Investigate and research the voyage of the Hokule’a (shown in SOURCE 3), including what supplies were taken and what traditional navigation techniques were used.

8.3 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

DETERMINING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE
1. How does an event such as the voyage of the Hokule’a in 1976 provide important evidence for historians studying Polynesian expansion?
2. Each of the Pacific island nations has an interesting history. In pairs, carry out research in your library or on the internet into the original human settlement and cultural traditions of one Polynesian nation of your choice. Present your information as part of an annotated wall map of the Pacific in your classroom.

8.4 Rapa Nui

8.4.1 The navel of the world
Easter Island, Rapa Nui and Te Pito o te Henua are all names for the tiny island 11,000 kilometres east of Australia and 3,600 kilometres west of Chile. Legend states that the bold Polynesian chief, Hotu Matu’a led his people to the island over 1300 years ago and they named their island Te Pito o te Henua, which has been romantically translated as the ‘Navel of the world’; a more accurate translation would be ‘the end of land’, which is an appropriate title for one of the world’s most remote islands.

The Polynesian name Rapa Nui (Big Rapa) came later, from a visiting Tahitian who noticed the resemblance of this island to one of Tahiti’s islands, Rapa Iti (Small Rapa) and named it accordingly. The more common name, Easter Island, derives from the first recorded European contact with the island. A Dutch navigator, Jacob Roggeveen, arrived on 5 April 1722; it was Easter Sunday.

The rise and fall of the Rapa Nui civilisation
The sight that greeted Jacob Roggeveen on that day would have been hard for him to comprehend. He estimated a population of approximately 2000 inhabitants. How could this small population on this sparse landscape produce such a profound culture and heritage? Evidence suggests that Rapa Nui had a far greater population in the centuries before and that Roggeveen was visiting Rapa Nui when its culture and people were in decline. The Polynesians who had arrived centuries before had prospered on the island until their growth exhausted the island’s resources. Archaeologists suggest that at its height there were as many as 15,000 people on the 163 square kilometres of land that is Rapa Nui. This society was relatively advanced, it had a clear political structure, it was culturally sophisticated to the point that it had the only Polynesian writing system known to historians — rongorongo — as well as the engineering ability to construct and move the impressive moai that faced Roggeveen’s ship.
8.4.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
1. Why is Rapa Nui more commonly known as Easter Island?
2. Identify three main achievements of Polynesian culture that occurred on the island of Rapa Nui.

8.4.2 The moai
Rapa Nui’s isolation fostered a distinctive cultural and religious phenomenon: the sculpture and movement of stone statues known as moai. Between c. 1000 and 1600, hundreds of statues were created and transported from the stone quarries to ceremonial platforms known as ahu. There are some 900 statues on the island today but, unfortunately, they are constructed in scoria — hardened volcanic ash — which lacks the durability of stronger stone and the conservation of the moai is a key concern for the curators of them.

Ancestor worship
Theories abound about the reason for the moai, but most researchers agree that the construction of the moai was a form of ancestor worship, the stern expressions representing previous ariki (chiefs). The design of the moai is not uniform; some moai had topknots of different coloured stone, some are standing, while others are kneeling. The fact that no two moai are alike adds weight to the conclusion that these statues represent actual historical figures sacred to the people of Rapa Nui. More elaborate theories have been proposed including arguments about extra-terrestrial significance, but these theories do not have substantial supporting evidence. Modern reconstructions and movement of moai has proven that basic tools and skills were all that was required to sculpt and transport these huge statues.

8.4.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
1. What are the main reasons provided to explain the existence of the moai?
2. Why have most historians concluded that the moai were symbols of ancestor worship?
8.4.3 Moving the moai

The moai were carved with *toki* (basalt chisels) from the volcanic rock that was available at the quarry known as Rano Raraku and transported where possible to the ahu. **SOURCE 2** depicts one such platform, Ahu Tongariki. Many moai did not make it to their intended locations and they lie seemingly abandoned at random sites. The reason for this could be straightforward — they were simply too heavy to move. While the largest moai at Ahu Tongariki weighs an impressive 86 tonnes this platform is only one kilometre from the quarry. Yet other massive moai were moved impressive distances and researchers have concluded that a number of approaches could have made this possible. While legend claims that the moai simply walked to their positions, it has been argued that it was possible, using log rollers and ropes, to swivel the moai gradually into position. Another method would have been to roll the moai to the ahu once again using logs as wheels. All of these techniques had significant impact on the environment. When Captain James Cook visited the island in 1774, he described a landscape that had no trees above three metres tall.

**SOURCE 2** Ahu Tongariki: the largest platform of moai. Most statues stand with their back to the sea, protecting the islanders while turning their back on the spirit world.

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Deforestation

Archaeological evidence provides little doubt that there was once a dense forest of sub-tropical palm trees, shrubs and ferns on Rapa Nui. The demise of these forests has been traced to two main sources: the introduction of the Polynesian rat and, more significantly, the over-foresting by the islanders themselves. Whether it was to provide rollers for the transport of the moai or to simply provide housing for the islanders, their rich culture began to degenerate approximately
a hundred years before European contact. Such was the rate of their decline that a period of violent internal conflict took place between the islanders, where incidents of cannibalism have been uncovered by archaeologists. Compounding their decline was the lack of timber to create ships that would allow escape. Trapped on Rapa Nui, the lack of resources nearly led to the death of the people and their culture. Ironically, Rapa Nui is now a World Heritage Site and most of its more-than 5000 inhabitants are actively engaged in protecting its legacy.

8.4.3 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
1. Identify the main theory put forward to explain why the moai seem to be abandoned at random sites across Easter Island. What evidence is provided in the text to support this theory?
2. Why is it pertinent to note that Captain Cook did not notice any trees above three metres tall?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE
3. Using SOURCE 2 and the information provided, identify how the moai could be transported to the coastline from the scoria quarry.
4. Explain, using SOURCE 2 as your evidence, the impact of over-logging on the island of Rapa Nui.

8.4 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

ANALYSING CAUSE AND EFFECT
1. Given that the island of Rapa Nui once had 15,000 inhabitants, determine how many people per square kilometre that equates to? State what conclusions you can draw from this.
2. Research the decline in population that took place in Rapa Nui in the period before European contact and identify the major events that affected the people and their environment.

DETERMING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE
3. Rapa Nui represents a striking lesson about environmental management. Using their experience as evidence, compose a letter that you could send to your Member of Parliament warning of the dangers of poor resource management.
4. Rapa Nui represents a unique and rich legacy. Research and report on one of the following:
   • the diversity of moai on Rapa Nui
   • the significance of the rongorongo language.

8.5 Discovery of the land of the long white cloud

8.5.1 The land of the long white cloud

Historians are not certain when and why the human settlement of New Zealand began. Archaeological evidence suggests that sometime between 800 and 1130 CE, a small group of Polynesian people, perhaps even a single family, sailed from the Cook Islands to the coast of New Zealand.

Why?
There is not enough evidence to give a definite answer to the question of why the first settlers came to New Zealand. Some theories are:
• a planned short voyage of exploration was blown off course
• an escape from war or disease
• a search for land and resources because of island overpopulation
• a spirit of adventure developed through sophisticated skills of navigation.

Although none of these has been definitively proven, most historians agree that the voyage to New Zealand was intentional and carried out by careful planning and skilful exploration. In support of that theory, it is argued that a raft or canoe blown off course would not have had enough people or supplies to establish a long-term settlement.
When?
Archaeological evidence indicates that the western Pacific region, including South-East Asia, New Guinea and Australia, was settled long before the islands of New Zealand. Aboriginal Australians arrived in Australia at least 40 000 years ago and the Polynesian islands were settled more than 3000 years ago. In contrast, New Zealand was first settled only about one thousand years ago.

**SOURCE 1** A map of New Zealand showing the areas of Maori settlement, hunting grounds of the moa and deposits of greenstone and obsidian. All of these aspects of the land would play an important role in the development of the Maori culture.
8.5.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
1. Why are historians unable to give a definite answer as to why humans first settled in New Zealand?
2. Why is it considered unlikely that the first voyages to New Zealand were accidental?
3. In your own words, explain how New Zealand came to be known as the ‘land of the long white cloud’.

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE
4. Using SOURCE 1, explain the settlement patterns of the Maori on Aotearoa in the period between c. 1000 and 1300.
5. Calculate the distance between the northern-most first settlement and the southern-most one. What does this suggest about the Maori who arrived in Aotearoa?
6. Explain why the concentrated settlements are mainly in coastal regions.

8.5.2 Navigation techniques
The Pacific Ocean is vast. It covers a distance of half the circumference of the earth, so there is no doubt that those people who explored the Polynesian region were excellent seafarers. Charts made from sticks and shells showed islands and sea currents and were passed down from generation to generation. Knowledge of the stars and other natural signs, such as the flight patterns of birds and the shape of clouds, also helped guide the voyagers across the seas.

SOURCE 2 Charts made from sticks and shells, like this one, helped the early seafarers navigate the vast distances between the islands of Polynesia. The chart shows ocean currents and islands and was a valuable tool in the absence of compasses and modern navigational instruments.
8.5.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What natural phenomena assisted the early navigators of the Pacific Ocean?
2. Given that charts made from sticks and shells were handed down from generation to generation, what does this suggest about the connection between Polynesian islands?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

3. What do Source 2 and the information within the text suggest about the navigation and seafaring skills of the early Polynesians?
4. What does Source 2 suggest about the language and culture of the early Polynesians?

8.5.3 The Maori

The first people of New Zealand are known as the Maori, meaning ‘original people’. By the time of Captain Cook’s arrival in 1769, the Maori population of New Zealand is believed to have been approximately 150,000. The Maori named their land Aotearoa, meaning ‘the land of the long white cloud’. Maori legend claimed the first explorer to reach Aotearoa was the navigator Kupe. He was accompanied by his wife, who called out he ao, meaning ‘cloud’, when she first sighted the North Island. It is said Kupe used the stars to guide him across the Pacific to find the long white cloud of New Zealand.

The Great Fleet and the Maori ancestors

According to Maori legend the voyages of seven waka, or canoes, brought Polynesian people from the land of Hawaiki in search of a new home. In Polynesian mythology Tahiti is known as Hawaiki, and the seven canoes are known as the Great Fleet. The canoes are believed to identify the ancestors of the Maori iwi, or tribes:

- Tokomaru
- Tainui
- Te Arawa
- Aotea
- Takitimu
- Mataatua
- Kurahaupo.

Source 3 Many paintings of early European arrivals to Polynesia, such as View of Huaheine by John Cleveley the Younger, c. 1788, show a very romantic view of those early encounters.
The history of every Maori family, the whakapapa, maintains the connection with their ancestors’ waka.

**SOURCE 4** Ngawaka E Whitu (The Seven Waka). This early twentieth century song (translated into English) portrays the Maori legend of the arrival of the seven waka.

Seven waka landed here
Paddle, paddle on
Tainui, Te Arawa, Mataatua
Paddle, paddle on
Tokomaru, Takitimu, Kurahaupo, Aotea ra,
These waka were paddled here
By our ancestors

**Maori development in Aotearoa**
From the Polynesian arrival in Aotearoa to the modern day, historians divide the history of the Maori into four periods:

**Nga kakano**
The East Polynesian or Archaic period, also referred to as *Nga kakano*, meaning ‘the seeds’, spanned from about 800 to 1200 CE. This is the time of the first Polynesian settlers and their immediate descendants. The people of this period are also known as the Moa hunters. It was a time of discovery and adaptation to the new land. The farming way of life did not immediately develop in New Zealand because the Moa hunters survived well on a hunter-gatherer lifestyle.

**Te tipunga**
The *Te tipunga* period, meaning ‘the growth’, began on the North Island during the thirteenth century and had spread across New Zealand by the sixteenth century. It was the era of expansion when the Maori discovered and settled the more remote areas of their land and began developing their unique cultural traditions, beliefs and art.

**Te puawaitanga**
The Classical Maori period dated from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. During this time, the earliest European explorers and settlers of New Zealand recorded the features of Maori classical society and culture. This period is known as *Te puawaitanga*, or ‘the flowering’, because it is regarded as the time when the most beautiful Maori art was created.

**Te huringa**
The final period from the nineteenth century to the present is known as *Te huringa*, or the ‘turning point’, because it is the time of increased Maori contact with Europeans and the introduction of the modern world into Maori culture.

**8.5.3 Activities**

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**
1. Define the following terms.
   - Maori
   - He ao
   - Iwi
   - Te tipunga
2. Why is the third period of Maori history called ‘the flowering’?

**USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE**
3. There is an aspect of the song in **SOURCE 4** that historians considered inaccurate. Compare it with **SOURCES 2** and 3 in subtopic 8.3 and explain what it is. *(Hint: Think about how the canoes were powered.)*
4. Examine **SOURCE 3**. Decide which period of Maori history it is depicting: Nga kakano, Te tipunga or Te puawaitanga.
5. How does **SOURCE 4** illustrate the connection Maori families have with their ancestors?
8.5 Putting it all together

Determining Historical Significance

1. Using the information in this subtopic, create a timeline reflecting the four periods of Maori history.
   Label each period with its key features, including the arrival of Captain Cook in New Zealand.
2. Compare and contrast the discovery and settlement of Aotearoa to the experience on Rapa Nui.

8.6 Maori society — an overview

8.6.1 Structure of Maori society

Traditional Polynesian society developed complex rules that determined the relationships between people. Societies were organised according to kinship, tribal groups and clans. Warfare and trade were also vital aspects of Polynesian society. Both helped maintain the power and authority of tribes and their leaders.

A person’s status or importance in society was of great significance to all Polynesian cultures. Anthropologists describe the structure of the Polynesian societies as being hierarchical, meaning a structure in which different groups of people have a particular rank or position of importance. A man’s rank or importance within the iwi, or tribe, determined how much political power he could have.

Maori society had a clear hierarchy:

- The ariki, or supreme chief, gained his position through birth and exceptional personal qualities including
  - tapu (sacred wisdom)
  - mana (authority)
  - ihi (excellence)
  - wehi (power inherited from the gods and the ancestors).
- The rangatira, or chief, inherited the position from his father. He made all the major decisions in the iwi. He was highly respected and held a place of great privilege. The rangatira led all major religious ceremonies and wore a whale ivory pendant as a mark of his position. He also carried a ceremonial patu or club.
- The kaumatua, or elders, appointed by the tribe because they possessed the wisdom to educate the young and guide the iwi. In early Maori society the kaumatua were believed to be the spirits of wise people who had been born again. The kuia, or elder women, held a position of particular respect and responsibility in guiding the rearing of the iwi’s children.
- The tohunga, or priest, held the knowledge of clan history and ancestry running back over hundreds of years. The tohunga understood genealogy, history, astronomy, religious rituals and prayers, and how to heal the sick and farewell the dead. Special kinds of tohunga developed unique skills in areas such as carving, canoe building or tattooing.
• The _tutua_, or commoners, were all the members of an _iwi_ claiming descent from the ancestors arriving with the Great Fleet.

• The _taurekareka_ or _mokai_, slaves, were at the bottom of Maori society. They were war captives or born into slavery. The taurekareka did all of the _iwi_’s hard physical work such as preparing food, fetching water, gardening and paddling canoes. They had no privileges and could be sacrificed during ceremonies involving _cannibalism_.

While leadership positions were primarily held by men, women had their own titles and a very important role to play in establishing alliances between different members of the family and other _iwis_. The first-born female of the most important families could be given the title of _ariki_. She would also have been shown the level of respect given to a queen in European society.

### 8.6.1 Activities

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

1. Explain the importance of a man’s rank in Polynesian society.
2. Draw a diagram illustrating the hierarchy of Maori society.
3. Identify and explain the role warfare played in Polynesian societies.
4. In what ways did the role of Maori women contrast to Maori men?

**USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE**

5. Identify two features of SOURCE 1 that illustrate that this man holds an important rank in Maori society.
6. Gottfried Lindauer, the artist of SOURCE 1, created many portraits of the Maori for European audiences. What aspects of the Maori culture is he trying to emphasise in this portrait? Justify your response.

### 8.6.2 The community

The general term to express the many groups and levels of traditional Maori society is _tangata whenua_, meaning the ‘people of the land’.

The _whanau_ was the family unit at the core of Maori society. The family and the other members of the _hapu_, or clan group, decided where individuals lived, who they married, who they were friends with and who they fought. Village communities ranged in size from just a few families to over five hundred people.

**SOURCE 2** *Tu Kaitote, the Pa of Te Whero Whero*, by George Angas. Painted c. 1845, this image shows a community meeting being held on the _marae_.

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Land and most of the property was communally owned. Absolute ownership of land was not common. In fact different families or tribal groups could have different rights to the same piece of land. For example, one family might have the right to catch birds in the forest while another might be allowed to fish in the nearby water or grow crops in the same area.

**The village**

On occasions when community meetings were held the people gathered in the open courtyard, called the *marae*, in front of the more formal meeting houses, known as the *wharenui*. The traditional Maori *pa*, or village, was designed around the marae because it was regarded as the spiritual centre of the village. It was on the marae that celebrations were held, the dead were mourned, guests were greeted and important matters were discussed.

The *pa* were often built on ridges and locations that could be easily defended. Rivers and lakes were also often used to provide natural barriers against enemy attack. Defences were completed by trenches, earth ramparts and palisades built from large sharpened stakes that were lashed together for strength.

The Maori were very successful farmers. Agriculture led to the construction of larger and more permanent village settlements. Village life was organised around food gathering and growing and warfare.

### 8.6.2 Activities

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

1. Explain the concept of tangata whenua and how it affected Maori communities.
2. How did the construction of the *pa* or Maori village reflect their values and customs?

**USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE**

3. Using SOURCE 2 identify natural and man-made defences that the Maori exploited or made to protect their village.
4. Which building in the painting is most likely to be the *wharenui*? Justify your selection.

### 8.6.3 Warfare

Power in Polynesian societies could be inherited, but it could also be gained through war. From the earliest times, warfare and the position of the warrior was a very important part of Polynesian culture. The Polynesian rulers maintained their authority over their people through brutal punishment, ritual and battle.

The leaders of Tonga, Hawaii and the tribes of New Zealand were in command of highly trained and disciplined warriors who pledged and demonstrated their obedience through

**SOURCE 3** The Maori war canoe was up to 40 metres long and could carry dozens of warriors. It was formed from a large hollowed-out tree trunk that was then intricately carved and decorated, as shown in this etching, c. 1773.
rituals and ceremony. Warfare could begin as revenge for insults or kidnapping, or it could consist of larger battles over land or resources. At times, Polynesian warfare could be large-scale invasions of groups of islands involving thousands of warriors.

Every Polynesian island community has an oral history telling of fierce conflict over land or political power. In the Marquesas Islands, Tahiti and New Zealand, the constant tribal warfare made it impossible for a single ruling royal family to take control. There was no concept of nationhood. Sometimes large iwi groups would temporarily join together under the control of an ariki, the supreme chief, to conduct larger scale warfare, hunting parties or trade.

Some of the first Europeans in New Zealand in the early nineteenth century were impressed by the courage of the Maori, but also shocked by the violence and incidence of cannibalism. The rangatira (chief) of a defeated tribe could be eaten by the enemy as a symbol of their victory and the end of his mana (power). The heads of important fallen enemies were preserved by smoking and oiling.

**SOURCE 4** The patu, shown below, was one of the hand-held weapons used by Maori warriors. Weapons were usually made from wood or bone, but the prized *mere* was like a club carved from the rare greenstone, found only on the west coast of the South Island. Weapons were sacred and were handed down through the generations.

**SOURCE 5** Prior to charging the enemy, Maori warriors often performed a war dance (haka), both to prepare themselves mentally for the battle and to strike fear into the enemy.

**SOURCE 6** A mummified head. The traditional tattoo is clearly visible.

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**DID YOU KNOW?**

Shrunken heads were objects of fascination for some European explorers who collected and traded them. This led to a trade in which slaves were tattooed and killed specifically to supply the European market. Since the 1980s, more than three hundred shrunken heads have been returned to New Zealand from several countries.
8.6.3 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
1 Outline the manner in which the transference of power could take place in Polynesian societies.
2 Explain how the Maori intimidated their enemies through both implied and actual violence.

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE
3 Examine SOURCE 3.
   a What other warrior culture does this scene resemble?
   b What conclusions about Maori warfare can you draw from the size of this vessel?
4 Using evidence from SOURCES 3–6, as well as the information in the text, suggest reasons why the Maori developed such a strong warrior culture.

8.6.4 Trade

Despite the constant warfare a network of trade links developed between the Maori tribes. Trade was important because food sources and natural resources were not evenly spread across the islands. The greenstone, called nephrite, was a type of jade found only in three small regions of the South Island. The South Island tribes mined the rich greenstone deposits and then shipped the treasured stone by canoe to the coastal villages of the North Island. Greenstone was the most valuable trade item, desired both for beauty and hardness. It was used to make weapons and ornaments and was known to the craftsmen as pounamu. The stone was so important to Maori culture that the entire South Island was named Te Wai Pounamu, meaning ‘place of the greenstone’. According to Maori belief, the greenstone came from the earth and was under the guardianship of the god Poutini.

Maori people also travelled and traded over long distances for the high quality obsidian from the Bay of Plenty, which they used to craft the blades of their knives. Food, such as mutton birds from the south, was regarded as a delicacy and so preserved and also traded widely.

Tapu

Maori life was guided by a sacred law known as tapu, meaning taboo. Those people who broke tapu were doomed to meet with misfortune, sickness or death. Tapu was enforced through religious belief, superstition and the power of the community tohunga, or spiritual leader. Only the tohunga could declare or release tapu. The gods, or atua, were the sources of tapu, and only through the protection given by the atua could humans be saved from evil. Objects that were declared tapu had to be given the highest respect. Forests and fishing grounds could be tapu during particular seasons of the year; burial grounds were tapu; and the possessions of a dead person were tapu until cleansed by a tohunga.

8.6.4 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
1 Explain why trade existed alongside warfare in Maori culture.
2 Outline the consequences of breaking tapu.

8.6 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

IDENTIFYING CONTINUITY AND CHANGE
1 Use an example from modern-day society to demonstrate your understanding of the term ‘hierarchy’.
2 Research the history of tapu and outline the ways it could be enforced by the tohunga. Research and describe one other society (modern or historical) who has or had a similar code of laws as the tapu.
3 Do you think the personal qualities of the ariki — wisdom, authority, excellence and inherited power — have modern-day equivalents? Suggest a profession or position in which these characteristics are valued.
8.7 People and the environment

8.7.1 The geography of New Zealand

The small coral atolls and volcanic outcrops of the tropical Pacific islands provided the Polynesian people with the opportunity to farm and fish for their food. Most Polynesian communities continued to live more from the sea than from the land. But in settling New Zealand the Maori had to adapt to a new climate. They brought with them many of the plant and animal sources they needed to survive, but they also exploited the natural resources of the new land.

New Zealand was the final frontier for the Polynesian explorers and became the largest Polynesian island home. In fact, the two main islands of New Zealand are larger than all the other islands of Polynesia combined. New Zealand presented a very different climate and natural environment. This new land was large and cold. It had heavy forests full of huge trees covering thick beds of ferns that grew right down to the coastline. More than 500 million years of volcanic activity formed the great central mountain ranges, a strange and wonderful landscape covered in ice and snow. A string of volcanoes stretching from White Island in the Bay of Plenty to the heart of the North Island created thermal springs, geysers and hot mud pools.

New Zealand had been part of the great southern continent called Gondwana (formed when the original continent of Pangaea broke apart) millions of years before the arrival of the Polynesians. Gondwana also included Australia and Antarctica. Before the age of mammals began, the great landmasses drifted away from each other and became separated by vast seas. The seas around New Zealand became rough and were swept by powerful ocean currents.

**SOURCE 1** An aerial shot of White Island and its volcano. The island, uninhabited today, was a favourite hunting ground for Maori clans.
The supercontinent Pangaea broke up millions of years ago. It formed the two smaller supercontinents of Laurasia and Gondwana, which then broke up further to begin resembling today’s continents. This diagram shows Gondwana.

8.7.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
1 Identify the geographical features that New Zealand, or Aotearoa, possessed that made it such a suitable place for Polynesian exploration and expansion.
2 How did the climate differ to other Polynesian islands?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE
3 Examine SOURCE 1. Identify the features of White Island that would make it an attractive hunting ground for the Maori.
4 Look at SOURCE 2 and suggest how New Zealand’s position in Gondwana supported the evolution of unique species.

8.7.2 Flora and fauna

The only mammals in New Zealand before human settlement were the seals living along the rugged coastline, the migrating whales and two species of bats that had probably originally come from Australia. Some trees and plants were similar to Australia, but 80 million years of isolation created the real treasure of the islands — the 15 000 types of plants found nowhere else in the world. Some examples include:
• ponga or silver fern, which was found throughout the areas of sub-tropical bush landscape
• beech trees and podocarp trees such as the kauri with huge trunks measuring over 15 metres in diameter and 30 metres in height
• flax plant with very tough stems found in the wetlands across the islands
• *pohutukawa* evergreen coastal trees, which flowered with bright crimson flowers in December.

One of the oldest surviving orders of reptiles in New Zealand is the *tuatara*, which has existed for over 200 million years from the age of the dinosaurs. The tuatara is an ancient reptile resembling most lizards. It is greenish brown in colour with two rows of teeth on the upper jaw and one row along the bottom. The skeleton of the tuatara shows an evolutionary origin from a creature resembling a fish.

The early Polynesian settlers hunted the *moa*, a flightless bird native to New Zealand. It ranged from the size of a chicken to about 3.7 metres in height, and could weigh up to 200 kilograms. However, the moa was easy prey and was gradually hunted to extinction because it provided an excellent source of food during the early years of Polynesian settlement.

8.7.2 Activities

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**
1. What were the only land-based mammals in New Zealand prior to human settlement?
2. Identify the factors that made the flora and fauna unique.

**USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE**
3. Referring to **SOURCE 3**, outline how the Maori people adapted to their new environment after arriving in New Zealand.
4. Is **SOURCE 3** a primary or a secondary source? Explain your answer.

8.7.3 Living with a new land

At first, the Maori continued to live according to their ancient Polynesian customs and traditions, despite the changed climate and landscape. The Great Fleet had brought both people and food plants such as taro, yam, gourd and kumara to New Zealand. The first settlers also transported from Polynesia the *kiore*, which was a species of rat, and a dog called the *kuri*.

Settlements spread along the coastal regions of both islands and the Maori began to adapt. The introduced tropical plants were cultivated in the North Island, and the Maori learned to hunt and fish in their new land. The roots of the native fern and the New Zealand cabbage tree were eaten, and fibre from the native flax plant was used to make cloth to replace the bark cloth, called *tapa*, produced in the other Polynesian societies.

Another remarkable flightless bird is the *takahe*, resembling a large prehistoric purple chicken. The *takahe* is a gentle and inquisitive creature with small wings, strong legs and a massive red bill. The *takahe* was thought to be extinct by the end of the nineteenth century due to over-hunting, loss of habitat and introduced predators such as the cat and dog. However, a long search in 1948 led to the rediscovery of some breeding pairs deep in the wilds of the Murchison Mountains.

**SOURCE 3** There were different species of moa, some ranging from the size of a chicken to others that were more than three metres tall. This image was published in 1907.
The takahe, once thought extinct, was rediscovered in 1948 in New Zealand’s Murchison Mountains.

Source 4

**8.7.3 Activities**

**Check your understanding**

1. What were the features of the takahe that made it particularly vulnerable and caused it to nearly become extinct?
2. What mammals did the first settlers introduce to New Zealand?

**8.7.4 Rahui and the extinction of the moa**

*Rahui* is a form of tapu that the Maori used to limit resource use. For example, rahui could be imposed over an area to prevent the gathering of food while the land recovered. It helped to conserve limited food supplies and other natural resources. All Maori tribes accepted the principles of rahui.

Unfortunately, rahui came too late for the moa. Although the young birds were an important food source of the Haast’s eagle, the adult birds lacked any natural predators prior to human settlement. The moa became an abundant and important food source, with both the meat of the bird as well as its large eggs providing a lifeline for the Maori. The bones of the bird were used to make ornaments and fishhooks, and even the shells of the giant eggs were used to carry water. The meat of the moa could be preserved and became a valuable trading good.
Archaeologists believe the moa was hunted to extinction by the fifteenth century. As a result, the Haast’s eagle also disappeared into history. As you will see later in this chapter, this had a huge impact on the Maori people.

### 8.7.4 Activities

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

1. Match the correct names with their description.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gondwana</td>
<td>Flightless bird that is now extinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponga</td>
<td>Flightless bird thought to be extinct in New Zealand until its rediscovery in 1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kauri</td>
<td>Ancient southern supercontinent that included Australia, New Zealand and Antarctica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flax</td>
<td>Plant with tough stems found in the wetlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moa</td>
<td>Huge native tree of New Zealand growing to 15 metres in diameter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuatara</td>
<td>Reptile related to dinosaurs with the appearance of a lizard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takahe</td>
<td>Silver fern</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Explain the meaning of rahui in your own words.

### 8.7 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

**ANALYSING CAUSE AND EFFECT**

1. Conduct some research into the extinct dodo bird that lived on the island of Mauritius. Identify similarities and differences in the circumstances of the extinction of the dodo and the moa.
2. Identify the natural resources that were available on Aotearoa. Explain which were used sustainably and which were not used sustainably. Justify your choices.
3. Compare and contrast the experience of Polynesian settlers on Rapa Nui and on Aotearoa. What similarities and differences are there between the way Maori and Rapa Nui societies used environmental resources?

### 8.8 Living in a Maori village

#### 8.8.1 The pa

The extinction of the giant moa threatened the survival of the Maori people. Fortunately, the Maori were not isolated on a small island like the people of Rapa Nui and still had access to timber for sailing vessels. Therefore, many tribes were forced to migrate when the moa was no longer able to provide a reliable source of food. Because of this migration north, the Maori population of the South Island declined.

Around the fifteenth century, larger permanent settlements began to be built. People had to turn to other sources of food such as shellfish and a fern root known as aruhe. Aruhe is an important source of carbohydrates and added much to the Maori diet. Indeed, it became a staple food even when taro or sweet potatoes were available. Despite being a difficult food to prepare, aruhe provided the stable crop production necessary for the growing Maori population. Gardening replaced hunting as the main way of obtaining food. Competition for land increased and slaves were used to do much of the hard manual work. Due to these changes, Maori culture moved into what historians call the Classical period.

The pa, or fortified village, first emerged around the fifteenth century. The Maori lived in a whare, or house, within their fortified villages. They dug out the floors of the whare to keep the warmth in. The construction of the whare varied according to location and tribal tradition. The whare was commonly built with a framework of branches from the small manuka tree and then thickly thatched with the leaves of a large water plant called raupo.

There were many other aspects to the pa, as can be seen in [SOURCE 1](#).
SOURCE 1 A modern artist’s impression of a Maori pa

- **A** Storage pits covered by low roofs, often used for storing vegetables
- **B** Pataka — storehouses built on platforms so rats and dogs could not steal the fish, meat, berries, and other food and goods. Weapons and other valuables were also kept in the pataka.
- **C** Shelters for canoes and cooking sites
- **D** Whare runanga — the meeting house was the focus of all cultural and tribal activities. It was a sacred building filled with symbolism. The house construction represents a man’s body, with the first rafter being his extended arms stretching down to his fingers. The rafters following the arms represent the man’s rib cage. A tekoteko carving is located at the front peak of each whare runanga. The tekoteko represents a protective tribal ancestor standing watch over the marae (courtyard). The ancestor’s protective power is known as the mana.

**8.8.1 Activities**

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

1. Compile a Maori language glossary by writing definitions for the following terms:
   - a pa
   - b whare runanga
   - c whare whakairo
   - d pataka
   - e raupo
   - f aruhe
   - g tekoteko.

2. Explain why some buildings in the pa were raised off the ground while others were dug into the ground.
8.8 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

IDENTIFYING CONTINUITY AND CHANGE
1 Imagine you are a visitor to a pa. Refer to the source and the text to write a diary entry recording a typical day of village life. Provide details of the daily activities you see taking place, the pa layout and the design and purpose of the buildings.
2 Identify the main differences between Maori village life in the classical period and the preceding Te tiwana period.

DETERMINING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE
3 The Maori did not need advanced technology to survive. They had a simple material culture (basic tools and weapons), but their non-material culture (art and beliefs) was very rich and complex. Early European settlers judged the Maori by their visible material culture.
   a What opinion would the Europeans form if they considered only the material culture?
   b How does considering more than just the visible aspects of a society help give you a more comprehensive view?

The village water source was not usually located within the boundary of the wooden fence. Water was carried every day from the outside wells and rivers. Firewood was also collected from afar. A large area of countryside was needed to provide the tribe with food. Gardens of kumara (a type of sweet potato) were dug with long wooden sticks called ko.

Whare whakairo (literally translates to ‘carved house’) — the family home of the village rangatira. A large pit filled with hot rocks was located at the centre of the whare whakairo to keep the family warm at night.
8.9 Customs and culture

8.9.1 The importance of art

Aotearoa was isolated from the other landmasses in the Pacific. Australia lay 1500 kilometres west across the treacherous and stormy Tasman Sea; to the south was the ice of Antarctica; and to the north were the tiny tropical islands of remote Oceania. This distance shaped a Polynesian culture that was unique in the Pacific.

The Maori people expressed their culture and beliefs through a range of arts and customs. The broad range of materials available provided a rich variety for artists and craftsmen to work with. Art was a way of expressing status and tribal differences. Art became a part of everyday life; even the simple shape of a fishhook could be made into an object of great beauty when it was polished and crafted with skill. Every prized possession was decorated; canoes and paddles, musical instruments and hair combs, storehouses and gateways all displayed the fine artwork of the Maori people.

Gathering together the materials required by the Maori craftsmen often involved dangerous journeys, or even war against rival villages. The South Island greenstone was the most precious material because it could be obtained only from remote locations. The people who followed the greenstone trade route walked through ice and snow, climbed steep cliffs with ropes made from flax, and crossed raging rivers on reed rafts to transport greenstone over the high passes of the Southern Alps. The Maori valued the beauty and power of their art, and so they were prepared to make great sacrifices for its creation.

8.9.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
1. List three reasons why art was valued in Maori culture.
2. Identify two ways the Maori made great sacrifices for the creation of their art.

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE
3. Why do you think the hei-tiki was only worn by Maoris of high rank?
4. Examine SOURCES 1 and 2. What conclusions can you make about Maori craftsmanship?
8.9.2 Carving out a history

Traditional Maori carving, known as *whakairo*, is famous for its detail and beauty, and took great skill to create. For this reason, the Maori held the talent of the wood carver in very high regard. The earliest carving tools were made from seashells and stone, such as obsidian, that was sharpened over many months in preparation for carving. The thick forests of New Zealand provided a plentiful supply of high quality timber for the Maori craftsmen.

Maori carvings expressed religious beliefs, myths and images of gods. The finest examples of Maori art and carving were created for the whare runanga, because this was the cultural centre of the village. Supporting posts were often carved with images of the seven canoes ancestors, and interior wall panels featured ancestral figures. Bows of canoes also often displayed ornately carved and ferocious faces.

**SOURCE 3** A carved figurehead mounted on a war canoe

**SOURCE 4** The talents of the highly skilled Maori craftsmen are visible in this example of whakairo.

8.9.2 Activities

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

1. How did the Maori exploit their natural environment to create whakairo?
2. What was the significance of these carvings?

**USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE**

3. Using **SOURCES 3** and **4**, explain the way in which Maori society wished to represent itself to its people and enemies.
4. Explain why the most ornate carvings were reserved for the whare runanga.
8.9.3 Dress

The quality and value of weapons, clothes and ornaments was of real significance to Maori society because it identified individual status and class groups. The design and materials used to make clothing and jewellery varied according to the tribal group, the location and the climate.

Although both men and women wore ornaments indicating their position and rank, it was the tradition for men to dress with greater decoration. Men wore their long hair wound into topknots held by beautifully crafted combs, and wore earrings made of greenstone or shark teeth. The ariki or rangatira displayed power and prestige by wearing a cloak made from the skin of a dog, and an ivory whale tooth, and carrying a ceremonial club known as a pata. Shell and bone were also used to carve jewellery such as pendants and necklaces. Faces were tattooed and bodies covered and patterned with brightly coloured ochre of blue and yellow.

Flax

The traditional Polynesian plants such as the paper mulberry tree and tropical cabbage tree did not survive in the colder climate of New Zealand. However, the Maori discovered wonderful new natural resources in New Zealand such as native flax called harakeke. Using a process that could take three months, the flax plant was manufactured into a sturdy fibre suitable for weaving into clothing, ropes and baskets. Flax sandals were worn on long journeys across frozen ground, flax string was used to hold pendants in place and flax clothing kept everybody warm.

A method of finger weaving was developed to produce a fine flax cloth similar to linen. Flax cloth was dyed and woven into traditional tribal patterns in red, white, yellow and black. Women wore colourful wrap around style flax skirts and delicately woven cloaks.

Korowhai cloaks were the most important and treasured item of clothing woven from flax. The korowhai were decorated with feathers from birds such as the kiwi, and woven with the traditional geometrical triangle and diamond shaped taniko patterns.

**SOURCE 5 Maori woman weaving baskets from flax**

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**8.9.3 Activities**

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

1. Identify the manner in which fabric, clothing and ornaments helped Maori society differentiate status.

2. Explain how the production of clothing revealed the differences in the roles that women and men played in Maori society.


8.9.4 Tatau

During his eighteenth century journeys of exploration, Captain James Cook wrote about the Polynesian art of skin decoration known as *tatau*. The British called it ‘tattoo’.

Archaeologists believe that the Lapita people were tattooed over 3500 years ago and carried the tradition with them on their great journeys of Pacific migration.

In Polynesia the tattoo came to have great cultural and spiritual importance. The tattoo gave Polynesians status because it signalled strength and power. The most elaborate tattoos were reserved for the chiefs and warriors. The colonising British outlawed the practice of *tatau* because it was considered the devil’s art, but it saw a revival in the twentieth century.

Ta moko

The practice of classical Maori tattooing is called *ta moko*. A straight blade or bone chisel was used to inject a sooty pigment into the skin, leaving a grooved scar with the appearance of a carving. Maori tattooists were regarded as master craftsmen who took many years to perfect their skills.

In traditional Maori society men were marked on the face, buttocks and thighs. Facial tattoo patterns were of greater significance to the identity of a person than their natural facial features. Women were tattooed on the face and breasts. The painful process was an initiation and rite of passage taking many years to complete.

The tattoo represented culture and belief to the Polynesian people. Moko showed Maori rank, genealogy and tribal history. Moko designs were a personal statement of Maori identity that could never be lost or stolen. Only death could destroy the moko.

The heiriki

Of all the Maori ornaments the most valuable was the *heiriki*. The carved tiki figures are found across many Polynesian cultures; in fact, *tiki* is also a general Polynesian term meaning ‘carving’.

Archaeologists believe that in Classical Maori culture the *heiriki* was worn only by people of the highest rank. It was worn by both men and women on ceremonial occasions, often hanging from a flax cord around the neck. The *heiriki* represented a human figure, neither male nor female, with the head tilted to one side and usually shown with hands placed on the hips. Many *heiriki* had their own personal name and traditional histories that could be traced back through generations of the one family.

The traditional meaning and origins of the *heiriki* are not completely understood by archaeologists. Some suggest the figure comes from Maori mythology and the story of Tiki, the first man created by the atua Tane.
8.9.4 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
1. Why did the colonising British outlaw the practise of tatau?
2. Explain the significance of ta moko to the Maori.
3. What have archaeologists concluded the hei-tiki was used for?
4. Explain why the hei-tiki was considered so valuable.

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE
5. Identify four features in SOURCE 6 that convey the status of this Maori ariki (chief).
6. Using SOURCE 7 as evidence, ascertain Captain Cook’s attitude towards ta moko.

8.9 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

DETERMINING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE
1. Using the sources in this subtopic, explain how dress and ornament were used to display position in Maori society.
2. The hei-tiki pictured in SOURCE 1 refers to Maori mythology. Research the Maori myth of Tiki and compare it to other creation myths.
3. Evaluate the role that Maori art plays in modern New Zealand life. Choose one of the art forms discussed here and research its acceptance or use in New Zealand today.

8.10 SkillBuilder: Making your own notes from sources

Why is note-making useful?
Notes summarise key information and clarify particular points in your own words. Being able to make useful notes will help you remember and understand key information easier.

*Rahui* is a form of tapu that the Maori used to *limit resource use*. For example, rahui could be imposed over an area to prevent the gathering of food while the land recovered. It helped to conserve limited food supplies and other natural resources. All Maori tribes accepted the principles of rahui.

Unfortunately, rahui came *too late for the moa*. Although the young birds were an *important food source* of the Haast’s eagle, the adult moa lacked any natural predators prior to human settlement. The moa became an *abundant* and *important food source*, with both the *meat* of the bird as well as its *large eggs* providing a *lifeline* for the Maori. The bones of the bird were used to make *ornaments* and *fishhooks*, and even the *shells* of the giant *eggs* were used to *carry water*. The *meat* of the moa could be *preserved* and became a *valuable trading good*.

Archaeologists believe the moa was *hunted to extinction* by the *fifteenth century*. As a result, the Haast’s eagle also *disappeared* into history. As you will see later in this chapter, this had a huge impact on the Maori people.

Go to your learnON course to access:
- An explanation of the skill (Tell me)
- A step-by-step process involved in developing the skill with an example (Show me)
- An activity to allow you to practise the skill (Let me do it)
- Questions to test your application of the skill (Applying skills)
This final subtopic provides a range of opportunities for you to review and respond through:

i revising and checking your historical knowledge
ii demonstrating your ability to apply historical concepts and skills.

Go to your learnON course to access:

• A key chronology of events relevant to the topic
• A summary of the key knowledge presented in the topic
• A ‘Big Questions’ activity
• A multiple choice topic test
• Short answer or extended writing responses