

The New Zealand  
Curriculum

LEVEL

4

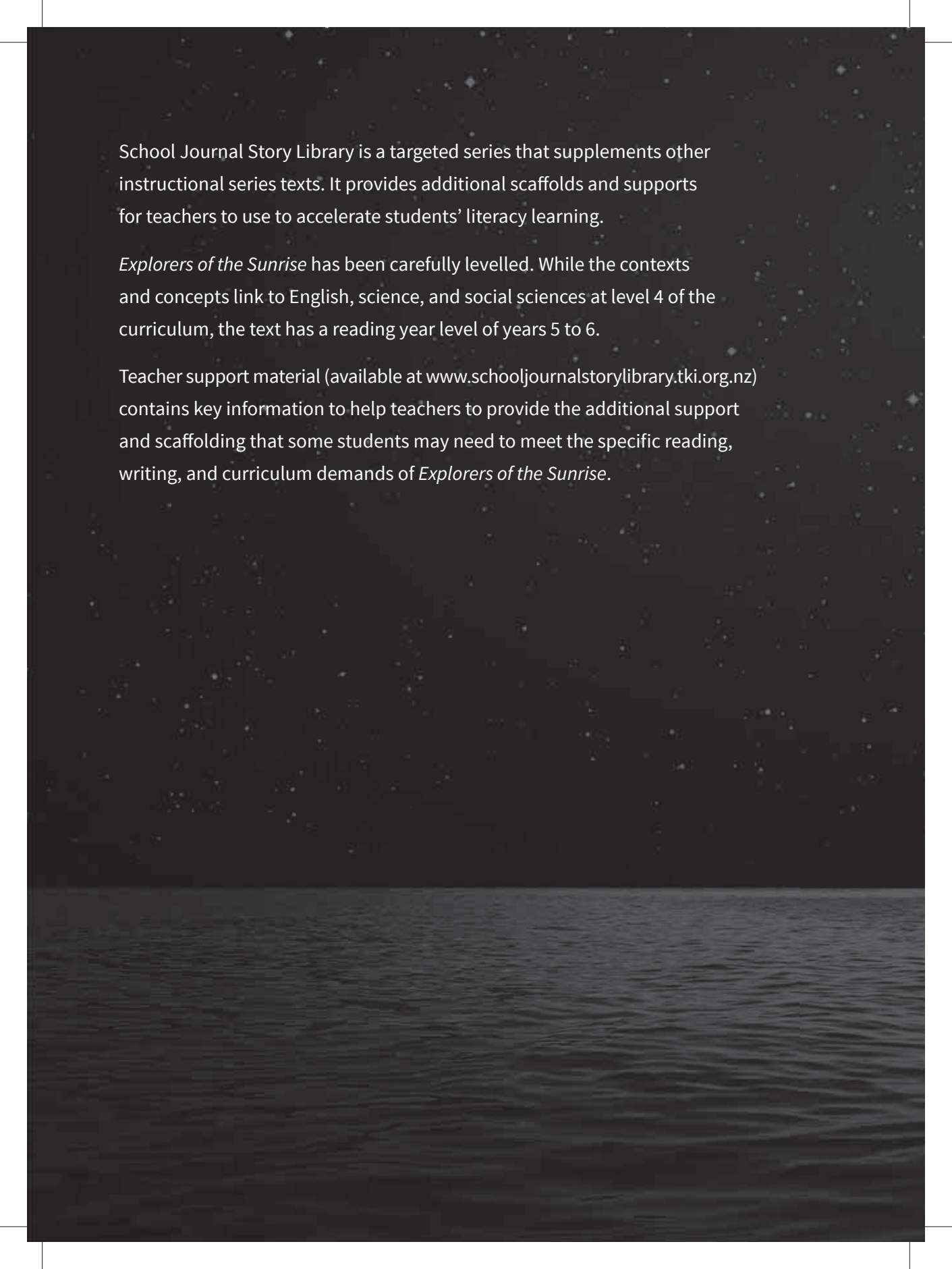


# EXPLORERS OF THE SUNRISE



JEFF EVANS | DAMON SALESA

School Journal Story Library

The background of the page is a dark, starry night sky with a horizon line. The sky is filled with numerous small, bright stars of varying sizes. Below the horizon, the surface of a body of water is visible, showing gentle ripples and a dark, reflective surface. The overall color palette is monochromatic, consisting of various shades of black, grey, and white.

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*Explorers of the Sunrise* has been carefully levelled. While the contexts and concepts link to English, science, and social sciences at level 4 of the curriculum, the text has a reading year level of years 5 to 6.

Teacher support material (available at [www.schooljournalstorylibrary.tki.org.nz](http://www.schooljournalstorylibrary.tki.org.nz)) contains key information to help teachers to provide the additional support and scaffolding that some students may need to meet the specific reading, writing, and curriculum demands of *Explorers of the Sunrise*.

# EXPLORERS OF THE SUNRISE

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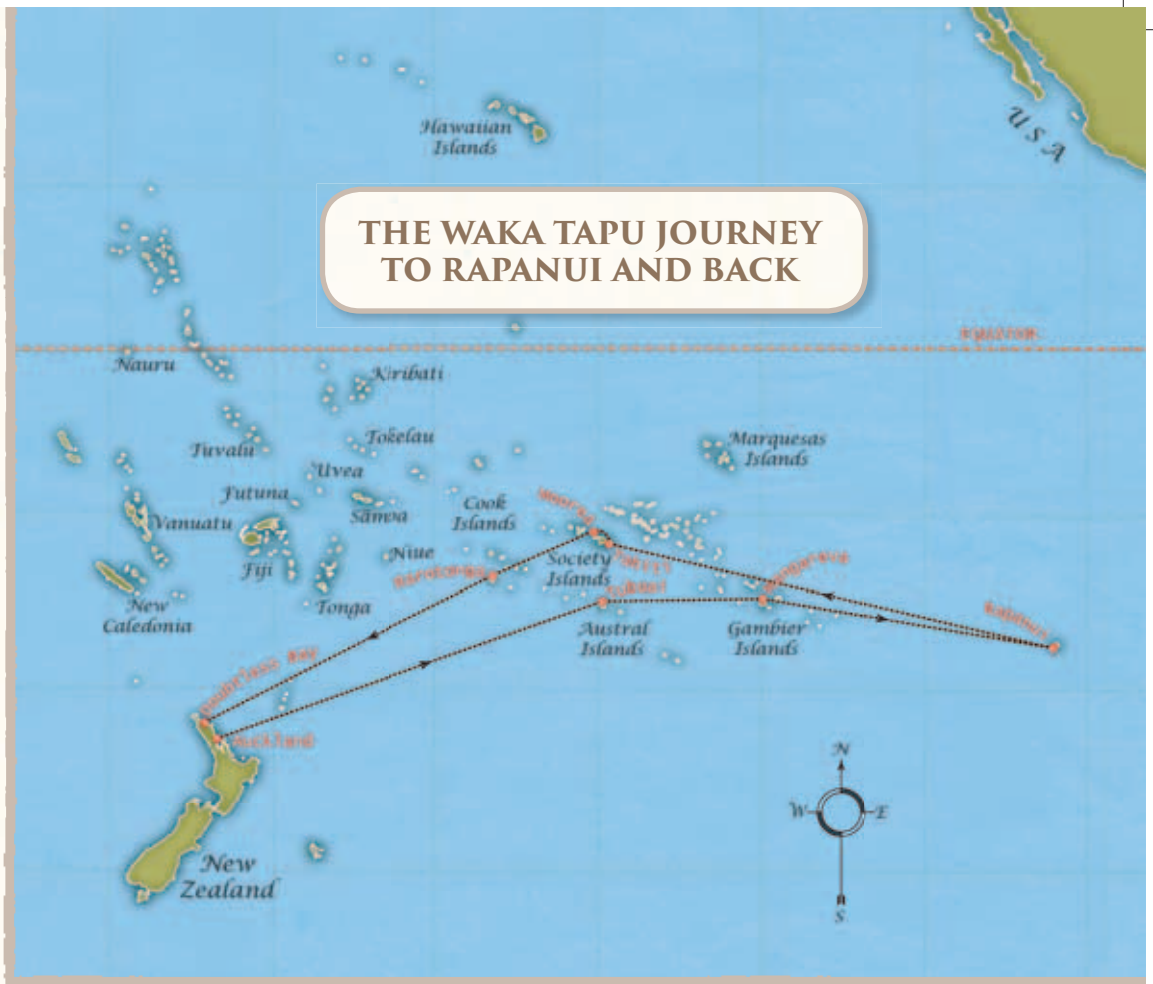
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# WAKA TAPU

BY JEFF EVANS

In 2012, two waka – *Te Aurere* and *Ngahiraka Mai Tawhiti* – sailed to Rapanui (Easter Island). The long and dangerous journey followed the path of Polynesian **voyagers** from long ago. The voyage was the dream of master waka-builder Hekenukumai Busby. It took ten months, and the crew used traditional navigation methods all the way.





During the journey, the **navigator** had to use all his skills and knowledge to locate the island of Rapanui. In the daytime, he used the sun and ocean swells to help guide the waka. At night, he relied on the stars to stay on track. It was hard work, and he didn't get much sleep during the voyage.

Being on the waka was a lot of fun, but not when it got stormy! The voyagers wore modern wet-weather gear to keep them dry, but they still got cold. The storms made it hard to navigate too, because the clouds covered up the stars at night. When that happened, the crew lowered the sails until the clouds went away. While they waited, everyone tried to keep warm and dry and get some rest.



As the waka sailed north, the days became warmer and the sea spray wasn't as cold. Their first stop was Tubuai. By the time they arrived at Tubuai, the two waka had been at sea for forty-three days. That's a long time to be on a boat that is small enough to fit inside a classroom! Can you imagine sitting on a waka, cold and wet, with no way of getting off for forty-three days? After a big welcome at Tubuai and a few days' rest, the two waka crews sailed to Mangareva. There they had another welcome, followed by a feast.



Moai (statues) on Rapanui

The last leg of the voyage to Rapanui was a big test for the navigator. This was because Rapanui is a small island and it sits all alone in the ocean. Also, the navigator had to find Rapanui when it was still below the **horizon**. He used many clues, such as the flight of birds and the ocean swells, to help him. Twenty-two days after leaving Mangareva, the voyagers arrived at Rapanui. They had been at sea for ninety days. The crew were happy to have a four-week rest before sailing home.

As the *Te Aurere* and *Ngahiraka Mai Tawhiti* sailed into Doubtless Bay, pūtātara and pūkāea rang out in welcome. The crews on the waka had completed a historic journey to Rapanui and back – a trip of around 10 000 **nautical miles**.



pūtātara (conch shells)

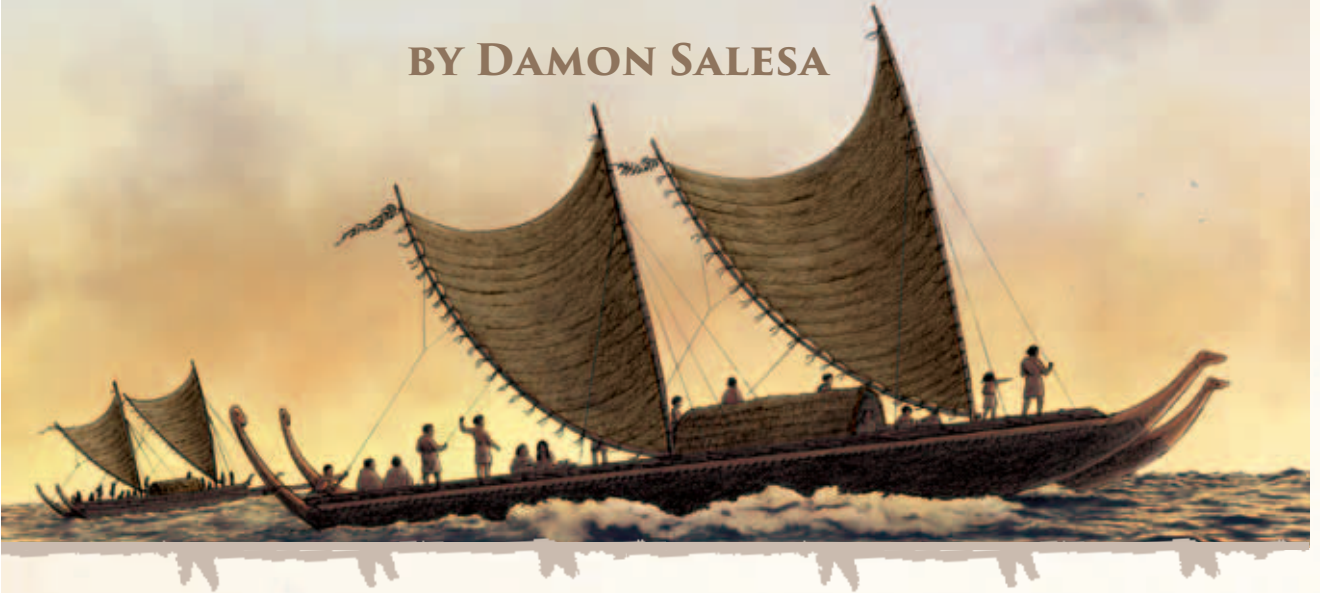


pūkāea (wooden trumpets)



# THE POLYNESIANS

BY DAMON SALESA



## HAWAIKI

Polynesians are Pasifika peoples whose **ancestors** voyaged eastwards from their homeland about 3000 years ago. There are different names for this homeland. The most common names are versions of the word “Hawaiki”. This is the spiritual and physical homeland of the Polynesian people. They remember Hawaiki as a place of heroes and great deeds.

## LIFE IN HAWAIKI

Polynesian stories, **archaeology**, and science tell us a lot about where Hawaiki was and what life was like there. It’s believed that Hawaiki extended from Tonga to Sāmoa and included the smaller islands of ‘Uvea and Futuna. This is where Polynesian culture first began. The peoples of Hawaiki were not all the same, but they had similar customs and languages. They kept in regular contact, trading goods and ideas, and like their ancestors, they were skilled voyagers.



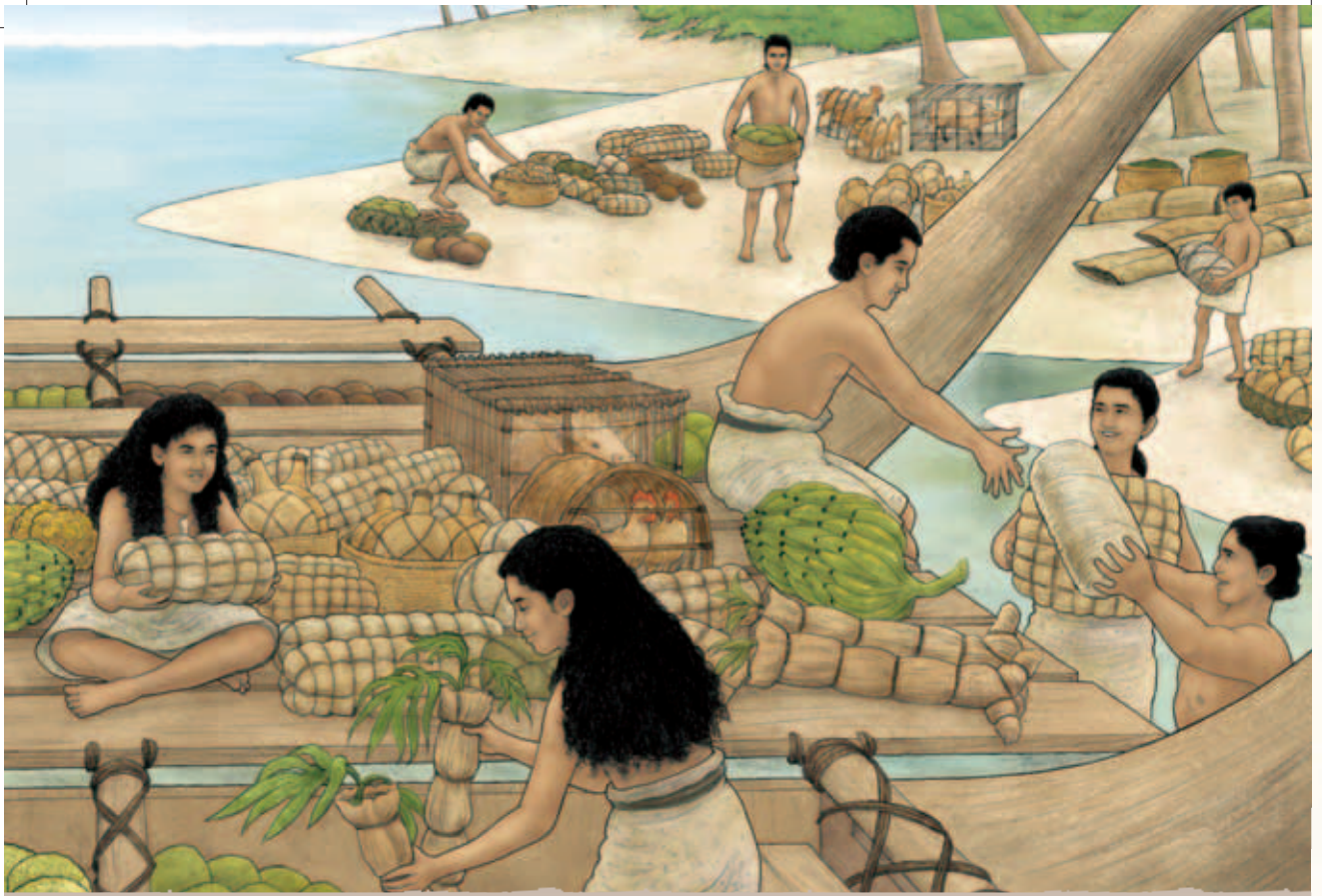
## VOYAGING

The peoples of Hawaiki never stopped voyaging. They were always travelling between islands. Soon, they travelled beyond Hawaiki.

### LEAVING HAWAIKI

The Polynesians began to settle on islands that were many hundreds of kilometres away, for example, Niue, Tuvalu, and Tokelau. These islands were all settled about 2000 years ago. Then the people headed further east. No one knows which route they took. About 1400 years ago, they had probably made it as far as the Marquesas Islands. And by 1100 years ago, they had discovered Mangareva and Rapanui. Meanwhile, those people who stayed behind in Hawaiki were making a different kind of journey. They were becoming Tongans, 'Uveans, Futunans, and Sāmoans. People, languages, and cultures were changing.





## SETTING OUT

On a long voyage, the Polynesians had to take enough food to last the whole journey. Fruit had to be eaten in the first few days, but taro would last a little longer. After a week, the people would eat food that had been preserved by drying or baking. They also took live animals and caught fish whenever possible. They collected rain water on the journey but had to take most of their water with them.

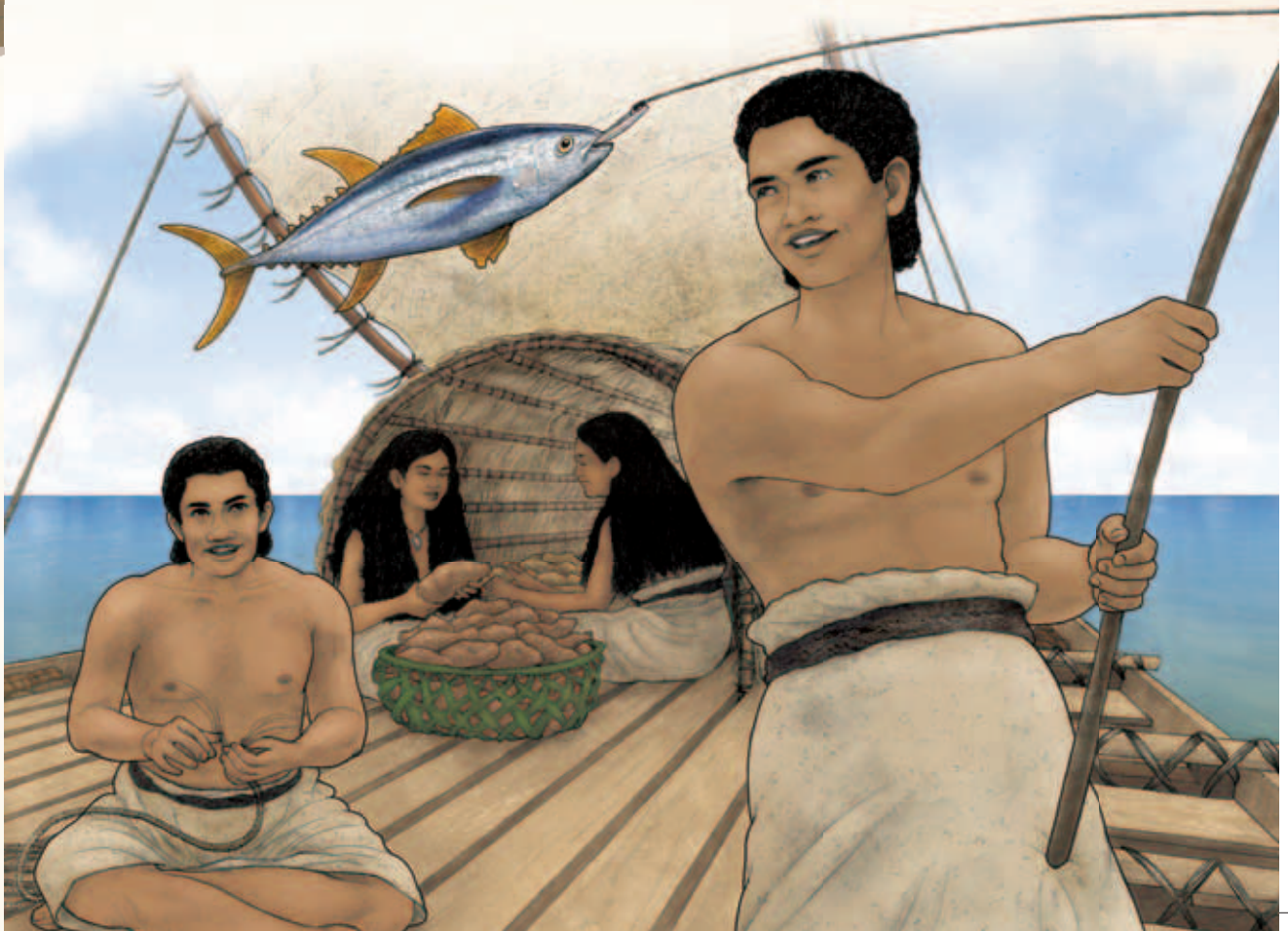
Not only did they need food and water but also the right people. Good leaders made sure that everyone co-operated and didn't panic or make bad decisions. Some people were navigators, while others handled and repaired the canoes.

When they arrived at their new island, other skills were needed. These skills included building or making things, looking after plants and animals, and caring for the sick.

## LIFE AS A VOYAGER

What was it like to be on one of the great voyaging canoes? The navigators and the crew worked the hardest. They had to make sure the canoe was sailing well. They also had to watch the sky and sea to be sure they were following the right path. The lead navigator would get very little sleep while the ship was at sea.

Everyone else had duties, too. These included repairing the ropes and the sails, fishing, preparing food, and tending to the plants and animals. A canoe of Polynesians was well-organised – ready to find and develop a new world.

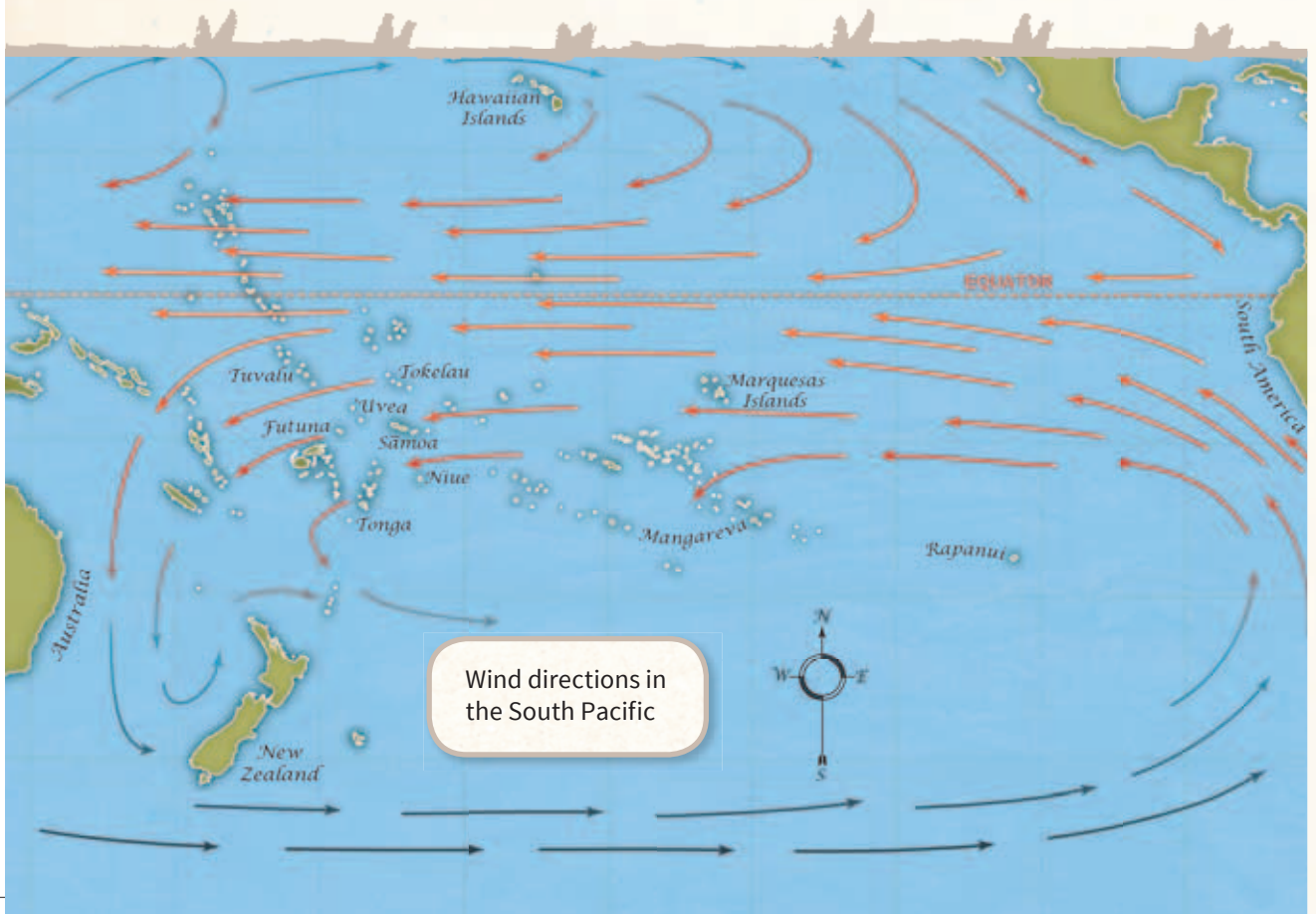


## NAVIGATION

The best Polynesian navigators are remembered as great heroes. For example, right across Polynesia, people still tell legends about Māui. The Māori people respect him as a great navigator with the ability to “fish up” islands from below the horizon.

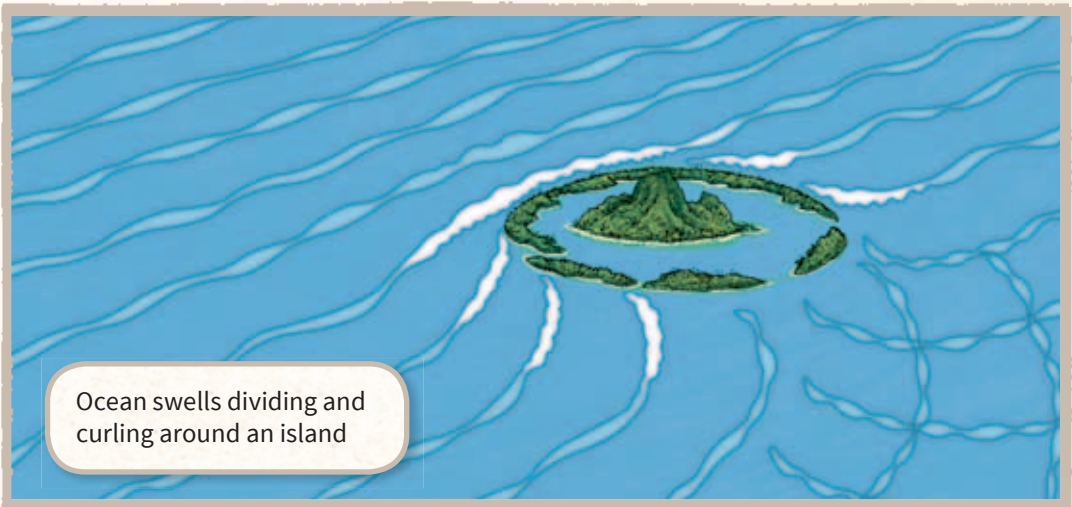
## WORKING THE WINDS

In Polynesia, the wind blew mostly from the east. But the Polynesians knew that at certain times of the year, the wind blew from the west. They wanted to travel to the east. So, when the wind changed, they would set off. These westerlies would not last long – just long enough to carry a crew hundreds of kilometres to the east. When the wind changed back to an easterly, if the crew had found no land, they could sail back home. This way of working the wind made exploring much safer.



## FINDING YOUR WAY BY SKY AND SEA

The Polynesian navigators were experts in the movements of the Sun, the Moon, the stars, and the planets. They used this knowledge to guide them on long voyages. They also used ocean **swells** to find their way. When a swell divides and curls around an island, it creates a pattern in the ocean. The navigator was able to detect this pattern some distance away from land. Swell patterns were useful because they could be used during the day and on cloudy nights when the navigator couldn't see the Moon, the stars, or the planets.



Ocean swells dividing and curling around an island

## FISHING UP ISLANDS

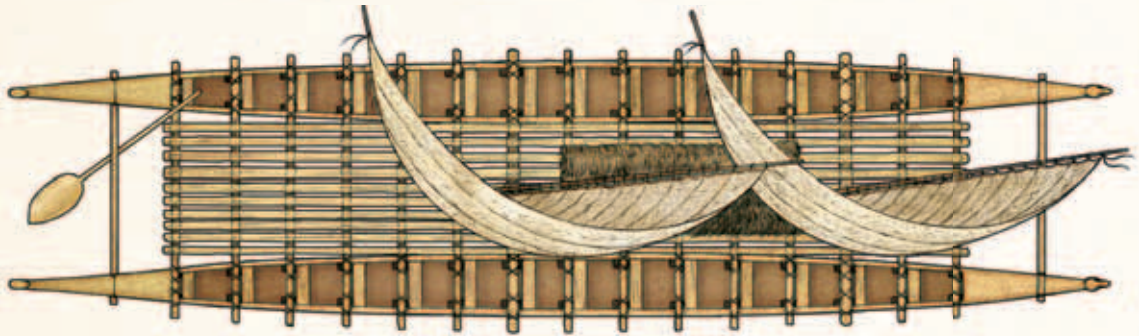
When an island was still below the horizon, Polynesian navigators used many clues to find it. In the early morning, birds fly away from land to catch fish, and in the late afternoon, they fly back towards it. Watching these birds helped the navigator to find land up to 80 kilometres away. Floating **debris** (such as leaves or tree branches) was another clue that land was nearby.

## POLYNESIAN VOYAGING CANOES

Voyaging canoes were over 22 metres in length and could carry dozens of people. They were very fast and could cover 180 to 270 kilometres a day. Making such big, fast, and strong canoes was both an art and a science.

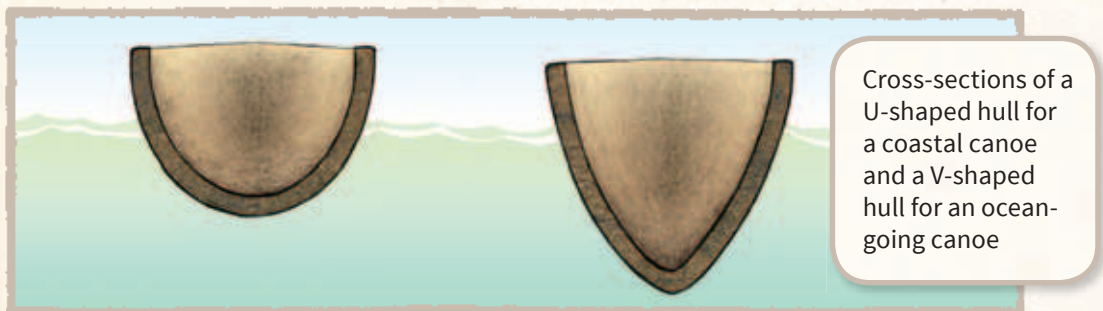
### THE DECK

Strong crossbeams joined the two **hulls**, and planks tied across the beams made a deck. There were gaps between the planks so that waves could splash through. Without the gaps, the waves could break the canoe apart. Most of these voyaging canoes had a shelter on the deck for protecting people, animals, and supplies. At the **stern** was a large steering paddle.



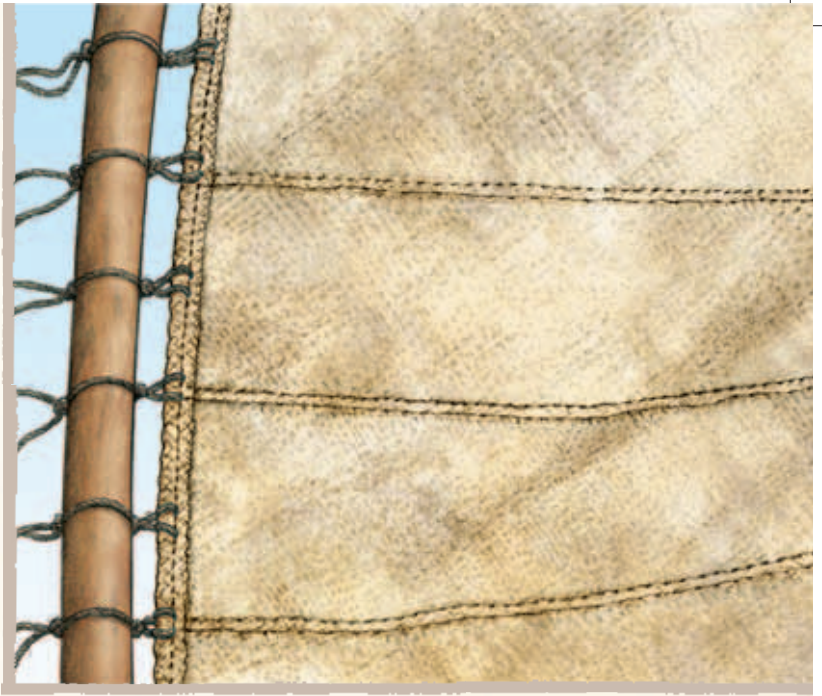
### THE HULLS

Traditional voyaging canoes were perhaps the world's first catamarans, which means they had two hulls. The hulls were perfectly shaped for sailing and were stable and easy to steer. They were made from the largest trees the Polynesians could find.



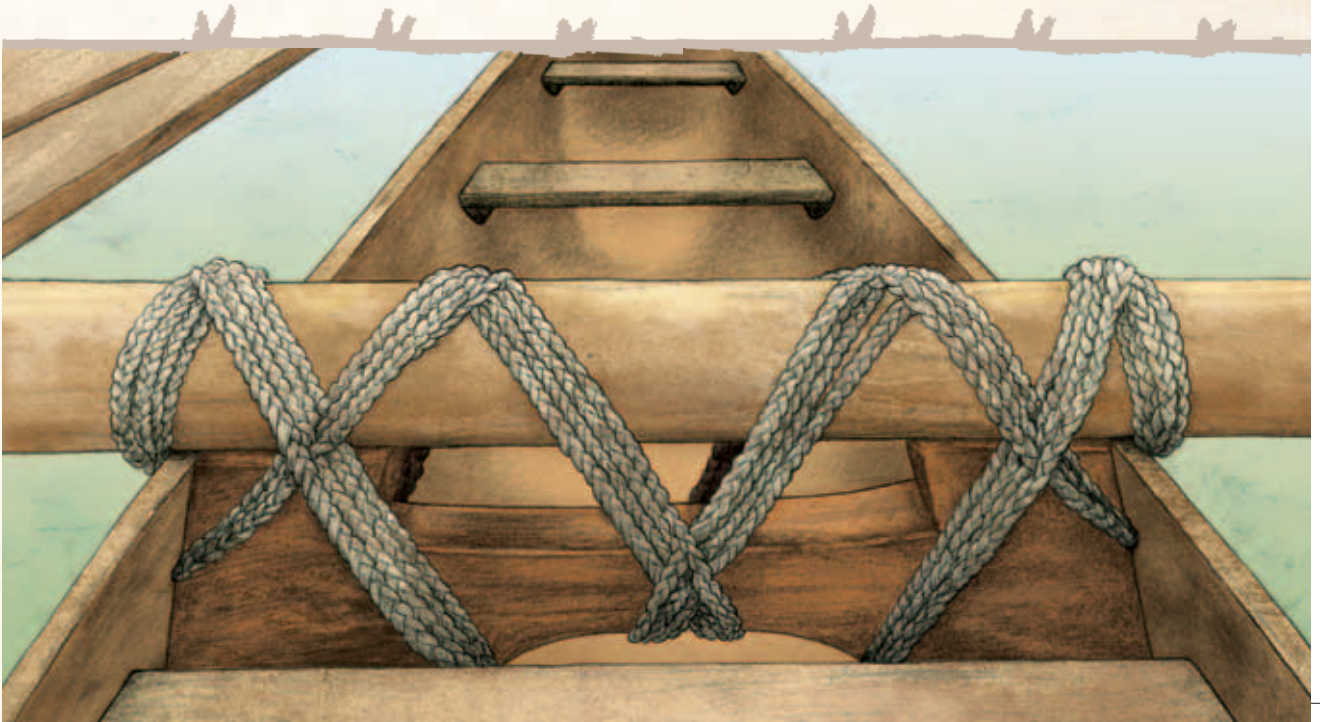
## THE SAILS

The sails were made from long strips of woven matting about 45 centimetres wide, which were stitched together. Most sails were **triangular** and set between two poles of very strong wood.



## THE LASHINGS

The wind and the sea are very powerful, so canoes had to be as strong as possible. The key to this strength was the tough cord that the Polynesians used. This cord let them build large and complex canoes without any nails. Wood that is nailed together can snap, but the **lashings** of Polynesian canoes could move and stretch. The cord for the lashings was made from coconut-husk fibres.



## A NEW POLYNESIA

No one really knows why the Polynesians began voyaging. Some may have been seeking mana – status and power. For others, they may have been getting away from trouble at home. But what we do know is that Polynesians have never stopped voyaging. They've just changed the way they travel. Instead of looking at the sky when navigating, Polynesians now fly across it. Flights now connect the islands as canoes once did.







Since the end of the Second World War, many thousands of Polynesians have moved away from their villages. Some have travelled to the main cities of their own islands. Others have moved further away – to Aotearoa and Australia.

Not all Polynesians speak the languages of their ancestors. Many speak English or French, and a few speak Spanish. Some Polynesians have non-Polynesian ancestors as well as their Polynesian ones. But like their Polynesian ancestors, they continue to travel.

Modern Polynesians remember their origins in many ways – in their languages, songs, dances, stories, and designs. As the Polynesian navigators understood, wherever you go, it is important to know where you have come from.

## GLOSSARY

- ancestors: members of the same family (or group of people) who lived long ago
- archaeology: the study of human history through looking at old places where people lived
- debris: scattered, broken pieces of something
- horizon: the line where the sea and the sky seem to meet
- hull: the main part of a boat that sits in the water – it doesn't include the masts and sails
- lashings: cords used to tie things together
- nautical miles: the unit of measurement used by the captains of ships and planes to measure distance (1 nautical mile = 1852 metres)
- navigator: someone who guides a vehicle (like a ship or plane) on the right path (used in this text to describe the person who guides the waka in the right direction)
- stern: the back part of a boat
- swells: large wave movements of the sea that are so powerful they are not affected by local winds
- triangular: shaped like a triangle
- voyagers: people who go on a long journey

## Acknowledgments

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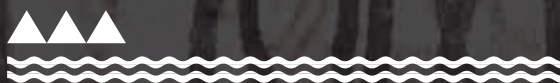
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