

Teacher's Resource Kit

Illustrated History of the South Pacific

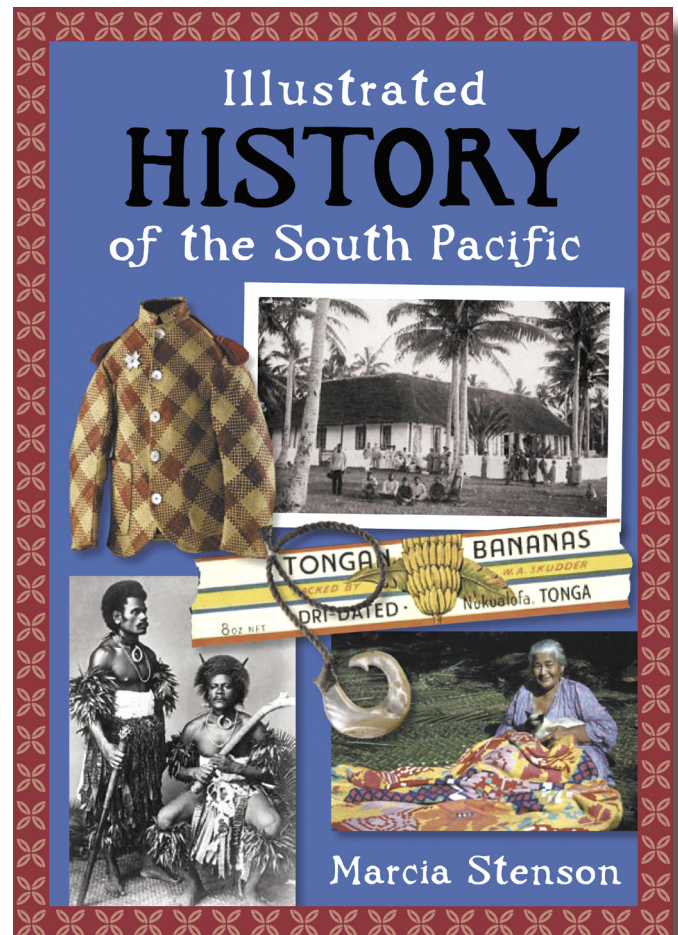
Marcia Stenson

The South Pacific is not only our geographic environment, it is also our cultural environment, and many New Zealanders trace their ancestry to Polynesian seafarers. This book is an introduction to the history of the South Pacific.

A companion to *Illustrated History of New Zealand*, also written by Marcia Stenson, it covers the following topics: geology and geography, the arrival of the first people to the Pacific, European exploration, war in the Pacific, and political issues both historic and current.

There is also specific information on these island groups: Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and the Polynesian outliers.

This timely book fills a major gap in our knowledge of the South Pacific. It will be an essential reference book for every home, school and library.



Marcia Stenson is the author of *Illustrated History of New Zealand*. She has been a secondary school History teacher and a Deputy-Principal, and she has written a number of books including the classic *The Story of New Zealand*.

This resource kit contains classroom activities for students aged 10 to 14, and includes the following topics:

- Geology and Geography
- Colonial Rule
- Island Studies
- Nuclear Issues
- South Pacific Mysteries



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Introducing the Book

Assess students' existing knowledge and impressions (before reading the book):

- With the whole group, look at a map of the South Pacific with the names of countries blanked out. How many islands can they name? Add labels to the map as you progress through the book.
- Ask students who have been to the islands to share their memories.
- What images arise from the phrase 'South Pacific island'? Get students to sketch an impression. Compare with glossy tourist brochure imagery.
- Pacific islands are often portrayed as 'paradise' where life is 'simple and easy'. What is your students' opinion on this? Revisit this statement after studying the book. Has their viewpoint changed?

Geology and Geography

- How did the name 'Pacific' originate?
- What does the name Polynesia mean? (p.9)
- Research Magellan and his discoveries. Plot his voyages on a world map.
- Locate island nations using compass directions. Use a Pacific map to practise. e.g. New Caledonia is north of New Zealand and east of Australia.
- Why is the Pacific a volatile volcanic and earthquake zone? (p.7)
- Study a Pacific map showing locations of volcanic eruptions. Compare with a map showing the tectonic plate boundaries. Draw the plates onto the volcano map.
- Is a cyclone a hurricane? Why or why not?

The Past

- What are three sources used to find out about the past? (p.10)
- Is archaeology very accurate? What use are plants in revealing the past? (pp.11 and 106)
- Create a table like the one on page 11 to compare English with European languages. Use the same list of English words and record German, French, Spanish and Italian translations. Any similarities?
- Why are stories so important in the islands? Why did writing not develop in Polynesian societies? Read other stories about Rata. (p.12)
- Research your own family history using some of these methods.

Seafarers

- What skills did the Austronesians bring? (p.15) Why did they explore the Pacific? (p.15)
- List the ways you might survive, adrift in a canoe on the open seas.

- Brainstorm all the possible ways of navigating at sea, then read pages 14 and 15. List the different ways used by early Polynesians.
- What were the essentials for settling a new island? (p.14)
- How was the chief central to society? (See also pages 25 and 50.)
- What do mana and tapu mean?
- What is tatau? (p.18) What does 'worn wealth' mean? Do we have present-day equivalents of showy wealth?
- List all the uses that Polynesians found for natural products. (pp.18-19)

- How did they change the environment? Did these things also happen in New Zealand?
- Chart the life of a child in a pre-European village:

Food	Housing
Work	Play

Explorers

- Create an illustrated map that summarizes the islands 'discovered' by European explorers.
- Why did Terra Australis interest European explorers?
- How did spices play a part?
- If you were an explorer arriving on an island, how would you make friends with the people? Role-play the situation.
- What does the phrase 'noble savage' mean? (pp.22 and 26)
- Write an account of a 'savage' in the big city, based on Omai's experiences.

Europeans

- When the two groups met, what shocked the Polynesians? What upset the Europeans? Are these things still upsetting today?
- How was life difficult for Polynesians? (p.26)
- Why were good teeth so important to survival?
- Why did the explorers see the Pacific as paradise?
- What products did traders take from the islands? Sandalwood forests are still exploited today – find out why this is an issue in the Solomon Islands.
- Research the history of surfing.
- How did missionaries cause major social change? What were the Blue Laws?
- In your opinion, what positive things did the missionaries do? What were the negative things? (p.30)
- Look at the paintings on pages 28, 29 and 31. What are the Europeans doing? Discuss how Europeans and Islanders are portrayed in each picture (e.g. facial expressions and clothing). Write captions for each.

Empires

- Define these words: colony, empire, protectorate, blackbirding.
- What right did these countries have to take over the islands?
- How did international powers clash in 1889 in Samoa? (p.33)
- In what ways was blackbirding like slavery? (See p.90)
- List the reasons for wanting to control the Pacific. (p.35) Were any of these fair or justified? Why did Niue (p.69) and Tokelau (p.80) want European rule?
- On a map of the Pacific, mark the islands which European countries controlled in 1900. Use a colour code. Has this control changed today?
- On a timeline, mark the dates of European take-overs.

Colonial Rule

- Look at the photo on page 38. Who might this be? Write a caption.
- Research the Banaba issue. (p.36) Has this been justly resolved yet?
- Why did some settlers think it was a God-given right to rule the Pacific? (p.37)
- Why did whites think they were superior to native peoples? The equation 'dark skin = wild beast' still exists today. Where is it seen in society and entertainment?

Island Themes

For each theme, find evidence from each island. Look for similarities and differences between countries.

1. Traditional Leadership:

- Compare the Cook Islands (p.44), Fiji (pp. 49, 50), French Polynesia (p.59), Samoa (p.72), Tonga (pp.82, 83), and Tuvalu (p.88). What is the most common kind of leadership?
- Why was there so much fighting between groups?
- Write a description of a Fijian chief and his powers.
- If you were a chief of an island tribe, what laws would you make?

2. Missionaries

- List some mission rules from the Cook Islands (p.46), Tahiti (p.61), Tonga (p.86), and Samoa (p.74). Why were some rules so strict? Do these rules still apply today?
- For each law, state whether you agree or not using a scale: strongly disagree – disagree – agree – strongly agree.

- How were clothing regulations more to do with lifestyle than religious belief?
- Were Christianity and local beliefs similar? (pp.51, 67, 74)

3. Colonisation

- List the good and bad effects of colonisation. (pp.47, 62, 69, 75, 80) Record this information on a chart.
- Design a poster to advertise one of the British laws in Fiji. (p.38)
- How was land ownership vital to control: compare Fiji (p.38) with French Polynesia. (p.62)
- How did Tonga stay independent from colonisers?
- Look at the photo on page 36. Brainstorm questions you have about this photo. Read the chapter to answer the questions.

4. Environment

- Research one of these Pacific environmental issues and present as a newspaper report: global warming and climate change (p.92); water resources; deforestation (p.106); nuclear issues; mining; cyclones.

Island Studies

1. Cook Islands

- How is the Cooks' culture similar to Maori/Tahitian? Give examples of religion and language similarities.
- The Cooks' imports are greater than exports. Why is this a problem?
- What was New Zealand's role? What does 'paternalistic' mean? Is it positive or negative?
- Look at the photo on page 47 – compare it with the photo on page 34/35. Note differences in clothing.

2. Fiji

- Where did the early Fijians come from?
- Create a chart that lists the causes and effects of racial tension in Fiji.
- Look at the photo of the chiefs on page 50. How many different natural materials can you spot?
- Write a brief biography of Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara.
- How did the arrival of Indians change Fiji significantly? (pp.54-56) What social divisions arose along ethnic lines? How is the racial climate now?

3. French Polynesia

- Imagine you are the first explorer to visit. Write a diary entry (with sketches) based on the paintings on page 60.
- How was the role of women different here?
- How did the French go about taking over? Why? List the effects of French colonialism.
- Why is phosphate so valuable?

4. Niue

- What geographical challenges did Niue present to settlers?
- Was New Zealand an effective ruler?
- Why did they have a 'go-slow' policy?
- Can Niue survive as a country?

5. Samoa

- What changes did Europeans bring to Samoa?
- What did the Mau resistance do?
- Did the New Zealand administration make mistakes?

6. Tonga

- Why were women powerful here?
- How were women's roles structured into society?
- Why has Tonga been such a settled kingdom compared to other islands? What impact did the kings and queens have?
- Look at the painting on page 83. What might be happening here? Write a caption.
- Debate the topic – 'A wise and just monarch is better than other forms of government.'

7. Tuvalu

- What is the biggest environmental danger facing Tuvalu?
- Why is the internet domain name '.tv' so valuable?

8. The Future

- What may be the biggest problem facing the islands? (p.98) Why is the economy fragile?
- Use census data to make a table of the Pacific Island population of New Zealand. Compare with island population numbers. Is this a problem?
- Draw a travel brochure encouraging people to visit one of the Pacific Islands.

The Nuclear Issue

- Look at the photo on page 97. What has this explosion got to do with the Pacific Islands?
- What effects do you think it might have had? Why did France, Britain and the U.S. all test nuclear weapons in the Pacific rather than at home?
- What problems resulted? Are they ongoing today?
- Imagine the size of the Bravo fireball (p.96) by drawing a 6.5 km circle on a map of a New Zealand city. Do the same with Eniwetok.
- Why were Pacific people divided over testing? (pp.65, 97)
- What was the Rainbow Warrior's role?
- Why didn't some countries sign the Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty?
- Write a letter of protest to one of the governments giving reasons why they should sign.

Mysteries

- Pacific Islands are a common setting for adventure or mystery stories. What physical features make them a good setting?
- There are 27 abandoned islands. Write a short story of castaways on an island (such as the TV series *Lost*).
- Draw a treasure map (on a grid) set on a Pacific island.
- The *Bounty* story has many movie and book versions. What is the latest real-life episode in this story? (p.104)
- Look at the painting on page 16. Write an imaginary story about these statues. Sketch or model the statues on Easter Island. Find out how they were erected.
- Design a chart that traces the history of the kumara. (p.106) Map its possible journey through time to New Zealand.

Art

- Tapa cloth prints: Look at examples of tapa patterns and symbols from different islands. Make a tapa-style symbol using relief prints. Use a 10x10 square of card as the block. Glue strips of card to the block. Print by crayon-rubbing or rolled-on ink.
- Construct a model of an outrigger canoe. Flax flower-stalks are a good lightweight material.
- Model one of the main island types (p.8) in clay.
- Illustrate the Tuvalu Creation story. (p.89)

Further Reading

- Junior fiction: *The Silent One* by Joy Cowley.
- Junior non-fiction: *Explorers Wanted — South Sea Islands* by Simon Chapman.
- Polynesian navigation: *The Kontiki* by Thor Heyerdahls.
- Captain Cook's voyages: *Young Nick's Head* by Karen Hess.
- Adventures of the *Bounty* crew: *Sea of Mutiny* by Ken Catran.

