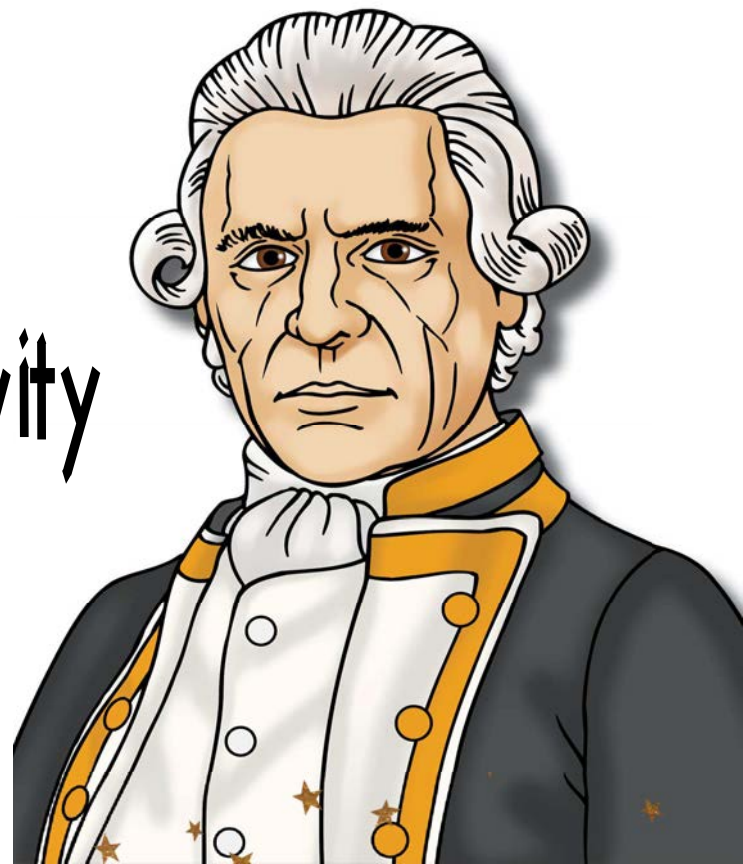


Grade 5 HASS
Australian History

Australian Explorers

Captain James Cook

Biography
Comprehension Activity



Aussie Star

RESOURCES

Captain James Cook



When was Captain Cook born ?

Where was Captain Cook born?

What was the name of Captain Cook's first ship?

What was the purpose of Captain Cook's first expedition? What year did he set off on this voyage?

Name three places he discovered on his first expedition?

Cook believed there was a 'southern most' continent, although he didn't find it, it was later discovered. What is it called?

What did Captain Cook call the Hawaiian islands?
Why did he call them this?

How, when and where did Captain Cook die?

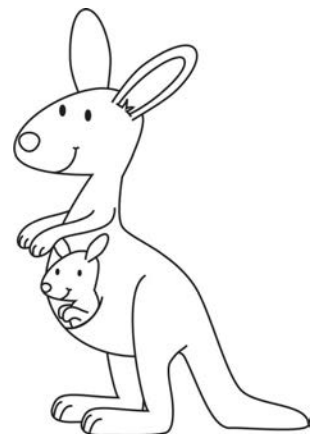
Cpt. James Cook

Biography

Young James Cook was always looking out the window at the sea nearby. He was born in 1728 and worked as a teenage shop assistant in England during the eighteenth century. Later, he became a famous explorer who travelled to the South Pacific and was known for his excellent navigation and mapmaking skills.

From his early age, all James could think about was the sea. He loved to hear the sound of the waves crashing against the shore and to see the huge ships coming into port from different places and unload their many cargoes. He dreamed of one day sailing the seas and discovering places that no one had ever gone to before. This was why he later became a merchant seaman and joined the British Navy.

His first trip in 1768 as Captain of the ship Endeavour was to Tahiti in the South Pacific to measure the distance of the earth from the sun by observing the movement of the planet Venus. While on this voyage he also explored the Society Islands, New Zealand and Australia of which he drew very detailed and accurate maps. He found Australia to be most interesting as there he discovered many new kinds of plants and animals, including the kangaroo. Can you imagine what it must have been like to find an animal that can run faster than a race horse and jump as high as three metres?



His second trip began in 1772 with two ships, Adventure and Resolution. His aim was to find out if there was a Southern continent in that region. He never found this continent, but during his expedition discovered South Georgia Island and the South Sandwich Islands, along with other places. On this voyage, Captain Cook also took his goat to make it the first animal known to have travelled around the world at that time.

On his third trip in 1776, Captain Cook went in search of a passage that many believed joined the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean. His ships were Resolution and Discovery. He sailed halfway around the world but did not find the passage. He eventually ended up discovering Hawaii and its islands where he and his men became the first Europeans to set foot there. Not used to seeing white people, for a while, the natives at first thought he was a god and held feasts in his honour and gave him gifts.

Do you want to know what Captain Cook called these Hawaiian Islands at first? They were named the Sandwich Islands after the Earl of Sandwich in England who had helped to pay for the trip.

Captain Cook met an unfortunate death in 1779 during a fuss with some of the Hawaiians over a stolen boat. The quarrel turned deadly when Captain Cook tried to take their leader captive and the people came to his defense. They killed the captain before he could get back to his ship.

Captain James Cook has gone down in history as one of the greatest explorers who ever lived and for navigating and mapping more places than anyone else during his time. He was honoured by NASA by having them name two of their space shuttles, Discovery and Endeavour, after his ships.