



Australian Government

endeavour250  
Reflecting on Australia's History

# First contact

What happened during first contact between the *Endeavour* crew and Aboriginal Australians?



HASS



Year Level: 3-4





# First contact

## OVERVIEW

**Students use an inquiry methodology to explore and assess events that unfolded when first contact was made during James Cook's 1770 voyage, particularly at Kamay (Botany Bay) and Waalumbaal Birri (Endeavour River) where the voyagers spent time on shore.**

Students use visual and text analysis to unpack primary and secondary source materials related to first contact. They use questioning and thinking strategies to consider the differing perspectives of European explorers and Aboriginal peoples at the time.

Students consider the events that followed on from first contact and consider the consequences that first

contact had for both European and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. They consider Cook's personal legacy and why assessments of this differ. Students generate contemporary interpretive tourist signs to express their understanding of the content and themes.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

**Students are aware of events that occurred during first contact at Kamay (now known as Botany Bay) and Waalumbaal Birri (now known as Endeavour River) in 1770.**

Students consider differing European and Aboriginal perspectives of the events.

Students interpret and assess a variety of historical sources.

Students explain the consequences and legacy of Cook's voyage and first contact.

## LEARNING AREAS



HASS

## DURATION OF LESSONS



3–5 lessons





# Australian Curriculum

## CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

## GENERAL CAPABILITIES



Critical and Creative Thinking



Intercultural Understanding



## HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES – YEAR 3

- Days and weeks celebrated or commemorated in Australia (including Australia Day, Anzac Day, and National Sorry Day) and the importance of symbols and emblems ([ACHASSK064](#))
- Locate and collect information and data from different sources, including observations ([ACHASSI053](#))
- Examine information to identify different points of view and distinguish facts from opinions ([ACHASSI056](#))



## HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES – YEAR 4

- The diversity of Australia's first peoples and the long and continuous connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to Country/Place (land, sea, waterways and skies) ([ACHASSK083](#))
- The journey(s) of AT LEAST ONE world navigator, explorer or trader up to the late eighteenth century, including their contacts with other societies and any impacts ([ACHASSK084](#))
- The nature of contact between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and others, for example, the Macassans and the Europeans, and the effects of these interactions on, for example, people and environments ([ACHASSK086](#))
- Locate and collect information and data from different sources, including observations ([ACHASSI074](#))
- Examine information to identify different points of view and distinguish facts from opinions ([ACHASSI077](#))





# Engage

**To introduce the idea of first contact, display this image from an illustrated atlas published in 1888.**

Engage students with when, where, what, why questions to gauge their prior knowledge and to establish a context for the image. Extend discussion to include reasons for Cook's presence, and unpack the terms 'explorer' and 'discovery' by using questions such as: What's an explorer? Why and what was Cook exploring? Did he 'discover' anything? If so, what?

Conclude the discussion by asking students to predict what might have happened next in the minutes, hours and/or days after the event pictured occurred.





# Explore

To explore first contact, students use historical source material related to events at Kamay (Botany Bay) and Waalumbaal Birri (Endeavour River), the places where Cook and his crew had onshore interactions with Aboriginal peoples and groups.

Begin this inquiry by brainstorming types of historical sources that can be used to learn about events in the past (eg journals, letters, maps, paintings, stories). Play the [Endeavour Journal: National Treasures video clip for students](#).

## Kamay (Botany Bay)

Ask students to locate Kamay (Botany Bay) using Google Maps or similar. Compare and contrast their maps to [this one](#) created by Cook. Discuss why Cook may have chosen this spot to set anchor and explore the land.

Arriving in April 1770, Cook spent just over a week at Kamay and it was here that he first set foot on the continent. Use the 'What happened at Kamay (Botany Bay)' resource sheet with students to access a varied selection of primary and secondary sources that relate to this event. Ask students to analyse and consider what can be learnt from each source, then discuss which sources they found more, or less, useful. Highlight the lack of eyewitness accounts from Aboriginal Australians and how this may shape what we know about the events. Students conclude the activity by writing their own brief account of what happened at Kamay.

## Waalumbaal Birri (Endeavour River)

Cook and his party spent seven weeks at Waalumbaal Birri after the *Endeavour* ran aground on a shallow reef in July 1770. While the ship was being repaired, Cook and his crew had a number of meetings with the Guugu Yimithirr people. Students use two entries from Cook's journal ([available as audio files on ABC Education](#)) to explore some of these meetings and then consider the events from the perspective of the Guugu Yimithirr people. Have students working in pairs or threes to record their impressions using a Y chart, recording in each sector how they presume the experience looked, felt and sounded to the *Endeavour* crew.

Familiarise students with Waalumbaal Birri, and Cook's reason for being there, by asking them to interpret this [painting](#) of the stranded ship. Next, give students these tasks:

- Use Google Earth to find the Waalumbaal Birri (Endeavour River) and Gungahdie (Cooktown). Can they find the reefs that posed a danger to the *Endeavour*? How do they think the river and town got their names?
- Use the [Indigenous language map](#) to name the group for whom this area is Country. (The answer is Guugu Yimithirr, also spelt Guugu Yimidhrr on the map)





### Working with the audio files

**Getting to know the locals:** This audio file of Cook's journal describes his first interaction with the Guugu Yimithirr people.

After listening to it with your students, use the provided transcript and/or questions to check for language and understanding. Ask students to reflect quietly on the events that occurred, and then to write:

- five questions Cook may have liked to ask the Guugu Yimithirr people if they could have communicated
- five questions the Guugu Yimithirr people may have liked to ask Cook.

In pairs, students take on roles to ask and answer their questions, switching roles as appropriate.

**Trouble over turtles:** this audio file of Cook's journal, focuses on misunderstanding and tension between the Europeans and Guugu Yimithirr.

After listening, discuss what happened and identify possible reasons/motivations for the actions of both Cook and the Guugu Yimithirr. Ask students to complete Venn diagrams to identify and compare the likely feelings experienced by Cook and the Guugu Yimithirr people at the time. Challenge them to write a parallel diary entry that presents the same events Cook described in his journal, but from the perspective of a Guugu Yimithirr person who was present at the time.





# Explain

**In this section, students explain the consequences and legacy of first contact.**

Use a third audio file of Cook's journal ([All things necessary for a happy life](#)) in which he reflects on the lives of the Guugu Yimithirr prior to settlement. Check understanding of the vocabulary used, and discuss why Cook thought the Guugu Yimithirr were 'far happier' than Europeans.

Explain to students that on 22 August 1770, Cook claimed eastern Australia for the King, and the British settlement of Australia began 18 years later. As a class, discuss the following questions:

- What are some of the things that the British brought with them when they settled in Australia? Encourage students to think about objects, knowledge and cultural practices brought by the settlers (eg sheep, guns, roads, towns, Christianity, new diseases, British laws).
- How might life have changed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a result of the British arrival?

Ask students to use the Think-Pair-Share strategy to consider three positive and three negative consequences of the British arrival in Australia.





# Elaborate

**Students critically view and contrast two posters, created more than 150 years after the *Endeavour* voyage, to consider differing perspectives of Cook's legacy.**

Compare and contrast the two posters as a class, highlighting the different ways Cook's arrival is viewed and acknowledged by different people.

- Tourism Australia [poster](#) from the 1950s. Be sure to read and discuss the text in the scroll at the bottom.
- The [story](#) of Captain Cook as the Rembarrnga people from Roper River in the Northern Territory recall it, 1988. Explore the artwork (the text tells the same story) highlighting the focus on Indigenous people, animals and spirits.

Write 'Cook' on a board and brainstorm words that different people may have used in the past, and may use today, to describe James Cook (eg explorer, invader, skilled, discoverer, aggressive, cartographer/map-maker). Prompt students by asking them to consider a variety of different perspectives across time and place (eg an Aboriginal person today, a British naval officer in the past).

The year 2020 marks 250 years since Cook arrived in Australia and the event is being commemorated nationally. Discuss why this may be the case. Challenge students to reflect on how they think Cook should be remembered. Conclude the activity by asking students to write a sentence that describes Cook from their perspective.





# Evaluate

**To evaluate their learning about first contact, students create an interpretive sign for tourists suitable for display at Kamay (Botany Bay) or Waalumbaal Birri (Endeavour River)/Gungahdie (Cooktown).**

Students should select a location and design the sign to include four sections of text highlighting:

- the Indigenous people of the area (eg Dharawal, Guugu Yimithirr)
- Cook and the Endeavour voyage
- what happened during first contact
- how the events are reflected on today.

Students should include appropriate headings and images when designing their interpretive signs.



# What Happened at Kamay?

▼ Source A	
<p><b>Drawing created in 1770 by Tupaia, a Polynesian religious man and navigator, who was on the <i>Endeavour</i></b></p>	<p><a href="#">Indigenous Australians in bark canoes</a></p>
▼ Source B	
<p><b>Quote from the journal of Joseph Banks, a naturalist on the the <i>Endeavour</i> voyage, 28 April 1770</b></p>	<p>Under the South head of it were four small canoes; in each of these was one man who held in his hand a long pole with which he struck fish ... These people seem'd to be totaly engag'd in what they were about: the ship passd within a quarter of a mile of them and yet they scarce lifted their eyes from their employment.</p>
▼ Source C	
<p><b>Quote from the journal of Sydney Parkinson, an artist on the voyage, 29 April 1770</b></p>	<p>... we could not prevail on them to come near us or to be social; for, as soon as we advanced, they fled as nimbly as deer ... In one of their houses, at the top of the bay, we had laid some nails, pieces of cloth, and various trinkets; and though the natives had been there in our absence, yet they had not taken any of them.</p>
▼ Source D	
<p><b>Image from the journal of Sydney Parkinson</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Advancing to combat</a></p>
▼ Source E	
<p><b>Quote from the journal of James Cook, 29 April 1770</b></p>	<p>... as soon as we put the boat in they again came to oppose us upon which I fired a musket between the two which had no other effect than to make them retire back where bundles of thier darts lay and one of them took up a stone and threw at us which caused my fireing a second Musquet load with small shott and altho' some of the shott struck the man yet it had no other effect than to make him lay hold of a Shield or target to defend himself.</p>
▼ Source F	
<p><b>Recent quote from <a href="#">Shayne T Williams</a>, a descendant of the Dharawal people, whose traditional lands edge Kamay (now known as Botany Bay).</b></p>	<p>If, however, you look at this same encounter from our perspective you would understand that two Gweagal* men were assiduously carrying out their spiritual duty to Country by protecting Country from the presence of persons not authorised to be there. In our cultures it is not permissible to enter another culture's Country without due consent. Consent was always negotiated.</p> <p><small>*Gweagal is a clan of the Dharawal people</small></p>



**Australian Government**

**Department of Education, Skills and Employment**

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport,  
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