



Cook's Cook

The Cook who Cooked for Captain Cook

Written and illustrated by Gavin Bishop

Cook's Cook follows the 1768 journey of James Cook's H.M.S. Endeavour with his ship's cook, the one-handed John Thompson, as story teller.

Through real recipes, events on board and the places the ship travelled on its way to the Pacific, the book tells multiple stories.

The Author

Gavin Bishop ONZM, Tainui, Ngāti Awa, is a leading New Zealand illustrator. He has published over 70 books internationally and been translated into 12 languages. He has written for television and theatre, as well as a libretti for the Royal New Zealand Ballet. His awards include New Zealand Children's Picture Book of the Year in 2000

Themes

In Cook's Cook, we encounter themes of discovery, food, social class, and race through the eyes of the ship's cook, the one-handed John Thompson. The book charts the 1768-1771 Endeavour expedition to the South Pacific to find the Terra Australis Incognita and watch the Transit of Venus. Readers will enjoy discovering the startling and unusual recipes and the world of 18th Century seafaring.

These teaching notes include references to some of the other books Gavin Bishop consulted when writing Cook's Cook. A bibliography is included at the end.

Level One Activities—Text (before and while reading)

1. Before you read, look at the cover (front and back) of the book. What can you tell about the book from the title, font, illustrations, and blurb? Think about the colours and style of illustrations and what they might tell you about what sort of book this is.
2. Either on your own or in pairs find the definition of the following words that appear in the book and then use them in a new sentence: Expedition, cutlery, provisions, adjacent, continent.
3. Naval/Ship Jargon. In Cook's Cook, you will come across examples of naval or ship jargon. Jargon are words or expressions used by a group that may be difficult for others to understand. An example of ship jargon in the book is "galley". As you read, look out for and make a note of other examples of jargon.

Level Two Activities—Responding to the text (while reading)

1. Some of the people in this book have special titles before or after their names, such as “Lieutenant” and “Esquire”. In pairs, find out what the meaning of these titles and how and why someone would be given them. You never know – you might find out that you should have a title!
2. John Thompson sometimes uses the expression “Blimey!” This is a word that is not often used nowadays. What other words and phrases can you find in the book that you don’t often hear people say? Do you know what they mean? Discuss in small groups of 3-4.
3. Look at the page with illustrations of the food and drink that was stocked for the expedition. Do you recognise these items? Are there some you have never heard of? Scurvy is a disease that sailors used to get because they didn’t have enough Vitamin C in their diets. Do you think the food on the voyage would make up a well-balanced diet? What is it lacking? What is there too much of? You may like to refer to *The Voyages of Captain Cook* (pp. 28-29) by Anthony Cornish. Discuss as a class.
4. Captain Cook is clear about the rules on the Endeavour and there are punishments for those who do not follow them. For example, whipping with the cat o’ nine tails. Do you think his rules and punishments are fair? What would be his reasons for being strict while they are at sea? Discuss as a class.
5. Gavin Bishop’s illustrations have wonderful details of the different places Captain Cook and his crew visited. Which places appeal to you most? Why? Or is there somewhere that looks frightening or dangerous to visit? Is there somewhere you would like to visit if you had the opportunity? List three reasons why. What would you like to know more about this place? List another three reasons why.
6. Captain Cook and his crew meet Māori people for the first time when the Endeavour reaches Aotearoa/New Zealand. In *Cook’s Cook* this is told from the perspective (point of view) of John Thompson. As a class, imagine what this meeting was like from the Māori perspective. How would they feel meeting Europeans for the first time? What would be the advantages and the disadvantages for them? You could look up descriptions of these meetings in other books, including Anne Salmond’s *Between Worlds: Early Meetings Between Maori and Europeans 1773-1815* (Prologue). Take note of what was important to both groups, for example, trade. What are some of the cultural protocols that the groups misunderstood? What would you know to do today that Captain Cook and his crew didn’t?

Level Three Activities—Creating based on the text

1. In *Cook’s Cook* we see some of what happens when sailors cross the equator for the first time. Crossing the line is a tradition that dates back centuries. In small groups of 3-4, look up crossing the line rituals and then create a short play or sketch to demonstrate to your class what would happen.
2. In pairs, trace a map of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Next, label the map with as many of the names given by Captain Cook and his crew alongside Māori names as possible. Include illustrations of important landmarks.

3. There are so many different weird and wonderful meals in this book! Choose a selection and use them to create a menu for an Endeavour-themed restaurant. Include starters, mains, and desserts. Also, what beverages would be on the menu? Make sure you give your restaurant an appropriate name.

4. Hold a breakfast party. In small groups plan a menu with 3-4 different types of breakfast food. You could look to other countries and cultures for inspiration (see Level Four activity 3 below). You could serve different groups so that it's a real surprise and treat!

Level Four Activities—Beyond the text

1. In Tahiti, John Thompson notices that the men and women never eat together. Different cultures and countries have different food and meal rituals. What are some that you know of and/or have experienced? Discuss as a class.

2. In pairs, choose one of the following topics to research and present your findings as a talk or a poster to your class. You could even create a radio play or podcast on your topic if you have the means to do so.

A) The Transit of Venus

Some questions to think about: When was the planet Venus discovered and by whom? How often does the Transit of Venus occur? What tools and instruments would explorers in the 18th century use to watch the Transit of Venus?

Suggested further reading: *Endeavour: The Story of Captain Cook's First Great Epic Voyage* by Peter Aughton (pp. 78-81).

B) The Endeavour

Some questions to think about: When and how was this ship built? What are some of the features of the Endeavour that wouldn't be used on a ship today? What was life like on the Endeavour? Was the ship used for other expeditions?

Suggested further reading: *The Endeavour: A Collector's Souvenir* by Harriet B. Allen, Graeme Leather, and TVNZ Enterprises.

C) The Life and Personality of Joseph Banks

Some questions to think about: What was Banks' background? Where did he grow up and go to school and university? Did he have any distinguishing characteristics (physical or personality)? Did he get along with Captain Cook and others on board? What became of his life after the Endeavour voyage?

Suggested further reading: *Captain Cook: The Seaman's Seaman - A study of the great discoverer* by Alan Villiers (pp. 33-34); *The Endeavour: A Collector's Souvenir* by Harriet B. Allen, Graeme Leather, and TVNZ Enterprises; *The Voyages of Captain Cook* by Anthony Cornish (pp. 39-40).

D) The Great Southern Continent/Terra Australis Incognita

Some questions to think about: When did Europeans first believe there was a Great Southern Continent? Did anyone draw a map or picture of what they thought it looked like? Whose idea was it to search for the Great Southern Continent? What is the meaning of Terra Australis Incognita?

Suggested further reading: *The Voyages of Captain Cook* by Anthony Cornish (pp. 41-42); *Between Worlds: Early Meetings Between Maori and Europeans 1773-1815* by Anne Salmond (pp. 31-32).

Bibliography

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