



# History and Governments

## TERMS & NAMES

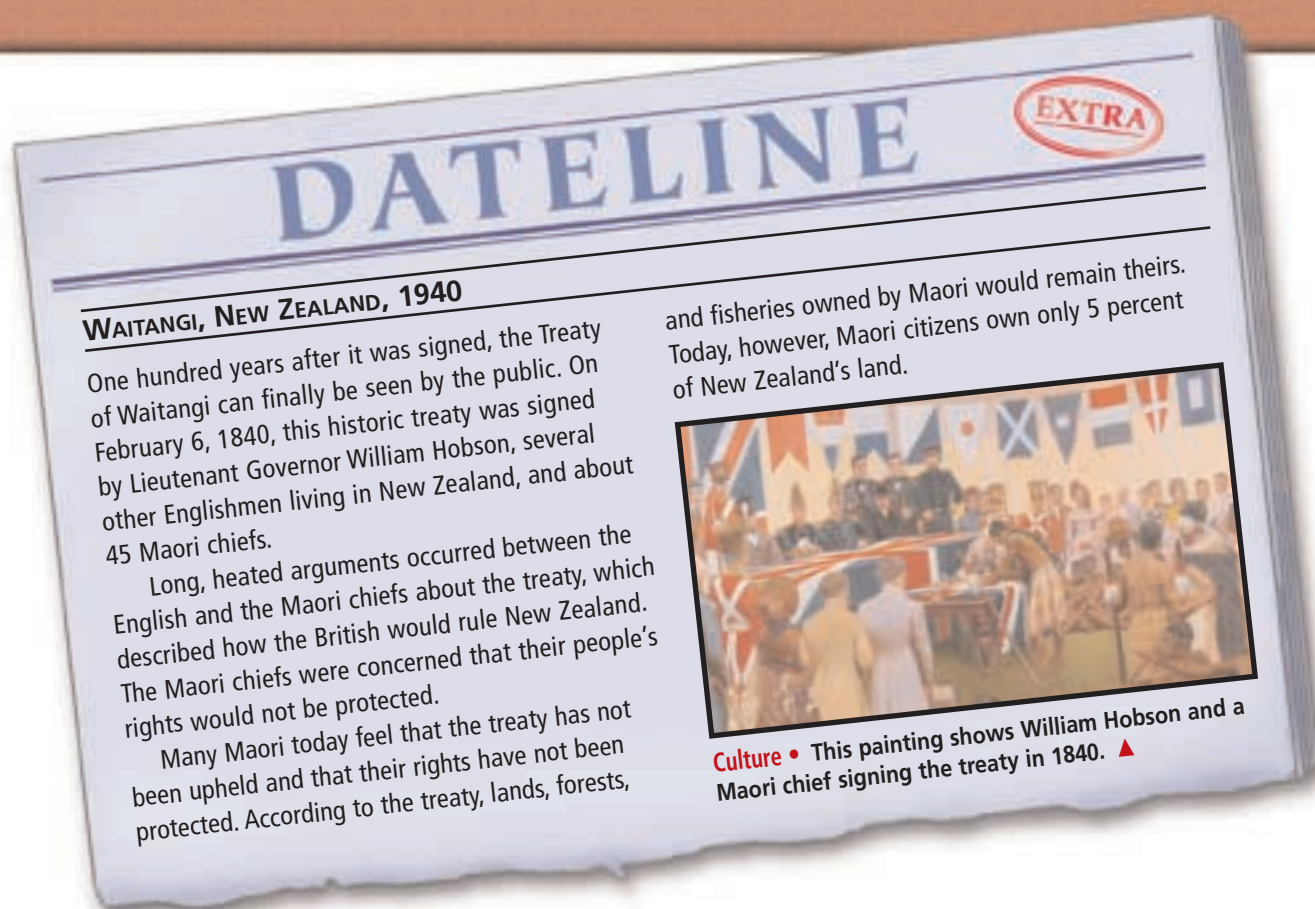
Maori  
Aborigine  
Melanesia  
Micronesia  
Polynesia  
Commonwealth of Nations

### MAIN IDEA

The nations of this region were first settled by people from nearby and later colonized by European nations.

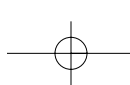
### WHY IT MATTERS NOW

In many nations today, different groups struggle for their rights and for the opportunity to rule.



## History of the Region

Long before the British arrived in New Zealand, the country's first settlers—the **Maori** (MOW•ree)—lived there. In fact, people inhabited many of the islands in the Pacific and Indian oceans for thousands of years before any Europeans arrived. Today, we know this region as Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands.



**Culture •** This Aborigine artist displays one of the paintings on tree bark for which his people are famous. ▲

## People of the Region

Australia's first inhabitants migrated there from Southeast Asia at least 40,000 years ago. Their descendants are called **Aborigines** (AB•uh•RIHJ•uh•neez). Settlers from Southeast Asia arrived in the Pacific Islands about 33,000 years ago. On the map on page 529, you can see the three regional groups of the Pacific—**Melanesia**, **Micronesia**, and **Polynesia**. Southeast Asians migrated first to Melanesia, then spread into Micronesia and finally Polynesia. About 1,000 years ago, Polynesians settled New Zealand. These settlers were the Maori.

### Reading Social Studies

#### A. Using Maps

Look at the maps on pages 460 and 529. Why do you think Southeast Asians settled the islands in the order they did?

**Island Life** Geography influenced which islands people settled. If an island had fresh water, wildlife, and vegetation, people settled there. If an island was too dry or too small, or lacked sources of food, it remained unpopulated.

Most of the early islanders fished or farmed. They also traded with nearby islanders. Because of the vast expanses of ocean, however, distinct languages and cultures developed over time.

**Europeans in the Pacific** In the 1500s, Europeans explored the Pacific for spices. In the 1600s and 1700s, missionaries and other settlers arrived. Some of them carried diseases, such as smallpox.



**Maori Carvings** The Maori have a long history of carving wood, stone, and bone. Many of the carvings are of human figures—either ancestors, gods, or characters from myths. Often, the carvings are found on items like canoes, weapons, and jewelry, though many also stand alone.

The most distinctive features of Maori carvings are the spiral patterns and seashells that decorate them, both of which you can see on the carvings shown here.

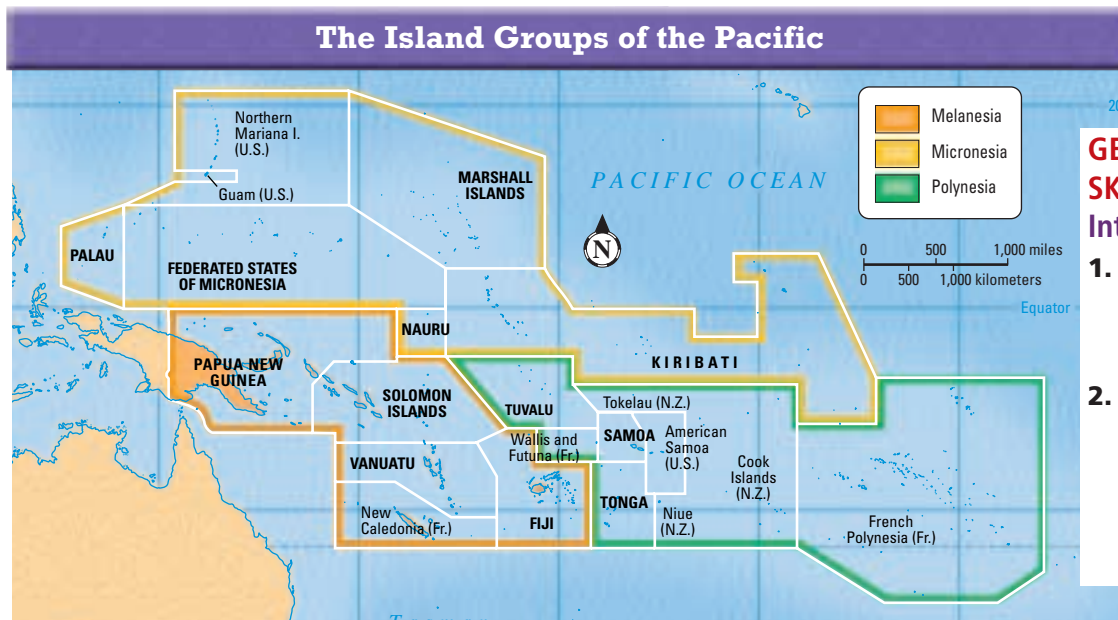


### THINKING CRITICALLY



- 1. Making Inferences** Think about the materials the Maori use in their carvings. How do you think these materials have helped to preserve their artwork?
- 2. Hypothesizing** What do you think might be the inspiration for the spiral patterns that the Maori use on their carvings?





### GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting a Map

- Location** • To which island group does Papua New Guinea belong?
- Movement** • To sail from French Polynesia to the Marshall Islands, in what direction would you travel?

Many of the native islanders died from these diseases. Some settlers also brought hardship upon the islanders by enslaving them.

Britain, France, Germany, Spain, the United States, and later Japan all established colonies in the Pacific. Since 1962, many islands have gained independence. Others are still colonies. For example, France governs New Caledonia, and the United States controls Guam.

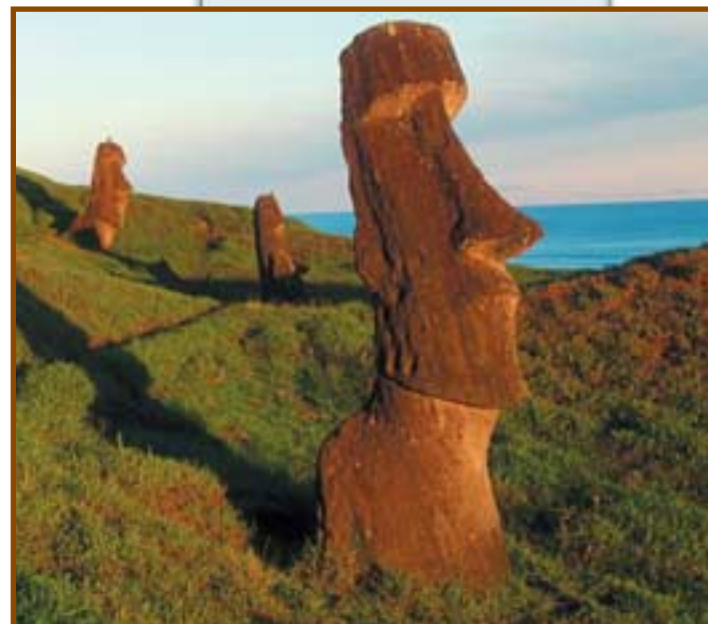
**Europeans in Australia and New Zealand** In the 1700s, Great Britain sent many people to Australia. Some were convicts who labored on farms, and others were free colonists. By 1859, six British colonies made up Australia. In 1901, these colonies became states of the Commonwealth of Australia.

In the 1790s, New Zealand was settled by whale hunters and traders from Great Britain, the United States, and France, as well as European missionaries and colonists. In 1840, the Maori and the British signed the Treaty of Waitangi, which gave control of New Zealand to Britain. New Zealand did not become a self-governing country until 1907.

### Strange but TRUE

**Mysterious Stone Statues** Far out in the Pacific, along the slopes of Easter Island, stands a strange sight. Giant stone heads peer out across the landscape. Hundreds more lie knocked down all across the island.

The island's early inhabitants carved these statues (shown below), which weigh up to 90 tons, out of the side of a volcano. How they moved the statues many miles to their present locations, however, is a mystery that may never be solved.





**Impact of European Settlement** When Europeans first came to Australia, as many as 750,000 Aborigines populated the continent. As more settlers arrived, Aborigines were forced into the country's interior. Today, only 1 percent of Australia's population is of Aborigine descent. Similarly, in New Zealand, only about 14 percent of the population today is of Maori descent.

## Governments

The governments of Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Island nations are quite varied. Some are democracies, some are monarchies, and some are ruled by other nations. Many countries have governments that resemble those of the nations that colonized them.

**Australia and New Zealand** Australia and New Zealand belong to the **Commonwealth of Nations**. This is a group of countries that were once British colonies and share a heritage of British law and government. Great Britain's monarch is their head of state but has no real power.

**The Pacific Islands** A few Pacific Islands still have official ties to various countries. For example, the United States is responsible for the defense of the Federated States of Micronesia, while the French Polynesians vote in French elections. Other islands rule themselves, such as Tonga, which is a constitutional monarchy.

### Reading Social Studies

#### B. Drawing Conclusions

What factors could explain why Aborigines are now such a small minority in Australia?

**Region •**  
This photo shows a selection of flags from the Pacific Islands. ▼



## SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT

### Terms & Names

- 1. Identify:**
- |                |               |                             |
|----------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| (a) Maori      | (b) Aborigine | (c) Melanesia               |
| (d) Micronesia | (e) Polynesia | (f) Commonwealth of Nations |

### Taking Notes

- 2.** Use a chart like this one to list and compare important details of the history of Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands.

	Australia	New Zealand	Pacific Islands
Early Inhabitants			
European Settlement			
Government Today			

### Main Ideas

- 3. (a)** Where did the earliest settlers of Australia and the Pacific Islands come from?
- (b)** List three reasons Europeans traveled to the region's islands.
- (c)** What do the governments of Australia and New Zealand have in common?

### Critical Thinking

#### 4. Summarizing

How did geography affect the region's settlement patterns?

#### Think About

- ♦ which islands the original settlers inhabited
- ♦ how the arrival of Europeans affected native populations

### ACTIVITY -OPTION-

Imagine that you were a Maori inhabitant of New Zealand. Write a **dialogue** between you and one of the European settlers.