



Uncovering the Ancient Pacific

Who were the first Pacific voyagers?



Our Learning Goals

By the end of this lesson, we will be able to:

- Describe the vast geography of the Pacific islands.
- Explain how Indigenous peoples first migrated across the ocean.
- Identify the Lapita people as ancestors of many Pacific societies.
- Recognise 'dentate-stamped' pottery and why it matters.
- Explore how navigation skills defined early Pacific mariners.



Key Vocabulary



Migration

Migration: people moving to settle elsewhere.



Ancestor

A person in your family from whom you are descended (like a great-grandparent).



Culture

Culture: beliefs, customs, arts, and way of life of a group.



Navigation

The skill of finding your way from one place to another, especially at sea.

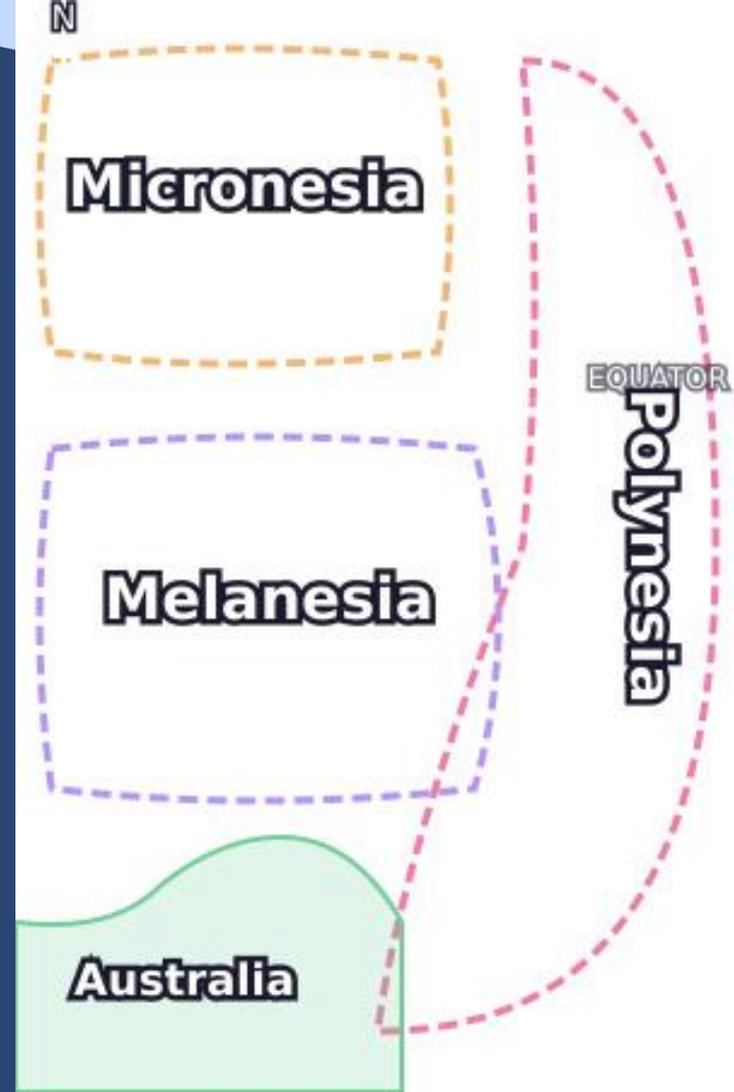
A Vast Ocean World

The Pacific Ocean is the largest and deepest ocean on Earth. It is so big that it covers about one-third of the entire surface of the planet!

The Three Regions

- **Melanesia** (near Australia)
- **Micronesia** (small islands)
- **Polynesia** (many islands, like New Zealand and Samoa)

Imagine looking out from a canoe and seeing nothing but water in every direction!



The Great Migration



Thousands of years ago, the first people set sail to explore this huge ocean. They didn't have motors or GPS.

How did they do it?

They built **double-hulled canoes** that were strong enough to handle big waves. They trusted their knowledge of the stars, the wind, and the ocean currents to guide them to new islands.

True or False



The first Pacific explorers used GPS and motor boats to find new islands.



TRUE



FALSE



Answers on the next slide...

True or False



The first Pacific explorers used GPS and motor boats to find new islands.



FALSE

False! They used amazing observation skills, reading the stars, waves, and wind to navigate their wooden canoes.



Meet the Lapita People

Around 3,000 years ago, a group known as the **Lapita** people began their journey.

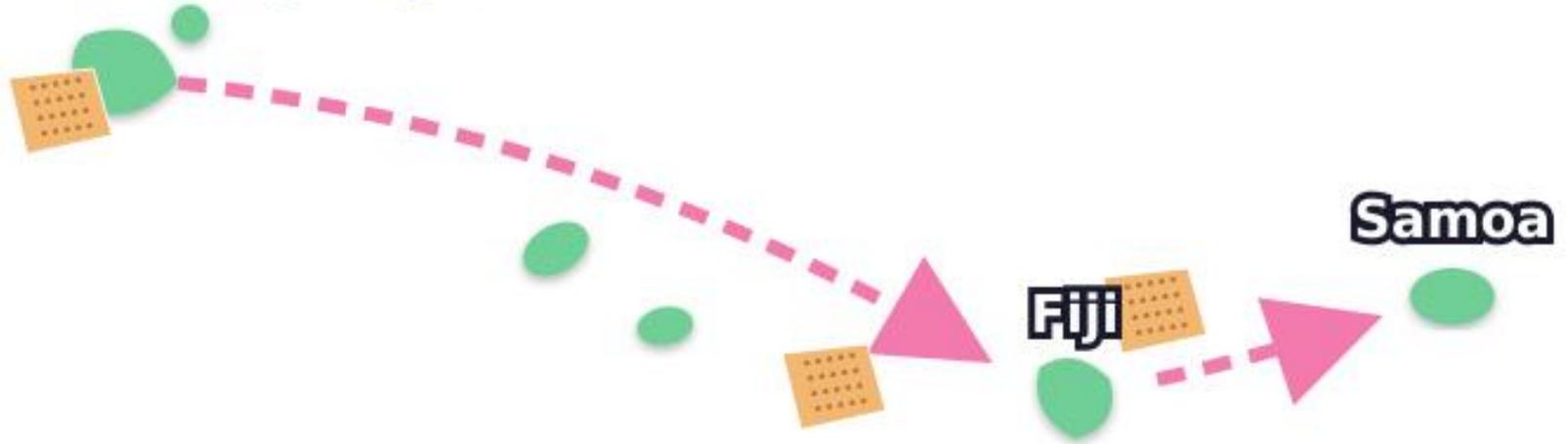
Who were they?

They were the first settlers to reach many remote islands. We call them the 'Lapita' because of the place where their special pottery was first found in New Caledonia. They are the ancestors of many modern Polynesian, Micronesian, and Melanesian peoples.



Tracking Lapita Pottery

Bismarck Archipelago

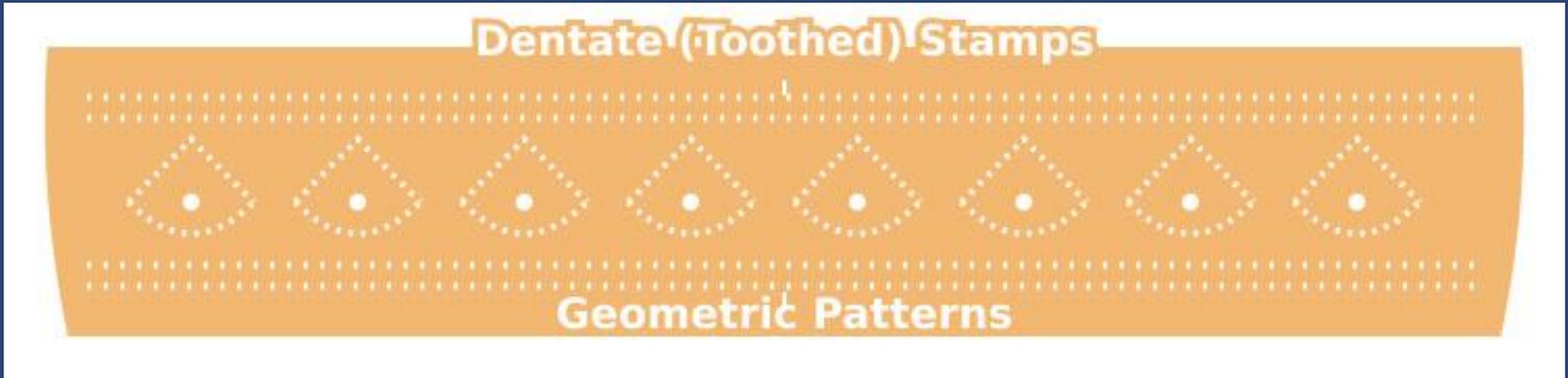


Lapita pottery shows the path of ancient voyagers

Dentate-Stamped Pottery



The Lapita people made beautiful, distinct pottery. The most famous feature is the 'dentate-stamped' pattern.



Archaeologists find these shards on different islands. By matching the patterns, they can track exactly where the Lapita travelled and settled.

Match the words with the pictures



1.

Lapita Pottery

a)



b)



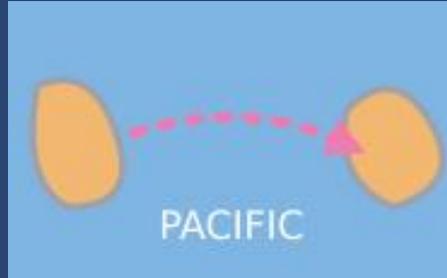
2.

Migration Route

3.

Double-hulled Canoe

c)



d)



4.

Navigating by Stars



Match the words with the pictures



b)



1.

Lapita Pottery

c)



2.

Migration Route

a)



3.

Double-hulled Canoe

d)



4.

Navigating by Stars

Master Mariners



Wayfaring (finding your way) wasn't just a skill—it was a huge part of their identity.

Navigating without Instruments

- **Star Paths:** Memorising which stars rise and set over specific islands.
- **Wave Patterns:** Feeling how ocean swells bounce off islands to locate land.
- **Birds:** Watching for seabirds that fly out to sea during the day but return to land at night.

This knowledge was passed down from generation to generation.

Discuss!



Let's Discuss

Lapita's identity was tied to navigation. Crossing vast oceans without tech would profoundly alter self-perception, fostering immense confidence and a deep connection to the natural world.

Discuss!



You might have said...

It showed they were brave, clever, and deeply connected to nature.

It required teamwork and trust in the community's knowledge.

It proved they belonged to the ocean and could master it.

Quick Check



Question 1:

What does the term 'migration' mean?

Question 2:

Who are the Lapita people ancestors of?

Question 3:

What special feature helps archaeologists track Lapita movement?



Answers on the next slide...

Quick Check



Answer 1:

Moving from one place to settle in another.

Answer 2:

Many Polynesian, Micronesian, and Melanesian societies.

Answer 3:

Dentate-stamped pottery patterns.



Summary

Today we learned how the first peoples of the Pacific were expert voyagers. The **Lapita culture** used their incredible navigation skills and distinct **pottery** to settle thousands of islands across the vast ocean. Their legacy lives on in the cultures of the Pacific today.

