



Tales of Ancient Worlds

A Stink at the Bank



Just to warn you here, this story is not for the faint heart!



In 1972, Lloyd's Bank wanted to build a new branch in the centre of York, in the UK. It is a very historic area of the city, full of charming timber-frame buildings and a huge medieval cathedral.



Archaeologists were called in to do a survey before construction could begin. As they dug down, they uncovered extremely old wooden planks. They had reached Viking York, or as the Vikings called it, Jorvik.



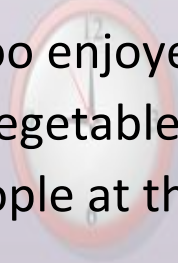
So many incredible friends were unearthed, including hundreds of thousands of pieces of pottery and Viking houses – enough finds to open a museum. But by far the most intriguing (and stinkiest), was a preserved Viking poo!



In archaeology, a preserved poo is known as a coprolite. This medieval chocolate log was an absolute belter, 20 cm (8 in) long! Obviously, this is a very funny discovery, and you might think the archaeologists were unhappy to find it, but nothing could be further from the truth. Archaeologists can learn a lot from this brown gold.



Because it's a natural substance, poo can be dated, allowing archaeologists to figure out the age of the site they're working on. It can also tell us a lot about ancient diets. The individual who deposited this poo enjoyed eating a lot of meat and bread but not so many vegetables. It can also tell us about the health of people at the time.



They Lloyds Bank coprolite contained hundreds of tiny, microscopic eggs, belonging to worms that can live inside your body.

Having worms inside you probably won't cause any major health problems but it can be painful when they leave your body. They can emerge from any hole, even the corner of your eye. Infestations like this were a regular problem for our ancestors in times when clean drinking water was hard to come by.

Who knew we could learn so much from this ancient deposit!



Explorers of the Pacific

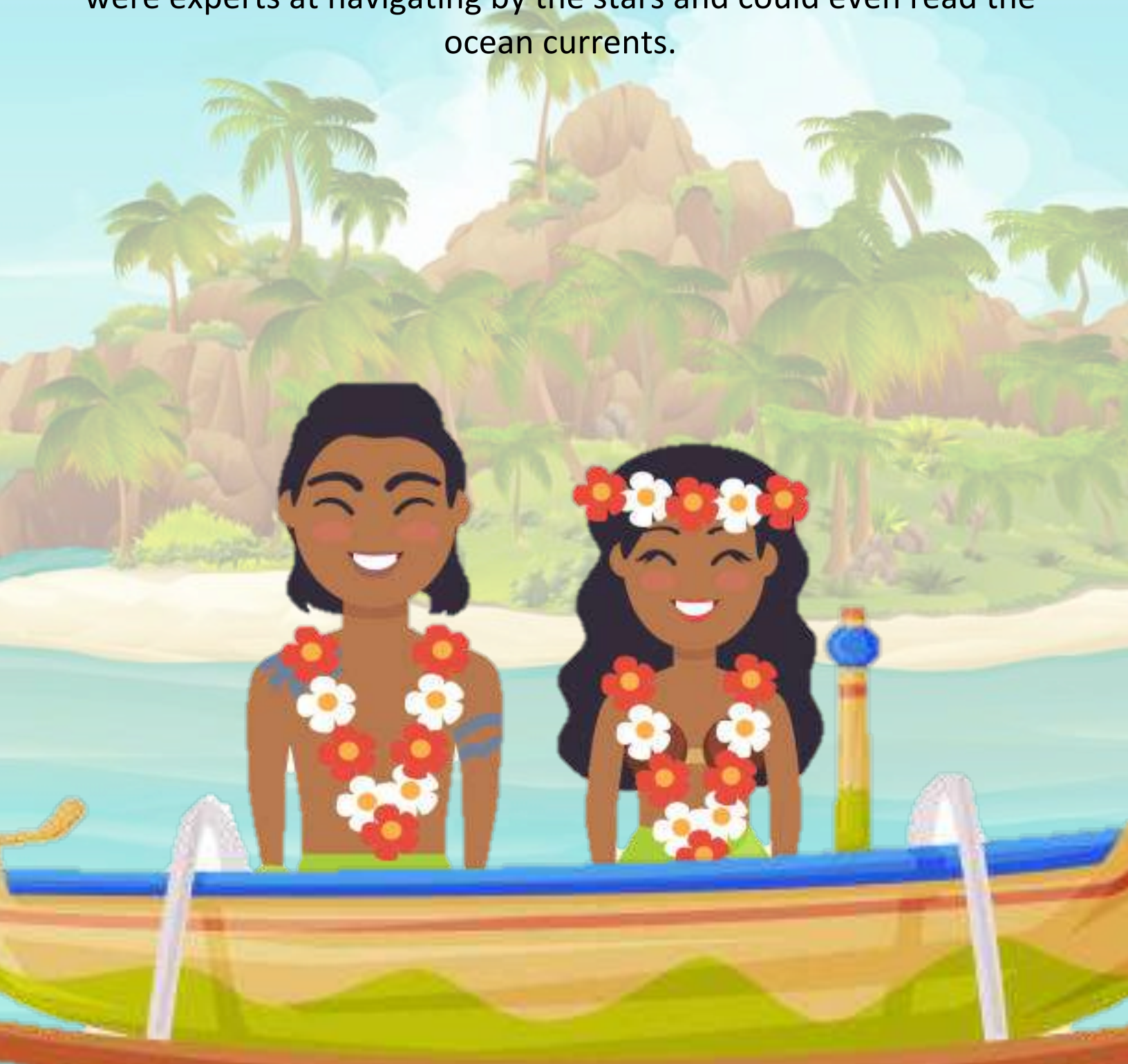


The Polynesians are the greatest maritime civilization in human history. No people have made the ocean their home quite like them. From New Zealand in the south to Hawaii in the north, the Polynesians are the original explorers of the Pacific Ocean – which takes up an incredible one-third of the entire world.



Canoe Life

Between the 1100s and 1200s, the Polynesians travelled between their island homes and large double hulled voyaging canoes. These were big enough to carry whole families as well as enough food and water for the journey. Polynesian sailors were experts at navigating by the stars and could even read the ocean currents.



Sea World

Apart from New Zealand, Polynesian mostly lived on hundreds of small Pacific islands. Some are close together, but many are extremely remote. The Polynesian triangle is marked by Hawaii in the north, New Zealand in the southwest, and Easter Island in the southeast. Each island has its own unique interpretation of Polynesian culture.



Journey Snacks

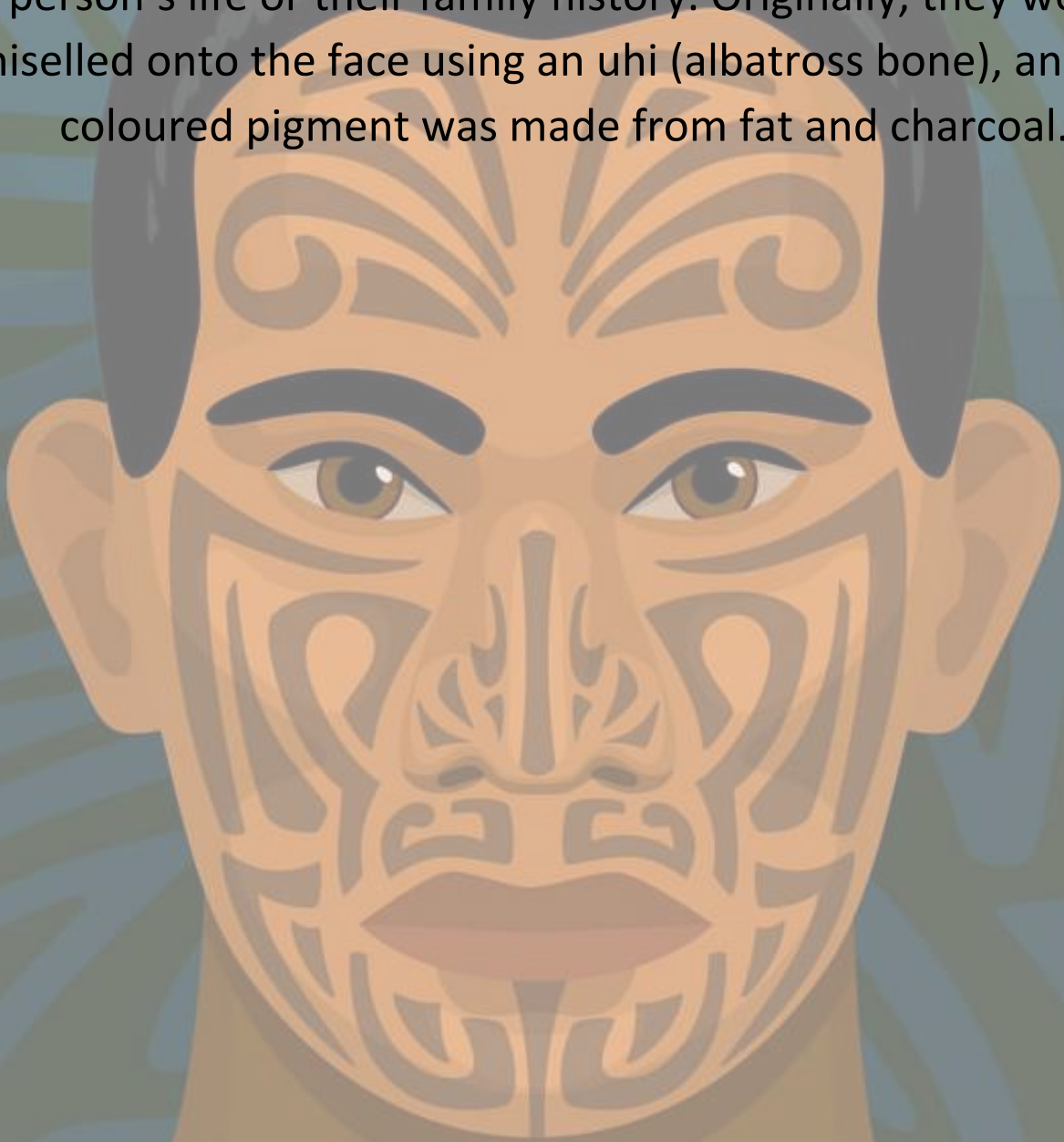
Food is important for any long journey at sea. The most important foods of Polynesian sailors were yams, sweet potatoes and pigs. The yams and potatoes could be turned into a fermented food called poi, which would keep fresh for the whole trip.



Tattoos

For many Polynesian people, tattoos are an important part of their identity. The Maori of New Zealand call tattoos moko.

Many of their designs represent a unique aspect of that person's life or their family history. Originally, they were chiselled onto the face using an uhi (albatross bone), and the coloured pigment was made from fat and charcoal.





THINK

DIGITAL ACADEMY