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**Auszug aus:**

*New Zealand - Geography, history, culture and tourism*

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**Titel:**

**Work sheet for applied geography  
New Zealand – Geography, history, culture  
and tourism**

**Bestellnummer:**

**Kurzvorstellung:**

- This work sheet provides general information about New Zealand, including geography, history, culture and tourism.
- Furthermore, the teaching aids offer basic knowledge about the Māori, New Zealand's indigenous people.
- The material includes creative tasks as well as solutions.

**Inhaltsübersicht:**

- Basic information
- The North and the South Island
- Biodiversity
- History
- Tourism
- Tasks
- Solutions and sources



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## New Zealand

### *Basic information*

New Zealand is a developed island country situated in the Pacific Ocean. As a relic from its times as a British colony, the country's Head of State is still Queen Elizabeth II. and the culture is predominantly „western“.

Since the distance to the nearest inhabited land comes to approximately 1.000 kilometres, New Zealand was one of the last countries to be settled by humans. The country consists of two main landmasses – the *North Island* and the *South Island* – surrounded by about 700 smaller islands. Along its north-north-east axis, New Zealand is about 1.600 kilometres long, whereas the maximum width amounts to approximately 450 kilometres<sup>1</sup>.

With only 4.4 million inhabitants, New Zealand has a low population density. Humans are outnumbered by sheep (about 50 million) on a massive scale<sup>2</sup>. The country is often referred to as “The Green Island“, because it is characterized by diverse places untouched by humans and covers 75 percent of its demand for electricity by using renewable energies. Agriculture and tourism play an important role for the country's economy.



New Zealand from Outer Space  
(commons.wikimedia.org)

### *The North and the South Island*

75% of New Zealand's inhabitants live on the North Island. The capital city *Wellington* is located there, as well as the largest city *Auckland* (“*the City of Sails*“). Wellington is an important cultural centre: it hosts New Zealand's film and theatre scene as well as its National Museum, *Te Papa Tongarewa*. The North Island, with its long and empty beaches (among them the famous *Ninety Mile Beach*), its high plains, huge forests, hill lands and volcanoes offers an extraordinarily diverse countryside.

The even less populated South Island also offers scenic attractions: the *Southern Alps*, a mountain range with 17 mountain tops over 3.000 m, runs 450 km from north to south. The highest mountain of New Zealand, *Mt. Cook* (3.754 m) is situated there. Some glaciers, such as the *Franz Josef Glacier*, descend to less than 300 metres above sea level, where they meet temperate rain forests<sup>3</sup>.

### *Biodiversity*

Because New Zealand was geographically isolated for more than 80 million years, the islands offer an outstanding biodiversity: many species of flora and fauna are endemic, which means that they do not appear anywhere else.

<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_Zealand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Zealand)

<sup>2</sup> <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuseeland#Bev.C3.B6lkerung>

<sup>3</sup> <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuseeland#Geographie>

When New Zealand was discovered by *Polynesians* in the 14th century, they neither found meat-eating mammals nor snakes. Because of the country's lack of predators, many species of flightless birds could evolve. The *Kiwi* is New Zealand's most famous flightless bird and one of the country's national symbols<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, New Zealanders even call themselves "Kiwis".

Nowadays, many endemic species are highly endangered or already extinct because early settlers brought rats, dogs and foxes with them. These invasive predators, together with manmade deforestation, had and still have a damaging impact on New Zealand's unique ecosystem. The first Polynesian settlers, whose descendants founded the *Māori* culture, already contributed to some species extinction – among the extinct animals is the flightless *Moa*, a bird that reached about 3,6 m in height with neck outstretched<sup>5</sup>.

### History

The *Māori*, the indigenous people of New Zealand, developed their unique culture, their own language and their rich mythology over several centuries in isolation. They gave their country the name "Aotearoa", which means "country of the long, white cloud"<sup>6</sup>. In 1642, the Dutch explorer *Abel Tasman* discovered the country, but it took another 130 years until the circumnavigation of New Zealand by British navigator *James Cook* proved that a new land was found. Within the following years, the first European settlers arrived and coexisted peacefully with the *Māori* at first. Between 1829 and 1835, conflicts between various tribes – equipped with European firearms – culminated in the *Musket Wars*. About 20.000 people died.



Sheep in New Zealand  
(commons.wikimedia.org)

In 1840, several *Māori* chiefs and representatives of the British Crown signed the *Treaty of Waitangi*. The Treaty gave Britain the right to govern New Zealand, whilst the *Māori* gained British citizenship, the promise of protection by the Crown and the promise that they could keep their land. Even though the British and the *Māori* versions of the Treaty are different and the agreements obscure, its signing is still considered as the nation's hour of birth.

The Waitangi Treaty was broken several times. When the British government sold *Māori* land to settlers without previous negotiations, the *New Zealand Wars* between the British government and *Māori* forces took place from 1845 to 1872. In the aftermath, large areas of land were confiscated by *Māori* tribes. The number of *Māori* people had been reduced from over 120.000 in 1820 to 44.000 in 1891. In the beginning of the 20th century, the *Māori* population recovered and the government supported their cultural revival. Even though some *Māori* still face social and economic problems, many efforts are made to include them into the "western" society and, at the same time, to protect their unique culture and language. Nowadays, about 565.000 *Māori* live in New Zealand. Their language *Te Reo Māori* is an official language and their old traditions such as *Tā moko*, (permanent body and face tattoos) as well as their famous *wood carvings* are very popular throughout the country<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kiwi>

<sup>5</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moa>

<sup>6</sup> <http://people.stthomasu.ca/~belyea/2003/Maori.htm>

<sup>7</sup> <http://history-nz.org/>

## Tasks

### 1. Fill the gaps with the words listed below:

playground / sports / The Lord of the Rings / zorbing / tourists / friendliness / countryside

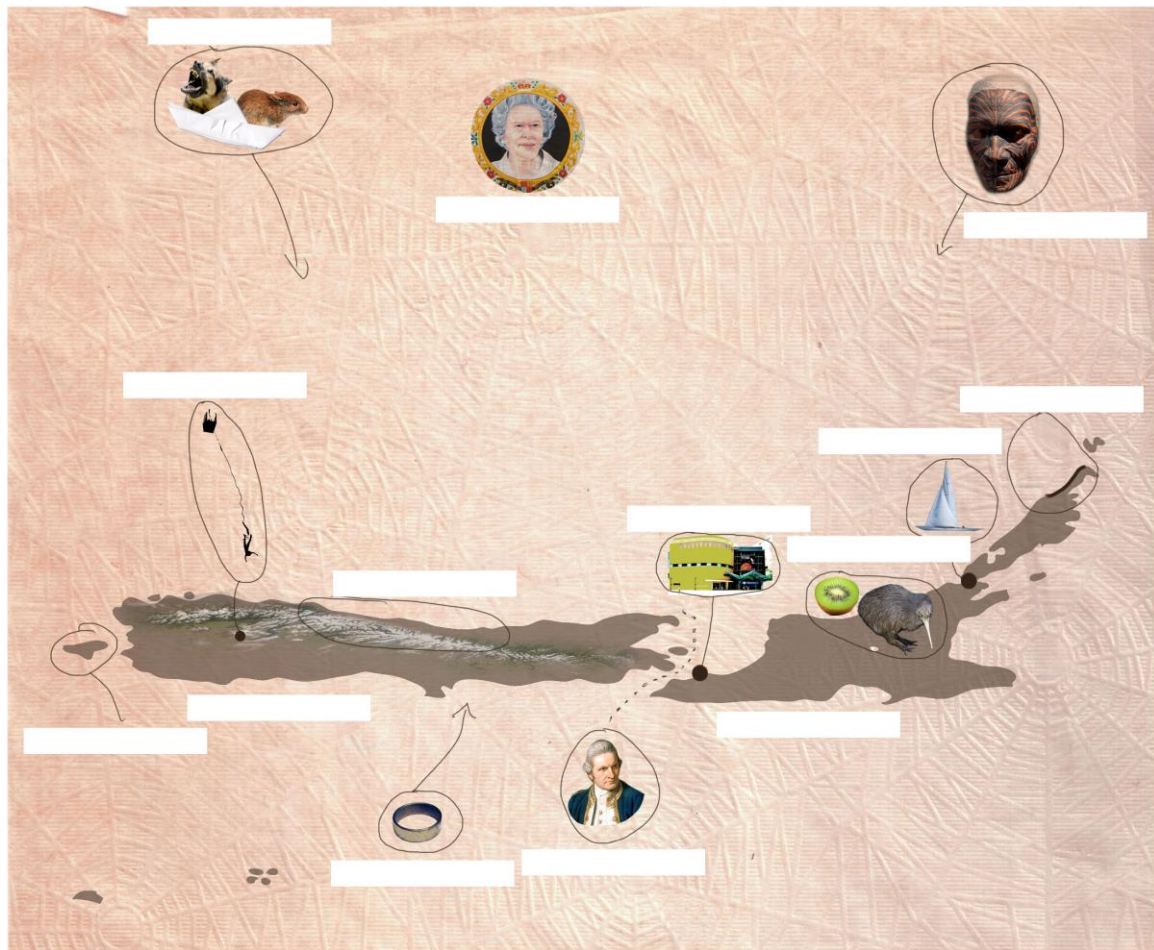
#### *Tourism*

The beautiful and varied \_\_\_\_\_ of New Zealand offers the possibility to practice various and sometimes extreme \_\_\_\_\_, such as bungee jumping, gliding, \_\_\_\_\_ (rolling downhill in an orb, made of transparent plastic), surfing and sailing. Bungee jumping was even invented in New Zealand (Queenstown).

Therefore, the country is often called a “clean, green adventure \_\_\_\_\_” “by foreigners. Along with the fact that New Zealand offers a good infrastructure for travelling; the sceneries, the different sports and the \_\_\_\_\_ New Zealanders are known for, attract many \_\_\_\_\_ from all around the world. Since the three episodes of \_\_\_\_\_ were shot in New Zealand, the country became even more popular for visitors.

### 2. Divide the class into two teams. One group represents the Māori who don't want their land to be confiscated. The other group represents the white settlers, who need new land. Discuss possible solutions to the conflict.

**3. Fill the gaps with the words listed below the picture.**



Fotos :Wikimedia Commons

Stewart Island	Cook Strait	Southern Alps	Wellington
Lord of the Rings	South Island	North Island	Queenstown
Auckland	Ninety Mile Beach	Māori	Head of State
			invasive predators



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