

Pre-1840 contact – activities for NCEA 3 History

See also [NZ in the 19th Century in the Classroom \(NZHistory.net.nz\)](http://NZHistory.net.nz)

A. Notes for the Secretary of State

The Colonial Office was responsible for determining British policy regarding its colonial possessions and the running of the British Empire. The Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, or Colonial Secretary, was the British Cabinet official in charge of managing the various British colonies.

Imagine that it is 1832. The Colonial Secretary has recently received a petition from 13 northern Maori chiefs asking King William IV for protection and recognition of their (Maori) special trade and missionary contacts with Britain. As an official working in the Colonial Office, you have been asked to prepare notes to assist in writing a Cabinet paper outlining why the government should tread very carefully as far as any intervention in New Zealand is concerned.

Using the category [Pre-1840 contact](#) and your own knowledge, complete the following tasks:

- The Secretary of State is looking for **at least four** strong arguments why Britain **should not** formally intervene in New Zealand.
- To help counter the criticism that the government might receive about past events in New Zealand that have harmed Maori, explain to the Secretary of State why these events are not something the Colonial Office needs to be greatly concerned about. The Secretary of State is a busy man with a big empire to worry about, so he is not interested in reading much more than a page of advice.
- Finally, explain to the Secretary of State your idea about appointing a British Resident to New Zealand. For practical reasons, you believe that this position would be best administered under the auspices of the government of New South Wales. Outline what this person would be expected to do and what the Colonial Office and the government of New South Wales could be expected to provide in terms of support. Once again keep your explanation to no more than a page

B. Busby's report

James Belich argues that many of the high-profile events of this early contact period were 'exaggerated and misinterpreted'. Attacks on property (muru) were more common and contributed to a sense of lawlessness. He flippantly described the European captain who aided the Ngati Toa attack on Ngai Tahu in 1830 as being 'no more than Te Rauparaha's taxi driver', maintaining that the level of Pakeha–Maori violence was dwarfed by the sum total of contact. 'There were perhaps one or two score of violent clashes, as against one or two thousand ship visits, and one or two hundred whaling, trading and mission

stations ... while the ruthless armies of the Musket Wars ranged the land, very few European stations were plundered, and virtually no Europeans seem to have been killed. As with Maori religious conversion, we have to invert our question. We have less to explain why there was so much Maori–European violence than wonder why there was so little' (James Belich, *Making peoples*, Penguin, Auckland, 1996, page 171).

James Busby, Britain's first Official Resident did not share this evaluation and believed matters in New Zealand were essentially out of control. Busby arrived in New Zealand in May 1833.

Imagine that it is late 1834. You are James Busby. Alarmed at the lack of support you are receiving from the Governor of New South Wales you have decided to write directly to James Stephen at the Colonial Office in London. Concerned with events in New Zealand as highlighted by the recent *Harriet* affair you want to explain to the Colonial Office what you mean by your description of 'frontier chaos' in New Zealand. More importantly you want to outline what you believe needs to happen in New Zealand to improve this situation.

You have 350 words to describe the situation in New Zealand as you see it and what you believe should be done to improve the situation.

C. Paragraph writing

Essay writing is an important skill to develop in history and two of the achievement standards in the external exams require you to write essays. The foundation to a good essay is joining sentences together as coherent paragraphs that tackle different parts of the essay question. A good essay must have good paragraphs.

A paragraph mirrors the structure of an essay. In marking it is common to skim read an essay first and look for signs that you have understood the question and that the material in front of the marker is relevant. Markers will look at your essay more closely after this initial reading, but anything you can do to create a positive first impression will help.

Each key or new idea in your essay must be a new paragraph. A marker needs to be able to see quite clearly where each idea begins and ends. It is sometimes helpful to think of a paragraph as having a set layout:

- Begin with a sentence that outlines what the paragraph is about.
- Write sentences to support the topic of the paragraph.
- End with a sentence that concludes the paragraph.

Developing good essay-writing skills involves developing good paragraph-writing skills. Think, ultimately, of your essay as being a collection of relevant paragraphs on a set topic.

1. Write a paragraph of several sentences in which you describe the main characteristics of contact between Maori and Europeans before 1835.

2. Write a paragraph outlining what opportunities were created for interaction between Maori and Pakeha before 1835.

D. Doing God's work

The missionaries are portrayed as being the main 'agents of contact' in the pre-Treaty period, but this is perhaps because they dominated the written evidence of this time. The entry on Marsden in the *Dictionary of New Zealand biography* claims that he 'greatly hastened the conversion of Maori' and that Britain's intervention that saved New Zealand from 'anarchy' was 'in large measure due to the apostolic labours of Samuel Marsden'. James Belich concedes that while the efforts of the missionaries should not be derided, we must be careful not to overstate their case.

Belich describes the process by which Maori selected, on their terms, which aspects of European contact they would adopt and which they would reject. How they responded and adapted to new ideas is another example of what has been described as Maori agency or, as Giselle Byrnes described it, dual agency – the blending or mixing of two worlds according to Maori criteria. Maori decided how they would use things like new ideas and technologies. This is an important distinction because it meant that Maori were not passive in their interaction as had been previously assumed by historians.

The missionary Henry Williams believed that too much time and energy had been devoted to teaching 'useful arts and agriculture' as a prelude to conversion. He wanted the mission to spend more time on spiritual teaching. Anne Salmond's description of a Sunday visit made by Thomas Kendall and William Hall to Te Puna at Rangihoua in June 1814 perhaps highlights what Henry Williams meant. Maori wanted to trade with the CMS men but were told that it was a sacred day and there could be no barter. This was a day of rest and prayer. Hall then told the gathered Maori how he and Kendall loved the Maori very much and how they would:

come and live with them and bring our wives and families if they would not injure them, and I told them I was a Carpenter and that I would build them large houses and fine canoes, and they seemed very much pleased with the Idea and expressed their joy by saying, "Nuee nuee rungateeda pakeha" – a very great Gentleman white man [another early northern use of the term Pakeha]. Kendall also invited some of the children to travel to Port Jackson in order to read books and to see Mr Marsden, who was well known in the Bay.

Anne Salmond, *Between worlds: early exchanges between Maori and Europeans, 1773–1815*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1997, page 436.

1. Based on Kendall and Hall's visit to Te Puna how did the missionaries plan to establish a relationship with Maori?
2. Imagine you are Samuel Marsden. It is mid-1814. In a letter to Thomas Kendall explain why you believe it is important to teach Maori 'useful arts and agriculture' in order to prepare them for conversion.
3. Now imagine you are Henry Williams. In a letter to Samuel Marsden explain why you have decided to place a greater emphasis on teaching

Maori scripture as opposed to teaching them 'useful arts and agriculture' as a prelude to conversion.

4. Why was there competition among Maori for access to missionaries?
5. Why did Maori become increasingly interested in the printed word and literacy?
6. What specific problems did the missionaries encounter in establishing themselves in New Zealand?
7. Why were some of the CMS workers involved in trading muskets with Maori?
8. Why would the need for a Maori patron have been a bitter pill to swallow for many missionary workers?
9. To what extent do you believe that the Christian missionaries were 'agents of virtue in a world of vice'?
10. In your opinion did Samuel Marsden save New Zealand from anarchy?
11. Why did few, if any, Maori convert to Christianity before 1830?
12. What were the key similarities **and** differences between the missionaries and other Europeans that Maori encountered in the period before the Treaty of Waitangi?

E. The exception not the rule

In the period before 1840 there were a number of high-profile incidents involving violence between Maori and Pakeha that contributed to a sense that New Zealand was a violent and dangerous place. This perception has been challenged by some historians who argued that these events were newsworthy because they were exceptional events. There were many more interactions between the races that were conducted peacefully if for no other reason than it made sense from a business perspective.

Using the feature [Frontier of chaos?](#) and your own knowledge and ideas, complete the following activities.

1. Investigation into the *Boyd* incident

Imagine you are a representative of the Governor of New South Wales investigating the demise of the *Boyd* and most of its crew at Whangaroa, 1809. A year has passed since the attack. You have visited the area. You have also interviewed a number of survivors, including Thom Davis and Ann Morley as well as some of the crew from the *City of Edinburgh* who had taken part in reprisals against those they held responsible for this incident. With the help of an interpreter you have spoken to local Maori who were involved in the attack on the *Boyd* and subsequent actions.

In your report you have been asked to:

- Outline the course of events for the governor, i.e., what happened.
- Describe the role that you believe traditional Maori practices and beliefs played in the events at Whangaroa.
- Outline what, if any, action should be taken against those Europeans involved in the reprisals against Maori in relation to the *Boyd* incident.
- Recommend what action should be taken by the government of New South Wales about this incident. Be prepared to justify your recommendations. The governor is keen to avoid a repetition of such events, so your recommendations should consider this.

2. What were the main consequences of the Boyd incident as far as European contact with New Zealand was concerned?
3. In a paragraph, of six to eight sentences, outline how the actions of Captain Stewart contributed to James Busby's analysis that New Zealand was an example of 'extreme frontier chaos'.
4. On what basis could British authorities justify taking the 'it's not our problem/responsibility' line with regards to the actions of men like Captain Stewart? Explain your answer.
5. In a couple of paragraphs, of between six and eight lines, outline whether or not you agree with the assertion that violence between Maori and Pakeha attracted great attention because it was the exception and not the rule. To what extent were events like those outlined in this feature 'exaggerated and misinterpreted'?

F. Practice essays

Remember structure is important

- A good essay must have good paragraphs.
- Each key or new idea in your essay must be a new paragraph.
- Think of a paragraph as having a set layout:
 - a sentence that outlines what the paragraph is about
 - sentences to support the topic of the paragraph
 - a sentence to conclude the paragraph.
- Use the structure outlined below to help you write your answer.

Introduction – your opening paragraph should:

- identify the decision you have chosen to examine AND
- introduce your argument about the significance of this decision.

Body - write structured and sequenced paragraphs that:

- describe a significant decision made by people and the historical context in which that decision was made
- describe and explain factors that contributed to this decision being made
- evaluate the consequences of this decision
- describe and evaluate views of this decision by contemporary commentators and/or historians.

Conclusion - write a concluding paragraph that sums up your main ideas and argument and links them back to the focus of the essay.
You should aim to write about 800-1000 words.

3.4 examine a significant decision made by people in history, in an essay

In 19th-century New Zealand there were a number of significant decisions made that affected people living here. Between 1814 and 1838 a number of Christian missions were established. The decision to bring Christianity to Maori had a number of significant consequences for Maori and Europeans alike.

What factors led to the establishment of the Christian missions in New Zealand between 1814 and 1838? What were the consequences of the establishment of these missions for both the missionaries and Maori?

For more detail on this achievement standard and criteria open [this Word document from the NZQA site](#).

3.5 examine a significant historical situation in the context of change, in an essay

So it was that Europeans came to New Zealand for flax, timber and whales; seals, sex and souls. They came in numbers that dwarfed those of the exploring expeditions, and they were much more important direct agents of contact with Maori. The hybrid world this interaction created, 'Old New Zealand' in Frederick Maning's nicely ambiguous phrase, began in the 1790s and survived for many years after 1840, until it was eventually swamped by new tides of settlement. The missionaries were fewest but had the busiest pens, and they divided this wave of Europeans into two: themselves, the agents of virtue; and almost everyone else, the agents of vice, who very often came from Australia.

James Belich *Making peoples*, Penguin, Auckland, 1996

Describe developments that occurred during the early period of contact between Maori and Europeans (1800–1835). Evaluate the ways in which this contact influenced the lives of people living in New Zealand at this time.

For more detail on this achievement standard and criteria open [this Word document from the NZQA site](#).