

Europeans thought that the double hulled waka was a fishing platform. Up until the 1970's European academics did not believe that this kind of boat could safely and accurately sail people across the vast Pacific ocean, centuries before famed European explorer Christopher Columbus.



The double hulled waka was created in Polynesia and used by islanders to travel across the Pacific. Two hollowed out trees would be **lashed** together and a woven flax sail would be used to catch the wind. Many people, plants and animals could be transported **safely** and quite quickly this way. A trip from Rarotonga in the Cook Islands to New Zealand would only take a few weeks.

The waka was stable but it still needed a very skilled captain. Polynesian explorers like Kupe could read the night sky and travel by the movement of the stars. They also read sea swells which gave them clues as to the direction they needed to take.

Questions (look in the text for highlight clues!)

- 1) What were three (3) things that could be transported **safely** on a double hulled waka?
- 2) What did **Europeans** first think was the main use of the double hulled waka?
- 3) How long would a usual trip take for a double hulled waka to travel from Rarotonga to New Zealand?
- 4) What part of the boat was used to catch and produce wind power?
 - a) The double hulls.
 - b) The hollowed out tree length.
 - c) The woven flax sail.
- 5) What two things did Polynesian sea captains need to be able to do well to get their boat safely to their destination?
- 6) Why do you believe that European academics could not believe that the Polynesian explorers had sailed double hulled wakas so accurately?

Māori origins, voyaging and adaptation
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New Words (look in the text for highlight clues!)

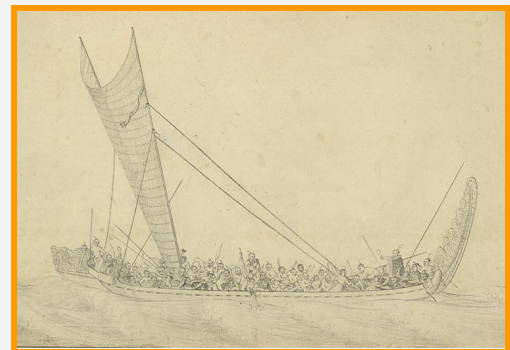
What do you think the word **lashed** means in the story? Read the sentence. Does it mean:

- a) Hit with branches.
- b) Inspected carefully.
- c) Tied together.

Naming Words (Nouns)

For each sentence find the naming word. This is usually a person, place or object.

- 1) The rats were hungry.
- 2) The double hulled waka is over 800 years old.
- 3) The stars were an effective way to navigate..



This sketch of a Māori double hulled waka was completed by a member of Captain Cook's crew in 1769, on his first voyage to New Zealand.