

Have you ever wondered why the Treaty of Waitangi is such an odd shape? The original treaty (one of nine copies) was **signed** in 1840 between Māori chiefs and the British Crown. It looked quite different to the one that New Zealanders view today as our founding document.

For many years the treaty was stored in a cupboard, forgotten by everyone. Those that discovered it first were not human. They were rats! The treaty was made from dried animal skin. The chance to **taste** this was too much for the rats so for many years they chewed around the edges.

When the treaty was discovered, people tried to fix it by cutting off parts chewed by the rats. The treaty is now cared for by Archives New Zealand who treat it as the most important document in our history. There is no way that rats could ever get another taste of the Treaty of Waitangi!



Questions (look in the text for highlight clues!)

- 1) Which two groups **signed** the treaty?
- 2) Give two reasons why the treaty we know today looks so different to the one signed in 1840?
- 3) Why was the treaty so **tasty** for rats?
- 4) Who looks after the treaty today?
 - a) The British Crown
 - b) Archives New Zealand
 - c) Māori tribes
- 5) Why do you think that there were nine copies of the Treaty of Waitangi?
- 6) “*The Treaty of Waitangi is a very important part of modern New Zealand.*”
Find a piece of evidence from the story that shows this statement to be true.

New Words (look in the text for highlight clues!)

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

- a) The document was discovered.
- b) It was the first document.
- c) It was signed by both groups.

Describing an Action Word (Adverbs)

For each sentence find the word that describes an action.

- 1) Rats quickly ate the treaty.
- 2) The treaty is looked after carefully.
- 3) The chief quickly signed his name.

Opinion

Can you think of a reason why our country’s ‘founding document’, the treaty, was forgotten by everyone?

