



Caert van't Landt van
uyt de Journalen ende
der Stierluyden t'lan
A^o 1627

Bij Hessel Ger
Met Octroy van
H. M. H. de Staten G
vereenighde Neder

Dirk Hartog 1616 - 2016

LEARNING SEQUENCE 1: Dutch traders and Australia

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LEARNING SEQUENCE 1: Dutch traders and Australia

This series of suggested activities aims to build curiosity and motivate students to begin to ask questions about the Dutch interest in Western Australia during the 1600s. This sequence of activities will also build the context for Dirk Hartog's arrival on the Western Australian coast in 1616.

Activity 1 The pewter plate

i. To stimulate the children's curiosity and initiate questions on the topic an image of the pewter plate, left by Dirk Hartog in 1616, could be the focus of a Visible Thinking routine "See, Think, Wonder". Information on this thinking routine can be found at the following website:

http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org/VisibleThinking_html_files/03_ThinkingRoutines/03c_Core_routines/SeeThinkWonder/SeeThinkWonderRoutine.html



Photo: P. Baker © Western Australian Museum

Courtesy of the WA Museum

This pewter plate with a message written in Dutch was left on an island off the west coast of Australia in 1616. The message and its English translation are provided below.

“1616 DEN 25 OCTOBER IS HIER AEN GECOMEN HET SCHIP DEENDRAGHT VAN AMSTERDAM DE OPPERKOPMAN GILLIS MIBAIS VAN LVIK SCHIPPER DIRCK HATICHS VAN AMSTERDAM DE 27 DITO TE SEIL GEGHM NA BANTVM DE ONDERKOPMAN JAN STINS DE OPPERSTVIERMAN PIETER DOOKES VAN BIL ANNO 1616”

Translation “1616 THE 25 OCTOBER IS HERE ARRIVED THE SHIP EENDRAGHT [Eendracht] OF AMSTERDAM THE UPPERMERCHANT GILLIS MIEBAIS OF LIEGE SKIPPER DIRCK HATICHS [Dirk Hartog] OF AMSTERDAM. THE 27 [October] (we) SET SAIL FOR BANTUM [Bantam] THE UNDERMERCHANT JAN STINS, THE FIRST MATE PIETER DOOKES VAN BIL. ANNO 1616”

Website: <http://museum.wa.gov.au/research/research-areas/maritime-archaeology/batavia-cape-inscription/cape-inscription/hartog>

Using the See, Think, Wonder routine students can be asked by the teacher:

What do you see?

What do you think about the plate?

What does it make you wonder?

ii. The sequence of questions are shared with the whole class and student responses to “What does it make you wonder?” are recorded on the whiteboard, or on coloured paper to create a “Wonder Wall”. As a result of this routine the students will initiate many questions. Some of these could include:

- What is pewter?
- Where did the plate come from?
- Why did they leave the plate?
- Who were these people?
- Who was Dirk Hartog?
- Why is his name spelt in different ways?
- What was an Uppermerchant and an Undermerchant?
- In what country is Amsterdam?
- Why were they on the island?
- Who did they meet on the island?
- What sort of ship was the *Eendracht*?
- Why was the Uppermerchant listed before the Skipper (captain of the ship)?
- Why did they sail to Bantam?
- Where is Bantam?
- Why did they have a base in Bantam?
- How did the plate survive for 400 years?

iii. Focussing on the students’ questions will provide the opportunity for them to undertake a short online research task on one of their “wonderings”. This can be conducted in pairs and the students will be encouraged to write out an answer to the question, define any new terms and write new questions that have been generated by their research.

New questions which emerge may include:

What was the VOC? Why were the spices so important? Were there other Spice Islands? What was an East India ship? What was a *retourschip*? What trade occurred between Europe and Asia and between Asian countries? What was the Brouwer route taken by some Dutch ships at this time? Why didn’t Dutch ships stay clear of the reefs and islands on the Western Australian coast? Why did Australia have so many names: *Terra Australis Incognita*, Southland, ‘Eendracht’s Land’, New Holland?

A [vocabulary list](#) has been developed to support this activity.

Conclude the session by posing two key questions:

1. Why were the Spice Islands important to the Dutch during the 1600s?

What spices are found in your kitchen at home? Ask mum or dad about how many you have at home and what they use them for.

2. What route from Holland did captains like Hartog use to sail from Europe to Asia?

Why did they come near the Western Australian coast?

Activity 2 The sweet smell of spices

- i. Discuss what the children learnt at home about spices - brainstorm the range of spices in their homes and some uses. You could bring packets of cloves, pepper, whole nutmegs and cinnamon sticks to class and provide the children with opportunities to smell, taste and feel the spices. You could bring foods which include some of these spices, or recipes to read.
- ii. Return to the first focus question:

Why were the Spice Islands important to the Dutch during the 1600s?

Why were spices important to the European people?

Discuss reasons for buying spices and why in the days before refrigeration spices may have been in high demand (A little Economics could be introduced here: If demand for a product is high and the supply of a product is low, then the price of that item is usually very high). How was food kept from going off before refrigeration was invented? You could briefly discuss drying, salting and pickling to preserve food. These websites will be helpful.

http://historymedren.about.com/od/foodandfamine/a/food_preservation.htm

<http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/trading/fact/spices/7spices.html>



Cinnamon, nutmeg and pepper were sources of great wealth for Dutch traders during the 17th and 18th centuries

Brainstorm some of the uses of spices in the era when food was highly salted or pickled.

- Many believed they had medicinal qualities. Nutmeg was said to warm up the body and to protect people from the plague, as well as treat arthritis and aches.
 - Because they were rare some people saw them as a sign of wealth.
 - Pepper and cinnamon helped to make salted and dried food taste better.
 - Pepper and cloves helped in preserving food.
 - They were exotic as they came from across the globe.
- iii. Hard tack or ship's biscuits were commonly used on the Dutch trading ships during the seventeenth century. You might like to make them for your class (to have with warmed milk or hot chocolate) or encourage some parents to bake them - making different batches with nutmeg, cinnamon, pepper or a few cloves. This website provides a recipe.

<http://www.thedearsurprise.com/how-to-make-and-eat-hardtack/>

During the early 1500s Portuguese traders brought spices to Europe from the Banda islands in the East Indies (now Indonesia). They made lots of money by selling these spices in markets across Europe. Nutmeg was grown on just a few Islands in the Spice Islands and was seen as very rare. From the 1590s Dutch traders began to compete with the Portuguese to buy these spices from local people in the East Indies.

2. What route did the Dutch take to sail to the Spice Islands?



The Dutch ship *De Eendracht* attacks a catamaran in the Southern Pacific. ([wikimedia commons](#))

The Dutch initially followed the Portuguese trading route that veered north from the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa to India and then east to the Spice Islands. However, there were problems with pirates off the African coast, the winds were not always reliable, or strong, and the tropical heat that caused diseases and the food to spoil. In 1611 the Dutch explorer Henrick Brouwer established another route, after leaving South Africa, ships would sail to around 40 degrees south, and sail this route east for approximately 7,300km (1000 mijlen) and then turn north and sail towards Java. Because this route halved the travelling time from Africa to Java, the United East India Company (VOC) ordered all trading ships to sail the Brouwer Route after 1617.

Mapping activity

See maps showing the Brouwer Route at the sites provided below. Students could map this route on a blank map, then locate and clearly mark the following places on the map:

- Holland (the Netherlands),
- South Africa,
- the west coast of Australia,
- Asian countries that the Dutch traded with by the mid 1600s: India (Malabar) and Ceylon (now called Sri Lanka), Batavia (now called Java), locations near Java - Moluccas, Malacca, Makassar, Kupang, China - Formosa (Taiwan) and Japan - Deshima (Dejima, a small island southwest of the Island of Kyushu).

Students could then illustrate their map with images of spices and other products that the Dutch traded in the East Indies. Alternatively, maps could be copied and distributed on an A3 sheet and completed by pairs or groups of three students and then displayed around the room.

<http://www.lifeonperth.com/dutchshipwrecks.htm>

scroll down to the map found under the heading “Why were so many Dutch ships wrecked on the Western Australian coastline?”

<http://museum.wa.gov.au/about/latest-news/problem-longitude-relation-discovery-australia>

(the map on this page is more detailed than the others and could be used as an outline for the student map, although the printing is not very clear)

<http://www.sharkbay.org.au/shark-bays-history-european-history-shipwrecks-zuytdorp.aspx>

(Hartog took the same route as the skipper of the *Zuytdorp* but *Eendracht* sighted the coast during the day and was able to anchor and investigate the land. The *Zuytdorp* hit a reef close to the coast and sank.)

What were the advantages of the new route? This solution created other problems. When to turn north? How did technology of the 1600s influence sea travel? Students could find out what the following terms mean: latitude, longitude, dead reckoning, an astrolabe, a chronometer.