

Country of the Week: New Zealand

New Zealand is an island nation in the Pacific Ocean.

BASIC New Zealand is made up of two large islands and many smaller ones. Most people live on the North Island, which is where New Zealand's capital city is located. **What is the capital?** (*Wellington.*) Auckland is the largest city and is also located on the North Island. Here you see a main street in Auckland. **What do you notice about this city?** Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern is the youngest female head of government in the world.

The North Island is home to many active volcanoes, including Mt. Ruapehu, which you see behind the green hills here. The North Island also has long sandy beaches. The South Island is mostly covered in

mountains. Many of the animals in New Zealand are not found anywhere else in the world. The kiwi, a flightless bird, is a symbol of the country. It has a long beak and short legs, and lays the largest eggs compared to its body of any bird in the world. **What animals are on these hills?** (*Sheep.*) Wool used to be New Zealand's main product, but today, tourism, mining, and dairy products are also important. Still, there are about 27 million sheep in New Zealand! NEXT



GENERAL New Zealand is made up of two main islands and many smaller islands. It is located southeast of Australia in the Pacific Ocean. Three-fourths of the country's 5 million people live on the North Island, which is also where the capital is. **What city is this?** (*Wellington.*) The largest city is Auckland, which is also on North Island. **What can you tell about Auckland from this picture?**

Although it is a small country, New Zealand has a very diverse environment. The South Island is larger than the North, and is mostly mountainous. The North Island has miles of sandy beaches and many volcanoes. The highest point on the North Island is Mt. Ruapehu, an active volcano, which you can see in the background of this photo of the countryside. **What animals do you see?** (*Sheep.*) Wool was once the country's

main product. There are still about six sheep for every person in New Zealand. Today, dairy products are the country's biggest export. The country also attracts millions of tourists each year, mostly from Australia. Many of the plants and animals are endemic, which means they are found nowhere else in the world. Many of the birds, like the kiwi, cannot fly. **Why do you think this is?** (*They had no natural predators and did not need to fly to escape.*) The kiwi is a national symbol and also a nickname for a person from New Zealand.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern took office in 2017. She is 37 years old, making her the youngest female world leader. Earlier this year, Ardern gave birth to a daughter, becoming only the second head of government to have a baby while in office. NEXT

ADVANCED New Zealand is the southernmost nation in Oceania. It is comprised of two large islands and about 600 smaller ones in the Pacific Ocean, about 1,200 miles southeast of Australia. About 75 percent of its 4.9 million people live on the North Island. New Zealand sits on two tectonic plates. There is a large volcanic plateau in the center of the North Island. This photo shows the countryside, with Mt. Ruapehu, an active volcano, in the background. The South Island is larger and mostly mountainous. New Zealand has few native land mammals, but many endemic plant and bird species. **Why is this?** (*Its remote location led many species to evolve independently.*) A flightless bird is a symbol of the country and a nickname for the people of New Zealand. **What is this bird?** (*The kiwi.*)

Wool was once the country's most important product, but today New Zealand has a diversified economy. Manufacturing, mining, dairy exports, and tourism are all important sectors. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern was elected in 2017. She is the world's youngest female head of state. This year, she became the second world leader ever to give birth while in office. **Do you think Ardern is held to a different standard than a man in her position?**

New Zealand's capital is Wellington. But about a third of the population lives in the largest city. **What is it?** (*Auckland.*) Auckland is ranked one of the world's most liveable cities. New Zealand is known for its progressive policies. In 1893, it became the first country in the world to give women the right to vote. **Why do you think New Zealand did this?** NEXT

Country of the Week: New Zealand (cont'd)

The Māori first settled in New Zealand about 700 years ago.

BASIC The Māori were the first people in New Zealand. They arrived from other islands in the Pacific Ocean about 700 years ago. Later, Europeans found the islands and began to trade with the Māori. This picture shows a British officer trading with a Māori man. **What kinds of things are they trading?** In 1840, the British signed an agreement with the Māori tribes and New Zealand became a British colony. Today, it is an independent nation, although it still has ties to Great Britain.

Māori culture is very important in New Zealand. The men in this picture are performing a traditional Māori war dance

GENERAL The first people to settle on New Zealand came from the Polynesian Islands about 700 years ago. Over time, they developed into a separate people, called the Māori. The Māori were expert hunters, fishermen, and farmers. The first European to set eyes on New Zealand was a Dutch explorer named Abel Tasman. About 100 years later, James Cook, a British explorer, mapped the area. This artwork from the late 1700s shows trade between Māori and Europeans. **What is happening in this picture?** As more Europeans settled in New Zealand, the Māori were not always treated fairly. In 1840, the British and Māori signed the Treaty of Waitangi, which made New Zealand a British colony, but also gave the Māori ownership of their lands. But this treaty was often ignored and land was still taken from the Māori. **Why do you think**

ADVANCED Due to its remote location, New Zealand was among the last places on Earth settled by humans. Polynesians arrived on the islands around the year 1280. They developed a distinctive culture and became the Māori. In 1769, British explorer James Cook mapped the area. This picture shows a British Naval officer trading with a Māori man. In 1840, the British and Māori signed the Treaty of Waitangi. This made New Zealand a colony of Great Britain. It also gave Māori the rights of British subjects. The Māori hoped that this treaty would protect them. But the British ignored it and used it to claim control over Māori lands. **What similarities do you see with the way Native Americans were treated in the U.S.?**

Today, Kiwis are known for their love of the outdoors; bungee jumping was

called the haka. During the haka, dancers stomp their feet, stick out their

tongues, and yell loudly. **Why do you think they do this?** (Perhaps to intimidate their opponents.) New Zealand's beautiful natural world provided the setting for the "Lord of the Rings" and "The Hobbit" movies. This movie set is now a tourist attraction. **Have you seen these movies? Do you think this setting was a good choice for these films?** END

the Māori wanted to be part of a British colony?

In the 20th century, New Zealand became an independent nation. Today, the culture blends Māori and European traditions. These men are performing the haka dance, a traditional Māori war dance that involves stamping your feet, slapping your body, sticking out your tongue, and chanting. The national rugby team performs the haka before matches. **Why do you think this dance is a national symbol?**

New Zealand's unique landscape has made it a popular setting for movies. This picture shows a set called "Hobbiton" from a famous movie series. **What series is this?** ("The Hobbit" and The "Lord of the Rings" trilogy.) **What do you notice about this set? Why do you think the director filmed these movies here?** END

invented in New Zealand. Māori artistic traditions include weaving and carving in bone, stone, and wood, using symbols to tell stories. Another Māori tradition is the haka dance. **What is this?** (A Māori war dance. Dancers stomp their feet, stick out their tongues, slap their bodies, and chant loudly.) The New Zealand national rugby team, called the All Blacks, even performs the haka before their matches, although some have called this cultural appropriation. **Do you agree with this criticism?**

New Zealand's otherworldly landscape has made it a popular choice for movies, such as this "Hobbiton" set. **What films was this set for?** (The "Lord of the Rings" trilogy and "The Hobbit" trilogies.) **Have you seen these films? Do you think this setting evokes Middle-earth? Explain.** END

