

## LESSON PLAN – GEOGRAPHY OF OCEANIA

TITLE: Geography of Oceania

TIME: 60 minutes

LEARNER POPULATION: grade level 6

CURRICULAR CONTEXT: part of Social Studies, Ancient Civilizations, Oceania

### OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this activity:

- 1) Students will be able to read maps.
- 2) Students will be able to identify the many different island groups that are part of Oceania.
- 3) Students will be able to distinguish between Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia.

### CONCEPTS/INFORMATION:

- Reading maps and legends
- Identifying the different island groups on maps

### INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE:

- 1) Show students different maps of Oceania.
- 2) Explain to students how to read the maps and how to extract the information contained in the maps and their legends.
- 3) Tell students to put all the previous maps away, and give them a blank map. Ask students to fill in the information (island names and regions) based on what they have learned before.
- 4) Students do word search exercise.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS: Background Information on Oceania; Internet Resources for maps of Oceania, blank map; word search.

## Background Information Oceania

The Pacific Ocean comprises 1/3 of the entire Earth. There are 25,000 islands in the Pacific, more than in any other ocean. The larger island masses are located in the Southern and Western Pacific, close to the Australian and Asian continents; they usually form arcs. Most of the islands are close enough to each other that they form groups or clusters.

The islands in the Pacific Ocean are mostly of volcanic origin, which results in crust instability. There are more than 400 active volcanoes in the region, and naturally, there are many earthquakes as well. These islands can be divided into several geological types. Some are continental, which means that they were formed by processes of sedimentation, folding and faulting. Examples are New Zealand, New Guinea, and New Caledonia. Other islands, like Tahiti, Oahu and Ponape are volcanic, which means they were formed by volcanic intrusion. And the third geological type are coral islands that are surrounded by coral reefs that vary in thickness and depth. A well-known example is the Great Barrier Reef, a large system of about 900 islands and over 3000 coral reefs.

The year-round temperatures in the Oceanic region are rather high, but depending on the island's exact location, there might be substantial differences; for example, areas that are close to the equator have much more rainfall.

In the past, people on the islands used to grow most of their food themselves, and they traded with other people for the materials and resources they did not have. Some plants that are typical for the region are the Coconut Palm (*Cocos Nucifera*), the Sago Palm (*Metroxylon*), the breadfruit (*Artocarpus altilis*), the Pandanus (*Pandanus tectoris*), bananas for cooking (*Musa paradisiacal*), taro (*Colocasia esculenta*), yam (*Dioscorea*

*esceulenta*), and sweet potatoes (*Ipomoea batatas*). Naturally, people in Oceania eat lots of fish, as well as pig and fish meat.

During Colonial times, the islands were “discovered” by Europeans; soon thereafter, European traders and merchants moved in. Plantations for sugar, coffee, cocoa, and cotton were established. Furthermore, missionaries came to the region to convert the islanders to Christianity. Contact with Europeans resulted in disease, bloodshed, depopulation, confiscation of land, commercial exploitation, and most of all, a disruption of Native lifestyles.

The two major colonial powers of the past in Oceania were Britain and France. The British practiced what is called “indirect rule,” which meant that Native institutions were partly preserved and local affairs were left in Native hands. This happened on Fiji, Tonga and the Cook Islands. The French intervened more directly and wanted to implant French civilization into the region. They destroyed Pacific institutions and replaced them with French ones, for example, in places such as the Society Islands and the Marquesas.

The early 1960s brought decolonization efforts, and a number of islands achieved their independence, e.g., Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Tonga, and Western Samoa. However, today’s Western powers, such as the United States, Australia and France, still try to retain some influence over the Pacific Island region. In addition, depending on the island’s strategic position within the Pacific power field between West and East, some of the islands have been used for military bases by foreign governments.

France has a nuclear weapons testing facility in French Polynesia, and the United States has a number of military bases and missile test ranges on Guam, the Marshall

Islands, and in Hawaii. Ironically, the island societies have become dependent on the outside financial resources that pay for these services.

Today, the thousands of islands and atolls in Oceania are inhabited by over 8 million people, and these societies are quite diverse. People from this region have left rural areas and migrated into the cities, or they have migrated into the metropolitan areas of the United States, Australia and New Zealand. For example, many Samoans and Tongans now live in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

# WORD SEARCH

## Places of Oceania

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S O M U F A L B H Y V O F I D H U X I Q S I M B X C A Y E U  
N D O R A E R J J A U K N M G J V C H V G S U Z O B U Z P T  
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W U S A I N H M U N D R V N M O O V H Z X N N A P C I A N O  
G M E P L S A T O E A E E Z N K F Q P A L A U I S L A N D S  
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I U G J B U I A T B Z A S G B P K I E U U E M V M R B T D Y  
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W Y Z N L L S M M S I Q W Z J L J C D O N G F F Z X O P U W  
R E J A M B R I L X K C O T K X A I N A E C O I Z C Q Z V M  
E P N N X M B C S P F K O S G O R D A X V I D I J L Z Q N G  
Y D P G E A B Y M J O D R S O A A S L S W P T M C P A H D H  
S I W C B V H Y J O M J K W T M P X S R P A T D L F I L P V  
M B I U N X K Z J F J Y I G R Q H E I S I L M E I Z Y X E N  
S K Y A B L J O R J M U P B A O N Z R S T J M Z Z X J B I E  
H X R B W N Y T H P G X V P W S U K E E Q R F V R X U P F W  
W I S D N A L S I L L A H S R A M N T D N A L A E Z W E N H  
V B S S D A H S P W M V C I Q Z Y X S F T X H Z Z G T L G E  
F V H H N N Z B N L N S C K U L J R A D I R J J A R J Z V B  
F I J I Y P A E R K Q B D V O E J Q E J S M O E O A R O N R  
F T Z S M P P L T U I M S P E R I X S F U Q M B I G A C F I  
T I B B A F B S E R W W H D Z H H Y T W X B R Q S B R R A D  
I X G V G I Q B N R G B G V V Z Y U F Q Y I I K T O R X V E  
Z Q J O N R F W Q A I O A W I A V G A P A G Q C R K N W R S  
W V U K O I N U L H U W T P B Z Z X V N N B Y C Z D P T H V  
A J F C T I J J J R M X E N M S J Q D S N W P Q M Z S F M F  
O H I N R I K K Z F V W K N U Q R O V F C C A T I D B H B Z

ADMIRALTY ISLANDS

AUSTRALIA

COOK ISLANDS

EASTER ISLANDS

FIJI

HAWAII

MARQUESAS

MARSHALL ISLANDS

MELANESIA

MICRONESIA

NEW CALEDONIA

NEW GUINEA

NEW HEBRIDES

NEW IRELAND

NEW ZEALAND

OCEANIA

PALAU ISLANDS

POLYNESIA

SAMOA

SOCIETY ISLANDS

TONGA

TROBRIAND

## Internet Resources: Maps of Oceania

<http://chamorroible.org/images/chamorroibleproject/map-oceania-2002.jpg>

<http://user.chollian.net/~omana21/Map/Map-Oceania-01.jpg>

<http://www.world-maps.co.uk/maps/600-oceania.jpg>

[http://www.escapeartist.com/efam18/Oceania\\_Political\\_97y.JPG](http://www.escapeartist.com/efam18/Oceania_Political_97y.JPG)

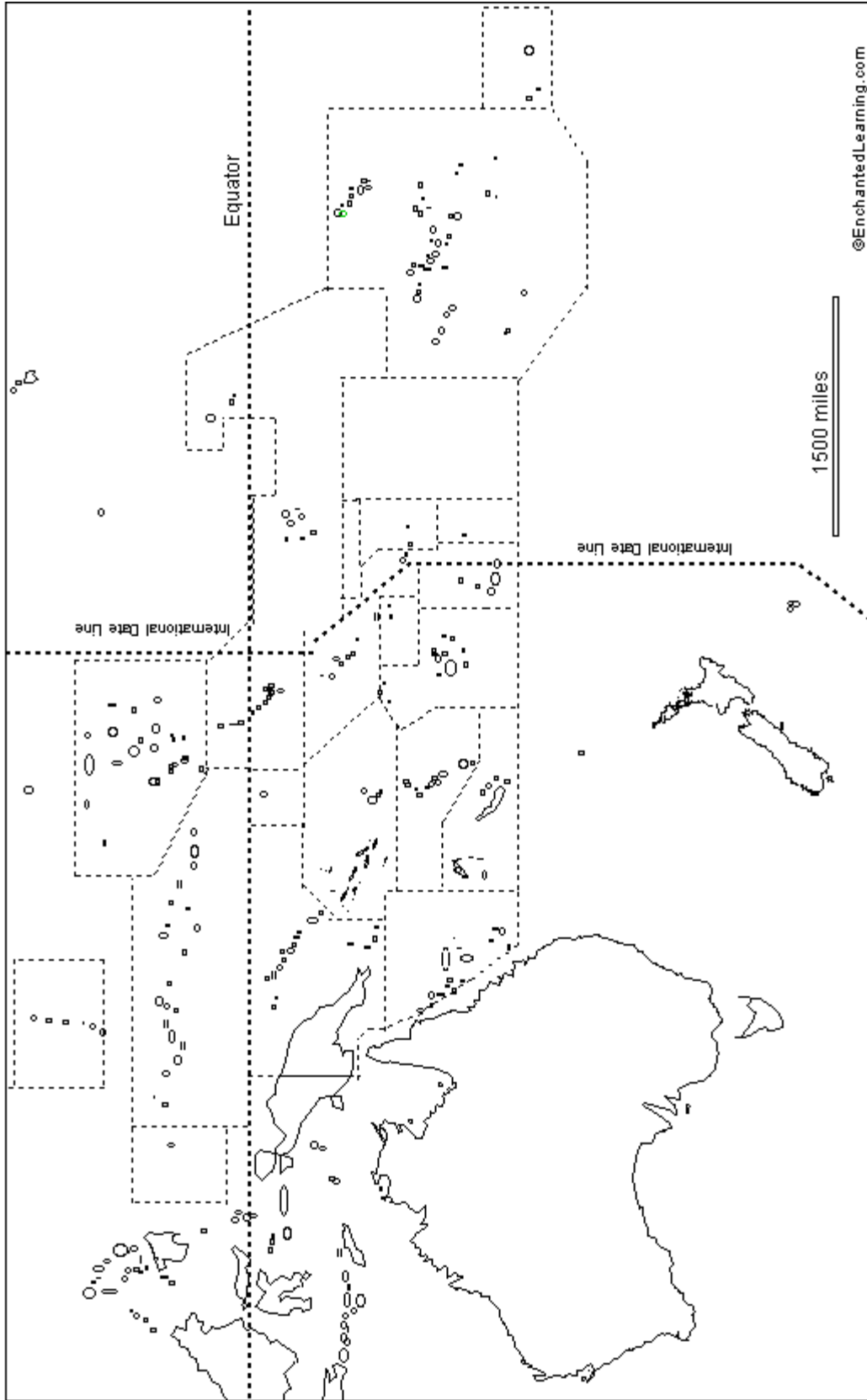
<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/geography/australia/oceaniaoutlinemap/map.GIF>

<http://world-hotel-reservation.info/maps/map-oceania.gif>

<http://www.travelnotes.org/Oceania/images/pacific.gif>

[http://go.hrw.com/atlas/norm\\_map/oceania.gif](http://go.hrw.com/atlas/norm_map/oceania.gif)

# Oceania



1500 miles

## LESSON PLAN – NAVIGATE THE OCEANS

TITLE: Navigate the Oceans

TIME: 60 minutes

LEARNER POPULATION: grade level 6

CURRICULAR CONTEXT: part of Social Studies, Ancient Civilizations, Oceania

### OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this activity:

- 1) Students will be able to identify different navigation techniques.
- 2) Students will be able to identify the ingenuity of Polynesian navigators.

### CONCEPTS/INFORMATION:

- Navigation of the oceans
- Different navigation techniques

### INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE:

- 1) Show students on a map of the world how much of it is made up of the Pacific Ocean. One-third of the entire Earth is covered by the Pacific Ocean.
- 2) Ask students to make guesses about how people living on small islands traded with people from different islands.
- 3) Hand out the information on navigation to students. Divide class into groups, and let them do research on the individual navigation techniques, using the handout, the Internet, and books.
- 4) Groups report back to the whole class.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS: Handout on Navigation, Internet



**EXTENSION/CLOSURE:**

1) Students research different trading routes between islands in the Pacific: what items were traded? How did people travel from one island to the other? What specific navigation techniques did they use? Have students look at navigation maps and figure out the specific features and hazards along the trading route.

## Navigation

People inhabiting the islands of the Pacific Ocean are one of the few who very early on excelled at navigating the oceans. Aside from Polynesians and Micronesians, we know of the Ancient Greeks, the Malays, the Persians, the Arabians, and the Phoenicians as “explorers” of the seas.

Polynesian navigators have used an impressive array of knowledge to find their way across the wide ocean, traveling from one tiny island to another. This knowledge was passed on from experienced navigators to their younger apprentices. Different ways of navigating the Pacific Ocean included knowing about the motion and position of stars; the weather and the time of the travel; the different animals which would gather in specific places and thereby make locating one’s position possible; the characteristics of the waves and the color of the ocean and the sky; the kinds of clouds on the horizon; and knowledge about how to approach land and safely navigate a boat into a port.

This knowledge, as well as the knowledge about how to build a boat, was kept mostly secret; navigators had a high social status and were well-respected in their societies. We consider ourselves lucky today that their knowledge was passed on from generation to generation and eventually written down. In 1973, the “Polynesian Voyaging Society” was established in Hawaii to research traditional navigation methods. In 1976, a replica of a double-hulled canoe was built, and it was successfully navigated from Hawaii to Tahiti without using any modern-day instruments.

Early Western navigators used their knowledge of prominent landmarks and the coast for navigation; this, however, forced them to stay rather close to the shore. A helpful navigation instrument is a magnetic compass whose use makes it possible to keep

the boat on the right course. The magnetized needle inside the compass aligns itself with the magnetic field of the Earth, which then makes it possible to determine the Cardinal directions, North, South, West, and East. The compass was invented by Chinese scientists, and the earliest record of its use was made in 1117 AD; using a compass made traveling so much easier and safer. Also helpful are nautical charts – maps of the ocean – which give information on water level, tides and currents, navigational features, and dangers, like sand beds for example.

Along the coastline, you can also see light houses which make orientation for boats and ships easier by providing them with a lit reference point. Radio systems also make it possible for captains to communicate with a person knowledgeable of the waters and to give directions for navigation. Finally, with the most recent technology of satellite navigation systems, navigating the oceans has become much easier and less hazardous.

## LESSON PLAN – MAKE YOUR OWN BOAT

TITLE: Make your own Boat

TIME: 60 minutes

LEARNER POPULATION: grade level 6

CURRICULAR CONTEXT: part of Social Studies, Ancient Civilizations, Oceania

### OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this activity:

- 1) Students will be able to work with wood.
- 2) Students will be able to create a simple boat out of wood, string and cloth.

### CONCEPTS/INFORMATION:

- Learning how to work with wood
- Learning how to build a boat
- Following the necessary steps

### INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE:

- 1) Review with students what they have learned about how people from Oceania traveled between islands.
- 2) Introduce the idea to students that they will work with wood today. Set up rules beforehand: clear work space, clean-up, safety rules, etc.
- 3) Explain to students how one works with wood, and go through the different steps of making the boat.
- 4) Distribute wood, string, hand saws, cloth, and other materials needed.
- 5) Help students in working with the wood and reiterate the different steps of making the boat.
- 6) At the end of the lesson, students exhibit their boats in a showcase.

**INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:** Instructions for making the boat; wood, string, wooden chopsticks, hand saws, wood drill, vice, cloth, glue, scissors.

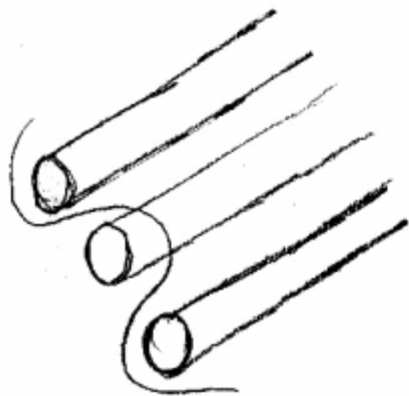
**EXTENSION/CLOSURE:**

1) Students can research the different boat types of Oceanic islands and make different boats.

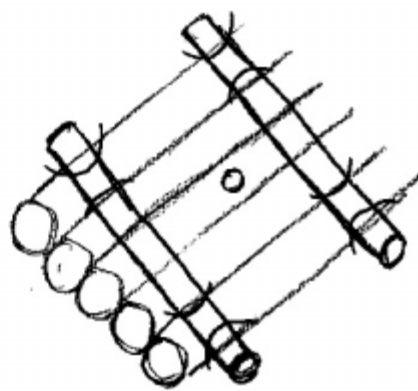
## Instructions for Making your Own Boat

- 1) Cut wood into same-length pieces (about 7 inches). Depending on size of wooden branches between 7-9 pieces per student.
- 2) Drill small hole (diameter of chopstick) into one of the pieces.
- 3) Put 5-7 pieces next to each other; the one piece with the hole goes in the middle.
- 4) Tie pieces together with string (see illustration A).
- 5) Put 2 remaining pieces across the float and tie them to the float with string (see illustration B).
- 6) Glue one chopstick into the hole.
- 7) Cut piece of cloth (about 4x4 inches) and glue top and bottom side of cloth around 2 chopsticks. However, leave 2 holes unglued in the middle of each side (see illustration C). This will be the sail.
- 8) Move sail over chopstick standing on float and attach it with string. Thread the string through the holes in the sail (see illustration D).

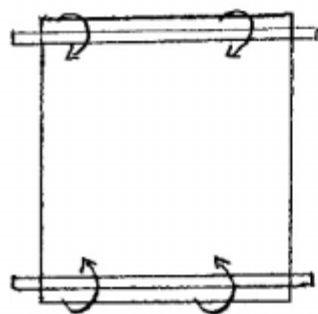
A)



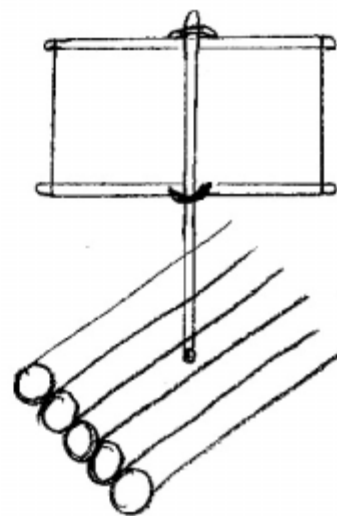
B)



C)



D)



## LESSON PLAN – WEAPONS AND TOOLS OF OCEANIA

TITLE: Weapons and Tools of Oceania

TIME: 60 minutes

LEARNER POPULATION: grade level 6

CURRICULAR CONTEXT: part of Social Studies, Ancient Civilizations, Oceania

### OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this activity:

- 1) Students will be able to identify different tools and weapons that were used in Oceania.
- 2) Students will be able to identify different materials that were used to make tools and weapons.
- 3) Students will be able to compare our society's environment and required tools to those of Oceania.

### CONCEPTS/INFORMATION:

- The use of tools and weapons
- Influence of the environment on tool use

### INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE:

- 1) Show students photos of the Pardee Home Museum's tools and weapons from Oceania. Explain to students what materials they were made of and how they were used. Or let students take educated guesses about these questions.
- 2) Talk to students about the influence of the environment on tool and weapon use.
- 3) Ask students what kind of tools our society uses and how this might be influenced by the environment.



- 4) Students invent a tool that would be helpful in our society, or in any society they could think of. Students either draw a sketch of the tool and how it works, or they create the tool out of various materials.

**INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:** Background Information on Tools and Weapons; photos of tools and weapons at Pardee Home Museum; paper, pencils, various art and craft materials.

**EXTENSION/CLOSURE:**

- 1) Students talk about how various societies in Oceania changed through the introduction of Western tools.

## Background Information Tools and Weapons in Oceania

People in Oceania use a great variety of materials to make tools and weapons, including wood, roots, stone, bark, leaves, shells and corals, animal teeth and bones. Stone was mainly used for tools and weapons, but also to build, cook and carve. The teeth of animals were used for tools and as ornaments; animal skins were used for drum heads and clothing; bones for weapons and tools; and bird feathers as ornaments.

When looking at stone tools, some were used in their natural state, just the way they were found, whereas others were shaped for specific reasons. There are three basic methods for shaping stone, all of which have been used in Oceania: 1) “flaking,” which means that flakes are chipped off the stone to shape it a certain way, 2) “pecking,” which denotes that another tool was used for hammering the stone into the desired shape, and 3) “grinding,” which is milling pieces off the stone to change its shape.

The most common stone tools used in Oceania were axes, chisels, adzes, blades, points, mortars, pestles, and millstones. Axes and adzes were used for completing the everyday task of cutting wood.

Some of the inhabitants of small islands and atolls in the Pacific Ocean did not have any stone available locally. Therefore, thick shells were used as a substitute. Shells were very good instruments for scraping, rasping, and shredding, but they were also employed as digging tools, utensils, ornaments, and as money. In some places, shells were in great demand and were traded for other goods.

As mentioned earlier, animal bones were also used. The long bones of larger animals were used for making daggers, knives, spears, and harpoon points, for example; whereas smaller bones were used to make needles, drills, awls, and pegs. Animal teeth

were made into points and engraving tools, and were added to some weapons, while shark teeth set into a wooden handle created a club or sword.

Another resource for making tools and weapons were plant materials, and these were plentiful on most islands. Digging sticks, handles for tools, weapons, spears, knives, and points of various sizes could be made out of tree trunks and limbs. Especially useful was the digging stick. Usually of a length between 1-2 yards and of a diameter of 1-3 inches, it was used to loosen soil; to dig for roots, corns and small game; to make holes, remove rocks and logs; and to carry burdens. The wood for a digging stick was carefully selected, since it had to be tough enough to be used for all these activities, but also light enough to be easily carried around. A digging stick was made by first scraping off the bark and then sharpening the working end.



Spear with rows of shark teeth from the Solomon Islands



Detail of a club with three rows of shark teeth from Gilbert Island



Harpoon



Head of harpoon



Wooden Sword





Throwing stick



Club from Melanesia



Club from Samoa

## Museum Catalogue Information on Objects

### Spear with rows of shark teeth

A Spear roughly carved from a single piece of wood. From near the pointed tip, three equidistant rows of shark teeth spiral around the shaft for a length of 76 cm. The teeth are fastened to the shaft by a string and reed-like material. The grip is comprised of a weave of string and husk material. There is a white string tied near the base of the shaft. From Solomon Islands.

### Detail of a club with three rows of shark teeth from Gilbert Island

A Club carved from a single piece of wood, rectangular at the grip and round on the upper shaft. Secured to the shaft by string and reed-like material are three rows of shark's teeth, fastened so that the rows are parallel to the shaft. There are four bands of woven husk material which secure the ends of the rows of teeth and divide the rows into three segments. There is a black wire tied to the grip. From Gilbert Island.

### Harpoon

Harpoons like this one were widely used in Fiji. Spears and harpoons were of two kinds: long ones for throwing, and shorter ones for holding and thrusting. Some were made out of one piece; others had separate tips, like the one in the photo.

### Head of harpoon

The detail photo shows the head of the harpoon which was probably made out of animal bones and/or teeth.

### Wooden sword

This wooden sword shows bands of decoration on the blade. Blade and handle are made from one piece of wood.

## Throwing stick

Throwing sticks, including boomerangs, were normally used as a supplement to the more predominant spears and clubs. However, the Australian boomerang had a very limited distribution.

## Club from Melanesia

This club was made out of wood and is probably from Melanesia where this kind was widely used. Notice the decoration in the club's body which is done through inlay technique.

## Club from Samoa

This club might be from Samoa. It is finely carved and has a saw-like edge.

## Resources for Teachers

Davidson, D. S.

1947 *Oceania. The Oceanic Collections of the University Museum.* In: University Museum Bulletin, vol. 12 (3-4). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania.

Lockwood, S. V., Harding, T. G. and B. J. Wallace

1993 *Contemporary Pacific Societies. Studies in Development and Change.* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

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1989 *Oceania. The Native Cultures of Australia and the Pacific Islands.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Vayda, A. P. (editor)

1968 *Peoples and Cultures of the Pacific. An Anthropological Reader.* New York: The Natural History Press.