

Rabbits, Rabbits Rabbits!

Levels 1-4
Aotearoa Histories Plan





Old Stories for Young Minds

About this resource

This resource has been created by the Central Otago Heritage Trust to support the teaching and learning of Central Otago's history. It is designed for students in Levels 1-4 and is intended to be used alongside the www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz website. Educators are encouraged to adapt the activities to suit their students' needs and adapt tasks as required.

The development of this learning module is guided by the Aotearoa New Zealand's Histories Curriculum and the Te Ao Tangata | Social Sciences Curriculum (introduced in 2022). As these frameworks continue to evolve, updates may be necessary. Both curricula use the "Understand – Know – Do" structure, with progress outcomes aligned under these headings. Teachers may refer to the Aotearoa NZ Histories website for further guidance.

We encourage your students to step into the role of historians, examining the past through the lens of those who lived it. They should consider how people thought, how they lived, and how their ideas and agendas shaped the generations that followed.

History is an ever-evolving narrative, shaped by new discoveries and shifting perspectives. A well-rounded understanding requires drawing from a diverse range of sources. While many historical records exist in written form, the oral history excerpts in this resource offer valuable alternatives, capturing insights that traditional texts may overlook.

The images in this resource have been sourced from various historical records. Where relevant, images of objects from Central Otago museums are included to encourage educators and students to engage with their local museums.

Finally, students are encouraged to explore their own ancestry and connections to New Zealand's history. Understanding their local *rohe* - its land and its people - helps build a sense of identity and fosters empathy for different perspectives.

Nāku noa, nā

Central Otago Heritage Trust

Rabbits, Rabbits, Rabbits!

Big Understanding	The introduction of rabbits to Central Otago had significant and lasting effects on the environment, economy, and communities. Understanding how and why they were introduced helps us learn about human impact on ecosystems and how people respond to environmental challenges over time
Know New Zealand Histories	Kōwhiringa ohaoha me te whai oranga <i>Economic activity</i> The choices people made to meet their needs and wants, how they made a living individually and collectively, and the resulting exchanges and interconnections. Whakapapa me te whanaungatanga <i>Culture and identity</i> How the past shapes who we are today – our familial links and bonds, our networks and connections, our sense of obligation, and the stories woven into our collective and diverse identities.
Nature of Science	Appreciate that science is a way of explaining the world and that science knowledge changes over time. Identify ways in which scientists work together and provide evidence to support their ideas.
Understand	Identify and describe the reasons for the introduction of rabbits and their impact. Examine historical sources such as oral history podcasts, photos, maps, and texts to understand how people responded to the issue over time. Explain how different perspectives i.e. farmers, environmentalists, governments shaped responses to the rabbit problem i.e. easter hunts etc Make connections between past and present environmental challenges in Central Otago i.e. goldmining land changes
The Living World	Recognise that living things have certain requirements to stay alive and that their environment provides for these needs (Level one)

Do	<p>Think critically about the past and interpret stories from it.</p> <p>Investigate how the local landscape was affected by rabbits and the methods used to control them.</p> <p>Compare historical and modern pest control methods and discuss their effectiveness.</p> <p>Create a timeline of key events in the history of rabbits in Central Otago.</p> <p>Listen to local stories about the history of rabbits and their impact on communities.</p> <p>Communicate findings through a creative project such as a poster, video, or storytelling activity.</p>		
Phases of learning	Level 1/2	Level 3-4	
Know <i>By the end of the unit these students will know:</i>	<p>Rabbits were brought to New Zealand from Australia in the 1830s so people could use them for food, fur, and hunting.</p> <p>During the Central Otago Gold Rush in the 1860s, miners and their families ate rabbit meat, which they called "underground mutton."</p> <p>The rabbit population exploded due to a lack of natural predators and suitable environmental conditions.</p> <p>Rabbits caused severe environmental damage, leading to erosion, loss of vegetation, and economic hardship for farmers</p> <p>Farmers quickly realised that rabbits were becoming a big problem</p> <p>People attempted various control measures, including hiring "rabbiterers" to trap, shoot, or poison them, and using biological controls and fencing.</p> <p>Factories were set up in places like Alexandra in the 1880s to can rabbit meat and send it to other countries, including supplying soldiers with canned rabbit meat during wartime.</p> <p>By 1893, over 17 million rabbit skins were sent to the United Kingdom to be made into items like gloves, hats, and coats.</p> <p>The introduction of rabbits connects to broader themes of human impact on ecosystems and problem-solving in history.</p>		
Understand	Level 1-2	Level 3-4	Resources

	<p>Describe why rabbits were introduced to Central Otago.</p> <p>Recognise how they changed the environment and affected people.</p> <p>Explore different ways people tried to manage the problem.</p>	<p>Investigate the long-term environmental and economic effects of rabbits in Central Otago.</p> <p>Evaluate different responses to rabbit problems and their effectiveness.</p> <p>Discuss how past human actions shape our present environment.</p>	<p>Rabbits, Rabbits, Rabbits podcast episodes.</p> <p>Connected text Level 3</p> <p>‘It seemed like a good idea at the time’ - Studies the introduction of stoats This article describes the introduction of stoats to combat the rabbit problem in the late 1800’s</p> <p>https://instructionalseries.tki.org.nz/Instructional-Series/Connected/Connected-2011-Level-3-Border-Security/It-Seemed-Like-a-Good-Idea-at-the-Time</p>
<p>Do</p> <p>Possible learning activities</p>	<p>Oral Histories - Listen to locals tell their stories about the challenges and opportunities created by rabbits.</p> <p>Field Study: Visit a local farm or conservation area to observe the impact of rabbits today.</p> <p>Simple Science Experiment: Observe how plants grow with and without grazing</p>	<p>Oral Histories - Listen to locals tell their stories about the challenges and opportunities created by rabbits.</p> <p>Field Study: Visit a local farm or conservation area to observe the impact of rabbits today.</p> <p>Creative Project- Make a mini documentary, podcast, or digital poster about the</p>	

	<p>using grass or seedlings in containers.</p> <p>Create a life cycle of a rabbit</p>	<p>history of rabbits in Central Otago.</p>	
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