

Text C (English / A2)

Waitangi Day: New Zealand's National Day (A2)

New Zealand is a unique country, and its national day is unique too!

New Zealand is very isolated – its **neighbour** Australia is more than 4,000 kilometres **away!** So it has some unique plants and animals, like the kiwi, a bird that can't fly.

People from NZ are often called "Kiwis" too.

New Zealand also has sheep... a lot of them! In fact, according to the 2015 **census**, there are almost seven times more sheep than people in New Zealand!

Fifteen percent of the population is Maori. The Maoris arrived in *waka* (large canoes) from Polynesia about 1,000 years ago. The Maori name for the country is Aotearoa, which means "the Land of the Long White Cloud."

Maori and British Influences

On 6 February, 1840, a representative of British Queen Victoria signed a **peace** treaty with 40 Maori chiefs. The treaty was signed in a place called Waitangi. The treaty established that New Zealand was part of the British Empire, and that the Maori were British **citizens**. Many countries' national days celebrate independence or a revolution, but New Zealand's national day, Waitangi Day, on 6 February, celebrates peace. In 1906, New Zealand became independent from Great Britain. But to honour the country's history, Waitangi Day continues to be the national day. In the past, Maori culture wasn't respected by *Pakeha* (the Maori word for white people) but now Waitangi Day is a day to eat Maori food, do Maori dances (like the *haka*, the ceremonial dance that the New Zealand rugby team does before matches) and watch *waka* canoe races.

Help:

- **neighbour** (n) normally, a person who lives next to you or close to you
- **census** (n) normally every 10 years, the government asks residents to answer questions about where they live, their marriage status, their job, etc
- **peace** (n) opposite of war / conflict
- **citizen** (n) person who has the nationality of a country and the right to a passport



A kiwi



Sheep



The haka, a Maori dance