



## History Detectives

Explore the history of taken Rapanui heritage

### 8. *The rongorongo boards*

*Requirements: writing materials and A4 pieces of paper*

*Working style: individually, as a class*

*Curriculum: History (world civilisations); Languages; Citizenship (sharing opinions; thinking about cultural perspectives)*

*Time: 20 minutes*

*Rongorongo boards are believed to be a system of early writing developed on the Island. Two dozen wooden objects bearing this writing are now scattered in museums across the world. None remain on Rapa Nui. The writers used either sharp obsidian (volcanic glass) flakes or sharks' teeth to 'inscribe' into the wood, and the wood may have been brought by early Polynesian arrivals to the Island. The marks are outlines of human, animal, plant, artefact, and geometric shapes – and no one has yet managed to decipher what they mean.*

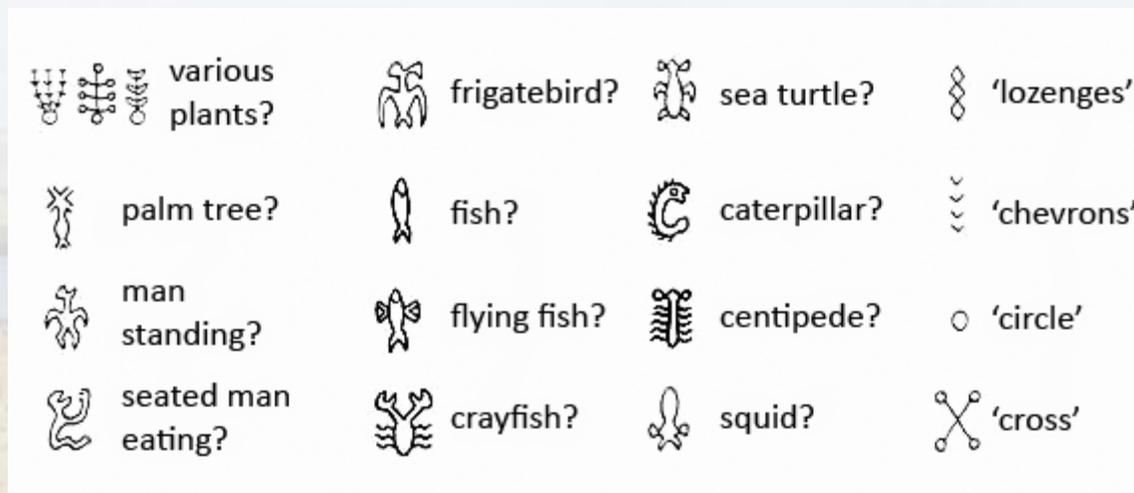


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*The writing style used is very unusual. And you are going to have a go at creating your own Rongorongo board.*

*Start by choosing 5 of these symbols used on Rongorongo boards. Practice drawing your chosen symbols (you can simplify them/ change them a little if you wish) before you start writing.*





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*On a clean piece of A4 paper, start at the bottom left corner of the page and draw your symbols in any order you like from left to right as a single 'line', using all 5 once.*

*Now turn your piece of A4 paper 180 degrees and write your next line from left to right, using the same approach as before but perhaps varying the order of your symbols.*

*Once you have completed that line, turn the paper 180 degrees and continue with this process until you have 5 lines of writing.*

*This style of writing, known as 'Boustrophedon Script', was used in many ancient writing systems because it was easier to carve on stone and wood, and made better use of space. How does it compare with the writing style we are used to in our lives?*