

We Know the Way!

An activity of "Moana movies show the wonders of Polynesian culture".

Read the article, "Moana movies show the wonders of Polynesian culture" (page 16–17, *What's Up* January 2025). It mentions the ancient Polynesian art of navigation called wayfinding. Work in pairs to experience a little wayfinding for yourself.

1a) Watch the following video to find out more about how the Polynesians navigated the Pacific Ocean.

How did Polynesian wayfinders navigate the Pacific Ocean?

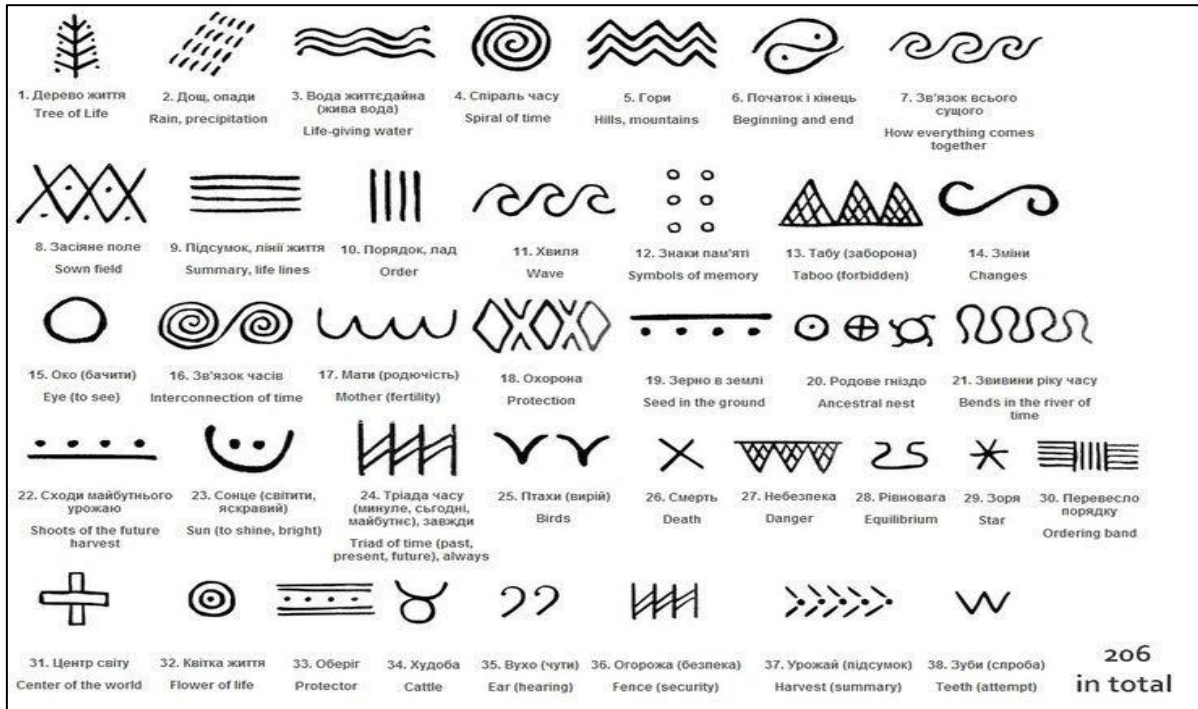
➤ <https://youtu.be/m8bDCaPhOek?feature=shared>

Alan Tamayose & Shantell De Silva (TED-Ed, 17 Oct 2017)

1b) Based on the video, match the following:

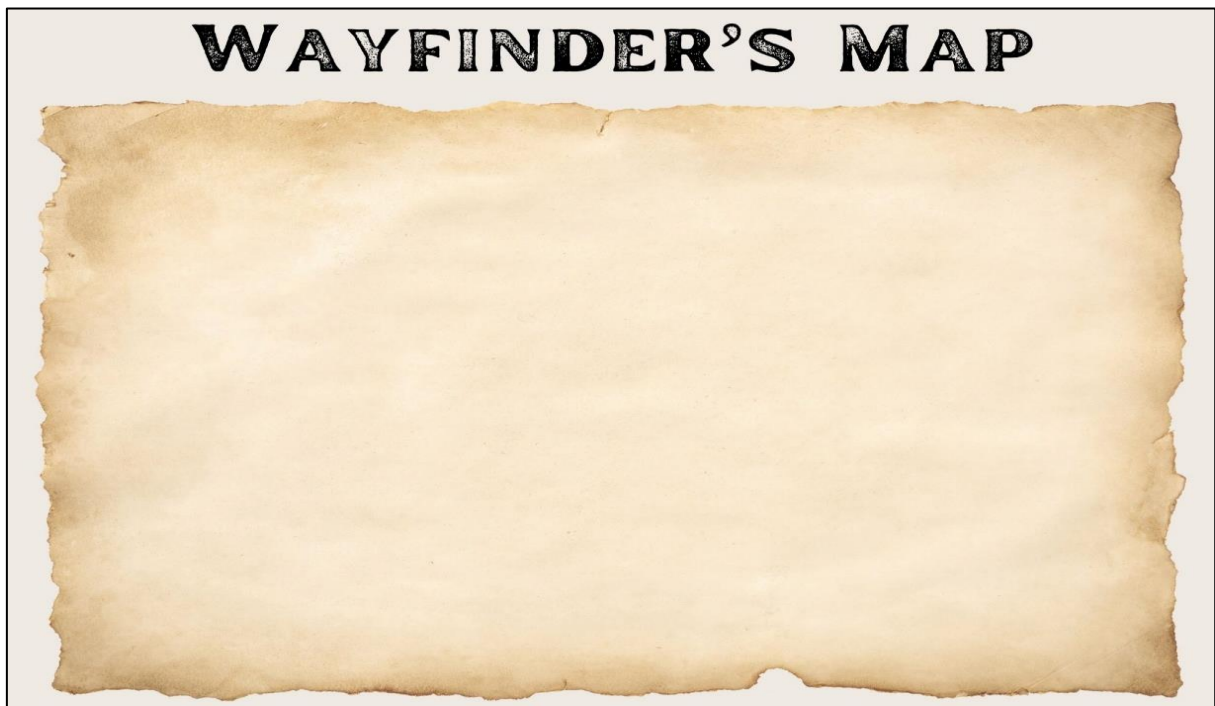
	NAVIGATION SKILL	NATURAL ELEMENT
1.	Some birds, like the manu-o-ku, have a flight range of say, 190 kilometres, hence, could be followed back to shore where they need to land and rest.	Sun
2.	The shade of the ocean water could reveal underwater features like reefs, which often signalled proximity to islands.	Stars
3.	The sun's position during sunrise and sunset indicated east and west. Hence, they could tell their direction. The sun also created low light against the ocean which helped them to see the ocean swells directly.	Ocean Swells
4.	Observing drifting plant life, such as logs or seaweed could indicate nearby land.	Clouds
5.	In the mornings, they could observe and feel the direction of the ocean swells or waves with their bodies and boats. They could observe the rocking motion caused by the waves against their boats and canoes.	Birds
6.	They memorised constellations, or star patterns, and their rising and setting points on the horizon. Using a "star compass", something like a mental map, they could maintain their direction during the night.	Winds
7.	Wayfinders understood prevailing wind patterns which helped them to estimate their location and adjust their course.	Ocean Colour
8.	The colour and shape of clouds could indicate the presence of land. High masses of clouds can indicate mountainous islands. Sometimes, water bodies like lagoons are reflected on the underside of clouds letting wayfinders know where they are.	Floating Debris

2a) Take a look at these Polynesian symbols and their possible meanings:



From: i.pining.com

2b) Design an imaginary island map that includes navigation symbols to help voyagers find the island. Include artistic details like landmarks, huts, trees, animal habitats, and ocean patterns using the symbols above.



2c) Test your map by asking another pair of students whether they can make sense of it for wayfinding. Do the same for their map. Use the feedback to improve your map.

2d) As a whole class, reflect on what it was like to pretend to be a map creator for wayfinders.