


The Silk Road got its name from the material that was first traded along its routes. Silk is a beautiful, soft cloth that was very popular in Europe. But long ago, only people in China knew how to make silk.

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Rich people in other parts of the world wanted to buy silk to make beautiful clothes. Traders could make a lot of money bringing silk to Europe from China.

Fact *Silkworms* make silk. These insects spin silk *cocoons* to cover and protect themselves as they change into moths. People unwind the silk thread from these cocoons to make silk cloth.

silkworm

cocoon

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Humpback whales

Whales are huge *mammals*, or warm-blooded animals, that live in the sea. Humpback whales make sounds like cries. Scientists think the whales make these sounds to communicate and to find partners. These sounds travel very long distances and can be heard for many kilometres in the oceans.



Humpback whales can jump up from the water's surface.

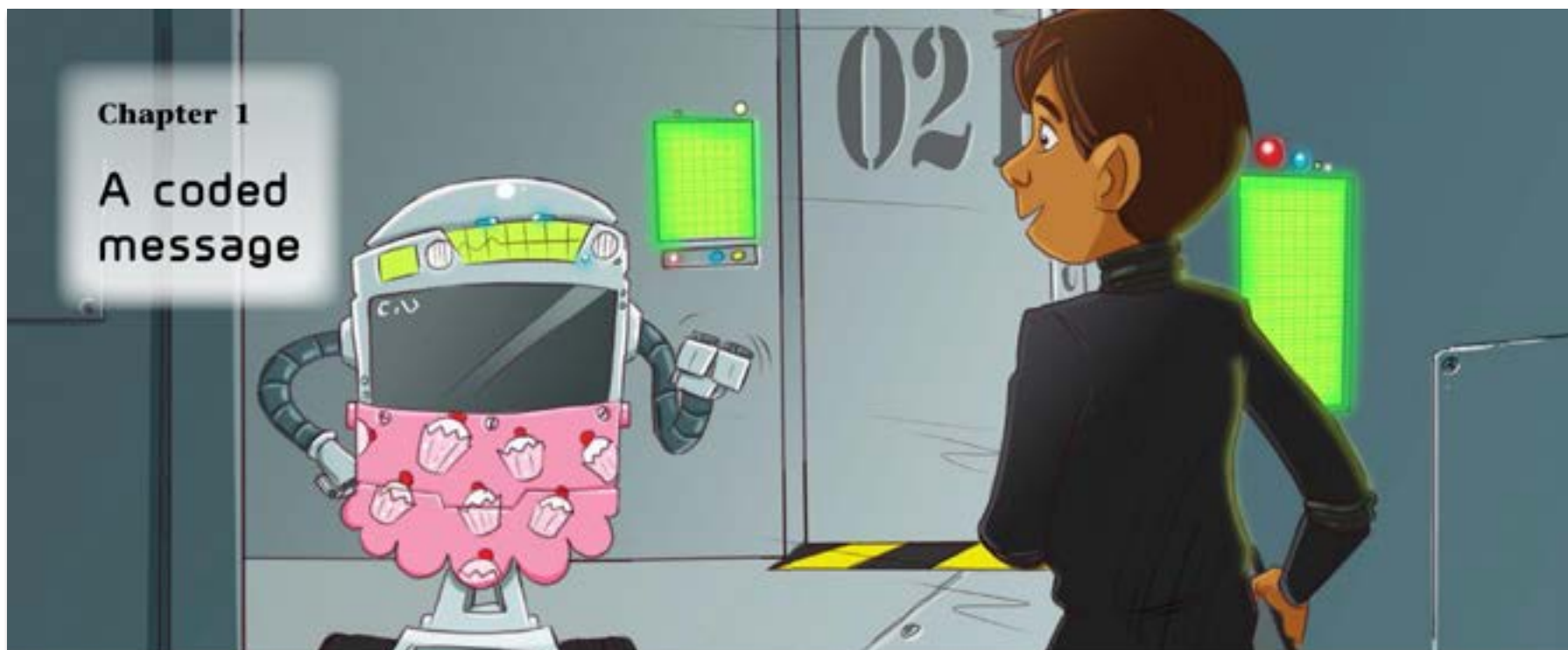
Whales migrate from cold feeding grounds to warmer areas to give birth to their young.



The whales are also known for their amazing migrations. They travel thousands of kilometres from icy waters at the top of the Earth. This is where the whales feed during the summer. The places they travel to during the winter are close to the middle of the Earth. This is where they have their young. The trip is amazing because the whales have to cover a long distance, and they are very large. These gentle giants are as long as a minibus and as heavy as 20 cars.

Chapter 1

A coded message



Max's bedroom door beeped. He walked over to its control panel and tapped a green button.

WHOOSH!

The door slid open. In front of him stood a short robot wearing an apron decorated with cupcakes.

"Hey, MUM," Max said.

"Hello, Max Jupiter Astro Marriot," the robot replied.

Max's parents were part of the Space Guard, a secret organisation that helped protect Earth.

Max was also part of Space Guard. He became a member after he stopped an asteroid from crashing into Earth.

Sometimes his parents took him on missions, but if they went on a secret mission, he had to stay at home. Then they assigned him a Minder Unit, which was like a robot babysitter. The one that stood in his doorway was called Megan, so Max called it MUM for short.

"May I enter?" MUM asked.

"Yes," Max replied. "And please call me Max."

THE MAORI

History

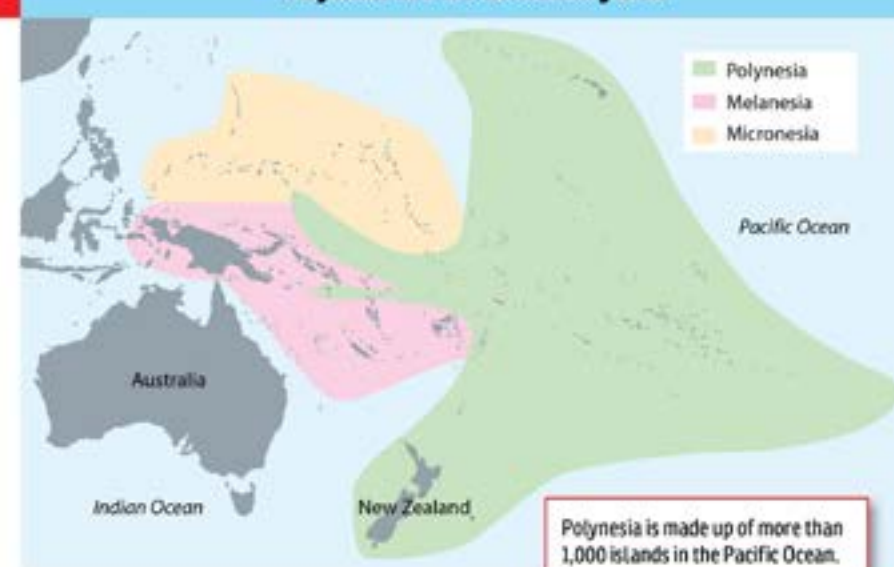
The Maori are the *indigenous* or native people of New Zealand. Nearly a thousand years ago, the Maori people came from the islands of Eastern Polynesia. These skilled sailors journeyed to New Zealand in canoes called “waka”. These Polynesian origins have greatly influenced the Maori culture’s food, language, song and dance.

The first Maori leader to make the voyage to New Zealand was Chief Kupe. He arrived there around AD 950 – more than a thousand years ago – in a great waka.



Maori tribe members in a waka

Polynesia and the surrounding area



Kupe was so impressed with the new land that he returned home to tell the rest of his people. They followed him back to New Zealand and began settling the untouched land.

In the early 19th century, settlers and whalers from Europe arrived on the shores of New Zealand. Wars broke out between the Maori and the Europeans. In 1840, a treaty known as the Treaty of Waitangi was signed between Maori chiefs and the British. Since that time, the two cultures have gradually merged together. Today the Maori culture, which is rich in tradition and legend, plays an important role in New Zealand society.