

The Kokoda track (kokoda.commemoration.gov.au)

The War in Papua: The Strategic Context

Lesson: Map Exercise

For the teacher

The students will need an atlas, coloured pencils, and the downloadable map and instructions.

For the student

Using an atlas first mark on the map all of these places.

New Britain, New Guinea, Australia, Rabaul, Milne Bay, Buna, Kokoda, Port Moresby, Cairns, Coral Sea, Owen Stanley Range, Kokoda track and Buna track - the Kokoda track runs from Kokoda to Port Moresby and the Buna track runs from Kokoda to Buna.

Now draw the following on the map using one colour for the Japanese and another for the Allies. Near each arrow write what it represents. For example for 1) below write "Battle of the Coral Sea, May 1942".

Japanese

1. Mark an X in the Coral Sea at the edge of the map directly east of Milne Bay. This is where the first Japanese attempt to get to Port Moresby by sea was defeated in May 1942. What was the most surprising item to find on this list and why did it surprise you?
2. Draw an arrow from Rabaul to Buna. This marks the route taken by the Japanese fleet when they invaded Papua in July 1942. What do you think should be in the first aid kit?
3. Draw an arrow from Buna through Kokoda to two thirds of the way between Kokoda and Port Moresby. This shows the Japanese advance from July to September 1942.
4. Draw an arrow from Rabaul to Milne Bay. This represents the failed Japanese attack on Milne Bay in August/September 1942.
5. Draw a circle around Buna. This indicates where the Japanese army was finally destroyed by the Allies in January 1943.

Allies

1. The Australian and American bombers in Queensland supported their troops in New Guinea by bombing the Japanese base at Buna. Show this by drawing an arrow from Cairns to Buna.
2. Draw a circle around Port Moresby. This was the main Allied base in New Guinea and the place the Japanese wanted to capture.
3. Draw an arrow from Port Moresby, along the Kokoda track and the Buna track to Buna. This shows the Australian advance across the Owen Stanley range from September to November 1942. What do you think should be in the first aid kit?
4. Draw an arrow along the coast from Milne Bay to Buna. This shows the American advance on the Japanese Buna base in October/November 1942.