

**ACTIVITY BOOKLET:
I AM ALI WALLACE**

**HERITAGE RESOURCE FOR
TEACHERS, PARENTS & CAREGIVERS**

WHAT IS 'I AM ALI WALLACE' ABOUT?

- 'I am Ali Wallace' was adapted from the activity booklet for Malay Heritage Centre's special exhibition, 'Seekor Singa, Seorang Putera, dan Sebingkai Cermin: Reflecting and Refracting Singapura' (12 October 2019 – 26 July 2020).
- Teachers, parents and caregivers are encouraged to facilitate the observation and learning process by referring to the actual artefacts on display in the gallery, or through artefact images and information available in this resource.
- You can also visit the children's space in MHC "Adventures in *Nusantara*" for other learning opportunities that will be shared in the later slides.
- 'I am Ali Wallace' aims to provide an opportunity for
 - Students/children to learn about the story of Ali Wallace and its connection to the Singapore story as well as his contributions to science; develop their language, literacy as well as motor skills ; engage their critical thinking; learn more about the animals in this region.
 - Teachers, parents and caregivers to delve further into a multi-disciplinary discussion and exploration.



We would love to hear how you have facilitated this activity. Please share your experience with us so we can continue to improve on our resources and benefit others too!

Reach us at shereen_tan@nhb.gov.sg

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADULTS

You will need..

1. A printer

2. A4 papers

3. Scissors

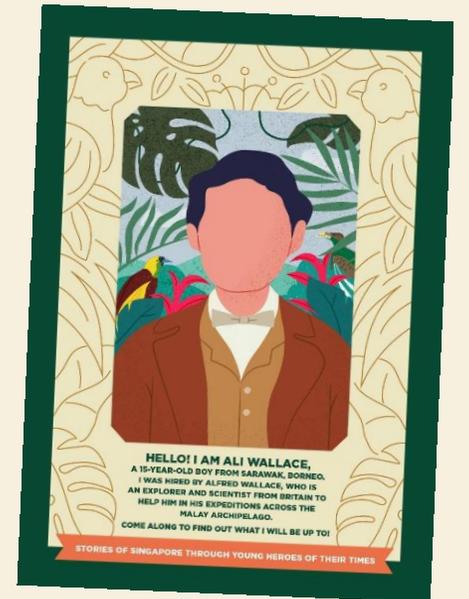
4. Glue or tape

5. Stapler

Putting the
booklet
together

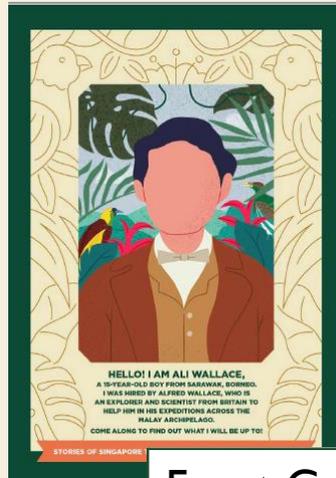
Step 1: Before printing the activity booklet, select the following print settings “double-sided” and “short-edge binding”

Step 2: Arrange your booklet according to the pages and staple the binding to hold the booklet together.

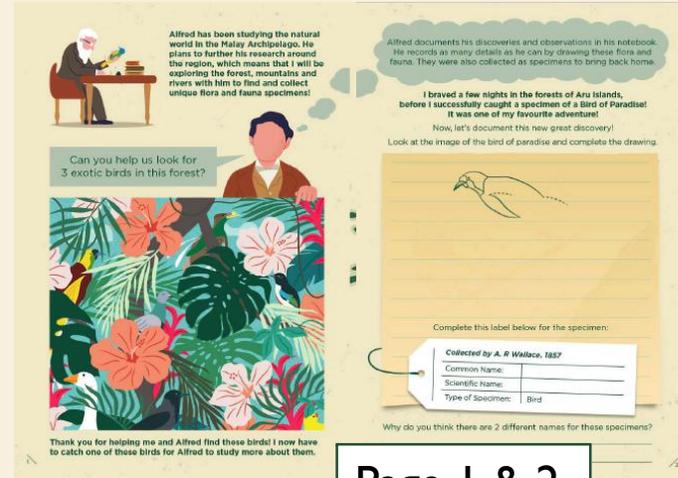


INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADULTS

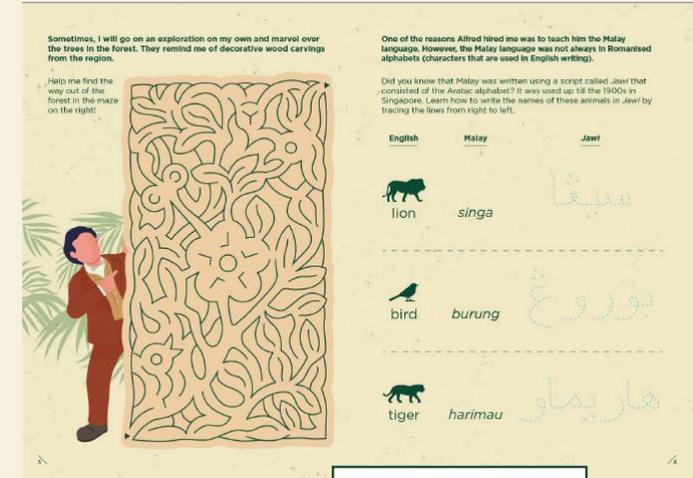
Your booklet should look like this.



Front Cover



Page 1 & 2



Page 3 & 4



Page 5



Back Cover

ABOUT ALI WALLACE

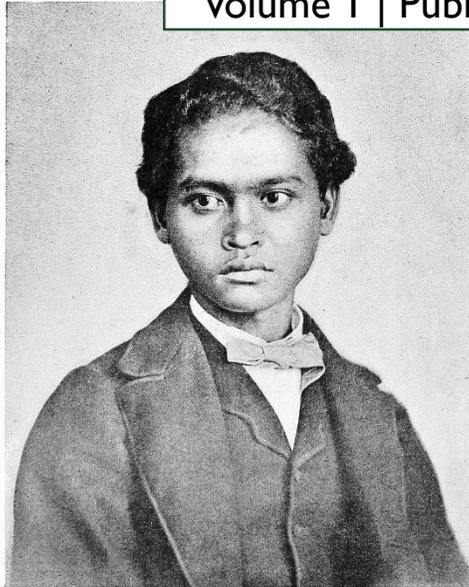
- Ali Wallace was believed to be 15 years old when he was hired by Alfred Wallace, a renowned naturalist, in Borneo, Sarawak to support his expedition in the Malay Archipelago. An attentive and trustworthy helper, Ali quickly became skilled at collecting and preparing bird specimens.
- Ali was not always a collecting assistant as he started out as a cook and general assistant. But his positions evolved due to his abilities. He ultimately rose to be Alfred Wallace's trusted headman.
- Ali made significant new discoveries for Alfred Wallace, such as a new species of the Birds-of-paradise, Wallace's Standard Wing (*Semioptera wallacii*).
- It is possible that Ali might have been responsible for collecting the majority of Alfred Wallace's bird specimens in this region. It was also believed that a significant amount of Wallace's impressive amount of natural history specimen could have been collected by Ali. If this was true, then Ali would have made an important contribution to science!
- There were some queries if Ali had adopted Alfred Wallace's last name. Little is actually known about Ali and what happened to him after he parted with Alfred Wallace. But there was an account by Thomas Barbour, an American zoologist, who claimed that he had met Ali many years later and Ali had introduced himself as Ali Wallace.

ABOUT ALFRED WALLACE

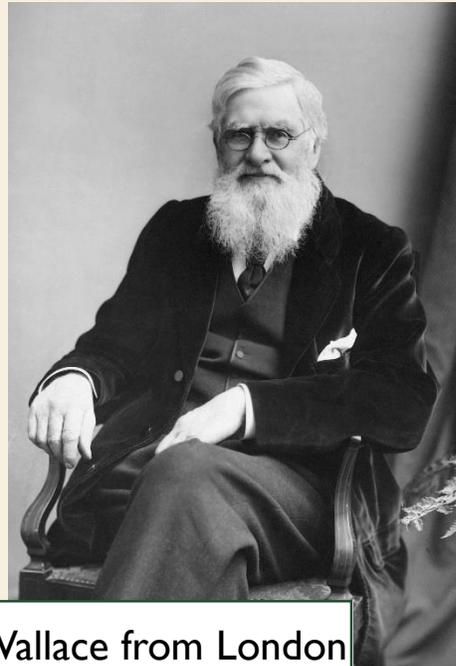
- Famed British naturalist Alfred Russell Wallace is best known for his work on the theory of natural selection and evolution. He co-developed the theory with Charles Darwin, who is most often credited with the idea (it became known as “Darwin’s Theory”).
- Like Charles Darwin, Alfred Wallace travelled the world, including the islands of the Malay Archipelagos, to observe and collect samples of specimens ranging from insects, birds, and other animals.
- He travelled to Southeast Asia (SEA) in 1854 and while he was here, Alfred Wallace derived to the conclusion that living things evolve over a period of time by adapting to their environment. Knowing that Charles Darwin was also working on a similar research, the two of them collaborated on a scientific paper discussing the topic in 1858. It ultimately led to the book “On the Origins of Species”.
- Alfred Wallace spent 8 years in SEA and gathered over 125,000 specimens.
- He also identified the zoological discontinuity known as the Wallace Line, a boundary line through SEA that divides Asian and Australian animal group. This means that several mammal, bird, and fish species found abundant on side of the line can only be found in small numbers, or none at all, on the other side.
- In some cases, European administrations were dependent on the knowledge of indigenous people and relied on the latter to conduct their expeditions. Alfred Wallace was especially reliant on the services of Ali, who accompanied him on various voyages to Ternate, New Guinea and other parts of the region, over the course of a seven-year period.

ALI WALLACE AND ALFRED WALLACE

Photograph of Ali from Alfred Russel Wallace
– My life; a record of events and opinions
Volume I | Public Domain



MY FAITHFUL MALAY BOY—ALI. 1855-1862



Photograph of Alfred Wallace from London
Stereoscopic and Photographic Company
(active 1855-1922) | Public domain

- The photograph of Ali on the left is a published version later reproduced in Alfred Wallace's autobiography. In it, he also mentioned that Ali was his "faithful companion of almost all my journeyings among the islands of the far East".
- The original photograph of Ali still survives in the Wallace Collection at the Natural History Museum (London). On the back of the original photograph, Alfred Wallace wrote 'Ali — my Malay Boy'.
- It is the only known photograph of Ali taken in Singapore in 1862 after they concluded their years of expedition that saw them explore through the region such as, Sarawak, Singapore, Lomok, Bali, Makassar, Aru Islands, the Moluccas, Ternate, Bouru, and New Guinea.

ABOUT BIRDS OF PARADISE



Drawing of *Paradisaea apoda* from Biodiversity Heritage Library

- The birds of paradise are called “the most extraordinary and the most beautiful of the feathered inhabitants of the earth” by Alfred Wallace for a reason - They are brilliantly coloured and showy.
- They are also known for displaying a spectacular dance as their mating ritual to attract the females and outshine the rest.

- Accompanying a specimen is usually scientific label that identifies the specimen. Sometimes, you may see two names on it – One that is written in Latin. This is the scientific name also known as binomial name, of the specimen and are recognised by scientists all over the world. The other name is a common name and the name of the same species can vary by geographic region.



See the *Paradisaea apoda* specimen on loan from Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum in Gallery 2 of the special exhibition.

ABOUT THE TIGERS WHO HAD BEEN GREAT MAGICIANS



- On page 5 of the activity booklet, there was a quote by Ali that he saw live tigers in Singapore and think they were men who had been great magicians. Turn to the next slide to read the full excerpt and find out more.
- In the Malay world, the depiction of animals stems from a predominantly ritualistic or symbolic interest. Sang Nila Utama's prophetic encounter of a lion-like creature, as described in the Sulalatus al-Salatin (Malay Annals), is perhaps the best example of this.
- The animal kingdom serves as a source of inspiration for the Malay imagination and the transmission of culture. Many Malay children would have heard of the adventures of Sang Kancil, the diminutive but cunning mousedeer which was able to outwit larger and stronger creatures such as the tiger, the elephant, the crocodile and even humans.



Specimen of Malayan tiger | Undated | Malay Peninsula | Collection of Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum

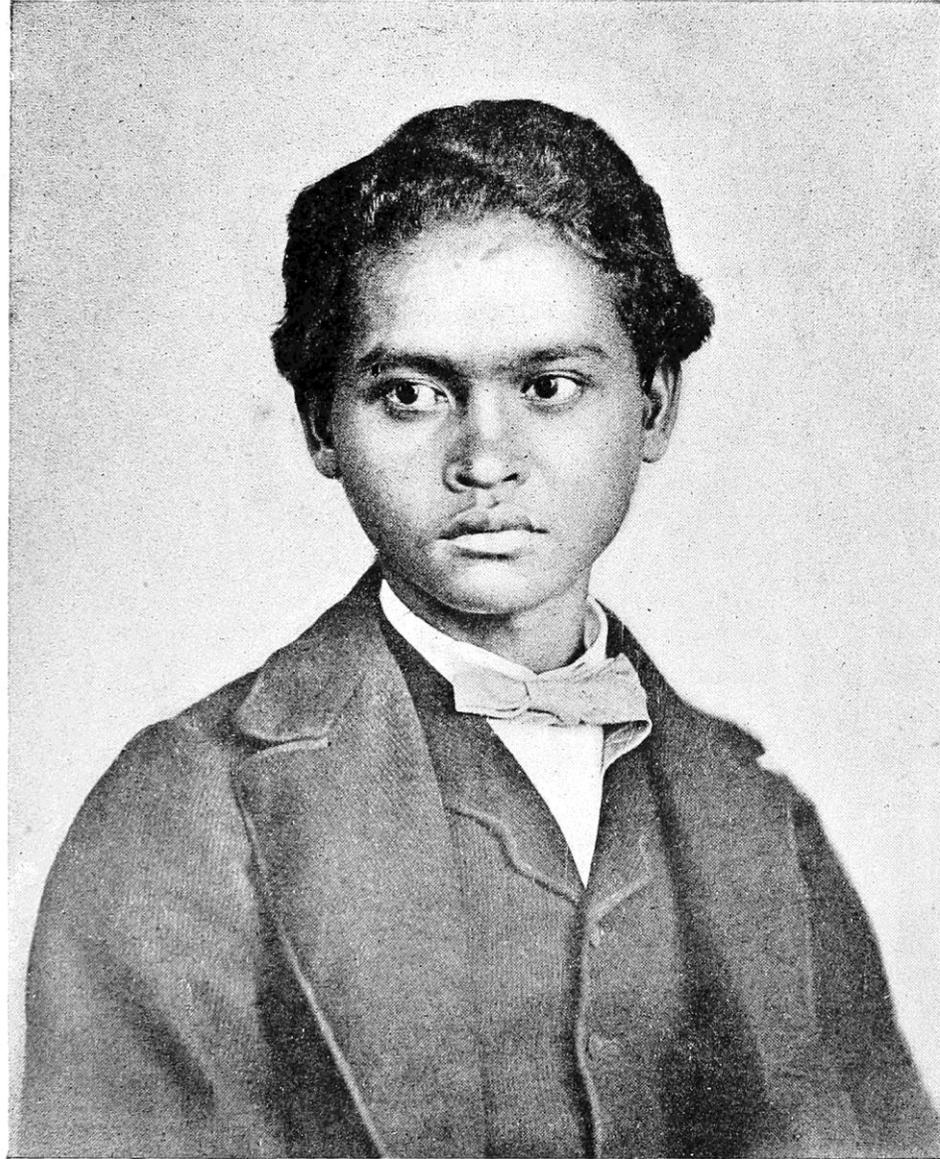
ABOUT THE TIGERS WHO HAD BEEN GREAT MAGICIANS

In a lecture Wallace delivered a decade later he recalled that Ali told tall tales to the natives of Ternate or elsewhere in the Moluccas.

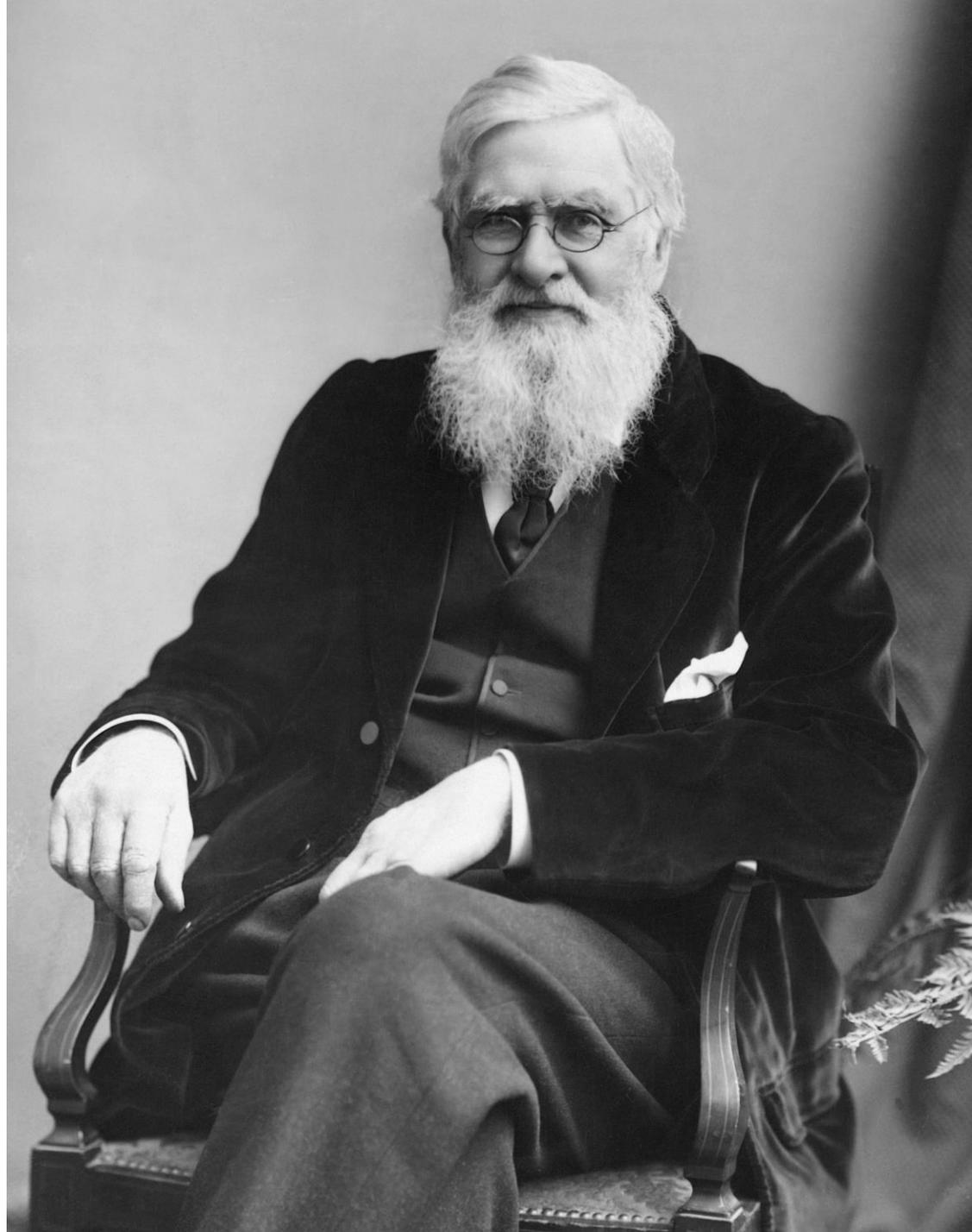
“One of my servants, a native of Borneo, who had been with me in Singapore and had there seen a live tiger and heard a good deal about those animals, made much of his knowledge when we reached the Moluccas, where such animals are totally unknown. I used to overhear him of an evening, recounting strange adventures with tigers, which he said had happened to himself. He declared that these tigers were men who had been great magicians and who changed themselves into tigers to eat their enemies,—that they often first appeared by the side of a benighted traveler as a small cat or dog, and gradually grew bigger and bigger, —or they appeared first as a man and talked with the traveler, till they came to some lonely place, when they dropped down on all fours, changed into a huge tiger and devoured him. These tales were accepted as literal facts by his hearers, and listened to with breathless attention and awe.”

This was probably based on the tiger in Singapore mentioned above and perhaps other encounters.

Except from page 10 of ‘I am Ali Wallace’: The Malay Assistant of Alfred Russel Wallace by John Van Whye and Gerrel M. Drawhorn



MY FAITHFUL MALAY BOY—ALI. 1855-1862







ABOUT WOOD CARVING



Undated | Southeast Asia | Collection of Asian Civilisations Museum, National Heritage Board

- Wood plays a significant role in our lives and this is no exception for the Malay world too. One of the oldest artform is wood carving and it can range from simple household items, to boats, weapons, ceremonial objects, wood panels (such as the one on the left), as well as architecture components.
- Wood carving works feature motifs, patterns, forms or even interpretations of stories. Apart from aesthetic, and functional use, wood carving works are also sought after for the symbolic power and embodied values, such as the *keris* (download the resource guide “I am Hang Nadim” for more information and activity about the *keris*).



ABOUT JAWI

- Jawi uses the Arabic alphabet to write the Malay language as well as other languages in the Malay peninsula including Achenese, Pegon, Banjarese and others. Jawi, like Arabic, is written from right to left. Jawi is slightly different from the Arabic alphabet in that it has 5 more characters than the standard 28.
- The introduction of the Jawi script in Southeast Asia is attributed to the arrival of Muslim merchants who later settled amongst the Malays. One of the earliest Jawi inscriptions in the region, as such, contains Islamic messages. A stone in Terengganu dated to the 14th century, for instance, is inscribed with 10 Islamic (Sharia) laws.
- The readership of newspapers and magazines published in Jawi was limited to Muslims since Jawi was taught only in Islamic schools. Zainal Abidin Ahmad, also known as Za'ba, was born in Negeri Sembilan and a prolific writer and scholar of Malay literature. Za'ba championed the use of Romanised Malay as he believed that the study of the Malay language should be made accessible to the larger Malay community as well as non-Muslim but Malay-speaking communities.
- By the late 1950s in Singapore, there was a gradual shift from publishing in Jawi to Romanised Malay.



Example of an advertisement printed in Jawi

ALI WALLACE

as mentioned in Alfred Wallace's publications, journals, letters and personal documents (19th – 20th centuries)

seperti yang disebut dalam penerbitan, jurnal, surat-surat dan dokumen pribadi Alfred Wallace (abad ke-19 hingga ke-20)

Ali Wallace was believed to be 15-years-old when he was hired by Alfred Wallace, a renowned naturalist, in Borneo, Sarawak to support his expedition in the Malay Archipelago. An attentive and trustworthy helper, Ali quickly became skilled at collecting and preparing bird specimens. Some of the birds that Ali had collected can be found on the wall. Can you guess the names of these birds? They are the King Bird of Paradise (*Cicinnurus regius*) Great Bird of Paradise (*Paradisaea apoda*), Wallace's Standardwing (*Semioptera wallacii*) and Ivy-breasted Pitta (*Pitta maxima maxima*). If you listen carefully, you may be able to hear their bird calls too!

It is possible that Ali might have been responsible for collecting the majority of Alfred Wallace's bird specimens in this region. If this is true, then Ali would have made an important contribution to science!

Ali Wallace dipercayai berumur 15 tahun ketika diupah oleh Alfred Wallace, seorang naturalis terkenal di Borneo, Sarawak untuk membantu dalam ekspedisinya di Kepulauan Melayu. Ali ialah seorang penolong yang sungguh prihatin dan boleh dipercayai. Beliau cepat menimba kemahiran dalam mengumpul dan menyediakan pelbagai spesimen burung. Sesetengah burung yang dikumpulkan Ali boleh didapati di dinding pameran ini. Bolehkah anda meneka nama-nama burung ini? Ia adalah Burung Raja Cenderawasih (*Cicinnurus regius*), Burung Cenderawasih Besar (*Paradisaea apoda*), Burung Wallace's Standardwing (*Semioptera wallacii*) dan Burung Ivy-breasted Pitta (*Pitta maxima maxima*). Jika anda dengar dengan teliti, anda mungkin dapat mendengar kercip burung-burung tersebut! Ada kemungkinan Ali bertanggungjawab dalam mengumpul sebahagian besar spesimen burung Alfred Wallace di rantau ini. Jika benar demikian, maka Ali telah memberi sumbangan penting kepada sains!

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

- Describe the object/image/animal – what do you see?
- Who is this person?
- Where is it from/is this person from?
- When is it produced/made?
- How was this object made?
- What is it made of?
- What do you think this object is used for?
- What does this object make you wonder?



TEACHING IDEAS

- Read stories about Sang Kancil and how the witty mousedeer outsmart other animals, to learn more about the different animals featured in the folktales from the Malay world. You may also look out for our storytelling videos.
- Go on a hunt around the Malay Heritage Centre's galleries to look for wood carving objects, or objects with flora or fauna motifs – how many can you find?
- Pick an animal featured in the gallery and make an animal mask.
- Role play as Ali Wallace and go birdwatching with your students or family. Make a record of the birds that you can find by drawing a picture of them. Add the name of the birds after that.
- Learn more about these animals by watching YouTube videos or visit the zoo and natural history museum to learn more about them. See next slide for some suggested links.
- Look for Jawi magazines in the Malay Heritage Centre. If you do not know Jawi, try and see if you can interpret the title or message based on the accompanying images.
- Visit the children's space "Adventures in Nusantara" in the Malay Heritage Centre and try your hand on the tangram activity to learn more about shapes, and listen to the bird calls of the different birds of paradise.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ‘I am Ali Wallace’ excerpt by The Conversation

<https://theconversation.com/i-am-ali-wallace-the-malay-assistant-of-alfred-russel-wallace-an-excerpt-85738>

- Chronology of Wallace's travels in the Malay Archipelago by Wallace Fund

<http://wallacefund.info/content/chronology-wallaces-travels-malay-archipelago>

- On The Brink Of Extinction - Episode 1: The Malayan Tiger’ by WWF Malaysia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gg-XWADEpWM>

- Photographer Tim Laman and Cornell University ornithologist Ed Scholes : Birds of Paradise by National Geographic

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/media/tim-laman-ed-scholes-birds-paradise/>

- How to read scientific names:

<https://www.enago.com/academy/how-to-write-scientific-names-in-a-research-paper-animals-plants/>

https://wwf.panda.org/knowledge_hub/teacher_resources/webfieldtrips/scientific_nomenclature/

- “Adventures in Nusantara” – pedagogy, design and inspiration by the Malay Heritage Centre

<https://www.malayheritage.org.sg/en/publication/e-catalogue/special-feature/adventures-in-nusantara>

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