

allowing air to circulate underneath, keeping the house cool; (3) a raised floor can provide protection from an attack; (4) the space underneath could be used as a workspace; (5) the two-piece pillar may have absorbed shocks from earthquakes; and (6) the cap's shape may have kept unwanted animals from entering the house. One thing we know for sure: Latte stones are important symbols of Chamoru culture.

The ancient Chamoru likely used fire in limited ways to manage agricultural lands, but today, fire in Guam has greatly expanded and is now a serious conservation problem. Human caused wildfires kill native species, degrade watersheds, reduce water quality,

and cause sediment to enter near shore areas where it covers and kills coral reefs. As in other tropical geographies, these wildfires also threaten the health and safety of human communities in Guam.

The USDA Forest Service has developed a wildfire awareness curriculum to help address the wildfire threat in Guam in partnership with: the Forestry and Soil Resources Division, Guam Department of Agriculture; the Guam Department of Education; the Pacific Fire Exchange; and the Center For Getting Things Started. This curriculum can be found at <https://www.pacificfireexchange.org/research-publications/wildfire-awareness-curriculum>.

## FACTivity



### Exploring Important Universal Values

**T**his FACTivity is taken from the Pacific Fire Exchange wildfire curriculum mentioned in the last paragraph of the essay. The curriculum includes information about some of the important values of Chamoru society. You will read about these values and hold a class discussion about how these values apply to your own life. The curriculum states that, “Values are the things that you believe are important in the way you live and work. They (should) determine your priorities, and, deep down, they’re probably the measures you use to tell if your life is turning out the way you want it to.”

#### Selected Chamoru Values:

**Inafa'maolek:** Harmony, to make good for everyone.

**Respetu:** You must have respect for yourself, for others, for our islands, ocean, and planet. The health of the environment is interconnected to many other issues.

**Taotao tano, Taotao tasi:** Interconnectedness. We are ONE. Realizing that we are one with the environment, with each other, and with the past and the future. Having this realization that all life is interconnected is powerful in changing our behaviors for the better of all.

**Måta:** Insight or Awareness. At a very young age, families teach children to be respectful when going into the forest or the ocean. The importance of one's ancestors and their influence and presence are emphasized. Children are taught to be aware and respectful of their environment and their ancestry.

Chamoru people use these values today to teach young people to be "future-makers" and not "future-takers." Discuss what you think those two terms mean and the following questions: How are the values above related to the idea of being a future-maker? Does your culture encourage these values? Give an example of how you have used (or can use) these values to be a future-maker.

**Discussion:** Scientists do not know for sure why Chamoru latte houses were built as they were. Recall that until 1668, the Chamoru culture was an oral culture. Discuss the possible relationship between not having a written language and the loss of cultural information. Discuss the importance of written language as well as the advantages of being an oral culture.

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## Web Resources

Guampedia: Archeology of the Marianas

<https://www.guampedia.com/historic-eras-of-guam/ancient-guam/archeology-of-the-marianas/>

Guampedia: About Guam

<http://guampedia.com/about-guam/>

Guampedia: Latte

<https://www.guampedia.com/latte/>

Guampedia: Ancient Chamoru Calendar

<https://www.guampedia.com/ancient-chamorro-calendar/>

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council: Lunar Calendars

<https://www.wpcouncil.org/educational-resources/lunar-calendars/>

Stanford News: Indigenous language of Papua New Guinea

<https://news.stanford.edu/2018/08/30/stanford-phd-student-documents-indigenous-language-papua-new-guinea/>

