

Cultural Essay Lesson Plan

Time Needed

30 minutes

Materials

- **Hawaiian Articles Cultural Essays**
(located at the end of the articles).

Introduce the cultural essay by reading the introductory material below. Have students read the cultural essay and answer the questions that follow the introduction.

The introductory material should be used for all articles except “Mangrove Mania.” See “Mangrove Mania” introductory material and questions to the right.

Hawai‘i Background: The Hawaiian Islands were first settled by the Polynesians, who arrived by boat around the year 300 CE (Common Era). The descendants of these first settlers are considered Native Hawaiian. Over time, other groups settled in Hawai‘i, including Europeans, North Americans, Chinese, and Japanese, among others. Today, only about 10 percent of the population is identified as Native Hawaiian.

Native Hawaiian culture, like most ancient cultures, held nature in high esteem. Aware of their dependence upon the natural environment for shelter, food, and clothing, Native Hawaiians developed political and cultural systems to ensure their survival.

In the cultural essay that you will read, you will search for clues to the Native Hawaiian connection with nature. Do this by answering the questions below:

- Who is the essay about?
- What is unique about the place being described?
- How did the place influence what happened?
- Could or did this happen in other places? Why? If so, where and describe how.
- What clues tell you that early Hawaiians respected their natural resources?
- What clues tell you that Hawaiians today respect their natural resources?
- How does the cultural essay relate to the article?
- Name two lessons we can learn from Hawaiian culture.
- Write a list of the lessons identified by the class.

- **Mangrove Mania Essay**
(located on p. 52).

Introductory material: The Federated States of Micronesia, or FSM, was settled up to 3,000 years ago by explorers from Asia and Polynesia. Because the nation’s more than 600 islands are separated by wide expanses of ocean, the culture of each inhabited island has remained distinct from other islands. For example, streams on the island of Pohnpei are inhabited by a freshwater eel. Pohnpeians believe that the streams and rivers were carved out of the land by these eels moving back and forth in the streams and are considered sacred animals. However, on Kosrae Island, only 300 miles away, eels are considered a delicacy and served at special occasions. The people of FSM, however, have things in common. The primary livelihoods across FSM are farming and fishing, and all FSM citizens practice singing, dancing, and storytelling.

Citizens of FSM value their identity as members of distinct ethnic groups with diverse cultural traditions and values. This sense of “unity in diversity” is embedded in the preamble to the FSM constitution: “To make one nation of many islands, we respect the diversity of our cultures. Our differences enrich us. The seas bring us together, they do not separate us. Our islands sustain us, our island nation enlarges us and makes us stronger.” (From <http://www.everyculture.com/Ma-Ni/Federated-States-of-Micronesia.html>.)

In the cultural essay that you will read, you will search for clues to the native connection with nature. Do this by answering the questions below:

- Who is the essay about?
- What is unique about the place being described?
- How did the place influence what happened?
- Could or did this happen in other places? Why? If so, where and describe how.
- How does the cultural essay relate to the article?
- Name two lessons we can learn from these Pacific Islanders.
- Write a list of the lessons identified by the class.