

**Intended for Grades:** 4-12 **Est. Time:** Project specific

**Lesson Title: HAWAIIAN SYMBOLOGY-Images that Speak**

**Lesson Purpose:** Students will:

- \* Focus attention on relevant topics (self, family, community)
- \* Learn about the meanings of symbols, both historical and current
- \* Create meaningful representations that incorporate historic Hawaiian symbols

**Materials & Preparation:**

- \* Symbols handout (See below)
- \* Paper with writing and drawing tools
- \* Decide on an authentic purpose for creating symbolic images. Projects might include:
  - \* *Create new designs for school items:* T-shirts, class flags, logo, bulletin board boarders, newsletter banner, school website artwork, exterior wall art, etc.
  - \* *Design a poster with a purpose:* Inform of an event; share information, motivate thinking, etc.
  - \* *Make a personal representation design:* Decorate a personal transition folder holding best work; design a family emblem or symbol; create a personal logo; design a picture representing goals illustrate a piece of writing or class book, etc.
  - \* *Decorate something at school:* Add important messages via words and images to promote peace and *pono* on benches, walls, or signs.
  - \* *Any real purpose:* Brainstorm how this information about Hawaiian symbols might be used. Consider ideas throughout the year when applicable.

**Background Information:**

The historical use of symbols is part of the culture of Hawaiians, Polynesians, and other indigenous groups. In fact, ancient symbolic designs are found around the world.

Petroglyphs and tattoos are two ways people of old shared their voice. These designs were created with a specific intention, like stating where you came from and who your family was, or recording important events in someone's life, likes a birth. Certain tattoos were also considered protection.

Even though there was some agreement to what a certain symbol (like of a bird) looked like, the specific style, meaning, and reason for use of a design was specific to each individual or family.

Today, tattoos have re-emerged as a popular form of expression. Understanding the use of symbols can help individuals make thoughtful choices if they choose to speak their voice with a tattoo.

Creating intentional designs where each line has meaning offers a creative format for people to identify what is important to them about themselves, a group, or a place. Using historical symbols can help build bridges of understanding to the past.

**Steps:**

1. Explain that students will explore the use of symbols in Hawai'i, past & present; they'll use these examples to help them create a meaningful artistic design. Set purpose by describing the project they will do and why they are doing it. (See Preparation ideas)
2. Build connections to student experiences by brainstorming symbols used today.

(I.e.: Business signs, T-Shirts, logos, advertisements, tattoos, tagging, street and building artwork; McDonald's golden arches, Red Cross, "F" for Facebook, etc.).

3. Identify and discuss the purpose and features of these designs: You can ask:  
*Why are they created? What features are notable and work well? Why?*
4. Invite students to share anything else they know about petroglyphs, logos, tattoos, and other images that speak.
5. Explain activity purpose and guidelines (I.e.: available time; supplies; expectations and protocols).
6. Allow students time to create a first draft of their design and then consult with others on how to improve it. Consider encouraging revisions until students create a work of beauty that make them feel proud. Share the following three helpful guidelines for peer critique:

**Be Kind ~ Be Specific ~ Be Helpful**

Source: *An Ethic of Excellence; Building a Culture of Craftsmanship with Students*  
by Ron Berger

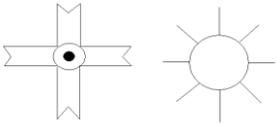
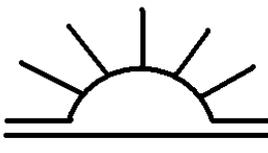
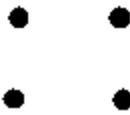
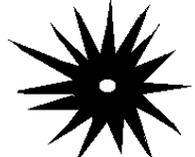
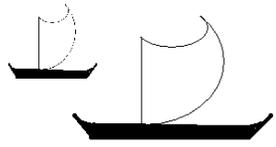
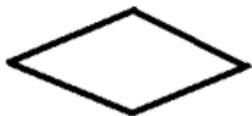
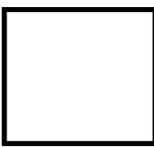
**Reflection Questions:**

*What did you learn that might be helpful in the future?*  
*What symbols or designs do you closely identify with, and why?*

**Resources:**

<http://www.pbs.org/skinstories/history/hawaii.html>  
<http://www.hawaiilive.org/topics.php?sub=Early+Hawaiian+Society&Subtopic=97>  
<http://coffeetimes.com/tattoos.htm>  
<http://www.coffeetimes.com/petroglyphs.htm>

HAWAIIAN SYMBOLS

 <p><b>Piko</b> – navel or belly button; connections to family and the past</p>	 <p><b>Lā</b> – sun, sun heat; daylight; brightness</p>	 <p><b>ūkuna</b> – rays of the sun at dawn; new beginnings</p>	 <p><b>Pouhana</b> – house posts; represents stability, strength; balanced &amp; grounded (pono); sacred #4</p>
 <p><b>wa</b> – frigate bird; tells of a prophesy; guides us; models survival skills</p>	 <p><b>Moana/Nalu</b> – ocean and/or waves</p>	 <p><b>Wai</b> – fresh water; lakes, rivers, puddles; Waiwai = wealth</p>	 <p><b>'Aumakua</b> – represents ancestors; guardian spirits; previous generations</p>
 <p><b>Wana</b> – Sea urchin; represents challenges; that which is precious and protected</p>	 <p><b>Pe'a and/or Wa'a</b> – Sail and/or canoe; represents voyaging, including spiritual journeying</p>	 <p><b>Paka'awili</b> – Spiral; represents going to and coming from</p>	 <p><b>Hulu and/or lau</b> – feather and/or leaf; represents truth</p>
 <p><b>Kipe'a</b> – to cross sticks; represents unity; sacred; shows direction</p>	 <p><b>Kaimana</b> – diamond; symbolizes genealogy</p>	 <p><b>Wai</b> – fresh water; represents rain; waterfall; tears</p>	 <p><b>Apo</b> – circle; Creator; symbolizes the sun; the moon</p>
 <p><b>Kū Pololei</b>– vertical lines; one way to show mana</p>	 <p><b>Pua Pana</b> – arrow; show direction</p>	 <p><b>Huinahā Kaulike</b> – square; represents earthly domain</p>	