

Intended for Grades: 7-12 Estimated Time: 90 - 120 min.

Lesson Title: UNCOVERING HISTORY THROUGH NAMES

Lesson Purpose: Students will:

- * Select a place name in or near their community, or a place that holds significance in Hawai`i, to study and explore
- * Deepen connections to this place by researching the meaning of its name and history
- * Prepare and give a short presentation to educate classmates about this place

Materials & Preparation:

- * Identify and research a few examples of place names to discuss
- * Prepare and present an example to share with the students
- * Organize resources to do research: Internet access; relevant books; individuals with historical knowledge

Background Information:

Many are content to live their lives without knowing the meaning of and the reason why certain places familiar to them got their names. The Hawaiian names given to certain places were given for various reasons, some simple, and some more historically relevant. Learning about places where they live will give participants an increased sense of connection and appreciation to their communities.

Steps:

1. As a group, talk about place and place names. An example can be discussing the word “wai” or fresh water and the many names that have “wai” in them and how they all have to do with water. Share examples and/or have Hawaiian dictionaries available to look up names on the spot. (Include researching smaller words within the name, *i.e.*: *wai* and *kiki*)
2. Support students in selecting their own place name to define and research. The place should be within your community, near it, or very significant. Some examples are street names, beach spots, *mauka* sites, places where a big event happened, or places that have reputations. List location choices before students start their research to limit duplication and ensure good choices.
3. As class work and/or homework, students then research the place they chose. This can start with simply defining the name with a Hawaiian dictionary (Break syllables apart, too). Students can continue to research in books, on the Internet (see resources below) and by interviewing local people who know the area well and have the willingness to share their *mana`o* (thoughts). Encourage students to support each other’s quest for information.
4. Facilitate a time for students to share and present their findings. Encourage students to be creative with this presentation, *i.e.*: bring in artifacts, share music or *oli*, create and use props, invite guest speakers, or create a PowerPoint or poster to support their presentation.

Reflection Questions:

- What did you learn from doing this research?
- Why did you choose your location?
- How do you feel after learning more about your place of choice?

Resources:

Ancient O`ahu - Fornander and Thrum

Ancient Sites of Hawai'i - James

Ancient Sites of Maui, Moloka'i, and Lāna`i - James

Ancient Sites of O`ahu - James

**Hawaii Place Names* - John R. K. Clark

Hawaiian Dictionary - Pukui and Elbert - www.wehewehe.org/

**Hawaiian Place Names* (Special Ulukau resource)

Nā Mele o Hawai'i Nei- Elbert and Mahoe

**Place Names of Hawaii*- Pukui, Elbert, and Mookini (Includes name meanings)

Sites of Oahu- Sterling and Summers

www.ulukau.org: (Under "Universal", type: Place Names to find various information sources)

**Find these resources in Ulukau's Hawaiian Electronic Library*