

**Intended for Grades:** 5<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> **Est. Time:** 45 min. - 1hr. **Date:** August, 2024

**Lesson Title: WHEN THE HEAVENS WEEP, THE EARTH LIVES Lesson**

**Purpose:** Students will:

- \* Gain a deeper understanding of the importance of wai (fresh water) in Hawaiian culture
- \* Learn about or review the water cycle from a scientific aspect
- \* Identify sustainability issues; work toward understanding solutions

**Materials & Preparation:**

- \* *Kūkulu Na Uapo* Curriculum DVD, Lesson #6 (The Water Cycle, 11 minutes) – online link at <https://youtu.be/CFqTosyyvXA?si=okaxE8LytGUk3sO6>
- \* Set up to project the attached ‘*Ōlelo No’eau* about *Wai* (water)
- \* Chart paper and pens
- \* Lined and unlined paper; pens & pencils to write and draw

**Background Information:**

*Wai* means fresh water, *kai* means seawater; both are of great value to the Hawaiians of past, and today, thus *waiwai* is the Hawaiian word for wealth. Water is the foundation of life and many important resources on land and in the sea. ‘*Āina* means land, earth, “the one that feeds us”.

Many ‘*Ōlelo No’eau*, or Hawaiian proverbs, were spoken about water, documented in a book entitled: ‘*Ōlelo No’eau - Hawaiian Proverbs and Poetical Sayings* by Mary Kawena Pukui. The poetical saying quoted below is one that is widely known.

**Steps:**

1. Cue DVD before class and project the ‘*Ōlelo No’eau* for students to read. Initiate the lesson by asking students if they know the English translation for *wai*. Ask a student volunteer to read the ‘*Ōlelo No’eau* in Hawaiian; then invite the class repeat it together:

*“Uē ka lani, ola ka honua.”*

2. Next, read the English translation: “When the heavens weep, the earth lives”, and discuss what this might mean. Invite students to share what they know about the value of water and its ability to sustain life.

3. Introduce and share the short video entitled “The Water Cycle” (11 min.) Ask students to take note of any words they don’t understand and jot them down.

4. After playing the video, debrief by discussing the main idea(s) of the video and define any unknown words. Stress understanding the following terms by writing them for the group to review:

- \* Environment: surroundings
- \* Amends: corrections
- \* Sustainability: Leaving the world better than you found it; taking no more than you need; protecting the environment; making amends when needed.

5. Create partners and ask students to discuss what they learned from the video that is important to remember. Ask each team to write down 2 or more ideas. Invite teams to briefly share.

6. Remind students that Hawaiian kupuna in the past lived sustainably, and suggest that everyone might greatly benefit by re-learning their sustainable Hawaiian practices.

7. Ask partners to brainstorm ways that we *have not* been sustainable as a modern culture. Share one example as a model. After a few minutes, generate a class list on chart paper of how people have not cared for this place:

*Examples:* \* Over-fishing \* Invasive plants on land and in the ocean \* Plastic bags  
\* Over-construction causing soil runoff and killing reefs \* Chemical fertilizers and poisons \* Clearing land for crops and development \* Dumping things in land fills instead of recycling, repurposing, etc.

8. Next, ask pairs to do two things:

a. Create individual small posters with this 'Ōlelo No'eaui on it, including the English translation with relevant designs and eye-catching illustrations.

b. While working on the poster, review the list on the board and discuss ways these problems might be addressed.

9. Provide time to have students share their posters and thoughts about solutions to the challenges our world faces. Discuss where posters can be placed to influence others to think of the importance of water.

10. Consider what service-learning project might be an authentic and useful experience for the students and community. Facilitate this project, if possible.

11. *Extension activity:* Research where the school and local community gets their water from in its speakers from the community to share about this and create avenues for the students to educate others.

### **Reflection Questions:**

\*Where is our water source?

\*Why is rain important?

\*How can we make a difference in our community, helping everyone become more sustainable?

### **Resources:**

**Hawai'i's Water Cycle:** <https://www.boardofwatersupply.com/water-resources/oahu-water-history/the-water-cycle>

**Stolen Waters video: Taro farmers battle for the stream waters that were taken by sugar plantations:** <https://oiwi.tv/oiwitv/stolen-waters/>

**After 150 years, water returns to Maui streams:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tz9YQ0bRg1o>

# *Uē Ka Lani, Ola Ka Honua*



**When the Heavens Weep, The Earth Lives.**

*‘Ōlelo No‘eau by Mary Kawena Pukui*

*Artwork by Alana Reiko Puamaolipihaokeolamauloaokalani Kahiapo*