PACIFIC PLACES

The Pacific Places curriculum unit addresses three Hawai‘i Department of Education (DOE) benchmarks for the seventh-grade Pacific Islands Studies course: the World in Spatial Terms (PI.7.1) benchmark and two Human and Physical Characteristics in Spatial Terms benchmarks (PI.7.2 and PI.7.3). The unit is designed as a self-contained package that can be used by teachers who are new to the Pacific Islands as well as by those who are familiar with the Pacific. The unit, which contains four lessons and takes twelve classroom periods, includes procedures/activities, resources/tools, and assessment instruments. The website for this curriculum unit is: [http://www.hawaii.edu/cpis/resources_7.html](http://www.hawaii.edu/cpis/resources_7.html)

Pacific Places draws on the skills and experience of curriculum development specialists (Donna Mills and Pauahi Baldomero-Kazunaga), classroom teachers (Nino Murray and Peter Wagner), and Pacific specialists (Julie Walsh and Tisha Hickson). Donna Mills was the coordinator for the project, which was made possible by a US Department of Education Title VI National Resource Center grant to the Center for Pacific Islands Studies (CPIS) at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa ([www.hawaii.edu/cpis](http://www.hawaii.edu/cpis)). Teachers Renee Adams (Kalama Intermediate, Maui), Tracy Palmgren (Ilima Intermediate, O‘ahu), and Sean Johnston (Washington Middle, O‘ahu), in addition to Murray and Wagner (Waiakea Intermediate, Hawai‘i) pilot tested the lessons.

THE “BIG IDEAS” ADDRESSED BY THE BENCHMARKS

The World in Spatial Terms benchmark (PI.7.1) and the Human and Physical Characteristics in Spatial Terms benchmarks (PI.7.2 and PI.7.3) specify that students will come to understand that

a) geographic representations (such as maps, graphs, diagrams, photographs, and satellite-produced images) can supply information about the physical and human characteristics of a place

b) the geographic makeup of coral, continental, and volcanic islands directly affects the Pacific region’s resource base, which in turn affects the region's potential for economic development

This unit includes Pacific Island Economies, a resource developed by James Mak, emeritus professor of economics at University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, is essential reading for teachers. Designed as a classroom reading for students, it is useful in understanding how the physical characteristics of Pacific Island entities affect their economic resources and their potential for economic development. This resource can be downloaded from the CPIS website at [www.hawaii.edu/cpis/resources_1.html](http://www.hawaii.edu/cpis/resources_1.html).

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARD 4

The Pacific Places unit explores National Geography Standard 4: The Physical and Human Characteristics of Place (see [http://www.learner.org/series/powerofplace/standards.html#standard4](http://www.learner.org/series/powerofplace/standards.html#standard4)). According to this standard, the physical characteristics of a place include climate, landforms, soils, hydrology, vegetation, and animal life, while the human characteristics of a place include language, religion, political systems, economic systems, population distribution, and quality of life. The ways in which physical and human processes interact over time are very complex. Because the three Hawai‘i DOE
benchmarks highlight the economics and demographics of Pacific places and their interaction with other characteristics of places, the terminology of this unit differs slightly than that of the National Geography Standard 4. The Pacific Places unit uses the term “human characteristics” to refer to selected elements of the built environment, such as bridges, man-made waterways, roads, cities and towns, and buildings, and contrasts these with the human characteristics of a place that pertain to economic activities and demographics.

DESCRIPTION OF LESSONS

- Lesson one is designed to hook students’ interest. It introduces them to the physical characteristics of islands in the Pacific region, also known as Oceania. It also introduces them to the ways that the physical characteristics of an island might influence its inhabitants’ daily activities and the ways they go about obtaining, and going beyond, the basic necessities of life.

- Lesson two is the centerpiece of the unit. It uses a matrix to guide students in gathering information about the physical and human characteristics of a particular place, or location. Students work in groups to research an assigned Pacific Island entity, with particular attention to how economic activities are related to its physical and human characteristics, including demographics.

- Lesson three asks the students to create a product or performance that compares a high-island entity and a low-island entity, with particular emphasis on the relationship between the physical and human characteristics of a location, including its demographics and economic activities.

- Lesson four is an optional extension activity.

CHOICE OF ISLAND ENTITIES

The six island entities for the study unit—Papua New Guinea, Fiji, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Chuuk State (one of the four states that make up the Federated States of Micronesia), Guam, and Tuvalu—were chosen with the following characteristics in mind:

- **Low islands vs high islands.** The Pacific Islands region is very diverse, both geographically and culturally. One way of understanding this diversity is by contrasting low islands (coral islands and atolls) with high islands (continental and volcanic islands). Low and high islands offer contrasts in terms of land area, population, climate, and economic resources. Our study matrix includes two Island entities that are primarily coral atolls and can be characterized as low islands—RMI and Tuvalu—and four entities that feature high islands, sometimes in combination with coral atolls.

- **Connections to the United States.** Our set of six Island entities is heavily oriented toward entities that have political connections with the United States. Our choice of Guam, RMI, and Chuuk State reflects, in part, the Hawai‘i DOE Pacific Islands Studies benchmarks’ focus on the cultural and political relations the United States has with selected islands. It also reflects the presence in Hawai‘i of a number of migrants from the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Chuuk State. These two entities are linked to the United States through compacts of free association, which specify that the citizens of these entities may work and live in the United States without having to obtain a visa. Including these two entities gives the growing number of Marshallese and Chuukese students in Hawai‘i an opportunity to see themselves...
in the curriculum, and it gives other students the opportunity to see their Marshallese and Chuukese peers as part of the broad Pacific Islands region.

- **Culture areas.** Although there is some debate in academic circles about whether the partitioning of the Pacific Islands into three culture areas—Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia—is useful or meaningful, it is still a common way of describing the entire Pacific Islands region. Our selection includes two Melanesian entities (Papua New Guinea, Fiji), three Micronesian entities (RMI, Chuuk State, Guam), and one Polynesian entity (Tuvalu).

- **Size.** Although Papua New Guinea is much larger than any other Island entity, and therefore is atypical in many respects, it is included as a further illustration of the diversity of the region.

**RESOURCES**

Each lesson is accompanied by resources that are needed for the lesson. In addition, there is a separate Resources web page (http://www.hawaii.edu/cpis/resources_7a.html) for lesson two that contains

- a list of resources on the Pacific Islands region as a whole
- a page for each of the six Island entities containing images and a list of resources

Although the list of resources for the region as a whole has been prepared with teachers in mind, the students may be given this general list, as well as hard copies of the resources for their particular Island entity. Each resource list contains links to online maps. These may be printed and given to each group, or students can access them from the lists and print the maps themselves.

In designing the unit, it was assumed that most, if not all, Hawai‘i DOE seventh-grade teachers have a classroom set of Reilly Ridgell’s *Pacific Nations and Territories*, third or fourth edition. Students using the third edition may have to rely on the online resources more than students using the fourth edition, which is more comprehensive.

**DATA GATHERING**

A few notes regarding data gathering and comparison:

- Because the entities selected represent different levels of political sovereignty, comparing and contrasting them is not as straightforward as it might seem. For example, it may not be easy for the students researching Chuuk, one of the four states that compose the Federated States of Micronesia, to find data just for Chuuk, as distinct from the Federated States of Micronesia.

- All of the Island entities that were selected (with the exception of Guam) consist of more than one island or atoll. Because the data are more readily available for the main island/atoll in each entity, we have focused on these main islands, which are in parentheses, following the name of the entity in the data-gathering matrix. However, economic and other activities on the main or capital island/atoll are not necessarily reflected in life on the outlying islands, just as O‘ahu offers a number of contrasts with its neighbor islands in Hawai‘i.
While the physical characteristics of an entity affect its economic base, there are other factors that influence an entity’s economy and demographics, such as its political status. For example, the political status of free association, which links an entity to a metropolitan power, such as the United States or New Zealand, may convey certain economic advantages and/or migration opportunities for an entity’s citizens. In our sample, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, and Tuvalu are independent nations; Guam is a territory of the United States; RMI is a self-governing nation in free association with the United States; and Chuuk is a one of the states that form the Federated States of Micronesia, another self-governing nation in free association with the United States. (For a concise representation of the different kinds of political association in the region, see the Political Statuses of Pacific Islands chart at www.hawaii.edu/cpis/PoliticalStatuses11.pdf.)

Because the wording of the three benchmarks does not refer to political association, the unit, as written, does not address the third “big idea” that is linked with the target benchmarks: migration from rural to urban areas resulted in large Polynesian communities in metropolitan areas. Political status is a very important aspect of Pacific Island entities, however, and teachers (and students) may want to add it as a category on the data-gathering matrix.
**Title of Unit:** Pacific Places  
**Course:** Pacific Island Studies

**Duration:** 12 class periods (@50 minutes ea.)  
**Grade:** 7

**Hawaii Content and Performance Standards III Benchmarks**  

- 7PI.7.1 World in Spatial Terms  
  Use geographic representations such as maps or models to explain population distribution and the physical and human characteristics of places in Oceania, including landforms, natural resources, climate, rivers, lakes, bridges, dams, roads, and buildings.

- 7PI.7.2 Human and Physical Characteristics in Spatial Terms  
  Describe demographic patterns and how they affect places.

- 7PI.7.3 Human and Physical Characteristics in Spatial Terms  
  Analyze important economic activities and explain the relationship between these activities and the physical (including natural resources, land forms, and waterways) and human (including bridges, canals and roads) characteristics of places in Oceania.

**Content Addressed:**  
- population settlement/distribution  
- demographics (eg, population increases, decreases, growth and decline, birth and death rates, race, ethnicity, patterns of movement over time)  
- economic activity (eg, providing for basic needs, making a living, trading, land and sea resources)  
- geographic theme of place: physical characteristics of places (eg, waterways, landforms, natural resources, climate, rivers, lakes) and human characteristics of places (eg, bridges, dams, roads, canals, buildings)

**Skills Addressed:**  
- using maps and other geographic representations  
- describing, explaining, and analyzing  
- making cause-and-effect connections

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Title and Duration</th>
<th>Notes/comments</th>
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| 1  Where Would You Live? (one class period) | This introductory lesson includes  
  - whole-class map reading and discussion activity  
  - small-group activity addressing the best place to live and why  
  - individual activity that provides each student a chance to design an island community based on his/her own needs/interests  
  
The intent is to have students begin to understand the difference between the physical and human characteristics of a place. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2</th>
<th><strong>Our Pacific Islands (eight class periods)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Compared with Places - Conclusions and Generalizations (two class periods)</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>A. Introduction (one class period)</strong></td>
<td><strong>A. Review (one class period)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>B. Hawai`i: Our State (one class period)</strong></td>
<td><strong>B. Assessment Task (one class period)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>C. Group Research (three class periods)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>D. Group Presentation (two class periods)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>E. Group Debriefing (one class period)</strong></td>
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Four corners activity in which students begin to classify topics into four categories: physical characteristics, human characteristics, demographics, and economics.

Teacher models and includes whole class in using maps, charts, and other resources to glean information and place it on a matrix. Categories on the matrix are clarified and skills such as using a map key are practiced. Class discussion should include the relationship between economic activity and other characteristics of places.

Assign students to one of six Island entities. Have students give same information as modeled in 2A and apply what they learned in 2A. They complete matrix after research and prepare for presentations.

Groups share their findings with the entire class. Groups submit their matrix to teacher for duplication and distribution to other students who should formulate some questions. (Teachers may want to prepare their own matrix to compare to student submissions.) Presentations should include relationship between economic activity and other characteristics of places.

Debrief in small groups using questions provided in Additional Questions to Consider.

Whole class with teacher: compare and contrast gathered information to identify patterns and offer generalizations. Examine characteristics in detail.

Complete final assessment task.
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<th><strong>Projecting the Future (Optional)</strong></th>
<th>Students address the following questions:</th>
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|   | This is an extension home-play lesson that takes the student beyond the benchmarks. It may be used for students who are ahead of others and/or be given as extra credit. | • In ten years where would I like to be and what do I need to do to get there?  
• What skills do I project I will need.  
• What will this place be like in ten years?  
• Would I like to live here? Why or why not?  
• What can I do now to make sure this is a place I will want to live?  
• In addition to the things we looked at, what other things influence my decision to live in a particular place? |