

Navigating the Stars

Knowledge Set Teaching Guide

This Knowledge Set celebrates Asian/Pacific American heritage as students read texts focused on how ancient Polynesians discovered and settled many Pacific Islands. Throughout this set, students will synthesize information from ancient Polynesian legends as well as informational texts to construct a better understanding of Polynesian culture and their sailing and navigation techniques. Students will also learn how Polynesians today are working to revive ancient traditions and values and share them with people around the world.

Target Grades & Subject(s): Grades 6-8; English-Language Arts

Learning Objectives

- Students will compare and contrast historical and scientific data presented in an informational text with the details provided in legends to gain a better understanding of ancient Polynesian culture. (CCSS RL.6)
- Students will examine and synthesize information presented in different media or formats. (CCSS RI/RL.9)

Before Teaching this Series

- Introduce the region of Polynesia by showing students a [map](#). Explain that Polynesia includes over 1,000 islands in the Pacific Ocean and the Polynesian people consist of various ethnic groups that speak different languages.

Texts in this Series (download texts [here](#))

Text 1: Pa'ao and Lonopele (4 pages)	
The first text in this set is a Polynesian legend about some of the first settlers on the Hawaiian islands. This text provides background about ancient Polynesian culture and introduces their navigation and sailing practices.	Extension Activity: Have students create a comic strip or write a journal entry presenting the conflict between Lonopele and Pa'ao from one character's perspective.
Text 2: Ancient Canoe Found In New Zealand Reveals 'Sophisticated' Early Sailing Technology (1 pages)	
This article builds on the previous text in this set by focusing on the recent discovery of an ancient Polynesian canoe. As students read this text, they will consider how the historical and scientific data presented relates to the details about the voyage and canoe described in the previous legend.	Discussion Questions: - Based on the article, why do some historians believe that the success of Polynesian sailors was due to luck? - Do you agree with this claim? Why or why not?
Text 3: Hawai'iloa and the Discovery of Hawai'i (3 pages)	
As we continue in this set, students will read a different Polynesian legend that describes the discovery and settlement of Hawaii. The instruction in this set guides students to compare and contrast this legend to other accounts describing Polynesian exploration. This legend also highlights some of the navigation techniques of ancient Polynesian sailors.	Extension Activity: Using a Venn Diagram, have students compare and contrast the legends about Pa'ao and Hawai'iloa. Ask them to identify elements of the two stories that are similar and highlight important aspects of Polynesian culture.
Text 4: How Far They'll Go: Moana Shows the Power of Polynesian Celestial Navigation (2 pages)	
In this text, students will continue to learn about ancient Polynesian navigation techniques. This text also addresses some of the questions posed in earlier texts in this set regarding whether Polynesian sailors intentionally sailed to new islands.	Discussion Question: - How does the evidence in this article support the description of Hawai'i Loa's journey in the previous legend?
Text 5: Hokule'a, The Hawaiian Canoe Traveling The World By A Map Of The Stars (7 pages)	
As we conclude this set, students will learn about how some Hawaiians today are reviving the sailing traditions of ancient Polynesians. The instruction in this text guides students identify and interpret textual evidence regarding the impact of learning about and embracing one's heritage. As students read this article, they should synthesize the details about Polynesian culture that they have learned in the previous texts.	Extension Activity: Have students explore the Polynesian Voyaging Society's website and other sites to learn about the different stops that the Hokule'a made on its journey around the world. Students can then create a map or another visual display showing the ship's journey and explaining the significance of each stop.