

# Expressions Of Culture, History And Politics Through Art And Music

This lesson is designed for social studies, arts, and literature classrooms, grades 9-12.

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## Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will:

1. Analyze a piece of music to identify its political, cultural, and historical messages.
2. Discuss relationships between art, history, culture and aesthetics.
3. Examine how Hawaiian artists transmit cultural traditions, history and nationalism in their work.
4. Create an original rap, poem, ode, etc. to express both identity and a point of view on an important issue of their choosing.

## Relevant Standards

These standards are drawn from “Content Knowledge,” a compilation of content standards and benchmarks for K-12 curriculum by McRel (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning), at <http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/>.

### Art

#### Music

**Standard 7:** Understands the relationship between music and history and culture

**Benchmark 3 (Level IV):** Knows various roles that musicians perform (e.g., entertainer, teacher, transmitter of cultural traditions) and representative individuals who have functioned in these roles

#### Visual Arts

**Standard 4:** Understands the visual arts in relation to history and culture

**Benchmark 3 (Level IV):** Understands relationships among works of art in terms of history, aesthetics, and culture

## Behavioral Studies

**Standard 1:** Understands that group and cultural influences contribute to human development, identity, and behavior

**Benchmark 7 (Level IV):** Understands that family, gender, ethnicity, nationality, institutional affiliations, socioeconomic status, and other group and cultural influences contribute to the shaping of a person's identity

**Standard 4:** Understands conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among individuals, groups, and institutions

**Benchmark 1 (Level IV):** Understands that conflict between peoples or groups may arise from competition over ideas, resources, power, and/or status

**Benchmark 3 (Level IV):** Understands that conflicts are especially difficult to resolve in situations in which there are few choices and little room for compromise

## Civics

**Standard 11:** Understands the role of diversity in American life and the importance of shared values, political beliefs, and civic beliefs in an increasingly diverse American society

**Benchmark 3 (Level IV):** Knows examples of conflicts stemming from diversity, and understands how some conflicts have been managed and why some of them have not yet been successfully resolved

**Standard 13:** Understands the character of American political and social conflict and factors that tend to prevent or lower its intensity

**Benchmark 1 (Level IV):** Understands issues that involve conflicts among fundamental values and principles such as the conflict between liberty and authority

## Language Arts

### Writing

**Standard 2:** Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing

**Benchmark 1 (Level IV):** Uses precise and descriptive language that clarifies and enhances ideas and supports different purposes

## Estimated Time

Two 50-minute class periods

## Materials Needed

- Computers with Internet access, or copies of relevant pages. For the music analysis section of this lesson, a computer will need to be able to play a MP3 file. Alternatively, the "Ea" CD by Sudden Rush could be purchased for \$16.98 from [BuyHawaiianMusic.com](http://www.buyhawaiianmusic.com) (<http://www.buyhawaiianmusic.com/Search.bok>)
- Handout: "Ea" Analysis Worksheet

- Handout: Reading Guide for “Sovereignty in Hawai’i”

## Backgrounder for Teachers

Art and music are integral components of cultural, social and political expression. In fact, when a culture or people are in conflict with others, related tensions are often expressed first through their art. Using music and art related to the Hawaiian sovereignty movement as an example, this lesson explores the connections between art, music, and history, and discusses how art and music can be used to bring attention to socio-economic and political issues within a community.

## Assumed Student Prior Knowledge

It is recommended that students have some background on Hawaiian history to help them understand the context of the essay, “Sovereignty in Hawai’i”. Another essay, “Hawaiian Historical Overview” and its Reading Guide can provide an overview of Hawaiian history, if needed.

## Teaching Strategy

### Part I

1. Begin the lesson by distributing copies of the “Ea” Analysis Worksheet to each student. Explain that you are going to play the chorus of a song by a band named Sudden Rush. Ask students to listen to the chorus and follow along with the lyrics on their worksheet.
2. Play the chorus of “Ea” provided in the MP3 music sample of Sudden Rush on the Sovereign Stories Web site (<http://www.sovereignstories.org/gallery.htm#sudden-rush>). (Note: the MP3 file plays the chorus to “Ea” at the beginning of the sample. After the chorus, other music by Sudden Rush is played.)
3. Give students a few minutes to respond to the worksheet’s questions about the chorus.
4. As a class, review student responses from their worksheets, focusing especially on the question about what might have motivated Sudden Rush to write such a song.
5. Then, have students read through the rest of the lyrics to “Ea” ([http://www.sovereignstories.org/sudden\\_rush-ea.htm](http://www.sovereignstories.org/sudden_rush-ea.htm)), provided on the Sovereign Stories Web site. Discuss if initial student answers to worksheet questions correlate to the rest of the lyrics of the song. There are three verses, each written by a member of Sudden Rush. Ask students to identify the different issues addressed in each verse. What are some common themes? Who are “Sam”, “Gepetto”, and “Mr. President”?
6. Next, expand student understanding of the song, “Ea” by having them read the essay, “Sovereignty in Hawai’i” on the Sovereign Stories Web site and complete its

companion Reading Guide. As either a class or as individuals (perhaps a game to see who can find the most connections?), try to link the song lyrics with issues and events in the essay. Some examples:

Lyrics: "You know they didn't wanna ever go down while they see us rising like an elevator. But its time for the indigenous up-rise. I see the fire burning in the children's eyes"

Related Issue: Resistance to indigenous rights

Lyrics: "Another freeway another *heiau* dies."

Related Issue: The impact of development on religious sites

7. Conclude the activity by asking students to name some other contemporary artists that express political and cultural views in their music? (i.e., Tupac Shakur, Sting, etc.) What are some issues these artists address?

## Part II

1. The Gallery section of the Sovereign Stories Web site features Sudden Rush and three other artists (a sculptor, a photographer, and a painter) who utilize their Hawaiian cultural background and sense of aesthetics in their artwork. Have students look at the biographies of these artists and identify what the artists say about their individual motivations.

2. Next, look at the examples of these artists' work provided on the site. As a class, discuss what they see in the different visual pieces. How is each artist's motivations expressed in his or her work? (Note: One image depicts a sculpture of a penis. Please be sure to review the image in advance and then emphasize to students the cultural significance of the image as reflected in Carl Pao's biography.)

3. Tell students that they are now prepared to produce their own creative expressions. Break students into small groups and have each group create a rap, poem, ode, or some other written work that both reflects an aspect of their identity and addresses a local, national or international issue/current event.

4. Allow time for students to recite or perform their pieces for their classmates.

5. To conclude the lesson, have students each write a reflective essay about his or her project that describes its topic, its significance, and the motivations for choosing it for his or her creative project.

## Assessment Recommendations

The following student work can be evaluated for this lesson:

- The accuracy and thoroughness of answers on the lesson handouts

- Correct identification of issue connections between the song, “Ea” and the essay, “Sovereignty in Hawai’i”
- Completion of a creative work that reflects both identity and a position on an issue
- Presentations with thought given to public speaking skills such as vocal clarity and eye-contact
- Thoughtful commentary in the reflective essay

## Extension Ideas

1. Find and analyze additional musical or visual pieces that feature cultural history and conflict. Consider sources such as the Native American community, other cultures, and/or foreign countries.
2. Extend the scope of the creative project in the main teaching strategy of this lesson to include visual artwork such as painting, sculpture, graphics, drawings, flags, family crests, banners, videos, etc.
3. Modern rap and hip-hop are distinctly American genres of music. Choose one or more artists from these styles and identify the themes and messages in their music. How has America's history influenced such music? How have these musical genres influenced American culture?
4. Check out the “On the Streets” section (<http://www.sovereignstories.org/streets.htm>) of the Sovereign Stories Web site. There you'll find articles about two demonstrations for Hawaiian rights and the preservation of culture. Such actions are other ways that one can express his or her cultural identity and bring attention to economic, social and political concerns. After students have completed the creative project in the main teaching strategy of this lesson, have them research how others have expressed their perspectives on their project's issue.
5. Produce a class CD of the students' creative projects. Have students design a CD cover and write liner notes that explain the themes and issues covered.
6. Create a feature of student creative projects for the school newspaper or TV outlet.

## Related Resources

### Journals

'Oiwi: A Native Hawaiian Journal, ed. D. Mahealani Dudoit, vol. 1, issue 1, 1998. Honolulu: Kuleana 'Oiw Press.

A collection of essays, artwork, poetry and scenes related to Native Hawaiian culture, history, art, resistance, and spirituality. The journal also includes an article and more artwork by Kapulani Landgraf.

### Lesson Plans

These related lesson plans can be accessed through PBS TeacherSource (<http://www.pbs.org/teachersource>):

- The Strength of Native American Music  
[http://www.pbs.org/americanrootsmusic/pbs\\_arm\\_its\\_lesson\\_four.html](http://www.pbs.org/americanrootsmusic/pbs_arm_its_lesson_four.html)  
This lesson plan discusses assimilation through the repression of cultural and national expressions in Native American communities and its effects on the people. Students will identify “dangerous music” today as well as “cultural music” and why music is important to a group's cultural identity.
- The Art of Social Protest  
<http://www.pbs.org/kqed/onenight/teachers/>  
Examine how art and music help define and unify a social movement as well as function as symbols of protest.

### **About the Author**

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## "Ea" Analysis Worksheet

Read and listen to the chorus of a song by *Sudden Rush* entitled, "Ea". Then, answer the questions below. (Note: A glossary of Hawaiian words is provided.)

### **"Ea" by *Sudden Rush*** (chorus)

To all my people tell me what you want, *Ea!*  
Hawaiians tell me what you need, *Ea!*  
Trying to take what the *kanaka maoli* got, *Ea!*  
Just to satisfy the government's greed, *'A'ole!*  
Hawaiians tell me what you want, *Ea!*  
*Kanaka Maoli* tell me what you need, *Ea!*  
We must never forget what our *kupuna* taught.  
*Ea* even if I have to bleed.

### **Glossary of Hawaiian Words**

**'a'ole** – no, not, never

**Ea** – sovereignty, rule, independence

**heiau** – pre-Christian place of worship, shrine

**ka'a** – car

**wa'a** – canoe

**Kanaka maoli** – Native Hawaiian

**kupuna** – grandparent, ancestor

**mana** – supernatural or divine power,  
power, authority

### **Answer the following questions:**

1. To whom is the song addressed?
2. Who do you think wrote the song?
3. What points are being made in the song?
4. What is the tone of the song?
5. What might have motivated someone to write this song?

## READING GUIDE

### “Hawaiian Historical Overview”

1. In the mid-nineteenth century, there was a systematic change in land tenure systems. Identify this change and the effects it had on the Hawaiian Kingdom and its people.
  
2. What events have contributed to the erosion of *Kanaka Maoli* cultural identity?
  
3. Name three major factors that contributed to the decline of Hawaiian control in the Kingdom.
  
4. What was the reaction to increasing influence of foreigners in the government?
  
5. What was the primary goal of those who wished to overthrow the monarchy?
  
6. What is the *Hawaiian Homes Commission Act*? What kinds of lands were included in this category?
  
7. What is the *Office of Hawaiian Affairs*?
  
8. What replaced agriculture as Hawai'i's primary economic force? How did this change affect native Hawaiians?
  
9. What are the three strategies utilized by Hawaiians to maintain and perpetuate their culture and identity?

<b><u>Glossary of Hawaiian Words</u></b>	
<p><b>‘āina</b> - land  <b>ali’i</b> – chief  <b>ali’i nui</b> – high chief  <b>‘auwai</b> –irrigation ditch that feeds taro gardens  <b>haole</b> – foreigner  <b>Kanaka Maoli</b> – Native Hawaiian  <b>Kuhina nui</b> – chief councilor  <b>lo’i</b> – taro gardens</p>	<p><b>loko i’a</b> – fishponds used to farm fish from the sea  <b>māhele</b> – to divide  <b>maka’āinana</b> – common people  <b>Mālama ‘Āina</b> – “to cherish the land”  <b>malihini</b> - newcomer  <b>mauka</b> – inland, towards the mountains  <b>Mō’ī</b> – paramount chief</p>

## READING GUIDE

### “Sovereignty In Hawai’i”

1. What are three important and connected trends and events that have contributed to the endurance and growth of the Native sovereignty movement in Hawai’i? Give examples for each.
2. What was the main impetus for political activism in this movement?
3. What are some of the strategies used to place Hawaiian sovereignty at the level of international law.
4. Ka Lahui Hawai’i is perhaps the most visible of the native initiatives for self-determination. Describe it.
5. How has the U.S. federal government responded to a growing nationalist movement in Hawai’i?
6. What are some criticisms of the *Office of Hawaiian Affairs* and the *Department of Hawaiian Homelands*?
7. Some groups argue that the Kingdom of Hawai’i still exists under foreign occupation. What evidence supports their claim?
8. While the Hawaiian nationalist movement is more closely related to the Native American movement, it utilizes some of the same strategies as the U.S. civil rights movement in the 1960’s and 70’s. What are some of the strategies utilized by early Hawaiian activists?

### **Glossary of Hawaiian Words**

**'āina** – land

**hula** – traditional dance of Hawai’i

**Kaho'olawe** – uninhabited Hawaiian island, taken by the US military in 1941 for bombing practice

**kanaka** – person, man

**kanaka maoli** – Native Hawaiian

**Kia 'āina** - governor

**kūpuna** – grandparents, ancestors

**lukānela** - lieutenant

**mele** - song

**Moloka'i** – Name of a Hawaiian island

**O'ahu** –name of the most populous of the Hawaiian Islands, home of the capital city Honolulu

**'ōlelo Hawai'i** – Hawaiian language

**oli** – traditional Hawaiian chant

**Onipa'a** – fixed, immovable, steadfast, resolute, determined