



CRAFT IN AMERICA

HAWAIIAN QUILTS: SPEAKING WITH FABRIC AND THREAD EDUCATION GUIDE

Name:

Worksheet 1: Carrying On Culture

*"That was the mission of my parents, to pass that culture on from generation to generation."
—Rae Correia*

Work with a partner to answer the questions here.

1. What happened to the Kingdom of Hawaii, and to its queen, Queen Lili'uokalani?
2. Why did the Queen make her quilt?
3. Imagine if something in this list that is important to you seemed to be disappearing. How might you try to preserve it in some way? How would you (or how do you already) help to pass such things on to the next generation? A plant, an animal, a kind of art, a craft, a part of nature, a building, a park, a game, a sport, a movie, a song, a dance, a hobby, an interest, a recipe, a language, a celebration, a holiday.
4. Do a search for Tapa, and then for Kapa, online. What are they?
5. In 2024, the shaka sign was made Hawaii's official state hand gesture. Hawaii is the only state to have one. Look up what it means, and how to make the sign.
6. The sisters continue to teach quilting in the Poakalani quilt class. What is their mission? How would you explain why it is important to them?

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Worksheet 1: Carrying On Culture with Sample Responses

1. What happened to the Kingdom of Hawaii, and to its queen, Queen Lili'uokalani?
Queen Lili'uokalani was imprisoned in the palace in 1893 when American businessmen overthrew the Kingdom of Hawaii.
2. Why did the Queen make her quilt?
Zita Cup Choy, the historian, said of the queen that "She began to speak to the future with thread and fabric, creating a quilt from garments, scraps." The queen also placed the Hawaiian flag at the center of her quilt. She wanted Hawaiians to remember the Kingdom of Hawaii and to be proud of it. Share with students that the queen's quilt is in the crazy quilt style that was popular in the states at the time; many fabrics in irregular shapes that are stitched together and highlighted with decorative embroidery stitches.
3. Imagine if something in this list that is important to you seemed to be disappearing. How might you try to preserve it in some way? How would you (or how do you already) help to pass such things on to the next generation? A plant, an animal, a kind of art, a craft, a part of nature, a building, a park, a game, a sport, a movie, a song, a dance, a hobby, an interest, a recipe, a language, a celebration, a holiday.
Take some time to discuss what students come up with. An example might be "I teach my younger cousins how to play soccer. It's important to me and my parents played it, too." "I helped last summer to clean up a park so it could stay open." "Recipes and holidays for me. My grandparents teach me how to cook the family favorites, and maybe I will do that for my grandchildren someday."
4. Do a search for Tapa, and then for Kapa, online. What are they?
Ask students to share what they have found, and add the following information if needed. Tapa and Kapa both refer to a papery textile that was made by Hawaiians before fabrics were imported to the islands. It was made from the bark of trees such as mulberry. It was very difficult to make but was used for clothing and blankets, and decorated with stamped designs. Even though fabrics from the mainland replaced tapa, or kapa, and it began to disappear, it is still used for ceremonial clothes and as artworks. Many artists are working to preserve this traditional craft. Point out to students that this is more evidence that Hawaiians are proud of their cultural traditions, and work to preserve them for future generations.
5. In 2024, the shaka sign was made Hawaii's official state hand gesture. Hawaii is the only state to have one. Look up what it means, and how to make the sign.
Ask students what they have found. It is a positive sign, and can mean aloha, hello, goodbye, and "hang loose" which means "take it easy." It was also popularized by surfers. Students should have fun with this. They can make the sign and include it as a fact on the eventual wall display.
6. The sisters continue to teach quilting in the Poakalani quilt class. What is their mission? How would you explain why it is important to them?
Point to the quote at the top of the worksheet. Just like with artists preserving tapa and kapa textiles, the sisters want to preserve distinctly Hawaiian culture. You might ask students to share what is important about their individual cultural backgrounds, as they may have begun thinking about in question 2.