



Gibbs Smith Education

Lesson Plan

Kumulipo

- Individually or as a class, read the following Spotlight from the Student Edition:

Many traditional Hawaiian stories are told through oli, or chants. The Hawaiian creation chant, known as the Kumulipo, is very long. It's the story of a royal family in Hawai'i and their origins back to the beginning of the world. It covers the creation of plant, animal, and human life. The Kumulipo has 2,102 lines and is known today because generations of Native Hawaiians memorized it and passed it down through oral tradition until it was put into writing in the 18th century. Queen Lili'uokalani translated the Kumulipo into the English language in the 19th century while under house arrest.

- Provide students with the [Text and Translation](#) of the Kumulipo. You may want to have students watch this short [5-Minute Introduction](#) to the Kumulipo.
- Consider the importance of the Kumulipo for those who wish to celebrate Indigenous culture or center traditional Hawaiian understandings of nature as a means of conservation. Have students examine the following:
 - [Kamehameha Schools Seniors' Animated Video of the Kumulipo](#)
 - [Zoe Leonard's Hand Written Copy of the Kumulipo](#) (bottom of page)
 - [Gwen Arkin's Plant Pairings within the Kumulipo](#)
 - **Ask:** How do these works of art require a close reading of the Kumulipo? How do they draw the viewer's attention to different aspects of the text?
- Have students select a passage of the Kumulipo or another origin story, song, or poem to explore with art. Have students share their work or hold a brief discussion about how creating art related to an origin story provided new insights to the text.
- Examples of art may include the following:
 - illustration, painting, fiber arts, etc. to represent scenes or convey the action, mood, or events in an excerpt
 - rewriting, memorizing, or reciting a passage
 - translating a passage into a different language, storytelling style (narrative, song, etc.), or creating an abridged or simplified version for children
 - drawing inspiration from the text to inspire a dance, instrumental music, new recipe, etc.
- Depending on your goals for the assignment, provide students with in-class time or a due date and expectations for their work if you would like students to submit a draft or finished product.

Approx. Time



- 60 minutes

Big Questions



- How have modern artists interpreted the Kumulipo?

Resources



- <https://blogs.ksbe.edu/adakina/files/2008/02/kumulipo-text.pdf>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXQGhErjCFk>
- <https://www.ksbe.edu/article/illustrating-the-kumulipo>
- <https://uchri.org/foundation/plant-pairings-within-the-kumulipo/>

Source



- *Mosaic: Themes in Asian American Studies*