

Teacher Toolkit

A LESSON ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & ALOHA 'ĀINA

LESSON PLAN & PURPOSE

This teacher toolkit was created by the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement to promote youth civic engagement during the public comment period for the proposed national marine sanctuary in marine waters of Papahānaumokuākea.
This toolkit has been written for high school and college levels.

After this lesson, students will be able to:

- Understand multiple, different ways to engage with government decision-making.
- Connect and apply knowledge from the classroom to real-life advocacy opportunities.
- Feel comfortable researching, writing about, and advocating for issues they feel are important.
- Develop the confidence to continue their advocacy well beyond this lesson.

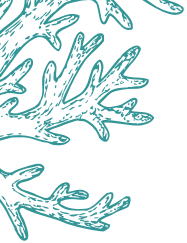
TIME FRAME

The public comment period will be open March 1, 2024 – May 7, 2024, with in-person public comment meetings across Hawai'i in the month of April.

This lesson is ideally taught sometime during this period, so students can directly apply what they've learned to a real-life opportunity for civic engagement. However, the lesson on civic engagement is evergreen and can be adapted for any current issue. For more information on the Papahānaumokuākea national marine sanctuary designation public comment period, please visit <https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/papahanaumokuakea/>

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- A lesson plan to introduce students to civic engagement, including multiple ways to get involved with different government decision-making processes, steps to develop a strategy to identify policy issues and solutions, and different paths to become an impactful advocate;
- A practical and timely application to practice advocacy skills, including background information on Papahānaumokuākea, sample in-class activities to discuss advocacy and learn about different constituent interests, and additional resources for research;
- Possible assignments to practice advocacy skills and participate in the ongoing public comment period, with a sample grading rubric.



Youth Civic Engagement

LESSON PLAN

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ADVOCATE?

Advocacy is the public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy. Put more simply, it's a way to let the government know what you think.

The government makes decisions for its citizens all the time, ranging from taxes to housing developments to holidays to environmental protections. Oftentimes, there's no one right answer for everyone because different members of the public will feel differently about the same issue. It's up to the government to hear from as many people as possible and make the decision that best balances everyone's thoughts, ideas, and concerns.

It's important to be a strong advocate because government does not work without active civic engagement; a representative government cannot make the right decisions if it does not know the full breadth of what the public thinks. If you don't voice your opinion, the government can't bring that into consideration when making a final decision.

HOW DOES THE GOVERNMENT MAKE DECISIONS?

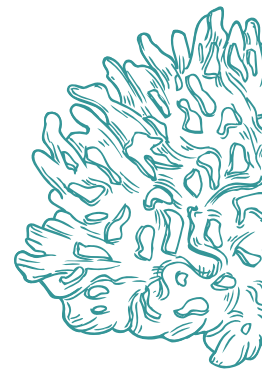
At every level of government, within every branch of government, there is an opportunity for constituents to voice their opinion.

DISCUSSION #1

What are the different parts of government?

Students can have a couple of minutes to list out as many parts of government as they can think of. Instructors should be sure to include all three branches of government (judicial, legislative, and executive) as well as multiple levels of government (federal, state, and local). An example list is below.

- Federal
 - Supreme Court of the United States
 - United States Congress
 - The White House, Departments, and Executive Agencies
- State
 - Supreme Court of the State of Hawai'i
 - Hawai'i State Legislature
 - Hawai'i State Governor and State Departments
- Local
 - City Councils and Neighborhood Boards
 - Mayor's Office and City Departments



Youth Civic Engagement

LESSON PLAN

HOW DOES THE GOVERNMENT MAKE DECISIONS? (CONTINUED)

DISCUSSION #2

For each different part of government, what is one way that you can become engaged in their decision-making process? How impactful is each different method of advocacy?

Students can have some time to talk about the different ways that citizens can interact with their government. Students should also discuss the pros and cons for each method, as well as possible barriers to access. For example, some students may not be able to vote if they are not citizens or if they are younger than 18. An example list is below, with articles highlighting youth advocacy in certain areas.

Judicial Advocacy

- Becoming involved in court cases that create precedent
 - How Hawai'i's Youth Advocates are Fighting for Hawai'i's Future: <https://earthjustice.org/feature/hawaii-youth-climate-lawsuit>
- Filing amicus briefs

Legislative Advocacy

- Voting
 - Native Hawaiian leaders gather in Honolulu to encourage voter participation: <https://www.hawaiipublicradio.org/the-conversation/2022-08-02/native-hawaiian-leaders-gather-in-honolulu-to-encourage-voter-participation>
- Testifying on bills, resolutions, budgets
 - Lahaina Strong at Opening Day of the State Legislature: <https://mauinow.com/2024/01/17/lahaina-wildfire-survivors-community-leaders-rallying-on-opening-day-of-the-legislature/>
- Writing letters to your representatives

Executive Advocacy

- Making public comments on agency rules and regulations

Grassroots Advocacy

- Joining an advocacy group
 - Sierra Club Youth Advocacy Program: <https://sierraclubhawaii.org/youth>
- Public protesting
 - Onipa'a March: <https://www.hawaiipublicradio.org/local-news/2024-01-18/onipaa-march-draws-thousands-to-commemorate-overthrow-of-hawaiian-kingdom>
- Posting on social media
- Talking to your friends and family



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LESSON PLAN

HOW CAN YOU BE AN IMPACTFUL ADVOCATE?

Even if you know all the ways that you can make a difference in the government decision-making process, every advocate can improve their skills and hone their technique to become more impactful. Below is a framework to guide students through advocacy for any issue.

Identify the problem

What are problems that you see in your neighborhood or on the news? Problems can be small, like a pothole that needs to be fixed, or large, like international issues.

Research the problem

What government body can help solve the problem? What are other people doing to help solve the problem? Has the problem been solved in other places?

Advocate for a solution

How can you reach the government body best suited to solve the problem? Who can you work with to help advocate? Which solution are you advocating for?



Youth Civic Engagement

LESSON APPLICATION

BACKGROUND: PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS AND PAPAĪANAUMOKUĀKEA

Below is background information for instructors to help explain the public comment process, Papahānaumokuākea, and how students can apply this civic engagement lesson immediately. The background information is useful to establish a foundation for the lesson activity, but students should also be encouraged to do more research for the lesson assignment.

PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS

Before governing bodies can make a decision, they first listen to public input. Before a bill is passed, legislators will hear public testimony on the issue. Before a big case is decided, the court will accept briefs from the public on what they think. Whenever an executive agency creates a new substantial rule, they first release a draft version of the rule so the general public can voice their opinions, critiques, changes, or recommendations. This is called the public comment period.

When federal agencies decide to create or change a new rule, they will publish it in the Federal Register, which is like the official newspaper of the federal government. For more information, visit <https://publiccommentproject.org/>.

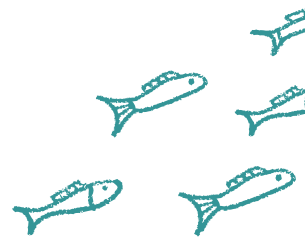
PAPAĪANAUMOKUĀKEA

Papahānaumokuākea exists hundreds of miles northwest of Kauaʻi and Niʻihau. It's made up of 583,000 square miles of ocean, including many seamounts, and the islands and atolls of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

For centuries, Native Hawaiians made special voyages to Papahānaumokuākea to gather, fish, hunt, conduct ceremonies, and live. It's home to complex ecosystems both on land and deep in its oceans. It's an area brimming with mana, a deep spiritual energy to be given reverence and respect. Today, the abundance of Papahānaumokuākea is a rarity in Hawaiʻi and the world.

In an effort to protect Papahānaumokuākea, multiple protections from state, federal, and international bodies have been bestowed upon the place. Each layer of protection does something a little different. For example, when Papahānaumokuākea became a marine national monument by Presidential Proclamation 8031 in 2006, this allowed for more streamlined coordination and management of resources. In contrast, when Papahānaumokuākea was designated a cultural and natural UNESCO World Heritage site in 2010, it was recognized as internationally important, alongside other World Heritage sites like the Great Wall of China, the Great Barrier Reef, the Galapagos Islands, and the Pyramids of Egypt.

Right now, the marine waters of Papahānaumokuākea are proposed for designation as a [national marine sanctuary](https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/papahanaumokuakea/), our national parks of the ocean and Great Lakes. If it becomes a national marine sanctuary, this new layer will add to, and strengthen existing protections for natural, cultural, and maritime heritage resources. It will also expand education, outreach, and research. The public comment period for the national marine sanctuary proposal will be open in March and April. For more information, please visit <https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/papahanaumokuakea/>





Youth Civic Engagement

LESSON APPLICATION

ACTIVITY: STAKEHOLDER ROLE-PLAYING

In this activity, students will role play the public comment process to decide whether Papahānaumokuākea should be given more protections, the same amount of protections, or fewer protections. Students will take on different stakeholder identities and draft an opinion that aligns with their stakeholder's values. The purpose of this activity is to step into the shoes of someone else and understand multiple perspectives of an issue.

First, students should watch a news story from 'Ōiwi TV on Papahānaumokuākea that explores the possible consequences of downsizing or eliminating its monument status:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ar5Y8vDZRSA>

The story touches on the potential of unexplored habitats in Papahānaumokuākea and Hawai'i's fishing industry's distinction between conservation of such resources for the use of future generations and complete preservation. During the video, students should take note of different stakeholders, their respective opinions on the same issue, and why they have such different views.

Next, students should be assigned one of five roles: marine biologist, steward (someone who takes care of the islands), fisherman, student, and government official. Roles can be adapted to fit the needs of the classroom. Students should then split up into their respective stakeholder group to discuss their values (what do they care about?), what their ideal outcome is (what should happen to Papahānaumokuākea protections?), and how to voice their opinion in the most persuasive way (what does a good public comment look like?). Students may be as inventive as they want in establishing their stakeholder personas and backstories.

Students playing as government officials have a special role, because they will not draft a public comment but will instead listen to everyone else's comments and make a decision that seems fair. These students should still discuss their values (what things are important to them and why? This video describes several Hawaiian values: [He Wa'a He Moku](#), [He Moku He Wa'a](#)), the most important factors in their decision (should all values be weighted the same?), and what a fair decision would look like (is it fair to listen to some people's comments over others?).

Finally, each stakeholder group should present their public comment to the government official group. Each comment should be no longer than three minutes and should be written to try and convince the government official that their proposed solution is the correct solution. After each group has made their comment, the government officials will discuss by themselves and announce their final decision to the class and why they made it. The activity should wrap-up with a class discussion on the process and anything that the students struggled with.



Youth Civic Engagement

LESSON APPLICATION

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Below are additional resources on Papahānaumokuākea. These are good places to supplement the provided background information, or a starting place for the assignments below.

- The official website for Papahānaumokuākea offers a breadth of knowledge on the area, including information on each of the islands, its cultural heritage, science and research, and education: <https://www.papahanaumokuakea.gov/>
- The Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement has published a special podcast series on Papahānaumokuākea. The podcast in its entirety can be accessed here: hawaiiancouncil.org
- The Office of Hawaiian Affairs published an hour of interviews on Papahānaumokuākea, documenting the personal stories of Native Hawaiians involved in the establishment of Papahānaumokuākea, one of the largest protected areas in the world. That can be accessed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7LFEuXxuo4&t=2842s>

ASSIGNMENTS

Students can choose one of three possible options to practice their civic engagement skills.

Students can:

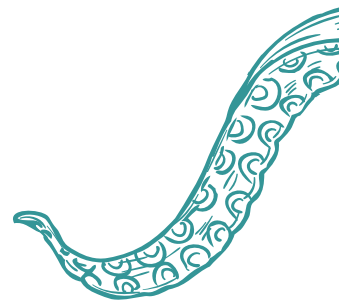
1. Submit oral testimony at one of the public meetings in April;
2. Make a written public comment; or
3. Create a social media post.

Each option is a different way to advocate for the interests of Papahānaumokuākea.



Youth Civic Engagement

ASSIGNMENTS



Oral Testimony

Students attend one of the public hearings to orally deliver their comment to government officials about sanctuary designation for marine waters of Papahānaumokuākea. Oral comments should be no longer than three minutes and should concisely deliver the student's opinion on sanctuary status and the reason for their opinion. If possible, the student can have a friend, or classmate record them providing their comment. The schedule for public hearings can be found at

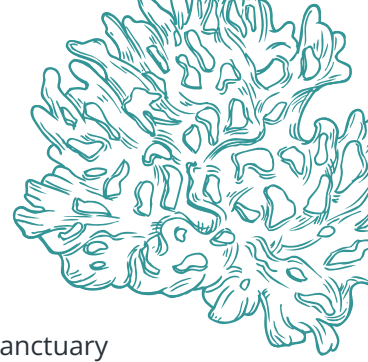
<https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/papahanaumokuakea/>

Below is a sample grading rubric for the oral testimony assignment.

	5. Exemplary Work	4. Exceeds Expectations	3. Meets Expectations	2. Below Expectations	1. Did Not Follow Instructions
LENGTH	Student is within the time limit and is concise with their language, details, and reasons.	Student is within the time limit and include enough information without being burdensome.	Student is within the time limit.	Student goes slightly beyond the time limit or could have been reasonably longer.	Student goes beyond the time limit or is far too short in their assignment.
INFORMATION	Information conveyed is concise, well thought-out, and detailed.	A good amount of information is given.	Enough information is provided so that it is clear what the student is advocating for.	Some information is provided, but not enough to build a solid foundation.	Little to no background information is provided on the topic.
ADVOCACY	Student clearly states their position and makes multiple persuasive arguments.	Student clearly states their position and makes at least one persuasive argument.	Student clearly states their position, but does not make any persuasive arguments.	Student's position is present within their comment, but it is buried.	Student does not state their position whatsoever.

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ASSIGNMENTS

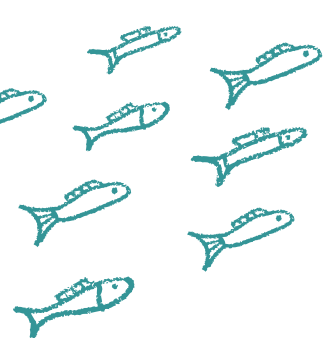


Written Public Comment

Students write and submit a public comment about sanctuary designation for marine waters of Papahānaumokuākea. The written comment should be anywhere between 1 – 3 pages and specifically state the student’s opinion on sanctuary status as well as reasons for the decision. Students can find the portal to submit their comment at <https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/papahanaumokuakea/>

Below is a sample grading rubric for the written public comment assignment.

	5. Exemplary Work	4. Exceeds Expectations	3. Meets Expectations	2. Below Expectations	1. Did Not Follow Instructions
LENGTH	Student is within the time limit and is concise with their language, details, and reasons.	Student is within the time limit and include enough information without being burdensome.	Student is within the time limit.	Student goes slightly beyond the time limit or could have been reasonably longer.	Student goes beyond the time limit or is far too short in their assignment.
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ASSIGNMENTS

Social Media Post

Students create a social media post encouraging their audience to make public comments about sanctuary designation for marine waters of Papahānaumokuākea. Students can be creative in their post; they can record a video, create an infographic, or find some other way to advocate on social media. The post should be educational, engaging, **tag Papahānumokuākea** (FB: @papahanaumokuakea Instagram: @papahanaumokuakea.hawaii), **use hashtag #gotpapa**, and have a call to action. Images and video for use in the post can be found here: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/papahanaumokuakea/>

Below is a sample grading rubric for the social media post assignment.

	5. Exemplary Work	4. Exceeds Expectations	3. Meets Expectations	2. Below Expectations	1. Did Not Follow Instructions
LENGTH	Student is within the time limit and is concise with their language, details, and reasons.	Student is within the time limit and include enough information without being burdensome.	Student is within the time limit.	Student goes slightly beyond the time limit or could have been reasonably longer.	Student goes beyond the time limit or is far too short in their assignment.
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