

Note to teacher:

Aloha no kakou!

First of all I just want to mahalo you for being a teacher. I've watched my mom be a teacher for most of my life and it is no easy task nor light responsibility. I've also watched her love and care for her students and I'm sure you are no different.

I wanted to create this lesson plan for Native Hawaiian Plant Month because I am hoping that with your help, everyone gets the chance to learn more about Hawaii and what makes it so special. Educating our next generation is so important. I enjoy doing lessons like these with my children and I am encouraging you to take the main idea of this lesson and make it fit your own class.

I don't write a lot of lesson plans so I would love your feedback on how it went and anything I can add to it to make it more helpful for other teachers. I believe in the importance of what you are doing. E hoomau!

Na'u no,
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Lesson: Native Hawaiian Plant Month

Grades: K-4 (see suggested variations at the end)

Time: 30-45 minutes

Objective: Students will be able to describe what a native Hawaiian plant is and why it is important to protect native Hawaiian plants.

Supplies & Materials:

- Watercolor paints and Brushes (basic Crayola ones work just fine)
- Cups of water (can use jars or any kind of small container)
- [Watercolor paper](#)
- A native Hawaiian plant. I recommend asking your local nursery, but if you're on Oahu then go to [Hui Ku Maoli Ola](#). Here are some suggestions of plants that are easier to find:
 - **Indigenous:** Aalii, Ilima, Kupukupu, Alahee, Akulikuli, Koali Awa, Pohinahina, Niu, Palapalai
 - **Endemic:** Ohia Lehua, Alula, Akia, Kokio, Maile

Vocabulary:

native: a plant or animal of indigenous origins or growth

endemic: a plant that is only found in one part of the world

indigenous: a plant that is found to be native in multiple parts of the world

unique: being the only one of its kind

Introduction: (5 minutes)

1. Begin by explaining to the students that April is native Hawaiian Plant Month in Hawaii.
2. What does that mean? What is a native Hawaiian Plant?
 - a. Ask them to raise their hands if they think plumeria, pineapple, or bird of paradise is Hawaiian (they are not).
 - b. Explain that most plants we think are Hawaiian are not Hawaiian.
3. Ask the students where we live and then explain that in order for a plant to be native Hawaiian it had to get to Hawaii without human help. How is that possible?

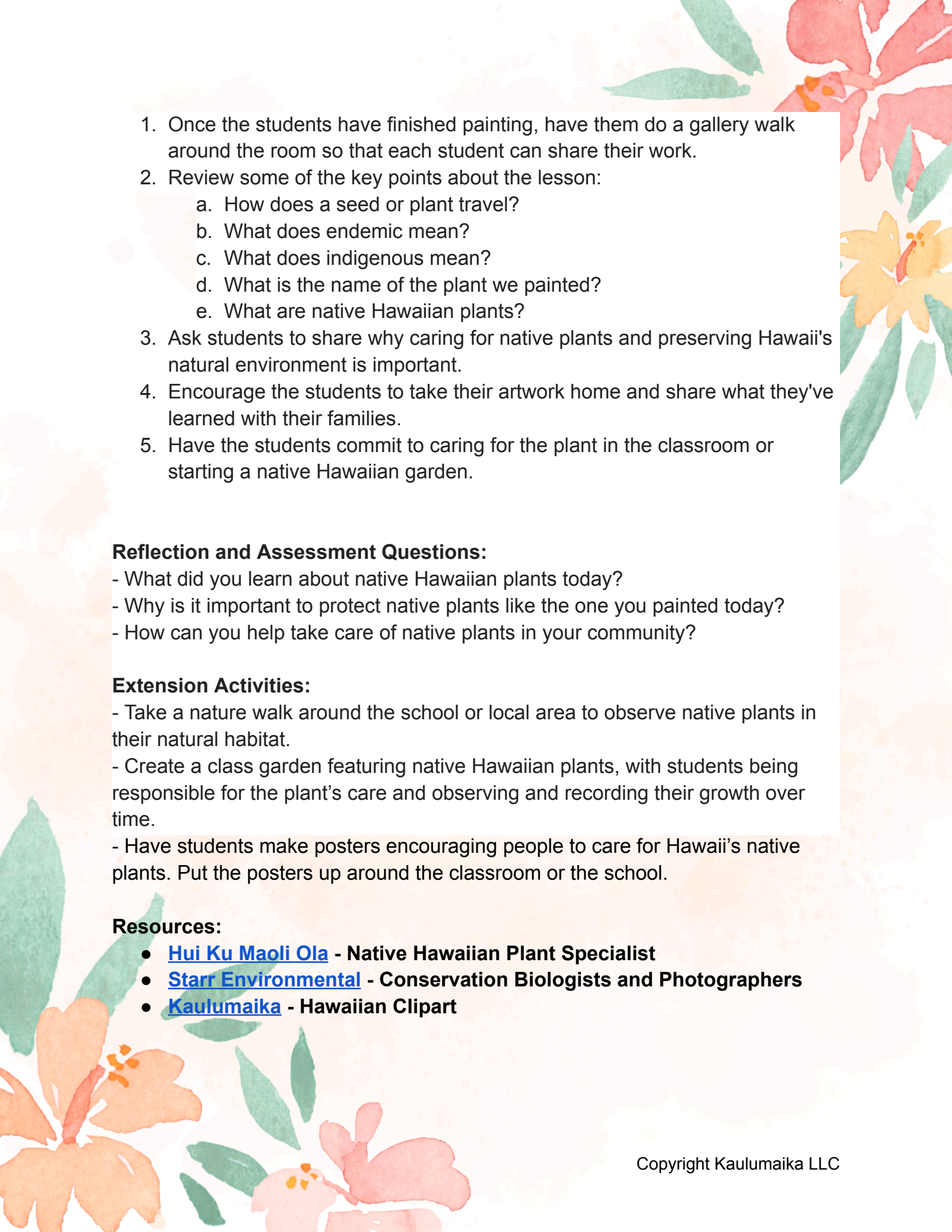
Lesson: (10 minutes)

1. Ask the students how they travel around (cars, buses, walking). Have students act out (in place) some of the different modes of transportation.
2. Ask students how plants travel. Can they drive or walk?
3. Explain to the students that plants have different ways of spreading called the 3 W's:
 - a. Wind
 - b. Wing
 - c. Waves
4. Review the 3 W's having students repeat them and make a hand motion to show each way that plants spread.
5. Explain that once a plant or seed travels to a new place it will either evolve and become unique or the plant will stay the same. If the plant stays the same it is called Indigenous which means the plant found its way here and also other places in the world. If the plant becomes unique it is called endemic because the plant is found nowhere else.
6. Explain that there are close to 1400 native Hawaiian plant species in Hawaii. Many are endangered and facing extinction. Discuss why it is important that native species are protected and cared for.

Art Activity: (15 minutes)

1. Introduce the native Hawaiian plant you brought to the class and if it's indigenous or endemic.
 - a. Share some facts about it. Search for the plant [here](#) to learn more about it before sharing it with your students.
 - b. Let the children come close to the plant to touch and smell it.
2. Ask the students to describe shapes and colors they see in the leaves and flowers of the plant.
3. At their desks show the students how to paint some of the shapes they described and how to mix colors on a scratch piece of paper.
4. After practicing, encourage the students to paint their own picture of the plant, using the information they learned about its appearance and paint along with them.
5. Have the students write the name of the plant on their paper and sign their names like an artist.

Conclusion: (10 minutes)

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1. Once the students have finished painting, have them do a gallery walk around the room so that each student can share their work.
 2. Review some of the key points about the lesson:
 - a. How does a seed or plant travel?
 - b. What does endemic mean?
 - c. What does indigenous mean?
 - d. What is the name of the plant we painted?
 - e. What are native Hawaiian plants?
 3. Ask students to share why caring for native plants and preserving Hawaii's natural environment is important.
 4. Encourage the students to take their artwork home and share what they've learned with their families.
 5. Have the students commit to caring for the plant in the classroom or starting a native Hawaiian garden.

Reflection and Assessment Questions:

- What did you learn about native Hawaiian plants today?
- Why is it important to protect native plants like the one you painted today?
- How can you help take care of native plants in your community?

Extension Activities:

- Take a nature walk around the school or local area to observe native plants in their natural habitat.
- Create a class garden featuring native Hawaiian plants, with students being responsible for the plant's care and observing and recording their growth over time.
- Have students make posters encouraging people to care for Hawaii's native plants. Put the posters up around the classroom or the school.

Resources:

- [Hui Ku Maoli Ola](#) - Native Hawaiian Plant Specialist
- [Starr Environmental](#) - Conservation Biologists and Photographers
- [Kaulumaika](#) - Hawaiian Clipart

Suggested Variations and Additional Notes:

- For younger grades:
 - Simplify and shorten the lesson. Don't define endemic and indigenous. Focus on helping them understand how a plant can be from Hawaii.
 - Keep the painting portion short unless you have lots of help. The kids all go at their own pace and I noticed that once they finished the painting activity became a mess making activity where they would just start playing with the paint and water.
 - You can try to get the class to paint with you step by step and that might make the outcome more uniform, but the kids seemed to really like just painting how they wanted to paint.
 - Use a separate area like a carpeted area for the discussion portions and have the kids sit at their desks only for the art portion.
- For older grades:
 - Have the kids research some of the definitions on their own and present them to the class.
 - Opt out of the movement activities.
 - Allow them more time to paint.
 - Focus more on why native plants are important in the discussion portion.
- For at home activity:
 - Start with this educational video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TmtH3jrRvrw>