

POLYNESIAN DANCE AND DRUMMING



YEAR 3 - 6 MUSIC – CURRICULUM GUIDES

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

The incursion addresses these elements of the Intercultural Understanding Curriculum:

- Recognising culture and developing respect
- Interacting and empathising with others
- Reflecting on intercultural experiences and taking responsibility

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

PYP – Enhanced Framework Overview 2018 IB learners strive to be:

- **OPENMINDED** we critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.
- **CARING** we show empathy, compassion and respect. We have commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

RESOURCES

- Teacher laptop connected to display screen, student computers or iPads to complete quiz
- Quiz on word document to share electronically with students or print
- Quiz answers in this lesson plan

OBJECTIVE

To learn about Polynesian dancing and drumming and reflect upon the role of dance in passing on cultural information

BACKGROUND - 10 min

Historical knowledge

Before the written word came to the Cook Islands the history of its people was passed on in stories, chants and dance. Many traditional dances were learnt and performed as part of coming-of-age ceremonies celebrating new life and love.

Today dancing remains an important way to maintain cultural heritage from one generation to another.

Costumes

The dance skirt (purau) for both men and women is made from kiri'au (beach hibiscus) inner bark which has been cured in salt water for up to three weeks, and then dried, stripped and dyed. Flowers, shells, feathers, and seeds are used to decorate the titi or overskirt which goes over the purau. Women wear the

coconut bra, an influence from Tahiti in the 1980s. Prior to this, shell or seed decorated cloth bras were worn. In the mid-1990s, the bustle at the back of women's dance skirts became an added option.

Drums

To the East of Polynesia, drums with a skin covering predominate and to the West the wooden drum is beaten but in the Cook Islands, a central point in the Pacific, a full ensemble of both kinds of drums is used.

Language

There are striking similarities between the languages of Hawaii, Tahiti, the Cook Islands and New Zealand. However, the words for 'dance', vary even between each of the Cook Islands. On the island of Mauke it is 'ori', Aitutaki 'koni', Atiu 'ingo', Penrhyn 'kosaki', and Manihiki 'hupahupa'. This is despite striking similarities in the styles of dance and drumming.

Reference for background information: "Ori, koni, ura, kapa? Cook Islands Dance, What Is it?" Jean Mason, Museum Cook Islands, 31st May 2022, accessed 1st June 2022

<<http://enjoycookislands.com/stories/ori-koni-ura-kapa-cook-islands-dance-what-is-it>>

Activity: Watch the Sounds of Polynesia 2 minutes

Click on this link to watch a performance by presenters Sounds Of Polynesia and ask the class to think about the background information shared.

[Sounds of Polynesia](#)



QUIZ - 🕒 20 min

Give students access to the quiz by sharing the quiz word document with them. It will help them to further understand the background information about Polynesian dancing and drumming.

Younger students could choose 4-6 questions to answer instead of all 10.

1. What was the purpose of traditional Polynesian dances? (coming-of-age ceremonies)
2. What is passed on from generation to generation through dancing? (cultural knowledge)
3. What materials are the drums made from? (wood, skin)
4. True or false? In the East of Polynesia, mainly wooden drums are used. (false)
5. What are drums in the West of Polynesia made from? (wood)
6. True or false? The term for 'dance' is similar throughout Polynesia. (false)
7. What is the purau made from? (beach hibiscus inner bark)
8. What decorates the titi? (flowers, shells, feathers and seeds)
9. What was added at the back of women's skirt in the 1990s? (bustle)
10. Which Cook Island uses the word 'hupahupa' to mean 'dance'? (Manihiki)

Extension Activity: Choreograph 'Happy Birthday' 20 minutes

In the Cook Islands, cultural heritage is passed between generations through dance. In this activity, groups of students are encouraged to understand this concept through creating their own movements to "Happy Birthday" and then sharing them with the class.