

Queen Lili‘uokalani Conversation Kit



Liliuokalani by M. Dickson. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; gift of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum.

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HER STORY

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Queen Lili'uokalani



“You must
remember
never to cease
to act because
you fear you
may fail.”

– Queen Lili'uokalani
(1917)

Portrait: *Lili'uokalani* photographed by Harris & Ewing Studio. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; gift of Aileen Conkey. **Quote:** Lili'uokalani, 1917. Reported by her hānai daughter, Lydia K. Aholo to Helena G. Allen, *The Betrayal of Lili'uokalani*, Mutual Publishing, 1982.

Lydia Lili'u Loloku Waiania Kamaka'ehea (1838-1917), better known as Queen Lili'uokalani, was the Hawaiian Kingdom's only reigning queen and last monarch before the overthrow of the sovereign state. Queen Lili'uokalani governed Hawai'i from 1891-1893, presiding over the Hawaiian Kingdom during a time of great economic growth. By 1890, 21 international treaties and more than 80 embassies around the world recognize the Hawaiian Kingdom. Additionally, Hawai'i and its multiethnic society enjoyed universal suffrage in 1840 (a full 120 years before the United States), universal health care, state neutrality (1855), and a 95 percent literacy rate, the second highest in the world.¹

A brilliant musician, beloved leader, and proponent of access to education for all, Queen Lili'uokalani's motto was “E 'onipa'a...i ka 'imi na'auao” (Be steadfast in the

¹ Correa, Kālewa. *Smithsonian American Women: Remarkable Objects and Stories of Strength, Ingenuity, and Vision from the National Collection*. Washington D.C. Smithsonian Books, 2019, p. 78

seeking of knowledge). The word 'onipa'a, meaning steadfast, is a single word often used to describe the Queen and her inspiring legacy of aloha 'āina—a form of civic engagement—and her dedication to care for those most in need. Aloha 'āina, a Hawaiian philosophy concerning humanity's relationship to the universe, translates as both "love of land" and "love of country." Much more than an expression of environmental or political consciousness, aloha 'āina conveys an important aspect of Native Hawaiian cosmogony described in the Kumulipo: that the Hawaiian people and the Hawaiian archipelago share common ancestors and are related to one another. Native Hawaiian schools of thought developed an extensive understanding of the interconnectivity between all living things over the course of many centuries.

Expressions of aloha 'āina are also referred to as demonstrations of Hawaiian nationalism. It is important to point out that aloha 'āina (love of land, love of country) as a sentiment of patriotism is defined differently in a Hawaiian context where genealogical connection to the land is paramount. As Queen Lili'uokalani explains, "patriotism, which with us means the love of the very soil on which our ancestors have lived and died, forbade us to view with equanimity the sight of any foreign flag, not excepting the one for which we have always had the greatest respect, floating as a matter of right over any part of our land."²

Deceit and treachery also marked the queen's tenure. On January 17, 1893, the Queen was forcefully removed in a coup de main supported by American troops and warships under the direction of John L. Stevens, US minister to the Hawaiian Kingdom. The United States argued that it needed Hawaiian ports to fight the Spanish-American War deeper in the Pacific, which the Hawaiian Kingdom's neutral status prevented. Despite years of unsuccessful appeals to international states and the United States government, Lili'uokalani was confined at home in Honolulu until her death in 1917. While not an American woman, Queen Lili'uokalani marks a significant voice in the framework of American imperialism. A force to be reckoned with, she protected her country, citizens, and role as sovereign until her passing. Aloha 'āina continues today and often motivates contemporary acts of civic engagement.

² Lili'uokalani. *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen Liliuokalani*. Honolulu: Hui Hānai, 2013 [1898], p. 35.

Hawaiian Keywords for This Conversation Kit

Throughout this conversation kit we are including important keywords in the Native Hawaiian language to better contextualize topics related to Queen Lili'uokalani's legacy and current events about Maunakea on the island of Hawai'i. Embedding words in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i--or, Hawaiian language—throughout this kit attempts to honor the fact that Hawai'i has multiple official languages. Please refer to this word bank for definitions of words you will see in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i.

- aloha 'āina: *love of land and love of country*
- kapu aloha: *scared love (lit), kapu aloha is an evolving, philosophical code of conduct to extend kindness, empathy, and love to one another*
- kia'i: *protector or guardian*
- kumu: *teacher, coach*
- Maunakea: *mountain of Wākea*
- mele: *chant, song or poem*
- 'Ōlelo Hawai'i: *Hawaiian language*
- 'onipa'a: *steadfast*

To learn how to pronounce these terms, please use this [resource](#).

Driving Questions

How do legacies of activists influence modern-day issues?

Why is it important to learn about critical issues impacting people in communities far from your own?

Supporting Questions

- How can a portrait demonstrate forms of resistance?
- How might a song communicate a message of social change to its listeners?
- What is activism and who are activists?
- What assumptions might we make about activists and their causes?

Civic Learning Themes

- Civic Action: Exercising one's rights as a citizen (non-legally defined) to affect change or share an opinion on public policy or actions taken by government officials. This can include lobbying, voting, canvassing, protesting, protecting, etc.

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards

D2.Civ.6.3-5. Describe ways in which people benefit from and are challenged by working together, including through government, workplaces, voluntary organizations, and families.

D2.Civ.10.3-5. Identify the beliefs, experiences, perspectives, and values that underlie their own and others' points of view about civic issues.

D2.His.6.3-5. Describe how people's perspectives shaped the historical sources they created.

D2.Civ.14.9-12. Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights.

D3.1.9-12. Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.

D2.Soc.7.9-12. Cite examples of how culture influences the individuals in it.

D2.Soc.18.9-12. Propose and evaluate alternative responses to inequality.

D2.Civ.5.9-12. Evaluate citizens' and institutions' effectiveness in addressing social and political problems at the local, state, tribal, national, and/or international level.

D2.His.1.9-12. Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by the unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

D4.7.3-5. Explain different strategies and approaches students and others could take in working alone and together to address local, regional, and global problems, and predict possible results of their actions.

Common Core Anchor Standards for Reading

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Primary & Secondary Sources

All conversation kit resources can be found in this [Learning Lab collection](#).

Individual links to resources are also included below.

- Artifacts:
 - [Portrait of Queen Lili'uokalani in 1891](#)
M. Dickson (c. 1870–95), *Lili'uokalani*, c.1891, Photograph, Albumen silver print. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; gift of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum.
- Publications:
 - ["Aloha 'Oe," song written by Queen Lili'uokalani in 1878](#)
Queen Lili'uokalani. Aloha 'Oe. 1878.
https://www.huapala.org/Aloha/Aloha_Oe.html
- Newspaper Databases:

- [Chronicling America](#), an American newspaper database
- [Papakilo](#), a Hawaiian newspaper database

Facilitation Strategies & Discussion Formats

Queen Lili'uokalani was a philanthropist and the last sovereign ruler of Hawai'i. Born in 1838 as Lydia Kamakaeha to Hawaiian nobility, her mother was an advisor to Kamehameha III who ruled until 1862. Before his death, Kamehameha III adopted his nephew Lota Kapuāiwa, who ruled Hawai'i until 1874 when he died without a successor. Lili'uokalani's brother King Kalākaua was elected and ruled until 1891 when Lili'uokalani became the ruler of Hawai'i. Queen for just two years following her brother's death, she was forcefully removed in an 1893 coup de main supported by American troops and warships under the direction of John L. Stevens, US minister to the Hawaiian Kingdom. In the years afterwards she unsuccessfully attempted to fight for Hawaiian sovereignty in the United States and abroad and was imprisoned for her efforts.

Queen Lili'uokalani was an accomplished composer and wrote considerable amounts of music over her lifetime, especially during her imprisonment. One of Hawai'i's best-known songs, "Aloha 'Oe," was written by Lili'uokalani around 1878.

Activity 1. Portrait Analysis

Provide students with Menzies Dickson's portrait of Queen Lili'uokalani and questions included in the Portrait Analysis worksheet, which is included as a printable at the end of this kit. Explain that this picture was taken around the time of her coronation to the Kingdom of Hawai'i.

Individually, in pairs, or as a full class, have students examine the image and respond to the prompts below, using the elements of portrayal—visual clues in portraits that help the view tell the story of the image—as a guide.

- Facial expression: Use adjectives to describe Queen Lili'uokalani facial expression. What emotion(s) does this expression convey?

- Pose: Describe Queen Lili'uokalani's pose.
- Clothing: What clothing is Queen Lili'uokalani wearing? What might her clothing convey about her?
- Hairstyle: Describe Lili'uokalani's hairstyle. Why would hairstyle be an important element of a portrait?
- Setting: What is the setting of the portrait?
- Objects: What objects are in the portrait? Objects function as symbols. What might they be telling us about Queen Lili'uokalani?
- Medium: What is the medium of this portrait and why might knowing the medium be important?
- Historical context: In light of the history of Queen Lili'uokalani that you have learned about, what connections can we make between Queen Lili'uokalani's portrait and her commitment to the preservation of Native Hawaiian culture and Hawai'i's history?

Display the portrait for the full class to see (hi-res image available [here](#)). As students share their responses to the portrait analysis questions make note of their response on the image or in a separate chart on the board.

Activity 2. Primary Source Material Search: What happened in 1891?

Invite students to search for newspaper articles or editorials about Queen Lili'uokalani during the year 1891 when she became Queen of the Hawaiian Kingdom. This think-pair-share activity supports students' understanding of Queen Lili'uokalani's international reputation and asks them to evaluate a primary source. Encourage students to search through late nineteenth century newspaper publications in both Hawai'i and the United States through these two newspaper databases:

- [Chronicling America](#), an American newspaper database
- [Papakilo](#), a Hawaiian newspaper database

Once they have located and read an article, have students answer the following questions on a worksheet, which is included as a printable at the end of this kit:

- What is the name of the newspaper publication and the author of the article?
- Describe the article in a few sentences.
- For what audience was the article written?
- Use a mobile device to look up any names, events, or words that are unfamiliar to you. List them below and include their definitions.
- Now that you've thought a bit about the article, whose point of view is being shared? What viewpoints could be missing?

Activity 3. Song Lyric Annotations and “Aloha ‘Oe” (Three-Part Activity)

This activity asks students to evaluate the significance of a situation, topic, or issue keeping global, local, and personal connections in mind. The three main questions for reflection:

- Why might Queen Lili‘uokalani's story matter to me?
- Why might it matter to people around me (family, friends, city, nation)?
- Why might it matter to the world?

Keeping the “3 Y's” in mind, let's look at a song written by Queen Lili‘uokalani in 1878. “Aloha ‘Oe (Farewell to Thee),” is a world-famous song with multilayered meanings. The song is believed to have been inspired by an observation Queen Lili‘uokalani made while on horseback on her way from the east side of O‘ahu to Honolulu. While admiring the beauty of Kane‘ōhe Bay, she witnessed a couple bidding farewell to each other. As she continued her trip to Honolulu, she began to hum a melody that would become “Aloha ‘Oe.” While the song is globally admired for its messages about farewells, the song is also regarded as Queen Lili‘uokalani's sense of loss for the Hawaiian Kingdom after she was forcefully removed by American troops in 1893.

- **Part 1:** The first part of this activity takes a deep dive into the lyrics of “Aloha ‘Oe,” inviting students to think about the words used by Queen Lili‘uokalani with the history of her life and reign.
 - Listen to [this recording](#) of “Alohe ‘Oe (Farewell to Thee)” and follow along with a copy of the lyrics translated into English from ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, available as a printable at the end of this kit and online [here](#).
 - With the history we have about Queen Lili‘uokalani’s life, and how this song was created, ask students to think about how the lyrics might hold symbols about her life and legacy:
 - What do you think Queen Lili‘uokalani was feeling when she wrote the song?
 - How might the Queen’s identity help us understand the song’s cultural significance on a global scale?
 - Why might this song be important for people in Hawai‘i today?
 - Ask students to use one copy of the lyrics and spend five minutes annotating the lyrics by:
 - Putting question marks by words or phrases they may not understand.
 - Putting exclamation marks by words or phrases that surprise them.
 - Underlining phrases or words that stand out to them as important clues to the story behind the song and/or the song’s symbolic importance.
 - In the margins, writing questions about what more they want to know based on the lyrics and the words.
 - After students have annotated the song, build in time for students to share out what they marked on the lyrics.
 - What words can be clarified for them?

- What phrases stood out to them that they'd like to share with the rest of the group?
- Use the song's historical context to support students' questions and observations about the song.
- **Part 2:** For the second part of the activity, ask students to imagine Queen Lili'uokalani writing this song in 2020. What would she write about in current times?
 - Ask students to read [this article](#) about the Thirty Meter Telescope planned for the summit of Maunakea on the Island of Hawai'i, an excerpt of which is found at the end of this conversation kit.
 - Given what we now know about Queen Lili'uokalani, what might she communicate to the kia'i, or Native Hawaiians protecting and guarding Maunakea?
 - How would you update the song lyrics to reflect what the kia'i are doing today?
 - Using the second copy of the lyrics, ask students to annotate it with new words:
 - With a writing utensil, underline keywords or phrases you would update to make the song specific to Maunakea and the kia'i in 2020.
 - Over the underlined words/phrases, in the spaces between each song's lyric line, have students write their new word/phrase.
 - After students have annotated the song, build in time for students to share their annotated song, reading it from beginning to end. After they read their annotated lyrics, ask students to share why they made their word changes and what information was used to inform the changes.
- **Part 3:** The final part of this activity dives into a contemporary mele written by educator Hinaleimona Wong-Kalu, or Kumu Hina.

- Read the lyrics for the mele “Kū Ha‘aheo E Ku‘u Hawai‘i,” available here and as a supplementary resource at the end of this kit, and watch this video of the mele being performed.
- After reading the lyrics and listening to the mele, you may recognize some ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i terms from the word bank at the beginning of this kit.
- Open a brief conversation about how the lyrics of Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu’s “Kū Ha‘aheo E Ku‘u Hawai‘i” and Queen Lili‘uokalani’s “Aloha ‘Oe” compare.
 - What do the songs or mele have in common? What makes them different from each other?
 - How do the songs or mele embody the concept of aloha ‘āina?
 - What do both songs or mele communicate to the world about the Hawaiian Kingdom and why is this important?
 - How do these songs or mele serve as a form of activism?

Supplemental Resources

Below are additional resources that expand on the legacy of Queen Lili‘uokalani and current events on Maunakea.

- Multimedia: [Learning Lab Collection about Queen Lili‘uokalani](#)
- Artifact: [Portrait of Queen Lili‘uokalani between 1870 and 1890](#)

August Wegner (1823–92), *Liliuokalani*, c.1870-1890, Engraving on paper. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; purchased through generous contributions to the Victor Proetz Memorial Fund.

- Audio: [Tony Ku and Tomomi Sugiura, “Aloha ‘Oe,” track 207 on Original Hawaiian Steel Guitar with Tony Ku, accompanied by Tomomi Sugiura, Smithsonian Folkways Records, 1979, phonograph record.](#)
- Articles about Maunakea:

- [Herman, Doug. “The Heart of the Hawaiian Peoples' Arguments Against the Telescope on Mauna Kea.” Smithsonian.com. Smithsonian Institution, April 23, 2015.](#)
- [Kagawa-Viviani, Aurora. “Maunakea: Redirecting the Lens onto the Culture of Mainstream Science.” Medium. Medium, November 7, 2019.](#)
- [Lillie, Ben. “Protests on a Hawaiian Volcano Show That Science Needs a New Ritual.” Slate Magazine. Slate, May 1, 2015.](#)
- Books (available digitally at links below):
 - [*Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen, a book written by Queen Lili'uokalani*](#)

Lili'uokalani, Queen. *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen*. Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1898.
<https://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/liliuokalani/hawaii/hawaii.html>
 - [*The Kumulipo, a Hawaiian creation chant translated by Queen Lili'uokalani*](#)

Lili'uokalani, Queen, trans. *The Kumulipo*. Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1897.
<https://www.sacred-texts.com/pac/lku/>

This conversation kit was authored by Kālewa Correa, Healoha Johnston, and Andrea Kim Neighbors at the Smithsonian's Asian Pacific American Center and Ashleigh Coren at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery. Learn more at <https://womenshistory.si.edu/>, <https://smithsonianapa.org/>, and <https://npg.si.edu/>.

Supplementary Materials: Portrait Analysis



- Facial expression: Use adjectives to describe Queen Lili'uokalani facial expression. What emotion(s) does this expression convey?

- Pose: Describe Queen Lili'uokalani's pose.

- Clothing: What clothing is Queen Lili'uokalani wearing? What might her clothing convey about her?

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- Historical context: In light of the history of Queen Lili'uokalani that you have learned about, what connections can we make between Queen Lili'uokalani's portrait and her commitment to the preservation of Native Hawaiian culture and Hawai'i's history?

Supplementary Materials: What Happened in 1891? Worksheet

- What is the name of the newspaper publication and the author of the article?
- Describe the article in a few sentences.
- For what audience was the article written?
- Use a mobile device to look up any names, events, or words that are unfamiliar to you. List them below and include their definitions.
- Now that you've thought a bit about the article, whose point of view is being shared? What viewpoints could be missing?

Supplementary Materials: Lyrics for “Aloha ‘Oe” (Farewell to Thee) by Queen Lili‘uokalani

Ha‘aheo ka ua i nā pali
Ke nihi a‘ela i ka nahele
E hahai (uhai) ana paha i ka liko
Pua ‘āhihi lehua o uka

Hui:

Aloha ‘oe, aloha ‘oe
E ke onaona noho i ka lipo
One fond embrace,
A ho‘i a‘e au
Until we meet again

‘O ka hali‘a aloha i hiki mai
Ke hone a‘e nei i ku‘u manawa
‘O ‘oe nō ka‘u ipo aloha
A loko e hana nei

Maopopo ku‘u ‘ike i ka nani
Nā pua rose o Maunawili
I laila hia‘ai nā manu
Miki‘ala i ka nani o ka lipo

Proudly swept the rain by the cliffs
As it glided through the trees
Still following ever the bud
The ‘ahihi lehua of the vale

Chorus:

Farewell to you, farewell to you
The charming one who dwells in the
shaded bowers
One fond embrace,
‘Ere I depart
Until we meet again

Sweet memories come back to me
Bringing fresh remembrances of the past
Dearest one, yes, you are mine own
From you, true love shall never depart

I have seen and watched your
loveliness
The sweet rose of Maunawili
And ‘tis there the birds of love dwell
And sip the honey from your lips

Translation by Lili‘uokalani. Hawaiian text edited by Puakea Nogelmeier. Courtesy of the Huapala Hawaiian Music and Hula Archives. Compiled by Kaiulani Kanoa-Martin, © 1997. All rights reserved.

Supplementary Materials: Lyrics for “Kū Ha‘aheo E Ku‘u Hawai‘i” by Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu

Kaiko‘o ka moana kā i lana nei Hawai‘i
Nāueue a hālulu ka honua a Haumea
Nākulukulu e ka lani ki‘eki‘e kau mai i
luna
Auē ke aloha ‘ole a ka malihini

Hooho:

Kū ha‘aheo e ku‘u Hawai‘i
Māmakakaua o ku‘u ‘āina
‘O ke ehu kakahiaka o nā ‘ōiwi o
Hawai‘i nei
No ku‘u lahui e hā‘awi pau a i ola mau

Auhea wale ‘oukou pū‘ali koa o Keawe
Me ko Kamalālāwalu la me Kākuhihewa
Alu mai pualu mai me ko Manokalanipō
Ka‘i mai ana me nā kama a Kahalelani

E nāue imua e nā poki‘i a e inu wai
‘awa‘awa
E wiwo‘ole a ho‘okūpa‘a ‘a‘ohe hope e
ho‘i mai ai
A nāi wale nō kākou kaukoe mau i ke
ala
Auē ke aloha ‘ole a ka malihini

E lei mau i lei mau kākou e nā mamo
aloha
I lei wehi ‘a‘ali‘i wehi nani o ku‘u ‘āina
Hoe a mau hoe a mau no ka pono sivila
A ho‘iho‘i hou ‘ia mai ke kū‘oko‘a

The earth of Haumea rumbles and
shakes
The highest heavens shudder up above
The sea of Hawai‘i surges in turmoil
Alas! Woeful indeed are the heartless
foreigners

Chorus:

Stand tall my Hawai‘i
Band of warriors of my land
The new dawn for our people of Hawai‘i
is upon us
For my nation I give my all so that our
legacy lives on

Where are you soldiers of Keawe
Along with those of Maui and O‘ahu
Unite, join together with those of Kaua‘i
Marching alongside the descendants of
Ni‘ihau

Move forward young ones and drink of
the bitter waters
Be fearless, steadfast for there is no
turning back
Let’s press onward straight on the path
of victory
Alas! Woeful are the heartless foreigners!

Be honored always oh beloved
descendants of the land
Let us wear the honored ‘a‘ali‘i of our
beloved land
Paddle on in our pursuit of civil justice
Until our dignity and independence is
restore