

CAN HAWAI'I'S ALOHA SPIRIT SURVIVE A WAR?

Created by the [Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i](#) (JCCH) and the [Go for Broke National Education Center](#), in collaboration with the Hawai'i State Department of Education.

OVERVIEW

Inquiry Description

This inquiry leads students to consider the extent to which war can have an effect on the people involved. By investigating the compelling question, **“Can Hawai'i's aloha spirit survive a war?”** students will perform formative tasks that allow them to research what the sociopolitical effects of the bombing of Pearl Harbor may have been and the responses of the people involved. In addition, they will also investigate the “aloha spirit.” The staging of the compelling question and the formative tasks will enable them to build on knowledge and skills through the course of the inquiry and help them recognize the power of the “aloha spirit” in influencing social and political changes. The students will create an evidence-based argument regarding whether the community values of “aloha spirit” can survive a war.

What is the “aloha spirit” and how universal are its values? The Hawai'i Revised Statutes (State Law) includes [The Law of the Aloha Spirit](#), which states, “the essence of relationships in which each person is important to every other person for collective existence.”

Encased in the term “aloha spirit” are the values of kindness, unity, being agreeable, humility, and perseverance.

This spirit is rooted in the Hawai'i State Department of Education's [Nā Hopena A'ō \(HĀ\) Framework](#), designed for every student over the course of their K-12 education. One of the HĀ's six life-long learning outcomes is a “Strengthened Sense of Aloha:”

4. Strengthened Sense of Aloha: I show care and respect for myself, families, and communities. A sense of Aloha is demonstrated through empathy and appreciation for the symbiotic relationship between all. I am able to build trust and lead for the good of the whole.
 - a. Give generously of time and knowledge
 - b. Appreciate the gifts and abilities of others
 - c. Make others feel comfortable and welcome
 - d. Communicate effectively to diverse audiences
 - e. Respond mindfully to what is needed
 - f. Give joyfully without expectation of reward

- g. Share the responsibility for collective work
- h. Spread happiness

In addition to an understanding of the aloha spirit, this inquiry requires prerequisite knowledge of historical events and ideas. Students should already have studied the anti-Japanese sentiment in the U.S. prior to World War II, including Japan's expansionist efforts in Asia. Also important is knowledge of the U.S. government's pre-war assessment and development of custodial detention lists that were referenced to make arrests of Japanese Americans under martial law immediately following the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

This inquiry is expected to take five or six class periods. It can expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences regarding the supporting questions, formative performance tasks and featured sources.

Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiries in order to meet the needs and interests of their particular students. Resources can also be modified as necessary to meet individualized education programs [IEPs] or Section 504 Plans for students with disabilities.

This IDM supports the Common Core English/Language Arts standards in reading and writing.

Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question, "Can Hawai'i's aloha spirit survive a war?" students work through a series of supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources in order to think critically and construct an argument supported by evidence.

STAGING THE COMPELLING QUESTION

In staging the compelling question, "**Can Hawai'i's aloha spirit survive a war?**" teachers may engage students to think critically about and share what "aloha spirit" means to them. Share the values of aloha, as explained in the [Hawai'i Revised Statutes](#): kindness, unity, being agreeable, humility, and perseverance. Explain to students that aloha is defined in the Hawai'i Revised Statutes as, "the essence of relationships in which each person is important to every other person for collective existence."

Share with students how Shigeo Yoshida, in 1939, put the aloha spirit into the context of war. Yoshida, one of the leaders of Hawai'i's Council for Interracial Unity, stated, "How we in Hawai'i are going to live together after the war will depend on how we live together during the war."

Next, show students [this photo](#), courtesy of the Hawai'i State Archives, taken at 'Iolani Palace on March 28, 1943 and explain that when the call went out to Hawai'i's Japanese American community for 1,500 volunteers to join the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, nearly 10,000 men responded. The men in this photo were some of them. Discuss how these volunteers demonstrated the "aloha spirit."

Should the teacher need additional references to clarify for the students, please refer to the [Live Aloha site](#).

SUPPORTING QUESTION 1

The first supporting question, "Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, what sociopolitical changes occurred in Hawai'i?" has students explore the sociopolitical effects at the start of World War II on the people of Hawai'i. The formative performance task starts with the teacher guiding students to understand "sociopolitical," using the definitions included at the top of [Graphic Organizer 1](#). Examining the text and images in [Featured Source A](#) (*Hawaii News Now*), [Featured Source B](#) (*Mā'alaea*), and [Featured Source C](#) (*Huffington Post*) will allow students to complete the graphic organizer with a variety of these sociopolitical changes. Students are also asked to reflect critically on how they might have responded to these changes.

SUPPORTING QUESTION 2

For the second supporting question, "How did the people of Hawai'i on the home front respond to these sociopolitical changes?", students will explore Featured Sources A-D to respond to the question and will briefly note their findings in the first column of [Graphic Organizer 2](#).

[Featured Source A](#), from *Densho*, provides an overview of the work of the Morale Committees formed in Hawai'i after Pearl Harbor. [Featured Source B](#) from the 100th Infantry Battalion Veterans, chronicles the crucial work of one of these committees, the Emergency Service Committee, in influencing the changes on the Hawai'i community. [Featured Source C](#) from *Discover Nikkei* gives an overview of Hawai'i's Varsity Victory Volunteers that was the first all-Nisei volunteer unit to enter service during WWII.

While completing the first column, students need to also think about how these responses embody the "aloha spirit." Students will then record their opinions in the second column of the graphic organizer.

SUPPORTING QUESTION 3

For the third supporting question, "How did the Japanese American soldiers from Hawai'i respond during the war and soon thereafter?" students delve into personal stories and use [Graphic Organizer 3](#) to consider the legacy of these soldiers.

[Featured Source A](#) is an infographic about the legacy of Japanese American soldiers, including both the Hawai'i soldiers and those from the rest of the mainland U.S. Students are asked to

begin connecting the ideas from the infographic to this inquiry's compelling question. Remind students that the Hawai'i Revised Statutes (State Law) includes [The Law of the Aloha Spirit](#), which states, "the essence of relationships in which each person is important to every other person for collective existence."

[Featured Source B](#) is a 22-minute video produced by award-winning filmmaker, David Ono, called, "*Ganbare! Never Give Up! Hawaii's Soldiers in World War II.*" For teacher reference, a [video overview](#) lists time stamps which correlate with segment numbers in the lower left corner of the video. Closed captioning is also available.

While watching the video, students will complete the second column of [Graphic Organizer 3](#) noting how five soldiers from Hawai'i responded during World War II and soon thereafter. In the graphic organizer's next column, they are asked to think of one word to sum up each soldier's response. Finally, in the last column students are asked to indicate the degree to which these actions connect with the aloha spirit.

Students examine [Featured Source C](#), from Densho, which is an article about the history and impact of the GI Bill on Japanese Americans. This article will help students gain a wider view of Japanese American soldiers of World War II. While looking at this article, it might be helpful to revisit the Hawai'i State Department of Education's [Nā Hopena A'ō \(HĀ\) Framework's](#) "Strengthened Sense of Aloha:"

I show care and respect for myself, families, and communities. A sense of Aloha is demonstrated through empathy and appreciation for the symbiotic relationship between all. I am able to build trust and lead for the good of the whole.

SUMMATIVE PERFORMANCE TASK

At this point in the inquiry, students have examined resources that cover the broad sociopolitical effects of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, specific examples, including the Japanese American soldiers from Hawai'i. Students should be expected to demonstrate the breadth of their understandings and their abilities to think critically and use evidence from multiple sources to support their claims.

Using these personal notes gathered during the three formative performance tasks, students will create a written response or oral argument that discusses the compelling question, "**Can Hawai'i's aloha spirit survive a war?**" while using sound reasoning, appropriate structure, examples, and supporting details.

Then, engage all students in a discussion to provide an opportunity for interactive learning. Based on each student's argument, engage individual students in sharing their perspectives on the compelling question. Practicing the spirit of aloha, invite students' questions and/or constructive comments. The value of this inquiry is that students become more aware and accepting of various perspectives, understanding that part of civil discourse is the ability to hear and understand different opinions supported by research findings.

To extend their arguments, students may create a “Live Aloha” talk show with guests advocating for how sociopolitical changes that occurred as a result of World War II have (or haven’t) contributed to Hawai’i’s aloha spirit.

Students may have the opportunity to Take Informed Action by drawing on their understandings of whether Hawaii’s aloha spirit can survive a war.

UNDERSTAND Articulate the importance of the individual’s contribution in protecting our civil liberties and in practicing the spirit of aloha.

ASSESS Present your argument and/or explanation using specific examples in an effective and appropriate print, verbal, or digital format.

ACT Connect your product to the commemoration of Hawai’i’s Civil Liberties and the Constitution Day staged annually on January 30. Another option is to learn more about National History Day’s [Sacrifice for Freedom Program](#).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Hawaii Nisei Project. *The Hawaii Nisei Story: Americans of Japanese Ancestry During World War II*. 2006-2007. Available at:

<http://nisei.hawaii.edu/page/home>

National Archives and Records Administration, “World War II Enemy Alien Control Program Overview.” Available at:

<https://www.archives.gov/research/immigration/enemy-aliens-overview>

Niiya, Brian. *Japanese Americans in Military During World War II*. Densho Encyclopedia.

Available at:

http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Japanese_Americans_in_military_during_World_War_II/

Public Broadcasting System. *Fighting for Democracy: Japanese Americans*. 2007. Available at:

http://www.pbs.org/thewar/at_war_democracy_japanese_american.htm

Rayson, Ann. *Modern History of Hawai’i*. 2012. Bess Press.

MAHALO

The Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai’i and the Go for Broke National Education Center would like to thank the following organizations:

Military Intelligence Service Veterans - Hawaii

<http://www.misveteranshawaii.com/>

Nisei Veterans Legacy

<https://www.nvlchawaii.org/>

@nvlchawaii

100th Infantry Battalion Veterans

<http://www.100thbattalion.org/>

Nisei Veterans Memorial Center

@MauiNVMC

442nd Veterans Club and Legacy Center

Sons and Daughters of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team

<https://442sd.org/>