

Teacher's Knowledge Quest: Hawaiian Star Compass

Instructions: Explore the "Hawaiian Star Compass" activity in order to:

- learn about the types of information and knowledge recorded on the compass;
- consider why they were important to the ancient Polynesian navigators, and
- write your opinions on how the traditional voyaging was tied to people's health then and now.

Record your findings and thoughts by answering the following questions:

Student answers may vary, but key concepts and possible answers are provided below in order to help guide class review and discussion.

a. What types of environmental observations are recorded?

The compass records knowledge of environment related to the cardinal directions, the sun's positions and those of the stars observed. In addition, the Hawaiian names of various elements on the compass provide the knowledge of winds and birds that a navigator must have in directing the voyage across an ocean without any instruments.

b Why are these important for traditional voyaging?

Students' answers may vary. The main idea that students should gain is that ancient navigators needed to observe and know by memory the surrounding of where they were navigating to find direction to sail. Their "instruments" were their knowledge gained through experiences and oral history of how to 'read' the environment to navigate to and from the Hawaiian Islands.

c. How does the traditional voyaging tie to one's health?

Students' answers may vary. The key concepts for students to construct are 1) the navigation was and is a physically rigorous and mentally engaging activity—i.e., fit and healthy navigators; and 2) today, the traditional voyaging connects the Native Hawaiians to their culture and history