



**GeoCivics Lesson:**  
***Myths & Legends Gallery***

<b>Teacher(s)</b> Jenny Logologo	<b>Unit title:</b> Exploring the Power of Myths in American Samoa <b>Lesson title:</b> Myths & Legends Gallery	<b>Grade Level(s):</b> 8th Grade
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**Notes:**

This is lesson 1 of 3 that will be taught to the 8th graders.

**Pre-existing Knowledge:**

Before beginning to learn about myths, it is beneficial for students to have some pre-existing knowledge. Here are a few key areas of knowledge that can enhance their understanding and engagement with Samoan myths: familiarity with the Samoan culture, Samoan language proficiency, understanding of the oral tradition, knowledge of the Samoan history, awareness of Polynesian mythology, recognition of key mythological figures, appreciation for nature & land, and respect for cultural sensitivity. While pre-existing knowledge in these areas can enhance the learning experience, it is important to note that learning about myths is also an opportunity to deepen one's understanding and knowledge of Samoan culture, making it accessible to students at different stages of familiarity.

**Overview:**

“The Samoans explain their islands' colonization differently from anthropologists. The Samoan myth of creation, still passed on from generation to generation, is as follows: In the beginning, there were only the heavens and the waters covering the earth. The god Tagaloa looked down from his place in the sky and considered creating a place on the earth where he could stand. So he made a resting place by creating a rock called Manu'atele [Greater Manu'a]. Tagaloa was pleased with his work and said, "It would be - well to have still another resting place." He divided the rock Manu'atele so he would have other places in the sea that would serve as stepping stones. From these pieces of rock, he created Savai'i, Upolu, Tonga, Fiji, and the other islands that lie scattered about the wide ocean. When Tagaloa had finished fashioning all of these islands, he returned to Samoa. He measured the distance between the islands of Savai'i and Manu'a and found it to be too great. So he placed a rock halfway between and designated it as a place of repose for the chiefs. He called this last island Tutuila.

Tagaloa then sent a sacred vine to spread over the rocks. The leaves of the sacred creeper fell off and decayed and things like worms grew from them. Tagaloa saw that the creeper had given birth to worms that had neither heads, nor legs, nor breath of life. So the god came down and provided these worms with heads, legs, arms, and a beating heart. Thus the worms became men. Tagaloa took a male and a female and placed them on each of the islands that he had created. The man, Sa, and the woman, Vai'i, were placed on one island and the place was called Savai'i. U and Polu were placed on another and it became known as Upolu. The couple Tutu and Ila were the first inhabitants of Tutuila. To and Ga went to a place that Tagaloa named Toga [Tonga], and Fi and Ti were taken to the place to be called Fiti [Fiji]. Then, Tagaloa decided that men should be appointed to rule the different islands and so he created the title of Tui [king]. He created the titles Tuiaga'e, Tuita'u, Tuiofu, Tuiolosega, Tuiatua, Tuia'ana, Tuitoga, and Tuifiti, and thus established lords of the islands.

Then, Tagaloa looked upon all he had created and decided that there should be a king greater than all the others and that he should reside in Manu'atele, his first creation. He selected the son of Po [night] and Ao [day] to be the king of kings. When this boy was to be born it was found that his abdomen was firmly attached to his mother's womb. Because of this, he was given the name Satia i le Moaatoa [attached by the abdomen], and the whole island group that would be his domain received the name Samoa [sacred abdomen]. When the child was born, he sustained a great wound as he was ripped from his mother's body. From this came the name of the place of his birth, Manu'atele [the great wound]. When this boy grew to manhood, he became king of all the Tui [kings] and carried the title Tuimanu'a Moaatoa. This "creation story" was first recorded by the anthropologists, Lyell and Ellen Holmes, and is taken from their study, *Samoan Village, Then and Now.* -- *National Park Service*

**Purpose: What students will learn:**

Myths and legends play a vital role in the cultural heritage and identity of American Samoa. For students, understanding and appreciating these stories hold several significant benefits that extend beyond academic learning. Incorporating the study of myths and legends into the curriculum of American Samoan students allows for a holistic educational experience that encompasses cultural heritage, language development, ethical understanding, critical thinking, and emotional growth. By embracing these stories, students gain a profound appreciation for their cultural roots and are empowered to contribute to the preservation and celebration of their unique heritage.

**National & State Geography Standard(s):**

**National:** The geographically informed person knows and understands:

- Standard 6: How culture and experience influences people's perceptions of places and regions.

**Samoan Standards:**

Geography Standard 6: Changes in the Perception of Places and Regions

- 2. Perceptions of places and regions change by incorporating multiple direct and indirect experiences. Therefore the student is able to:
  - A. Analyze the ways in which people change their views of places and regions as a result of media reports or interactions with other people, as exemplified by being able to
    - Describe students' perceptions of a place that are based on indirect sources (e.g., television, films, movies, travel brochures).

- Describe students' perceptions of a place that are based on direct sources (e.g., visiting the place, multiple visits, or residing in the place).

**National & State Social Studies Standard(s):**

**National Social Studies Standard:**

- Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change: Knowledge and understanding of the past enable us to analyze the causes and consequences of events and developments, and to place these in the context of the institutions, values and beliefs of the periods in which they took place.

**Samoa Social Studies Standards:**

- Standard 1: Students reconstruct, interpret, and critique the causes and consequences of past events in the context of the institutions, values, and beliefs of the periods in which they took place.
- ASH.1.1: Investigate early societies and the settlement of the Samoan islands from the 17th to 19th centuries, including their geographical distribution, religious beliefs, and traditions.
- Collect and display information on early societies and settlement in the Samoan islands, including lifestyle, religious beliefs, traditional practices (e.g., ava ceremony, wedding, funeral), productivity, and overall scope of a Samoan village
- Develop a logical argument about Samoa's myths and legends by following an investigative procedure to test the accuracy of a selected legend or myth

**ELA Standards**

Standard 1: Students inquire about and comprehend key ideas and details in a variety of texts.

8.1.1 Construct, ask, and respond to questions as a way to extend learning

- Explain the significance of the title of a chosen selection, identify key ideas related to the title, and reflect on how the ideas might have personal application

Standard 2: Students investigate the craft and structure of a variety of texts.

- 8.2.3 Analyze point of view in an expository text to discover how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints, and analyze how point of view in literary texts creates particular effects
- Examine a literary text (e.g., play, poem, story), and explain how particular desired effects develop (e.g., dramatic, irony, suspense, humor)

Standard 3: Students integrate knowledge to make meaningful connections between ideas in diverse texts.

- 8.3.1 Analyze the relationship between a filmed or live production of a story, and the original text or script, and evaluate the choices made by the director or actors

Standard 6: Students research to build and present knowledge in writing.

- 8.6.1 Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works (e.g., the Bible)

Standard 9: Students apply strategies to comprehend and utilize vocabulary appropriately in a variety of contexts: social, instructional, and academic.

- 8.9.2 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings
- 8.9.3 Apply word knowledge when producing oral and written texts.

**ISTE Teacher *and/or* Student Standard:**

**Students:**

1.3 KNowledge Constructor:

- 1.3.c.: Students curate information from digital resources using a variety of tools and methods to create collections of artifacts that demonstrate meaningful connections or conclusions.

**Language Function:**

- **Comparing and contrasting:** Students use language to describe similarities and differences in objects or ideas.
- **Analyzing:** Students use language to separate whole into parts, identify relationships and patterns.
- **Summarizing and Informing:** Students use language to identify, report or describe information.
- **Justifying and Persuading:** Students use language to give reasons for an action, decision, point of view, convince others.

**Culturally Responsive Lesson Strategies:**

- **CONNECTION:** Lesson/Activity incorporated real-life connections and representations from various cultures and life experiences.
- **HIGHER ORDER THINKING:** Lesson/Assignment provides avenues for students to engage in higher cognitive processing.
- **DIFFERENTIATION:** Lesson/Assignment provides opportunities for individual learners to express their learning in various ways.
- **ACCESS:** Lesson/Activity communicates ideas in several different ways.

**Objective(s):**

- Students will be able to research traditional Samoan myths, and explore traditional Samoan symbols.

**SIOP**

	<b>SIOP Elements</b>	
<b>Preparation</b> Adapting content <b>Linking to background</b> Linking to past learning Strategies used	<b>Scaffolding</b> Modeling <b>Guided practice</b> Independent practice Comprehensible input	<b>Grouping Option</b> <b>Whole class</b> <b>Small groups</b> <b>Partners</b> <b>Independent</b>
<b>Integrating Processes</b> <b>Reading</b> <b>Writing</b> <b>Speaking</b> <b>Listening</b>	<b>Application</b> <b>Hands on</b> <b>Meaningful</b> Linked to objectives <b>Promotes engagement</b>	<b>Assessment</b> <b>Individual</b> <b>Group</b> <b>Written</b> <b>Oral</b>

### Evidence of Mastery (Measurable):

**Formative** - After students work independently or with a partner to read and record information about an assigned Traditional Samoan Myth, the students will first share out their findings in small groups and then as groups will present their findings to the whole class, and the teacher will take notes of their presentations for use as a formative assessment of student learning.

**Summative** - Students will do a Write-Up to explain what they have learned from reading and researching Samoan myths about early societies and settlements in the Samoan islands, including the lifestyle, religious beliefs, traditional practices, productivity, and the overall score of a Samoan village, and will include evidence from the myths read and research done and include references to the myths and research sites to support and document the points made in their Write-Up. The teacher will use the Write-Up Rubric below to assess students' Write-Ups with a score of 25 or higher indicating mastery.

#### Write-Up Rubric

Levels of Accomplishment	Criteria	Points
Exceeds Expectations	Write up clearly explains in great detail what was learned about early societies and settlements in the Samoan islands and includes accurate and fully explained information and evidence from specific myths and research sites to support the information explaining the lifestyles, religious beliefs, traditional practices, productively, and overall score of a Samoan village and it provides additional information learned as well. The write-up also includes full and accurate references to the myths and research sites used.	30 + pts.
Meets Expectations	Write up clearly explains what was learned about early societies and settlements in the Samoan islands and includes information and evidence from the specific myths and research sites to support the information that explains the lifestyles, religious beliefs, traditional practices, productively, and overall score of a Samoan village and the write-up also includes accurate references to the myths and research sites used.	25 pts.
Approaches Expectations	Write up explains at least some of what was learned about early societies and settlements in the Samoan islands and includes a little information and some evidence from the specific myths and research sites to support the information explained. At least 3 of the following elements are clearly explained: the lifestyles, religious beliefs, traditional practices, productively, and overall score of a Samoan village. The write-up includes a few, but not all of the references to the myths and research sites used.	15 to 20 pts.

Fails to Meet Expectations	Write up does not clearly explain what was learned about early societies and settlements in the Samoan islands and lacks information and/or key evidence from specific myths and research sites to support the information explained. Less than 3 of the following elements are explained in the Write-up: the lifestyles, religious beliefs, traditional practices, productively, and overall score of a Samoan village. The write-up does not include accurate references to the myths and research sites used.	0 to 10 pts.
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<p><b>Key vocabulary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>myth:</b> a traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people</li> <li>● <b>identity:</b> a set of characteristics that can be used to identify a person</li> <li>● <b>legend:</b> a traditional story regarded as historical but unauthenticated</li> <li>● <b>historical:</b> belonging to the past, of what is important or famous in the past</li> <li>● <b>moral:</b> standards of behavior that enable people to live cooperatively in groups</li> <li>● <b>landmark:</b> a building or place that is easily recognized, especially one that you can use to judge where you are</li> <li>● <b>value:</b> the importance, worth or usefulness of something</li> <li>● <b>geography:</b> the study of places and the relationships between people and their environments</li> <li>● <b>culture:</b> the customs, arts, social institutions and achievements of particular nation, people, or other social group</li> </ul>	<p><b>Materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teacher access to computer and projection device and the internet to play videos to the class</li> <li>● Video: <i>Pese O Le Tatau</i> (2.54 min.) (Link in Sources below)</li> <li>● Images of Samoan myths and legends (n Lesson Materials Document)</li> <li>● Student access to notebooks for recording vocabulary and taking notes</li> <li>● Video: <i>The legend of Samoan Tatau</i> (link in Sources below)</li> <li>● Excerpts from traditional Samoan myths (In Lesson Materials Document)</li> <li>● Traditional Myths and Legends of Samoa - one per student or partner group: (<b>NOTE</b> these can be from the book: <i>Myths and Legends of Samoa</i> by Tala o le Vavau (available on Amazon) or from the internet using links in Sources below)</li> <li>● Students' access to computers to read the article and conduct research</li> <li>● Book on Amazon: <i>Myths and Legends of Samoa</i> /Tala o le Vavau</li> <li>● Art paper or posters and art supplies - markers or colored pencils or paints for students to create a visual representation of a key scene or character from a myth they have read.</li> <li>● Copies of Write-Up Rubric - one per student (found above in lesson plan)</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Sources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Video <a href="#">Pese O Le Tatau</a></li> </ul>
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- Images of Samoan myths and legends: [https://www.google.com/search?sca\\_esv=ebfe579d5b8c900a&sca\\_upv=1&rlz=1C1GCEA\\_enUS915US915&q=copyright+free+images+of+Samoan+myths+and+legends&tbm=isch&source=Inms&prmd=ivsnbmt&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewit-rinnpiGAXUPLkQIHdMcAaAQ0pQJegQIChAB&biw=1404&bih=746&dpr=1.25](https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=ebfe579d5b8c900a&sca_upv=1&rlz=1C1GCEA_enUS915US915&q=copyright+free+images+of+Samoan+myths+and+legends&tbm=isch&source=Inms&prmd=ivsnbmt&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewit-rinnpiGAXUPLkQIHdMcAaAQ0pQJegQIChAB&biw=1404&bih=746&dpr=1.25)
- Video: The legend of Samoan Tatau: [The legend of Samoan Tatau](#)
- Excerpts from traditional Samoan myths: [Myths and Legends of Ancient Samoa | NZETC](#)
- Traditional Myths/Legends for students to read: [Myths and Legends of Ancient Samoa | NZETC](#)  
*The Samoan Creation Legend: [The Samoan Creation Legend - National Park of American Samoa \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#)*  
*The Story Of Pili and Sina: <https://folklore.usc.edu/the-story-of-pili-and-sina/>*

*Teacher Resources:*

- . Online article: *History of Samoan Tattoos:* <https://www.madrabbit.com/blogs/forever-brighter/samoan-tattoo>
- *moan Art in the Tatau (Tattoo) - Teachers (U.S. National Park Service).* (n.d.). Samoan Art in the Tatau (Tattoo) - Teachers (U.S. National Park Service). <https://www.nps.gov/teachers/classrooms/samoan-art-in-the-tatau-tattoo.htm>
- *Skin Stories . History of Tattoo | PBS.* (n.d.). Skin Stories . History of Tattoo | PBS. <https://www.pbs.org/skinstories/history/#:~:text=In%20Samoa%2C%20the%20tradition%20of,serving%20as%20his%20father's%20apprentice.>

**Engage**

**Teacher Will: (Hook)**

1. Ask students if they have any family myths or legends? Stories that have been passed down? If not, what movies have they seen that are based on myth or legend?
2. Then, play the video [Pese O Le Tatau](#) (This is a 3 minute clip from youtube based on the Samoan tattoo.) And then the teacher will welcome the students and introduce the lesson title and begin the lesson by asking students if they have heard any stories or legends from American Samoa.
3. Show images of Samoan myths and legends (in Lesson Materials Document) and ask students to share out their initial thoughts and reactions. And then lead the class in a discussion of the importance of myths in cultures and their relevance today, emphasizing that myths often explain natural

**Students Will:**

1. Students will listen to the video shown and can sing along in the Samoan language. The students will then listen attentively to the teacher’s introduction and share out their knowledge of American Samoan stories or legends.  
**(Grouping: Whole Class) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking) (Preparation: Linking to background)**
2. View images of Samoan myths and legends shown by the teacher, and engage in a class discussion sharing their thoughts and reactions to the images and sharing out their thinking about the importance of myths in contemporary society today.  
**(Grouping: Whole Class) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking) (Preparation: Linking to background)**

<p>phenomena, teach moral lessons, or pass down cultural values.</p> <p>4. The teacher will then introduce the lesson vocabulary words to the class, writing them on the board, and discussing the meaning of each word with the students. Make connections to the discussion they just had about the images and the importance of myths, and have the students record the words and definitions in their own <u>notebooks</u>.</p> <p><b>(Scaffolding: Modeling)</b></p>	<p>3. Listen to the teacher’s introduction of the lesson vocabulary words and engage in a discussion with the class about the meaning of each word and how they connect to the images seen and their discussion about the importance of myths. The students will follow the teacher’s example, writing down each word and its definition in their own notebooks.</p> <p><b>(Grouping: Whole class) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking/Reading/Writing)</b></p>
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**Explore**

<p><b>Teacher Will:</b> Partner ELLs/SPED or Gifted students to provide language or learning support as needed.</p> <p>1. Show the <u>video <a href="#">The legend of Samoan Tatau</a></u> and lead the class in a discussion of the video. Lead the class in a brainstorming session identifying and discussing Samoan symbols.</p> <p><u>Reading Assignment:</u></p> <p>2. Present to the class excerpts from traditional Samoan myths (In Lesson Materials Document) and give students a reading assignment, assigning each student or set of partners a myth to read.</p> <p><b>(NOTE)</b> These can be from the book: Myths and Legends of Samoa by Tala o le Vavau (available on Amazon) or selected from online myths (see links in Sources above) and have the students identify and write down symbolic elements found in the myth as they read.</p> <p><u>Group Analysis:</u></p> <p>3. The teacher will then organize students into groups for a discussion on their assigned myths, having students work together to analyze the myths read and share out and discuss the meanings of these with the group.</p>	<p><b>Students Will:</b></p> <p>1. Watch the video about the legend of Samoan Tatau (tattoos) and engage in a class discussion of the video, sharing out their thoughts and understanding.</p> <p>2. Engage with the teacher and class in a brainstorm discussion to share out their ideas and existing knowledge of Samoan symbols.</p> <p><b>(Grouping: Whole class) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking) (Preparation: Linking to past learning)</b></p> <p>3. View and read excerpts presented by the teacher and then use their computers to access their assigned myth. Read the myth independently or with a partner and identify and write down in their notebooks all symbolic elements found in the myth.</p> <p><b>(Grouping: Whole class/Independent/Partners) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking/Reading/Writing) (Application: Hands-on/Meaningful/Promotes engagement)</b></p> <p>4. Work in groups to share the myth they have read and to work together to analyze the myth and share out symbolic elements, discussing their meanings in the group.</p>
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	<b>(Grouping: Small Groups) (Integrating Processes) Listening/Speaking) (Application: Meaningful/Promotes engagement)</b>
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**Explain - Formative Assessment**

<p><b>1. Teacher Will:</b> Facilitate a whole-class discussion where each group presents their findings, and guide the discussion towards drawing connections between the themes and how they reflect Samoan culture and beliefs. As each group presents their findings, the teacher will make note of their presentations for use as a formative assessment of student learning.</p> <p><b>2.</b> After the presentations are over, the teacher will introduce the concept of oral tradition and explain how myths were traditionally passed down from generation to generation in Samoa.</p>	<p><b>Students Will:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work together as a group to present their findings from their reading and group discussion to the whole class.</li> </ol> <p><b>(Assessment: Group/Oral)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Listen to the teacher and reflect on how myths were passed down from generation to generation.</li> </ol>
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**Elaborate**

<p><b>Teacher Will:</b> <b>(NOTE)</b> Strategically group ELLs/SPED and Gifted students to provide language and learning support as needed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage students in a class discussion summarizing what they have learned about Samoan Myths and Legends, and have students think/pair/Share questions they still have and want to learn more about Samoan Myths and Legends. Then have students work together in small groups to conduct further research to explore their questions and find additional information about Samoan myths and legends.</li> <li>2. After conducting their research, the teacher will provide art materials to each student and assign them to choose one Samoan myth and create a visual representation of a key scene or character from the story. Then in their small groups, have students present their</li> </ol>	<p><b>Students Will:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage in a class discussion summarizing their learning about Samoan myths and legends, and think/pair/share questions they still have and want to learn more about Samoan myths and legends. Then work in their small groups to conduct research to look for additional information about Samoan myths and legends to answer their questions, and take notes on what they find.</li> </ol> <p><b>(Grouping: Small Groups) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking/ Reading/Writing) (Application: Meaningful/Promotes engagement)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Work independently to create a visual representation using available art supplies that represents a key scene or character from one of the myths they have read.</li> </ol>
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<p>artwork to the class and explain the significance of their chosen scene or character in relation to the myth.</p>	<p>Then present their artwork to the class and explain how this art piece represents a significant part of the myth they read.  <b>(Grouping: Independent/Whole class) (Application: Hands-on/Meaningful/Promotes engagement)</b></p>
<p><b>Evaluate</b></p>	
<p><b>Teacher Will:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As a Summative assessment, have students do a Write-Up where they are to explain what they have learned from reading and researching Samoan myths about early societies and settlements in the Samoan islands, including the lifestyle, religious beliefs, traditional practices, productivity, and the overall score of a Samoan village, and explain to students that they must include evidence from the myths read to support the points they make in their write-up, and they must also include references to the myths and research sites used as evidence.</li> <li>2. The teacher will provide students with copies of the <u>Write-Up Rubric</u> and explain the criteria that will be used to grade their write-up.</li> </ol> <p><b>(NOTE:)</b> The teacher can have ELLs/SPED students work with a partner to complete their write-up, if needed. Students can also use the research notes taken in their notebooks to support them in writing.  <b>(Scaffolding: Guided Practice)</b>  When finished the teacher will collect the students' Write-ups and use the <u>Write-Up Rubric</u> to evaluate student learning with a score of 25 or higher indicating mastery.</p>	<p><b>Students Will:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.&amp; 2. Listen carefully to the teacher's explanation of how they are to complete their Write-up and use their copy of the <u>Write-Up Rubric</u> as a guide to complete their write-up explaining what they have learned from reading and researching Samoan myths.</li> </ol> <p><b>(Assessment: Individual or Partners/ Written)</b></p>
<p><b>Extension(s):</b> Have students read and research myths and legends from other U.S. Territories and compare and contrast these to what they have learned from those of U.S. Samoa.</p>	