***1.7.5 - 1924 Hanapēpē Massacre***

**The Asian American Education Project**

| ***Grade Levels*** | 5-8 |
| --- | --- |
| ***Lesson Overview*** | On September 9, 1924, violence erupted between Filipino plantation workers and law enforcement during the Hanapēpē Labor Strike in Kauaʻi, Hawaiʻi. During this massacre, at least 16 Filipino plantation workers and four police officers died. In this lesson, students will learn about the 1924 Hanapēpē Massacre. They will identify the key events, causes, and effects of the Hanapēpē Massacre. They will also examine the experiences of Filipino sugar plantation workers in Hawaiʻi. |
| ***Lesson Objectives*** | Students will:   * Summarize key events of the Hanapēpē Massacre. * Identify causes and effects relating to the Hanapēpē Massacre. * Describe the experiences of Filipino plantation laborers in Hawaiʻi. |
| ***Standards*** | [College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards](https://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/c3/c3-framework-for-social-studies-rev0617.pdf)   * D2.His.13.6-8. Evaluate the relevancy and utility of a historical source based on information such as maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose. * D2.His.14.6-8. Explain multiple causes and effects of events and developments in the past. * D2.His.15.6-8. Evaluate the relative influence of various causes of events and developments in the past.   [Common Core State Standards: English Language Arts Standards » History/Social Studies » Grade 6-8](https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/6-8/)   * [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.1](https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/6-8/1/) Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources. * [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2](https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/6-8/2/) Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions. * [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.4](https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/6-8/4/) Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies. * [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7](https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/6-8/7/) Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts. |

Trigger Warning: This lesson is about a massacre and does mention violence and death.

***1924 Hanapēpē Massacre Essay***

In 1835, William Hooper (1809-1878) arrived in Kōloa on the island of Kauaʻi. He established the first sugar **plantation** in Hawaiʻi. Although his business failed, this opened the way for the development of a sugar **economy**. More White businessmen began taking over native Hawaiian land.

As plantations flourished, the need for labor increased. The pool of Native Hawaiian laborers decreased. This was due to the spread of disease introduced by White settlers. In addition, many Native Hawaiians quit. They complained of the harsh working conditions. Plantation owners then turned to **migrant labor** from Asia. They **recruited** workers from Japan, China, and the Philippines.

Over the years, over 46,000 Chinese, 180,000 Japanese, 126,000 Filipinos, as well as Portuguese and Puerto Rican workers arrived in Hawaiʻi. These workers were hired under contracts that lasted for three to five years. They worked 10 to 12 hours per day. They worked six days per week. They did backbreaking work. They lived in small, overcrowded houses. As such, they were often sick.

Plantation workers were separated by **ethnic groups**. Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino laborers were each paid at different rates for the same work. Plantation owners often pitted one ethnic group against the other in labor **disputes**. Many riots broke out among the workers.

Filipino sugar plantation workers in Hawaiʻi first arrived in 1906. At first, there were 15 of them. They were known as ***sakadas***. They were recruited from three main regions of the Philippines. The Ilocanos were recruited from the northernmost region of the Philippines. The Visayans were recruited from the middle region of the Philippines. The Tagalogs were recruited from Southern Luzon, the northern group of islands in the Philippines. The majority of the Filipino workers were Ilocanos and Visayans.

By 1932, Filipinos became the backbone of plantation labor. They made up 70% of the workforce. They were paid as little as 90 cents a day, much less than migrant workers from Japan and China. According to a 1939 Bureau of Labor Statistics report, Filipino workers were paid about $467 in 1938. Meanwhile, Japanese workers earned $651 in the same year. Filipino workers were also given the most labor-intensive jobs. For example, they had to harvest and haul the sugarcane.

Filipino plantation workers fought for better working conditions. In 1919, they formed the Filipino Labor Union. Their leader was Pablo Manlapit (1891-1969). Together with the Japanese Federation of Labor (1920), the Filipino Labor Union organized the Oʻahu Sugar Strike in 1920. Over 8,000 migrant workers stopped working for almost seven months. Manlapit started the High Wage Movement in 1922. He demanded the Hawaiian Sugar Planters’ Association (HSPA) increase the pay rate from $1 per day to $2 per day. He also demanded the HSPA decrease work hours to eight hours a day. However, these demands were ignored. As a result, the High Wage Movement organized another **strike** in 1924.

The Hanapēpē Sugar Strike of 1924 began on Oʻahu. Then, it spread to the Big Island. Next, it spread to Maui and the Garden Isle in Kauaʻi. The **strikers** from the Kōloa and Makaweli (currently Kaumakani) plantations set up two headquarters. Approximately 150 Filipino workers rented out a Japanese language school in Hanapēpē. The 400 remaining strikers stationed themselves in the Hee Fat rice warehouse building in Kapaʻa. The workers in Hanapēpē were on strike for about a month and a half before a **massacre** occurred. Most of the strikers were Visayan Filipinos.

On September 8, 1924, two Ilocano Filipino workers rode their bikes into Hanapēpē. They wanted to buy shoes. On their way back to their plantation, they passed by the Japanese school house. They were attacked and held **captive** by strikers. These strikers were frustrated by the non-strikers for not supporting their **movement**. Friends of the captives realized they were missing. They went to the Kauaʻi sheriffs. Sheriff Deputy William Crowell (1873-1935) tried to retrieve the captives. But the strikers refused to give them up. Crowell returned the following day with an arrest warrant. He also had 40 armed policemen. Crowell was able to have the captives released. Upon leaving the headquarters, strikers followed and taunted Crowell and the two captives. They waved their cane knives in the air. The armed policemen took this as a threat. They fired upon the strikers. At least 16 strikers were shot dead. Four sheriffs died as a result of stab wounds. Funerals took place in the days following the massacre. There was a funeral for the fallen sheriffs. There was another for the strikers.

After the massacre, the National Guard was sent to Kauaʻi to restore order. Over 100 strikers were arrested. About 76 strikers were **indicted** for rioting. About 58 pleaded guilty and served four years in prison. Although he was not present at the massacre, Manlapit was found guilty of **conspiracy**. He was sent to Oʻahu Prison in 1925. He was released after serving two years. But he was forced to leave Hawaiʻi. Other leaders of the High Wage Movement were fired. They were **deported** back to the Philippines. With their leaders in jail, the 1924 strike ended. It lasted eight months. Labor movements remained silent for the next ten years.

As a result of the massacre, sugar plantation owners stopped recruiting Visayan Filipinos. Recruitment shifted to the Ilocos region. Plantation owners also didn’t recruit educated Filipinos. They divided Ilocano and Visayan Filipinos in fear of their uniting against them. Within a few years, Ilocanos became the majority of Filipinos working on sugar plantations.

The Hanapēpē Massacre derailed the Filipino labor movement in the United States. There was no public outcry after the massacre. The massacre did not inspire any **solidarity** with other plantation workers. Protests from Filipino sugar laborers in the 1930s struggled to gain support until the Hawaiian Sugar Strike of 1946. Led by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), the 1946 strike was able to inspire over 76,000 sugar plantation workers to stop working. They fought for improvements in pay, housing, and working conditions. The success of the 1946 strike is due to the strength of solidarity across ethnic groups.

The memories of fallen strikers from the 1924 Hanapēpē Massacre were forgotten until 2006. At this time, the Kauaʻi Filipino Centennial Celebration Committee dedicated a concrete marker in the Hanapēpē Town Park to commemorate the historic event. The graves of the strikers were unmarked until 2019. This is when the Hawaiʻi State Chapter of the Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS) found a trench at the Hanapēpē Filipino Cemetery. This was believed to be the grave of strikers who died during the 1924 massacre. In 2024, the Kauaʻi County Planning Department commemorated the 100th anniversary of the 1924 Hanapēpē Massacre. Nearly 150 people attended.

Today, the 1924 Hanapēpē Massacre continues to serve as a symbol of Filipino American **struggle** and **resistance**. Filipinos made great **sacrifices**.They led the struggle to improve Hawaiʻi’s working class.

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***Vocabulary:***1

* **captive:** one who has been captured
* **conspiracy:** the act of secretly joining together to do an unlawful act
* **deported:** to be removed from a country
* **disputes:** arguments or verbal debates
* **economy:** the structure or conditions of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services in a country, area, or period
* **ethnic group:** a social group or category of the population that, in a larger society, is set apart and bound together by common ties of race, language, nationality, or culture
* **indicted:** formally charged with a crime by the finding of a jury
* **massacre:** the act or an instance of killing a number of usually helpless or unresisting human beings under circumstances of atrocity or cruelty
* **migrant labor:** a workforce that moves from one region to another offering their services on a temporary, usually seasonal, basis
* **movement:** an organized effort to promote or attain an end
* **plantation:** an agricultural estate usually worked by resident labor
* **recruited:** to be enlisted as new members
* **resistance:** an opposing or impeding force
* **sacrifices:** things/actions that are given up or lost
* **sakadas:** Visayan word for Filipino farm workers\*
* **solidarity:** unity (as of a group or class) that produces or is based on community of interests, objectives, and standards
* **strike:** a work stoppage by a body of workers to enforce compliance with demands made on an employer
* **strikers:** people who participate in a strike
* **struggle:** an act of strongly motivated striving

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1 Definition adopted from Merriam-Webster Dictionary

\* Definition adopted from <https://www.ilwulocal142.org/honoring-filipino-sakada-part-i>

***Discussion Questions:***

1. What was the sugar economy in Hawaiʻi?
2. Why was immigrant labor needed on Hawaiʻi’s sugar plantations?
3. Why were Filipinos recruited from specific regions of the Philippines?
4. How were laborers treated on Hawaiʻi’s sugar plantations?
5. How did Filipino American plantation workers fight for better working conditions?
6. What happened before, during, and after the Hanapēpē Massacre?
7. What are the effects of the Hanapēpē Massacre? Who was affected? How were they affected?
8. How does the Hanapēpē Massacre represent struggle and resistance?
9. Why was the Hanapēpē Massacre largely forgotten and how is it being remembered today?
10. What is the legacy of the Hanapēpē Massacre?

***Activity 1:* Defining and Examining “Massacres”**

A. Create and display the following chart for all to see:

| Merriam-Webster | the act or an instance of killing a number of usually helpless or unresisting human beings under circumstances of atrocity or cruelty |
| --- | --- |
| Dictionary.com | the unnecessary, indiscriminate killing of a large number of human beings or animals, as in barbarous warfare or persecution or for revenge or plunder |
| Wikipedia | an event of killing people who are not engaged in hostilities or are defenseless; a targeted killing of civilians en masse by an armed group or person |
| U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation | an event in which one or more individuals are actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area |
| U.S. Statute (i.e., the Investigative Assistance for Violent Crimes Act of 2012) | 3 or more killings in a single incident |

B. Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:

1. Which words stand out to you and why?
2. How are the definitions the same?
3. How are the definitions different? What accounts for the differences? Why would the legal definition require a number?
4. How would you define “massacre” based on these definitions?
5. Why is it important to define this word?

C. Tell students the following: “A massacre is the killing of a large number of people at the same time in a violent and cruel way. Unfortunately, U.S. history as well as world history is full of massacres. There are many reasons why massacres take place. One of the main reasons is to maintain power and/or to take power away. Taking human lives is never justifiable.”

D. Have students discuss the causes or factors that can lead to a massacre. Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:

1. How might ideology be the cause of a massacre?
2. How might instability be the cause of a massacre?
3. How might social or racial conflict be the cause of a massacre?
4. How might personal agendas be the cause of a massacre?
5. How might protecting national sovereignty be the cause of a massacre?
6. How might imperialism be the cause of a massacre?
7. How might theft and land grabbing be the cause of a massacre?
8. What other causes can lead to a massacre?

E. Have students watch this video entitled, “[Hanapepe Massacre Film Trailer](https://vimeo.com/403920786).” Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:

1. In what ways does the 1924 Hanapēpē Massacre fit the definitions studied above?
2. In what ways does it not align with the definitions studied above?
3. Why might it be important for this historical event to be labeled as a massacre? What is the significance of doing so?

F. OPTIONAL: Have students study different massacres in U.S. history. (Refer to Zinn Education Project’s resource entitled, “[Massacres in U.S. History](https://www.zinnedproject.org/collection/massacres-us/).”) Facilitate a discussion by asking students the following questions:

1. Why are there so many massacres in U.S. history? What do these massacres have in common?
2. Why is it important to study these massacres? How will studying the past help shape our future?

***Activity 2:* Summarizing the Hanapēpē Massacre**

A. Show students the [image of sugarcane plantation workers](https://docs.google.com/document/d/16AYtQtAhIwJDU27yItPCKDrG3SmBVeo1OWeEoUXJlkI/edit?tab=t.0) (below). Have students share what they notice in the picture.



Source: [Library of Congress](https://www.loc.gov/item/93510997/?loclr=blogflt)

B. Tell students the following: “This picture shows migrant sugarcane plantation workers in Hawaiʻi. In this lesson, you will be learning about Filipino American labor history in Hawaiʻi, specifically about the 1924 Hanapēpē Massacre.”

C. Have students read the essay. Consider the following options:

1. OPTION 1: Have students read the essay independently either for homework or during class time.
2. OPTION 2: Read aloud the essay and model annotating.
3. OPTION 3: Have students read aloud in pairs or small groups.

D. Facilitate a discussion by asking the Discussion Questions listed above.

E. Have students work in small groups. Assign each group to study one of the following events:

1. Arrival of sakadas in 1906
2. Working conditions of Filipino American plantation workers
3. Formation of the Filipino Labor Union in 1919
4. Oʻahu Strike of 1920
5. High Wage Movement of 1922
6. Hanapēpē Sugar Strike of 1924
7. Hanapēpē Massacre of 1924
8. Hawaiian Sugar Strike of 1946

F. Have students write a brief summary (2-3 sentences) of their assigned event by referring to the text and/or additional internet research. Have students create a poster that includes a visual and a caption that best represents their summary. Have each group present their visual and caption to the entire class.

G. Have students sort their posters into three categories (which should be posted around the room):

1. Before the Massacre
2. During the Massacre
3. After the Massacre

H. Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:

1. What are the conditions that led to the Hanapēpē Massacre? What caused the Hanapēpē Massacre to happen?
2. What happened during the Hanapēpē Massacre?
3. What are the effects or aftermath of the Hanapēpē Massacre?
4. Why is it important to understand what happened during the Hanapēpē Massacre?

***Activity 3:* Examining the Experiences of Filipino American Plantation Workers**

A. Have students reread the essay. Direct students to underline details in the text that describe the experiences of Filipino American plantation workers.

B. Have students complete this chart by listing adjectives for how to describe the workers’ experiences in the left column and evidence from the text in the right column:

| How would you describe the workers’ experiences? (One adjective per line) | What evidence from the text supports this? |
| --- | --- |
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|  |  |
|  |  |

C. Have students work in small groups and assign each group to read or listen to one of the following oral histories from the University of Hawaiʻi Foundation’s Center for Oral History:

1. Mauro Plateros: <https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/items/4b483e53-65de-407e-b1a4-6b8715f93b0e>
2. Sulpicio Venyan: <https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/items/e1944a17-b66f-43b9-b467-48cd67ffff89>
3. Ignacia Lagmay: <https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/items/56ca4db1-53bf-425b-bd82-360f862868f7>
4. Edwin K. Crowell: <https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/items/c3a16417-02d0-4e3d-be4d-967def94f99e>
5. Francisco Ceballos: <https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/items/ccf67e5c-8cf1-4734-b254-7ba920241ac9>
6. Agapito Bakiano: <https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/items/6e399f70-9322-4cb8-9b41-43e7b91b8eaa>
7. Anonymous (Interviewed with Gregorio Oroc): <https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/items/662a65bf-8e15-4bf8-8887-23abf397de58>
8. Anonymous (Interviewed by Chad Taniguchi): <https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/items/92a216f6-789f-4372-859e-5167f623c853>
9. Samuel Kahiko Aipoalani: <https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/items/4c7f74ce-3338-4274-bf16-b97b4ce3420b>

D. Have students complete this worksheet entitled, “[Oral History Analysis](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VAyy1bTXyMdWQ4cE9ffp9hzQ1uTTfeRskWAqr07RJYk/edit?tab=t.0)”:

1. Have students summarize the gist of the information conveyed in the oral history.
2. Have students describe the person giving the oral history.
3. Have students identify any biases or limitations of the person giving the oral history.
4. Have students select two quotes from the oral history that resonated with them and explain why.
5. Have students identify three ways in which the oral history affirms what they have already learned about the Hanapēpē Massacre.
6. Have students identify three ways in which the oral history either refutes or challenges what they have learned about the Hanapēpē Massacre.
7. Have students identify three questions they would ask the person giving the oral history if they were allowed to give a follow-up interview.

E. Facilitate a discussion by asking the following question:

1. What more did you learn from the oral histories?
2. How did the oral histories authenticate what you learned from the essay?
3. Why is it important to examine firsthand accounts of historical events, especially from communities of color?
4. How does the oral histories humanize the historical event?

F. OPTIONAL: Have students create a short video about the life of the person giving the oral history.

G. OPTIONAL: Have students listen and/or read one or more of these oral histories about the “[Pioneer Mill Company: A Maui Sugar Plantation Legacy](https://oralhistory.hawaii.edu/pioneer-mill-company-a-maui-sugar-plantation-legacy/)” from the University of Hawaiʻi Foundation’s Center for Oral History. Have them share how learning about these stories, albeit from a different sugar plantation, helps them understand the experiences of the sugar plantation workers at Hanapēpē.

***Activity 4:* Analyzing the Significance of Place**

A. Have students reread the essay and take note of all the geographical places mentioned.

B. Have students create a T-chart and list the names of all the places in the left column.

C. Ask students the following questions: “What is the significance of each place mentioned in the essay?” Have students record their responses in the right column of the T-chart.

D. Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:

1. How did each person’s homeland affect their experiences in the United States?
2. What assumptions were being made about the Filipino workers depending on where they came from?
3. Why does place matter?

***Activity 5:* Analyzing Filipino American Struggle and Resistance in Hawaiʻi**

A. Have students define the concepts of struggle and resistance by comparing several definitions found on the internet (refer to Activity 1 for a model).

B. Have students pair-share and discuss a personal example of struggle and resistance.

C. Create and display this chart for all to see:

| Event | How is this an example of struggle? For whom? | How is this an example of resistance? For whom? |
| --- | --- | --- |
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D. Guide students in completing the chart for each of the events mentioned in Activity 2 (refer to the posters in Activity 2):

1. Arrival of sakadas in 1906
2. Working conditions of Filipino American plantation workers
3. Formation of the Filipino Labor Union in 1919
4. Oʻahu Strike of 1920
5. High Wage Movement of 1922
6. Hanapēpē Sugar Strike of 1924
7. Hanapēpē Massacre of 1924
8. Hawaiian Sugar Strike of 1946

E. Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:

1. Which historical events demonstrate the struggle of Filipino American plantation workers in Hawaiʻi? How so?
2. Which historical events demonstrate the resistance of Filipino American plantation workers in Hawaiʻi? How so?
3. Why is it important to talk about resistance when talking about struggle?

F. Have students write a paragraph in response to this question: How do you think the struggle and resistance of Filipino American plantation workers impacted future labor movements in Hawaiʻi?

***Extension Activities***

A. Implement The Asian American Education Project’s lesson entitled, “[Chinese Massacre of 1871: Not an Isolated Event](https://asianamericanedu.org/chinese-massacre-of-1871-not-an-isolated-event.html).” Have students compare this massacre to the Hanapēpē Massacre by identifying the similarities and differences. Have students discuss why marginalized communities are often the victim of violence.

B. Have students study some recent massacres or mass killings against Asian American communities. Have students examine how prevailing stereotypes of Asian Americans contribute to violence committed against them. Have students discuss solutions for how to combat narratives that position Asian Americans as “perpetual foreigners,” etc.

C. Implement The Asian American Education Project’s lesson entitled, “[Fighting for Labor Rights](https://asianamericanedu.org/fighting-labor-rights.html).” Have students discuss why labor rights are so important. Have students research a labor struggle in U.S. history and share their research with others.

D. Have students compare the Hanapēpē Sugar Strike of 1924 to other Filipino American-led labor movements such as the Delano Grape Strike. Implement one or more of these lessons from The Asian American Education Project: “[Filipino Farmworkers Fight for Their Rights](https://asianamericanedu.org/larry-itliong-cesar-chavez-grape-strike.html),” “[Philip Vera Cruz: Justice for Farm Workers](https://asianamericanedu.org/philip-vera-cruz-justice-for-farmworkers.html),” “[United Farm Workers (UFW) Movement: Philip Vera Cruz, Unsung Hero](https://asianamericanedu.org/awoc-united-farm-workers-ufw-movement-philip-vera-cruz-unsung-hero.pdf),” and “[Larry Itliong: Unity of Filipino and Mexican Farmworkers](https://asianamericanedu.org/filipino-american-farmworkers.html).” Have students draw conclusions about how Filipino American labor movements evolved over time and what they learned from previous movements.

E. Have students research the different regions of the Philippines. Have them create travel brochures for each region. Have students analyze the similarities and differences across the regions.

***Further Information***

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The Asian American Education Project lesson entitled, “Fighting for Labor Rights.” <https://asianamericanedu.org/fighting-labor-rights.html>

The Asian American Education Project lesson entitled, “Filipino Farmworkers Fight for Their Rights.” <https://asianamericanedu.org/larry-itliong-cesar-chavez-grape-strike.html>

The Asian American Education Project lesson entitled, “Larry Itliong: Unity of Filipino and Mexican Farmworkers.” <https://asianamericanedu.org/filipino-american-farmworkers.html>

The Asian American Education Project lesson entitled, “Philip Vera Cruz: Justice for Farm Workers.” <https://asianamericanedu.org/philip-vera-cruz-justice-for-farmworkers.html>

The Asian American Education Project lesson entitled, “United Farm Workers (UFW) Movement: Philip Vera Cruz, Unsung Hero.” <https://asianamericanedu.org/awoc-united-farm-workers-ufw-movement-philip-vera-cruz-unsung-hero.pdf>