

Teacher's Guide

Introduction

1. Show the documentary video [Time and Tide](#)
2. Locate Kiribati, Tuvalu and Tokelau on a [map](#)
3. Discuss the importance of our [Oceans](#).

Geography

What is an atoll? How are they created? Where are they typically found?

[Atolls](#) are circular arrays of coral reef islands that are perched around an oceanic volcanic seamount that encircle a central lagoon. Atolls are formed mainly in tropical waters, since they require coral reef building. Most atolls are found in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Atolls can vary in size, but most atoll islands are typically no more than 5 meters above sea level.

Polynesia vs. Micronesia

[Kiribati](#) (pronounced kee-ree-bas) is a part of [Micronesia](#), and [Tuvalu](#) and [Tokelau](#) are a part of [Polynesia](#). A sub region of Oceania, the name Micronesia derives from the Greek *mikros*, meaning *small*, and *nesos*, meaning *island*. Micronesia is comprised of over 1,000 islands in the western Pacific Ocean, with influences from Melanesia, Polynesia, the Philippines, and Indonesia. Polynesia is also a subregion of Oceania, comprised of over 1,000 islands scattered over the central and southern Pacific Ocean. Polynesia is generally defined as the islands within the Polynesian Triangle, with its corners at Hawaii, New Zealand, and Easter Island.

[History of Polynesian Archaeology](#)

[Sample Lesson Plan on Polynesia](#)

Climate Change

[National Science Teachers' Association](#) A climate change study guide developed by the National Science Teachers' Association has many lesson plans and extensive links to many other useful sites.

[Bio Ethics Education](#). Another website from New Zealand has good information and poses some ethical questions from Christian, Jewish, and Islamic point-of-views:

Life on the Atolls

Dependence on Ocean and Land

People living on these island atolls live a very simple life. The ocean and land are their greatest resources, and provide gifts which make their lifestyle distinct. They do not have the distractions

of daily life as we know it in the United States. Many people live a subsistence lifestyle and are strongly guided by their faith and family values.

Land is never sold on these islands. Land belongs to families, and is passed on from generation to generation. As more family members are born, the land is divided among the remaining members. Even if people leave the island, that land still belongs to their family.

[Tuvalu Land Affairs](#)

Lagoon and Ocean

The shallow, tropical waters of the lagoons offer the perfect environment for coral reefs. Daily high and low tides refresh the waters and sustain marine life. This rich bio-diversity supported by the coral reefs has enabled people to live a comfortable subsistence lifestyle for generations. However, coral reefs are extremely sensitive and increasing sea levels, increasing sea temperatures, and ocean acidification, mixed with stronger storm surges can be devastating. Less fish in the lagoons, the salting of farmland, and the contamination of ground water has led to greater reliance on imported foods.

[Coral Reefs](#)

Fishing

The fishing industry is a significant source of income for the islands. Many men who leave the islands for work become highly skilled fisherman, or “seaman.” Not only is fishing an integral part of the economy, it is also a vital part of daily life on the islands. In Tokelau, for example, fishing creates a genuine sense of community through the spirit of *inati*. [Inati](#) is a communal activity, which ensures that everyone in the village gets a share of fish. The catch is shared equally among the villages, and the chiefs are in charge of the distribution. No one goes hungry.

[Kiribati Fishing](#)

[Women in Fisheries](#)

Food resources

Soil quality on the atolls is very poor and cannot support a great diversity of crops, and fresh water is a precious and limited resource. Staple foods include a variety of fish, pandanus leaves, copra, bananas, papaya, breadfruit, taro, and coconut. Supplemental foods such as rice, flour, sugar, and canned goods are imported regularly. Pork and chicken are also a significant source of protein, and are often reserved for celebrations.

Community

Family is of the utmost importance on the islands, and so is the spirit of community. Most villages have a community center, or communal meeting house, called a *maneaba* in Kiribati, and *maneapa* in Tuvalu and Tokelau. It is the site for celebrations, weddings, christenings, reunions, funerals, and feast days. The villages on the different islands also have a council of chiefs, who oversee the welfare of the islands. Families share whatever resources are

on hand, and help each other out when needed. Since most people rarely leave the islands, generations of families grow up together in these same communities.

[Tuvalu-Traditional Social Structure](#)

[I-Kiribati Culture](#)

[Tokelauan Culture](#)

Migration

Many people from Kiribati, Tuvalu, and Tokelau seldom leave their own islands. Those who do leave the islands do so in pursuit of economic opportunities in larger countries such as Fiji, New Zealand, and Australia. However, with rising sea levels due to climate change, migration will no longer be an option, but a necessity. Countries have already begun creating plans to help their citizens make the transition with dignity.

[Tuvalu's Environmental Migration to New Zealand](#)

Role of the Arts

Virtually everyone can sing and dance. Singing and dancing not only functions as a form of entertainment, but can be used to denote one's presence within the community, display one's genealogy, and recount historical events. It also serves as a significant form of expression. Singing and dancing is a way in which individuals connect with the community, affirm beliefs, and transmit cultural values. As a Kiribati Diplomat once said, "When you see a beautiful dancer, you know his family has loved him/her well."

[From Warrior to Worship: Understanding Polynesian Dance Types](#)

[Dancing to Remember: Saving History Through Dance](#)

Religion

Missionaries brought Christianity to the islands in the mid-1800s. Today Kiribati is 96% Christian, Tokelau is 94% Christian, and Tuvalu is 94% Christian. Major religious groups include the Roman Catholic Church, Kiribati Protestant Church, The Church of Tuvalu, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), Baha'i, Seventh-day Adventist, and Jehovah's Witness. The church and spirituality are a vital part of daily life on the islands. In paying respects to the land and sea, many islanders also pray daily to give thanks and celebrate life.

[Kiribati, Religion and Social Profile](#)

[Tuvalu, Religion and Social Profile](#)

[Tokelau, Religion and Social Profile](#)

Reflect on the Performance

1. What did you anticipate to see on stage prior to the performance? Did your views change after watching the show?
2. What were some similarities and differences you noticed between the different groups?
3. What were the songs about? What was the significance of the lyrics?

4. What did you learn about daily life in Tuvalu, Tokelau, and Kiribati? What did you learn about the different cultural values of the islands? How are these different from life in the United States?
5. What questions do you have after watching this performance?
6. What can you take from this performance in application to your own life?

Study Questions

1. In Tuvalu and Kiribati, the *maneaba* are the most important buildings on the island where the most important business takes place. What is the most important building in your school and community? What business takes place there?
2. How are atolls formed?
3. Compare and contrast the concept of land ownership on these atoll islands. Compare and contrast with land ownership in America.
4. What does it mean when people are “engaged in the work of subsistence” ?
5. Imagine a place where you could live without money. Describe this place.
6. What would your life be like?
7. Why is it hard to grow food in these atolls? What challenges do farmers or ranchers face in your area?
8. Fresh water for drinking, growing things, personal needs is precious in these atolls. What is a “fresh water lens”? What are the sources of your water?
9. Collecting rain water is essential in atolls. In what ways is rain water collected and stored where you live?
10. What are our government policies in times of drought?
11. Is climate change the same as global warming?
12. Where does carbon dioxide come from? What role does carbon dioxide play in climate change?
13. What are people in your community doing to reduce carbon emissions in the atmosphere? Suggest 3 to 5 things you can do to improve our world.
14. Form two or more groups to debate the role government should take in the challenge of climate change.
15. Is music and dance an important part of your life? Are you a participant? Or, a consumer?