



In May, we recognize AANHPI Heritage Month, a time to honor people in the United States whose families trace their origins to Asia, the Pacific Islands, and Hawai'i.

These communities are highly diverse, encompassing a wide range of cultures, languages, histories, and lived experiences. Each reflects distinct identities while also contributing to the broader fabric of American society.

In this packet, you'll explore aspects of these communities and people through engaging activities, creative projects, and new perspectives.

### This packet includes...

- Intro to AANHPI Month Reading Activity
- Virtual Field Trip Activity
- Honor and Celebrate: Unity in Action Activity
- Bernice Bing: Calligraphic Art Creative Activity
- What Makes a Place Feel Like Home? Activity
- Exploring U.S. Territories in the Pacific Activity
- AANHPI Crossword Activity

## Explore More

Dive deeper into AANHPI month with these reading suggestions!

### ***Prairie Lotus*, by Linda Sue Park**



A half-Chinese girl and her father settle in a small Dakota Territory town in the 1880s, where she dreams of becoming a dressmaker but must first face the deep-rooted prejudice of the people around her.

### ***Kira-Kira*, by Cynthia Kadohata**



A Japanese American girl growing up in 1950s Georgia navigates the challenges of feeling like an outsider while caring deeply for her ailing older sister in a tender story about family, identity, and loss.

### ***Inside Out and Back Again*, by Thanhha Lai**



Told in a series of poems, this is the story of a young Vietnam War refugee as she starts over in Alabama, finding her way through an unfamiliar culture while holding tightly to memories of home.



## Who is included in “AANHPI”?



### Asian Americans

People in the United States whose families trace their origins to countries across Asia, including China, India, Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam, and many others

### Native Hawaiians

The Indigenous people of the Hawaiian Islands, whose ancestors lived there long before Hawai'i became part of the United States

### Pacific Islander Americans

People in the U.S. whose families come from island nations and territories in the Pacific Ocean, like Samoa, Guam, Tonga, and Fiji

## These are diverse groups. Together, they represent...



Thousands of **languages** and cultural **traditions**, along with shared languages like English used across the U.S.



Communities shaped by **immigration**, from recent arrivals to families who have lived in the U.S. for generations



A wide range of **cultures** and **identities** that are part of everyday American life



**Indigenous** communities whose histories in places like Hawai'i predate U.S. governance

## So why are these groups often discussed together?

Asia and the Pacific Islands are geographically close and share some historical and cultural ties. However, for much of U.S. history, people from these regions were categorized and treated separately.

During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, activists and community leaders promoted the term “Asian American” as a way to build solidarity across different groups. This shared identity helped communities organize around common goals, including challenging discrimination and advocating for civil rights.

Over time, the term expanded to include Pacific Islanders and to more clearly recognize Native Hawaiians as a distinct Indigenous group with their own history and political status.

Today, AANHPI is used as a broad collective term that highlights both the diversity of these communities and the importance of coalition-building for representation, equity, and recognition in the United States.



Ready for a virtual field trip? In this activity, you will visit three landmarks that honor Asian American history. Click or scan the QR code to visit the landmarks!



As you move through the landmarks, write one fact for each one in the spaces below.

Wing Luke Museum	Angel Island	Morikami Museum

Once you've completed your trip, answer the following reflection questions.

1. Why is visiting landmarks like these (even virtually) important for learning history?
2. When a community sees their history represented in places like museums, monuments, or landmarks, what message does that send?
3. Which landmark do you want to visit in real life? Why?



Read about four important people from Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities on the next page. As you read, consider how each person contributed to their community and brought people together. What evidence shows this person's impact on others?

### Step 1:

Choose one person you read about on the next page to honor by creating a Celebration Day campaign.

### Step 2:

Plan your Celebration Day. Design a meaningful event that honors your person and reflects the broader impact of unity within a community.

#### Your plan should include...

- The name of your celebration
- The date of your celebration
- A description of what people will do together, including specific activities (events, performances, service projects, cultural elements, etc.)
- How your celebration brings people together and reflects the theme of unity

### Step 3:

Create a video, PSA, or digital campaign for a specific audience that introduces your person and promotes your Celebration Day. Your project should inform, engage, and persuade your audience.

#### Be sure to...

- Include a brief biography (relevant details only)
- Explain the person's impact (Why are they important?)
- Present your Celebration Day clearly
- Show how your celebration reflects unity and community
- Encourage others to participate or take action

#### Project expectations (choose 1-2):

- Include a call to action (example: "Join us..." or "Celebrate by...")
- Use evidence or examples from the person's life
- Incorporate visuals or music intentionally
- Maintain a clear tone and message throughout



### Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson

Dwayne Johnson, also known as “The Rock,” is a prominent actor and former professional wrestler. He was born on May 2, 1972, in Hayward, California. He takes pride in his Samoan heritage and emphasizes the importance of family, culture, and identity. Dwayne demonstrated perseverance as he worked to achieve success, overcoming significant challenges along the way. He motivates others by promoting teamwork, resilience, and uplifting those around you through his public messages. Through his words and actions, he shows that people are stronger when they stand united and support one another.



"Dwayne Johnson 2, 2013.jpg" from Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dwayne\\_Johnson\\_2\\_2013.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dwayne_Johnson_2_2013.jpg)

### Kristi Yamaguchi

Kristi Yamaguchi is a Japanese American Olympic figure skater who won a gold medal for the United States. She was born on July 12, 1972, in Hayward, California. She trained for many years with dedication and discipline to become a champion. After her skating career, she founded an organization that supports children’s literacy. Kristi values education and believes it plays a critical role in future success. She uses her achievements to give back and create opportunities for others. Through her work, she demonstrates that collaboration and support can make a meaningful difference.



"Kristi Yamaguchi.png" from Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kristi\\_Yamaguchi.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kristi_Yamaguchi.png)

### Yuri Kochiyama

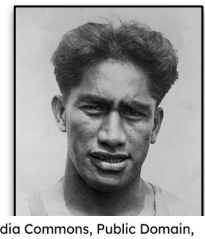
Yuri Kochiyama was a Japanese American civil rights activist. She was born on May 19, 1921, in San Pedro, California. During World War II, she and her family were unjustly placed in incarceration camps, shaping her commitment to justice and equality. She became involved in movements supporting the rights of Asian Americans and Black Americans. Yuri worked with other activists to promote unity and challenge injustice. She used her voice to advocate for social change and build connections across communities, demonstrating the power of solidarity.



"Yuri Kochiyama.jpg" from Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Yuri\\_Kochiyama.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Yuri_Kochiyama.jpg)

### Duke Kahanamoku

Duke Kahanamoku was a Native Hawaiian Olympic swimmer and a pioneer of modern surfing. He was born on August 24, 1890, in Honolulu, Hawai‘i, and passed away in 1968. He had a deep connection to the ocean and took great pride in his Hawaiian culture. Duke shared his culture by teaching others to surf and introducing them to Hawaiian traditions. He valued kindness and unity, often promoting the spirit of “Aloha,” which represents love, respect, and compassion. Through his actions, he fostered connection and helped others appreciate Hawaiian culture.



"Face detail, Duke Kahanamoku 1920c (cropped).jpg" from Wikipedia Commons, Public Domain, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Face\\_detail,\\_Duke\\_Kahanamoku\\_1920c\\_\(cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Face_detail,_Duke_Kahanamoku_1920c_(cropped).jpg)



In this activity, you'll read about **Bernice Bing**, a Chinese American artist who painted to connect with her heritage. Then, you'll plan and create art inspired by her style.

**Step 1: Read about the artist.**

Bernice Bing was born in San Francisco, California, in 1936. She lost both parents in childhood and was raised by her sister across a series of foster homes, an upbringing that left her largely disconnected from her Chinese heritage.

Bing found herself through art. She earned a scholarship to study painting, where a Japanese professor introduced her to Chinese philosophy and art. Bing went on to become a figure in the San Francisco art scene of the 1960s, using her work to explore what it meant to be Asian American at a time when that identity was largely invisible in mainstream American culture.

Bing drew inspiration from Chinese calligraphy, an ancient tradition that combines writing and visual art. Her oil paintings blend this tradition with her own perspective and style.

In addition to painting, Bing was a committed educator and community activist who helped develop art programs for underserved communities.



**Search online** to see Bernice Bing's calligraphic paintings:

- Lotus Goddess
- Lotus/Lotus Sutra
- Lotus Circle

**Step 2: Plan your piece.**

Choose one or more Chinese characters to use in your art piece.

光  Light    生  Life    欢  Joyous    力  Power    时  Time

What does that word make you feel? Or, what feeling do you want to express in your art?

- Joy     Pride     Longing     Peace     Something else:

Plan the artistic elements you'll use to express the meaning of your chosen Chinese character and your chosen feeling.

Colors

Line styles

Shapes



**Step 3: Create your artwork.**

Use the space below or a separate paper. **Write your chosen Chinese character(s)**. You can copy them from the previous page or create lines and shapes inspired by them. Then, **add lines, shapes, and colors** to help express the word's meaning and your chosen feeling.

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**Step 4: Reflect and connect.**

Bernice Bing made art about identity at a time when her community was largely invisible in American culture. **What would it mean for your identity or experience to be expressed through visual art?**



Imagine you move somewhere new where the culture is different from what you're used to.

- What would you bring with you that represents your identity?
- What would help you feel a sense of belonging in a new place?
- What kinds of public spaces, services, or businesses would be important to you?

Write or draw your answers to these questions in the box below.

Many Asian immigrants came to the United States seeking new opportunities, but they often faced discrimination, exclusion, and limited access to jobs and housing.

In response, communities formed **enclaves** — neighborhoods where people with shared cultural backgrounds could support one another, build economic opportunities, and preserve their cultural identities.

As you read about Chinatown, Koreatown, and Japantown, look for how these communities...

- **Support one another** → creating safety and belonging
- **Build opportunities** → through jobs, businesses, and services
- **Preserve culture** → through traditions, language, and celebrations

Each of these enclaves are an example of power in unity: people working together to create strong, meaningful communities.

As you read, think about how these communities show unity through the ways they support, build, and share.



# Activity What Makes a Place Feel Like Home?

## AANHPI Heritage Month 9-12 Activities

### Chinatown, NYC, New York: Safety and Belonging

In the late 1800s, many Chinese immigrants came to the United States looking for work. However, they faced unfair laws and discrimination that made it difficult to find jobs or housing.

In response, many chose to live close together and built communities that came to be known as Chinatowns. These neighborhoods offered support, shared language, and opportunities to start businesses.

Today in New York City, there are nine Chinatowns. The picture on the right shows one of the Chinatowns in Flushing, Queens.



"Chinatown 1" by chaddavis.photography, CC BY-SA 2.0, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chinatown\\_1.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chinatown_1.jpg)

**Notice** the bustling streets and business signs in different languages.

How did Chinatowns help people respond to the challenges they faced?

How does this example show the power of people working together?

### Koreatown, Los Angeles, California: Opportunity and Growth

After changes to U.S. immigration laws in the 1960s, many Korean immigrants moved to cities like Los Angeles.

They worked hard to build businesses, including restaurants, markets, and services that supported both their own community and the wider city. These efforts helped create new opportunities and strengthen the local economy.

Today, Koreatown is a lively neighborhood known for its businesses, culture, and strong sense of community.

**This is a picture of the Koreatown Senior and Community Center, which brings seniors together and offers programs that help them stay connected, active, and supported in their community.**



"965 S Normandie Koreatown Senior and Community Center" by (author listed on Wikimedia Commons), CC (license listed on the page), [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:965\\_S\\_Normandie\\_Koreatown\\_Senior\\_and\\_Community\\_Center.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:965_S_Normandie_Koreatown_Senior_and_Community_Center.jpg)

How did Koreatown create opportunities for both its own community and the larger city?

What does this show about the role of community in building economic success?



**The Peace Pagoda** is a landmark that represents friendship and peace between Japan and the United States.

**Japantown, San Francisco, California:  
Resilience and Preservation**

Japanese immigrants built communities like Japantown in the early 1900s, creating homes, businesses, and cultural spaces.

During World War II, however, Japanese Americans were forced to leave their homes and live in internment camps. Many lost their businesses and property.

After the war, some families returned and rebuilt Japantown. Today, it remains an important place where culture, traditions, and history are preserved and shared.

Why was rebuilding Japantown important after World War II?

What does this suggest about the role of unity in rebuilding communities?

**Your Turn: Building Community**

At the beginning of this activity, you imagined moving somewhere new. Now think about what you learned from these communities. If you were building a new community, how would you help people feel at home?

One way I would help people feel safe and supported is...

One way I would create jobs or opportunities is...

One way I would share or celebrate culture is...



**Directions:** Read about three U.S. territories located in the Pacific Ocean, and investigate the culture of the Pacific Islanders living there.

Imagine living on an island where your community is shaped by both deep-rooted cultural traditions and connections to a global superpower. For many people in the Pacific, this is everyday life.

The United States includes **14 territories** across the globe. Let's investigate three in the Pacific Ocean where people live: **American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam.**



"Oceania-map", Wikimedia Commons contributors, Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons

Although these territories are thousands of miles from the mainland United States, they remain politically connected to it in different ways. Each place reflects a unique blend of Indigenous heritage, colonial history, and modern U.S. influence.

**American Samoa: Tradition and Political Complexity**

American Samoa is an unincorporated U.S. territory made up of volcanic islands and coral atolls in the South Pacific. With a population of about 55,000, the territory is deeply rooted in fa'a Samoa, the traditional Samoan way of life, which emphasizes family, community, and respect for elders.

One of the most unique aspects of American Samoa is its political status. People born there are U.S. nationals, not citizens. This means they are protected by the United States and can live and work in the U.S., but they cannot vote in federal elections or hold certain political offices. This distinction raises important questions about representation, rights, and identity.



"Pago Eroded Volcano in American Samoa", National Park Service, Public domain, Wikimedia Commons

**Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands: A Cultural Crossroads**

The Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) is a U.S. commonwealth made up of 14 islands in the western Pacific. Most of its 50,000+ residents live on Saipan, the capital. The islands are geographically diverse, featuring coral reefs, limestone cliffs, and volcanic landscapes.



Culturally, the CNMI is shaped by a wide range of influences, including Indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian traditions, as well as Filipino, Korean, Chinese, and Japanese communities. This diversity reflects both historical migration and the region's role as a crossroads in the Pacific.

Unlike American Samoa, people born in the Northern Mariana Islands are U.S. citizens, highlighting how different territories can have different legal relationships with the United States.

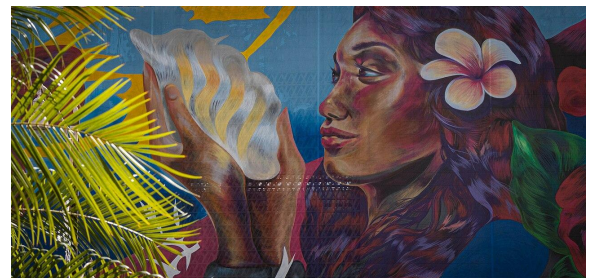


"Chamorro performers women", Marilyn Sourgose, CC BY 2.0, Wikimedia Commons

### **Guam: Strategic Importance and Cultural Identity**

Guam, the largest and most populated of the three territories, has about 160,000 residents. Located in the western Pacific, it has long been a key strategic location for the U.S. military, especially since it was acquired after the Spanish-American War in 1898.

Guam's role as a military hub has shaped its economy, infrastructure, and global significance. However, it is also home to the Indigenous Chamorro people, whose cultural traditions remain an essential part of island life.



"Guam mural 7623889", Jonathan Beauchamp, Public domain, Wikimedia Commons

Like the Northern Mariana Islands, people born in Guam are U.S. citizens, yet they do not have full voting representation in the U.S. Congress. This creates ongoing discussions about political status, self-determination, and the future of the territory.

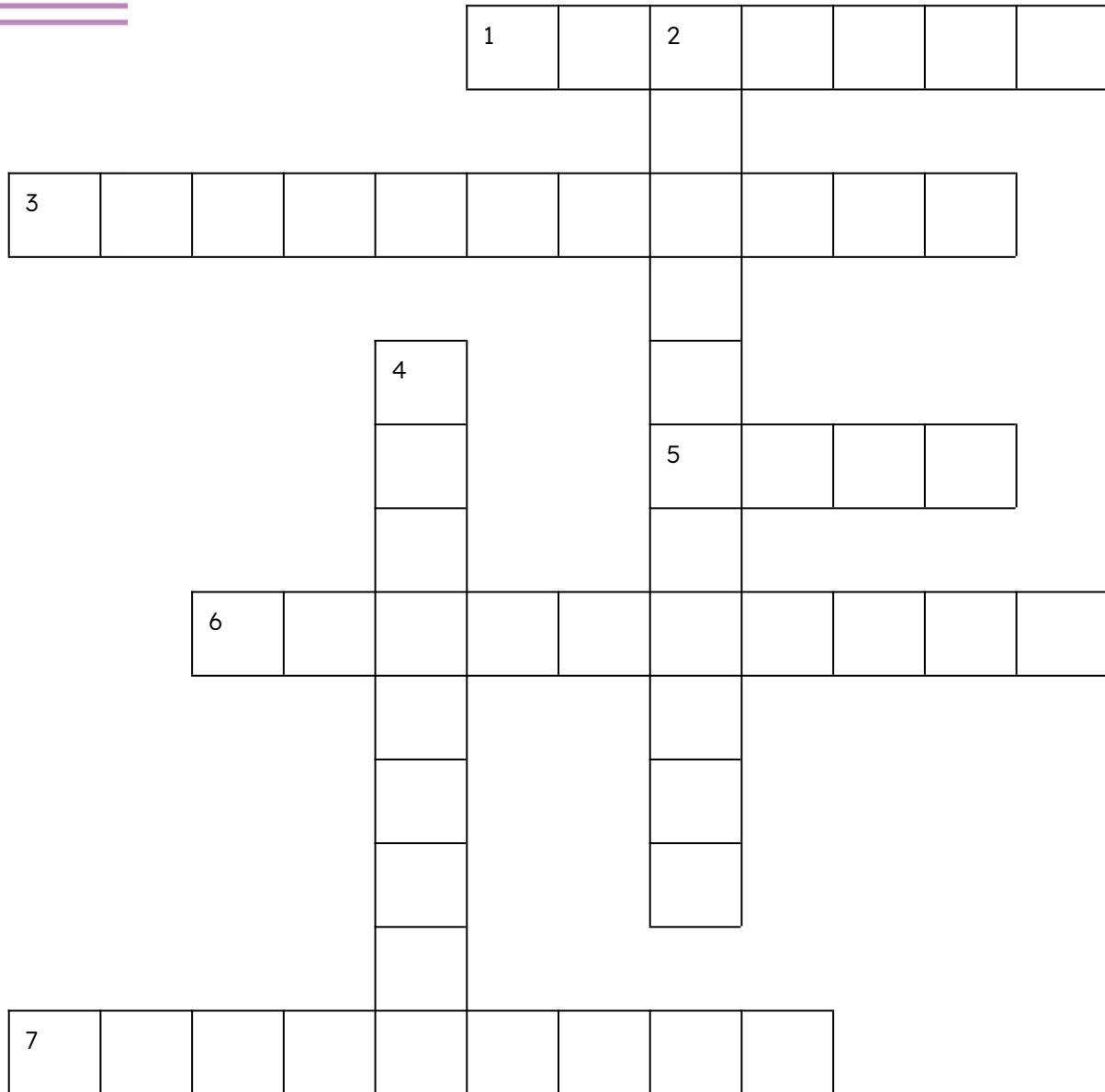
### **More Than Just Islands**

These Pacific territories highlight the complexity of what it means to be connected to the United States. While they share political ties to the U.S., each territory maintains its own cultural identity, shaped by Indigenous traditions and global influences.

They are home to Pacific Islander communities whose histories, cultures, and perspectives are an essential part of AANHPI Heritage Month. Studying these territories encourages a deeper understanding of representation, identity, and the diverse experiences that make up the United States.

**Deep Dive:** Choose one of the U.S. territories to further investigate their culture.

1. What are the local foods, languages, and traditions?
2. How and when did they become a U.S. territory? What was life like for the residents before and after becoming a territory?



**Across**

1. A neighborhood where people with shared cultural backgrounds could build community
3. The location of the largest immigration port on the West Coast in the 20th century
5. A large and populous Pacific territory that’s home to the Indigenous Chamorro
6. This Native Hawaiian Olympic swimmer shared his culture by teaching others to surf
7. In the 1960s, Korean immigrants built this lively Los Angeles neighborhood

**Down**

2. This ancient tradition, which inspired Bernice Bing, combines writing and visual art
4. This Japanese American civil rights activist built community and challenged injustice