

The Hawaiian Islands

Written by Serena Porter

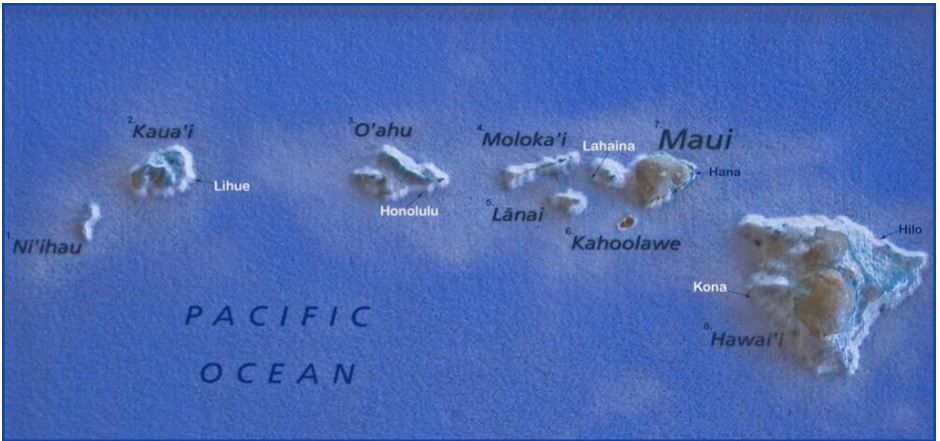


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The Hawaiian Islands

An Overview



In the Pacific Ocean, southwest of the lower 48 states, there lies eight islands that together are the Hawaiian Islands. Hawaii, Oahu, Maui, Kauai, Lanai, Molokai, Kaho'olawe, and Ni'ihau are the islands that make up the islands of Hawaii. Each island is unique in some way however, the location of these islands lends them all to have roughly the same climate and **biomes**. A biome is a naturally occurring community of plants and animals that occupy a major habitat. The biomes seen on these islands are rainforests.

The climate on these islands can be attributed to their formation, and the fact that these islands are volcanoes. The Hawaiian Islands were created when these volcanoes erupted enough times that the hot lava eventually started stacking up and hardening until there was so much hardened lava that it rose above the sea level and formed an island.

Hawaii

The Big Island

Hawaii is the largest island amongst the Hawaiian Islands. There are two active volcanoes on the island which provide the people who live there



This photograph was taken at sunset on the Big Island.

with great agricultural opportunities.

Agriculture is the practice of farming which entails not only the growing of crops but also raising animals for many of

our everyday food products. The lava rich soil allows for coffee plantations to be very successful. This is where several coffee companies get their coffee beans, including Kona coffee. The Big Island is also known for

Imagine!

The average third grader is 4 feet and 2 inches tall. How many third graders standing on one another would it take to reach the top of Hawaii's 442 feet tall waterfall?

its impressive waterfalls reaching heights of up to 442 feet tall!

Oahu

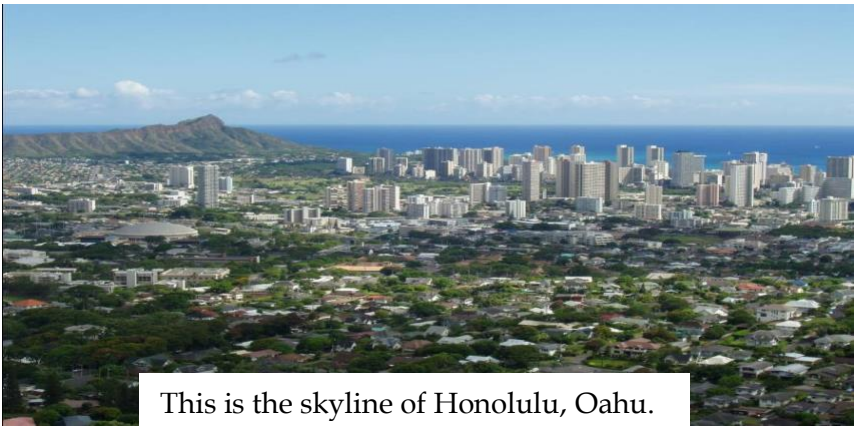
Oahu is home to the densely populated capital



This is just one view from a ridge of the Waimea Valley on Oahu, HI.

of Hawaii, Honolulu. Off the shores of Oahu is one of the most frequented tourist areas since World War II because of the tragedies at Pearl Harbor. Thousands of people a year visit the island to see the Pearl Harbor monument, to visit the ukulele factory, to explore Chinatown, and to hike Oahu's crater known as Diamond Head. Surfing, snorkeling, and hiking also attract many to Oahu's shores and lush forests.

While Oahu is popular for tourist attractions, it is also very important to the Hawaiian natives. The spiritual headquarters of the high priests lie amongst the terrain of the Waimea Valley where native archeological sites can be found. The sacred



This is the skyline of Honolulu, Oahu.

area is home to 1,875 acres of botanical gardens, hiking trails, and waterfalls.

Maui

Maui is the second largest island amongst the Hawaiian Islands. It is known as the playground for the wealthy because it is a little more expensive to be a tourist on Maui.

There are three major regions in Maui each being different from the other. One of the most iconic regions is the Hana Highway region which encompasses the Road to Hana.



The Road to Hana winds through valleys of waterfalls and lush green forests. While the ocean life is very

“Maui is the second-most-visited island in Hawaii with around 2.3 to 2.5 million visitors each year.”
– John C. Derrick

important to each island, Maui is striving to improve **reef** life around the island. A reef is a ridge under the ocean most of the time that is full of rocks, coral, and sea life. The most well-known reef in Maui is Molokini Crater. This islet is unique as it is made up of volcanic rock and sits above and below the sea. Many colorful fish swim in and out of the crater's hiding places, and the top of the islet is left as a sanctuary for the seabirds of Maui.



This photograph was taken by Tlpo Charsky of Waimea Canyon in Kauai, HI on August 28th, 2010.

Kauai

Kauai is the oldest island amongst the Hawaiian Islands, and it is known as the Garden Isle. An **isle** is another name for a small island. The beaches of Kauai and the rainforests on this isle provide a home to many rare and endangered **flora and fauna** found only in Hawaii. A wealth of biomes can be found on just this one island because it receives the most rainfall which earns itself the award of “the wettest place in earth.” Kauai gets an average of 440 inches of rain each year! Even though the constant rainfall means the island has full flowing waterfalls, swamps, lush forests, and well-watered mountains, there are still deserts on the isle. The Waimea Canyon is on the west side of the island of Kauai, and it is nicknamed “the Grand Canyon of the Pacific.” Much like the Grand Canyon, there are many hidden treasures and even waterfalls in this desert.

Lanai



This photograph is of the shores of Lanai. The rock is jagged lava flow that has cooled and formed the edges of the small island.

Lanai is the sixth smallest island amongst the eight Hawaiian Islands. The island is best known for its peace and quiet. Only 3,000 people live there among a few tourists. There are no stop lights on the island, and there are only a few paved roads. The island comes to its highest point right in the center at the peak of the volcanic mountain. It is said that one of

the best views of some of the other islands can be seen from this peak. The temperature on the mountain and in its surrounding densely green forests is colder than the beaches of the island. Even though the island is surrounded by the ocean, there is not as much rainfall here. The average rainfall per year is about 40 inches.

Lanai has a unique history – much like the other islands. Lanai was not **inhabited** until 1,000 years after the other islands because natives believed that man-eating spirits inhabited the island.

STOP! Think About It:

How can Lanai be right near Maui and only get 40 inches of rain per year when Maui gets 440 inches of rain per year?

Molokai

Molokai is just eight miles off the shore of Maui, and is considered part of Maui County



along with the island of Lanai. Molokai is another small island that is not affected by tourism the way the other islands are. There are pristine beaches due to their lack of pollution that tourism can cause.

A variety of flora flourish on this island including bananas, grapefruit, avocados, lettuce, papayas, taros, and sweet potatoes. These are just a few of the abundant fruits and vegetables that grow on Molokai. A **tsunami** in 1946 allowed for the island to flourish the way it has. There are rainforests that come out to the island's edge making the island look mysterious and full of life from an

off-island point of view.

Kaho'olawe



The U.S. Navy bombed part of the island of Kaho'olawe in 1965.

Kaho'olawe is the smallest island of the Hawaiian Islands. While there are islets that are smaller, Kaho'olawe is considered a volcanic island which puts it among the eight islands of Hawaii. The island is taken care of by the natives of Hawaii, and it is where most of the Hawaiian culture and practices are still practiced.

Before the natives of Hawaii and a preserve commission took back Kaho'olawe, the island underwent a long history of abuse. The island has been inhabited for thousands of years and was used as a place for agriculture and



The shores of Kaho'olawe.

fishing ports. It was then used by the U.S. Navy as a bombing range until

1990. Now, it is being restored to its natural beauty and ecosystems by many preserve actions and volunteers. There are many efforts being made to restore the rainforests of Kaho'olawe as well as the reefs surrounding the island.

Ni'ihau

The island of Ni'ihau is the seventh largest island. The island is known as the Forbidden Island. The population is around 70 people, leaving only 30 people during the summer because of vacationing. The inhabitants of the island do not have any employment opportunities other than the small U.S. Navy base and the one school. The school on the island is the only school in Hawaii that is run entirely on energy gathered by solar panels. The population has been declining for decades due to the lack of employment and the shutting down of local ranches. However, the island maintains its natural beauty due to the lack of people on the island.

Glossary

Agriculture: The practice of farming which entails not only the growing of crops but also raising animals for many of our everyday food products.

Biomes: A naturally occurring community of plants and animals that occupy a major habitat.

Flora and Fauna: Plants and animals

Inhabited: Living in an area

Isle: A very small island

Reef: A ridge under the ocean (most of the time) that is full of rocks, coral, and sea life

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Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.2

Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.4

Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 3 topic or subject area.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.5

Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.7

Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

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