LESSON PLAN

The Māori Meeting House: A Living Ancestor

Early Elementary and Middle School | Grades 3-5, 6-8
Digital Unit – Lesson 1 | Lesson 2 | Lesson 3

Background Information

This section helps build context and allows educators to dig more deeply into the content. It is up to the teacher's discretion how much to share with students.

What is a whare whakairo?

A whare whakairo (*FAH-reh Fah-KYE-ee-roh*) is a Māori "carved house," and hundreds now stand in Aotearoa (*Au-tay-ah-ROH-ah*), or New Zealand. Woodcarving techniques evolved from the carving traditions of ornate war canoes and pātaka (*PAH-tah-kah*)—storehouses—to the whare whakairo seen today. From the 16th-19th centuries, these structures became truly distinct architectural and art forms. Meeting houses such as the one at the Field Museum – one of only three outside New Zealand – reflect Māori mana (*MAH-nah*), or pride, power, and prestige, as well as Māori identity, community, and even resistance (Haka protest in Parliament / context).

These wharenui (*FAH-reh-new-EE*)—"large house(s)"—are family and community gathering places as well as sites for fostering cross-cultural understanding. On the marae (*mah-RYE)*—open space in front that includes the wharenui and any other buildings in the complex – the tangata whenua (*TAHN-gah-tah FEH-noo-ah*), or "people of the land," welcome visitors, and locals and guests alike offer speeches on topics both sacred and secular.

Who are the Māori (*MAU-ree*) people? See Māori People Facts for Kids or watch Who Are the Māori People of New Zealand? (27:17)

Such houses often face east towards the rising sun. The formerly earthen floors represent Papatūānuku (Earth Mother), while the roof represents Ranginui (Sky Father). The carved wall posts depict other gods and ancestors, and the porch window is the opening through which the gods first saw the world and the light of day (which they brought to all).

Outside the meeting house on the marae is the realm of the god Tūmatauenga (God of War and Human Activities), so it is outside that grievances are aired and problems discussed. Inside is the realm of the god Rongo (God of Peace and Agriculture), so talk and behavior there are expected to be peaceful and calm.

In addition to serving as a site of ceremony and debate, the wharenui, like a carved canoe, "represents the collective history, stories, genealogy, and mythology of the local community" (Hakiwai, et. al., 1994, p. 23). Each carving and design honors the contributions of ancestors and highlights the continuity that exists between creation, the gods, the ancestors who built the wharenui, and the present Māori community.

[. . .] the Maori house is a living presence "is richer than mere simile; it is beyond the idea of metaphor or representation [. . .] For the Maori, the house is not like *an ancestor, it* is *an ancestor."*
(Linzey, 1989, as cited in Critchlow Rodman, 1993, p. 263)

Wharenui are the living bodies of the ancestors for which they are named, and every aspect of the space reflects that embodiment. Here at the Field Museum, the wharenui forms the body of the ancestor Ruatepupuke (*roo-AH-tay-PU-pu-keh*), who brought the art of woodcarving to the Māori people from Tangaroa (tahn-gah-ROH-ah), God of the Sea. *Therefore, we call the wharenui by name and use the pronouns he/him* – something unique as most whare in Tokomaru Bay (from where Ruatepupuke II came) are named for women.

How did Ruatepupuke II come to be at the Field Museum?

The wharenui at the Field Museum is not the first of his name (nor the last). Another meeting house in honor of Ruatepupuke was built in Tokomaru Bay (toh-koh-MAH-roo) on the east coast of Aotearoa's North Island, but he was dismantled in the 1820s to keep him safe from attacks by northern communities. The carvings were soaked in whale oil and placed in the bed of the Mangahauini River. However, when the channel moved, the carvings were lost, or, as some Māori in Tokomaru Bay say, "'they returned to Tangaroa's domain'" (Hakiwai, et. al., 1994, p. 11).

On September 23, 1881, Ruatepupuke II opened in the area of Pakirikiri on the northeast side of the Mangahauini River in Tokomaru Bay. He was built for Mōkena Rōmio Babbington, a leading citizen of Tokomaru Bay and the oldest son of Mere Karaka Tiratapu and George Babbington, a whaler and one of the first white settlers in the area. Mōkena Rōmio could trace his ancestry to Ruatepupuke himself.

While hundreds of both Māori and Pākehā (PAH-kay-hah), or European New Zealanders, attended the opening, the whare was in disrepair by the late 1880s or early 1890s. Eventually, the house was sold sometime in the 1890s to a Mr. Hindmarsh and then to natural history specimen and ethnographic objects dealer J.F.G. Umlauff of Hamburg, Germany.

In December 1902, Umlauff published a catalog showing the house for sale "'as a whole'" (Umlauff as cited by Hakiwai, et. al., 1994, p. 15). The catalog included images of the house fully assembled in an exhibition hall Umlauff rented for the purpose. Due to a misunderstood translation, Umlauff called the house "Whare Whaikairo Huiteananui." However, Huiteananui is the home of the god Tangaroa and from where Ruatepupuke took the art of woodcarving.

In reconstructing the meeting house in the exhibition hall, Umlauff cut off the bottoms of the posts so that they would sit flat on the floor, and he had to shift the location of some of the poupou (*poh-poh)* – ancestor panels – to make up for missing ones. In addition, he replaced missing boards with plaster casts and substituted lattice-work panels to replace the tukutuku (*TOO-koo-TOO-koo*) – woven panels – as no originals remained.

In 1905, George Dorsey – Curator of Anthropology at Chicago's new Field Columbian Museum, purchased the meeting house. When the house reached Chicago, he was not exhibited for 20 years due to lack of space in the Field Museum's original building (what is now the Griffin Museum of Science and Industry). In 1925, however, the Field Museum (at its current location) reassembled the meeting house much in Umlauff's manner. In an attempt to be "as realistic as possible," Field Museum Director D.C. Davies reached out to Acting Director of the Dominion Museum (now Te Papa Tongarewa) James McDonald to help find replacement floor mats and roofing material. Attempts at "realism" reflected the often erroneous colonial practices of the time, such as in 1961 when the doorway and window were glassed over "so that the house could be used as an exhibit case to display a number of mats, manikins [sp] dressed in Maori cloaks, and the like. Under the heading 'New Maori Family "At Home" in Polynesian Hall' [. . .]' a life-size reconstruction of a typical family scene in a Maori council house in New Zealand shortly after the coming of the white man'" (Hakiwai, et. al., 1994, 17).

The attitude of the community in Tokomaru Bay towards the presence of Ruatepupuke II at the Museum was mixed, but, in 1986, at the opening of the traveling art exhibition "Te Maori: Maori Art from New Zealand Collections," the Field Museum was able to meet with a Māori delegation from Aotearoa to discuss the house. Soon after, John Terrell, Curator of Oceanic Archaeology and Ethnology at the Field Museum, led a group of 18 Chicagoans to New Zealand. Dialogue and partnership between the Field Museum and the Māori community in Tokomaru Bay continue to this day.

In 1992, Ruatepupuke II was disassembled and prepared for conservation with Field Museum conservators Catherine Anderson and Catherine Sease as well as conservation/restoration interns Hone Ngata and Hinemoa Hilliard in consultation with Phil Aspinall and the community in Tokomaru Bay, which contributed new woven tukutuku panels. Original carvings were found at two New Zealand museums and the Peabody Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, and they were reunited with their ancestor Ruatepupuke.

Ruatepupuke II was reopened to the public on March 9, 1993. Today, in the absence of a local Māori community in Chicago, Ruatepupuke II remains in the kaitiakitanga (*kye-TEE-ah-kee-tang-ah*)— the guardianship and protection—of local Native American and Native Hawaiian communities.

Sources:

Critchlow Rodman, M. (1993). A critique of "place" through Field Museum's pacific exhibits. *The Contemporary Pacific*, 5(2), 243–274.

Hakiwai, A. T., Terrell, John, Dorfman, Ron, Aspinall, Phil., & Field Museum of Natural History. (1994). *Ruatepupuke : a Māori meeting house*. Field Museum. https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/59845062

See p. 42-44 of *Ruatepupuke: A Māori Meeting House* (linked above) for the story of Ruatepupuke and the origins of carving.

Duration

Suggested times

3 class periods (60-90 minutes each)

Purpose

IDENTIFY how each part of a Māori meeting house is part of the body of a living ancestor.

EXPLAIN how viewing the wharenui not as an object but as an ancestor determines how one interacts with a meeting house.

RELATE how the Māori remember and honor ancestors to how others remember and honor ancestors in their own communities and families.

CRITIQUE a museum's role in perpetuating colonialism and harm against AANHPI and Indigenous communities and RECOMMEND ways museums now can mend a harmful past.

BUILD cultural empathy by learning about the Māori community.

Essential Questions

1. How have museums created harm/contributed to and reinforced stereotypes about AANHPI and Indigenous communities?

2. What can museums do to counter a harmful past?

3. What is a whare whakairo / wharenui, and why are they significant for the Māori community?

4. In what way does a whare whakairo "represent [. . .] the collective history, stories, genealogy, and mythology of the local community" (Hakiwai, et. al., 1994, p. 23) and highlight continuity between past and present?

5. In what way does viewing a wharenui not as an object but as an ancestor determine how one interacts with a meeting house?

Enduring Understandings

1. Through colonial collection and exhibition practices, museums at times have created one-dimensional, Eurocentric, exoticized, and/or erroneous depictions of AANHPI and Indigenous peoples.
1. Museums can bridge divides caused by colonization and oppression by engaging in dialogue and building relationships with communities. By supporting communities in telling their own stories (via co-curation and co-creation), museums can help foster greater understanding and empathy.
2. A whare whakairo is a "carved house," and wharenui means "large house." They are family and community gathering spaces. Meeting houses such as these reflect Māori mana (pride, power, and prestige) as well as Māori identity, community, and even resistance.
3. Each carving and design tells a story, honors the contributions of ancestors, and highlights the continuity that exists between creation, the gods, the ancestors who built the wharenui, and the present community.
4. Viewing the wharenui as an ancestor encourages visitors to enter with a spirit of peace, care, respect, and willingness to listen to the lessons the ancestor has to teach.

Students will know . . .

- The meaning of whare whakairo / wharenui and why they are important for the Māori community.
- The significance of the structural and design elements of the Māori meeting house and how they embody the ancestor Ruatepupuke and connect the community at Tokomaru Bay to its history, genealogy, and the natural environment.
- How the design elements reflect continuity between past and present.

Students will be able to . . .

- INFER how the structure of a wharenui is the body of a living ancestor by examining images of the meeting house Ruatepupuke II and IDENTIFY these parts by playing a matching game.
- INTERPRET what one can learn from ancestors by reflecting upon Māori designs and carvings.
- CRITIQUE former exhibition practices and RECOMMEND how museums might counter a harmful past through a discussion of Ruatepupuke II catalog images and community photographs.

- EXPRESS how viewing the wharenui not as an object but as an ancestor determines how one interacts with a meeting house.
- RELATE how the Māori people honor ancestors to how other communities honor ancestors by comparing them to dynasties represented in the *Cyrus Tang Hall of China*.
- CREATE a poupou (ancestor panel) honoring one's own ancestors and incorporating at least one Māori design element.

Cultural Wealth ↗

Yosso / p. 78

Linguistic

Familial

Social

Ethnic Studies Principles Alignment ↗

CELEBRATE and honor Native peoples of the land and communities of color by providing a space to share their stories of struggle and resistance, along with their cultural wealth.

CENTER and place high value on pre-colonial, ancestral, indigenous, diasporic, familial, and marginalized knowledge.

CHALLENGE imperialist/colonial hegemonic beliefs and practices on the ideological, institutional, interpersonal, and internalized levels.

Standards Alignment

NCSS

Theme 1: Culture
Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change
Theme 4: Individual Development and Identity

Illinois State Social Science Standards

SS.3-5.IS.2 Students generate supporting questions that require investigation to help answer essential questions.

SS.3-5.IS.3 Identify varied resources that answer essential and student-generated questions and that take into consideration multiple points of view.

SS.3-5.IS.5 Develop claims using evidence from multiple sources to answer essential questions.

SS.3-5.IS.10 Engage in reflective conversations to draw conclusions on inquiry findings and create action steps that consider multiple viewpoints.

SS.6-8.G.2.MdC Compare and contrast the cultural and environmental characteristics of different places or regions.

CPS Skyline

Grade 3: Communities Near and Far
- Unit 3: Communities and Cultures

Grade 5: Our Nation, Our World
- Unit 2: Global Movement, Connections, and Consequences

Grade 6: The World
- Unit 2: The Development of Cultural Identities

Social Justice

ID.3-5.2 I know about my family history and culture and about current and past contributions of people in my main identity groups.

DI.6-8.8 I am curious and want to know more about other peoples' histories and lived experiences, and I ask questions respectfully and listen carefully and non-judgmentally.

JU.6-8.12 I can recognize and describe unfairness and injustice in many forms including attitudes, speech, behaviors, practices, and laws.

Materials

Resource	Link
Activity Worksheets	Slide Deck with Vocabulary (Student Copy—English/Spanish) Wharenui Matching Game
Assessment	Creating a Poupou (Ancestor Panel)
Other Supplies	Projector and screen; speakers; scissors and glue; journals; chart paper; markers and crayons (not provided)
Recommended Reading: For Teachers	*Ruatepupuke: A Maori Meeting House* by Arapata Hakiwai and John Terrell
Recommended Reading: For Students:	*Lost in the Museum* by Victoria Cleal and Isobel Joy Te Aho-White

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Ruatepupuke II: Māori Meeting House

Field Museum

Exhibition Website
Slide Deck of Images (Teacher Copy)

Videos

- *My Job Lasts Forever* (20 seconds)
- *Ruatepupuke Is Very, Very Rare* (37 seconds)
- *A House You Can Call "He"* (25 seconds)
- *Please Touch to Keep Him Warm* (29 seconds)

Online Resources

For students and teachers (optional)

Websites

Te Aka Māori Dictionary— Includes pronunciation help
Māori People Facts for Kids
Pacific Anthropology at the Field Museum: Keeping the Marae Warm
Pepeha for Non-Māori
Sculpture and Belief: Ngāti Porou House Panels (with video)

TikTok

Māori Stuffs Cool

YouTube

On the Māori people and wharenui:

New Zealand, the Maori Heritage | SLICE |... (52:01) – Lengthy but worth a watch! Includes everything from the use of the marae to tattooing and haka. SLICE has several Māori documentaries.

How to Pepeha!

How to say your pepeha: Tikanga explained

Whare Māori Series:

Whare Māori Ep02: The Wharenui (Part O... (25:49) – History and evolution of meeting houses; shows how the wharenui is the body of an ancestor.

Who Are The Māori People Of New Zeala... (27:18) – Some errors in pronunciation of Māori words

Current events:

Lawmakers use haka to protest in New Zealand's p... (1:20)
42,000 Crowd New Zealand's Parliament Grounds in Support of Māori Rights

Waitangi Treaty - Behind the News (4:17) —For students!

Designs and Patterns:

Miss Takai's Art Class - Kowhaiwhai

Extensions:

Lost in the Museum, read by Suzy Cato (8:23) —Read-aloud

Critical Concepts & Vocabulary

Terms, critical concepts, or words that should be defined before or during the lesson

For this unit, it is important to focus on the location of each part of the meeting house and how each part represents the **body** of the ancestor. The rest of the information is a bonus! For more insight into the meaning of the words and recordings of pronunciations, see: Te Aka Māori Dictionary.

Note: Māori words have no separate singular and plural form.

Slide Deck with Vocabulary (Student Copy – English/Spanish)

	Definition
Whare whakairo	*Pronounced FAH-reh Fah-KYE-ee-roh*. Carved house(s). They are gathering places for events and discussions both sacred and secular, spaces in which to mediate cross-cultural understanding, and symbols of Māori identity that connect a community to its history and ancestors.
Wharenui	*Pronounced FAH-reh-new-EE*. A "large house" of which Ruatepupuke II is one.
Marae	*Pronounced mah-RYE*. This is the open area in front of the wharenui where guests are greeted, speeches are made, and discussions are held. The marae also may include other buildings that are part of the complex. The marae and its protocols reflect Māori customs, beliefs, and values.
Koruru	*Pronounced koh-ROO-roo*. Gable "masks" that most likely depict the **faces** of Ruatepupuke (on top) and his grandson Ruatepukenga (on the bottom). However, the order might be reversed.
Maihi	*Pronounced MY-ee-hee*. Wide front gable boards that form the v-shape of the roof and represent the **arms** of the ancestor whose name the house carries. These open arms welcome visitors to the marae. The raparapa (rah-pah-rah-pah), or carved ends at the ends of the maihi, are the **hands**.

Amo	*Pronounced ah-mo*. The large front posts that support the maihi (gable boards). The carvings represent ancestors, and some say that posts themselves are the **legs** of the ancestor Ruatepupuke.
Matapihi	*Pronounced Mah-tah-PEE-hee*. The porch window that represents the **eye** of the ancestor. Through this opening, the meeting house receives light. However, the house grows darker as you move towards the back, symbolizing the journey from creation to death.
Kūwaha (whatitoka, tatau)	*Pronounced KOO-wah-hah*. Doorway or **mouth** that represents the threshold between the earthly, physical world outside the wharenui and the realm of the sacred and spiritual world inside.
Mahau, Roro	*Pronounced Mah-hau or roh-roh (respectively)*. The mahau is the porch, or, as it is sometimes known, roro—the **brains** (because this is where one begins contemplating the embodiment of the ancestor. Something changes here as you enter the wharenui. – Ayson Lewis).
Tāhuhu (tāhū, tāuhu)	*Pronounced TAH-hoo-hoo*. The ridgepole along the center of the roof that depicts the genealogical descent from Ranginui (Sky Father) and Papatūānuku (Earth Mother), both of whom are shown in the carvings on the front end of the ridgepole above the porch of Ruatepupuke II. The continuous line reflected in the kōwhaiwhai (koh-fye-fye) or painted pattern (scroll design in white or unpainted wood on alternating red and black) upon the ridgepole represents the continuity of this particular Māori community. Many ridgepoles tell the creation story and the journey from Te Kore (the void) to Te Po (realm of night) and finally to Te Ao Mārama (realm of light). The history and genealogy of this particular Māori community begins upon the tāhuhu and continues upon the heke (rafters) and finally to the poupou (ancestor panels) along the walls. Thus, the tāhuhu is the **spine** of the ancestor.

Source: Hakiwai, A. T., Terrell, John, Dorfman, Ron, Aspinall, Phil., & Field Museum of Natural History. (1994). *Ruatepupuke : a Māori meeting house*. Field Museum. Ruatepupuke - Biodiversity Heritage Library

Community Call

Land and ancestor acknowledgements to set the stage each day

Land Acknowledgment

- Take a minute to name the native lands that you occupy.
- Field Museum Land Acknowledgement
- Land Acknowledgements for Young Audiences
  - Lesson Guide | Model
- Why/How Land Acknowledgment?

Ancestor Acknowledgment

Share the following statement with the class:

We honor Ruatepupuke (*roo-AH-tay-PU-pu-keh*) who brought the art of woodcarving to the Māori (*MAU-ree*) people from Tangaroa (tahn-gah-ROH-ah), God of the Sea.

We honor his descendents such as Mōkena Rōmio Babbington who built this wharenui (*FAH-reh-new-EE*) that bears his name. We honor the ancestors whose names are still visible inscribed on the poupou (poh-poh): Ko Rangitukia (Koh Ran-gee–TOO-kee-ah), Ko Tewhiwhi (Koh Teh-FEE-fee), Katara (kah-TAH-rah). Ko Teuru (Ko Teh-OO-roo), and Waui (Wau-ee). We remember, too, all the unnamed ancestors depicted on the poupou (poh-poh) as well as the heart posts. We honor those who originally carved the wharenui as well as those who worked to restore Ruatepupuke II.

And we honor the Māori community still living in Tokomaru Bay, Aotearoa (*Au-tay-ah-ROH-ah*), as well as the Native American and Native Hawaiian communities of Chicago who serve as caretakers and stewards of Ruatepupuke II and the marae (mah-RYE) at the Field Museum.

{*If you have time, invite students to share the name of someone—living or deceased, family or not – who they wish to honor and remember today.*}

Day 1:

How Is a Wharenui an Ancestor?

Purpose

Build background knowledge and take that information and apply it to other readings, assignments, activities, discussions.

Community Call

Step 1

10 minutes

Share with students the land and ancestor acknowledgements and then complete the following opening activity to set the stage.

Introduction to Anthropology & Ethnocentrism

Discuss with students:

- What does an anthropologist do?
  - Study what it means to be human
  - Research past and current cultures and artifacts
- How does an anthropologist think?
  - With a learner's approach
  - With an open mind
  - Use of evidence
  - **No ethnocentric thinking**
- **Ethnocentrism = the belief that one culture is superior to another**
  - "For the Māori, the house is not *like* an ancestor, it [he] *is* an ancestor." (Hakiwai, A. T., Terrell, John, Dorfman, Ron, Aspinall, Phil., & Field Museum of Natural History. (1994). *Ruatepupuke : a Māori meeting house*. Field Museum.)

Activating Prior Knowledge

Hook

Show students these images (Slides 3-4) connected to Māori culture. Then ask the class:

↘ Have you seen anything like this before? If so, where?
↘ What do you think is represented in these images?

Note: Students might talk about movies, television, or the news. If you have extra time, you may wish to show the Haka protest in Parliament and/or context.

Frontloading

Step 2

20 minutes

Explain.

The images we just looked at come from the Māori people, who, as of 2023, make up 17.8% of the population of Aotearoa, or New Zealand (share this information about the Māori + map of Aotearoa, Slides 5-7). This is about 887,493 people.

The Māori are the Indigenous people of New Zealand. Indigenous means "native to."

Ask.

- What does it mean to be "native to" a place?
- What are the names of some Indigenous groups in the Americas?

Introduce.

- Today we are going to look at how the Māori remember and honor their ancestors.

Discuss. (whole class or **Think, Pair, Share** activity)

- What is an ancestor?
- In your own family or culture, how do you remember and honor ancestors?
- What can we learn from our ancestors?

Note: In addition to sharing the information below, you might consider sharing with students some of the background information about Ruatepupuke II from p. 1-2 of this unit plan.

Connect by saying . . .

- One way the Māori people remember their family history is through something known as a whare whakairo, or a "carved house."
- These wharenui – "large house(s)" – are family and community gathering places. (Show Slide 8.).
- Each carving and design on a wharenui is a type of ***visual storytelling*** (storytelling through images) that allows the community that built it to remember and honor ancestors, share their history and beliefs, and demonstrate how stories of creation, the gods, the ancestors who built the wharenui, and the present community are all connected. **Ask: *Have you seen this sort of visual storytelling elsewhere? If so, where?***
- Wharenui are regarded as ancestors. The wharenui at the Field Museum is the living body of the ancestor Ruatepupuke. Because the meeting house is considered a male ancestor, ***we refer to Ruatepupuke by name and use the pronouns he/him.***
- Ruatepupuke brought the art of woodcarving to the Māori people from Tangaroa (God of the Sea).

- Tangaroa captured Ruatepupuke's son and set him on the gable of his home Huiteananui. Ruatepupuke went to find his son. Ruatepupuke set Tangaroa's home on fire as he escaped and took back his son as well as the outside posts of the house that could not talk (inner posts could talk).

Share.
Show students the following short videos featuring JP Brown, the Field Museum's Regenstein Conservator:

- *My Job Lasts Forever* (20 seconds)
- *Ruatepupuke Is Very, Very Rare* (37 seconds)
- *A House You Can Call "He"* (25 seconds)

Groups
Step 3

< 5 minutes

Divide the class into groups of 3-5 students. To each group, provide the following:

- Wharenui Matching Game

Each group gets one set of materials.

Matching Game
Step 4

35 minutes

Match the parts of the wharenui to the body.
Provide students with the following instructions:

We know that Māori meeting houses are the bodies of ancestors. With your group, decide which part of the wharenui goes with which part of the human body. (15 minutes)

1. First, take a look at the worksheet with the parts of the wharenui (labeled in te reo Māori – the Māori language).
2. Then, using the picture of Ruatepupuke II (Slide 8) and the skeleton image for help, decide as a team which part of the house corresponds to each part of the body (words or pictures) listed on the right. Make sure you can explain your choices!
3. Finally, once you have figured out what all the pieces of the house represent, pick someone in your group to cut out the parts of the body and another to glue them where you think they should go on the wharenui worksheet. Select someone else to be your speaker.

Note: Teachers should model the first one (tāhuhu = spine) and then float around the room in case the groups have questions/need guidance. Check student "answers" before having them glue. However, the point is not that students "get it all right" but rather that

they are using observations to make inferences.

Also note that the Māori words on this worksheet are not literal translations of body parts. They are the traditional names of parts of the house.

Whole Group Reflection (20 minutes)
As you discuss the following as a whole class, guide students through the Māori meeting house via Slides 10-23 . Take them through one part of the house at a time and ask:

- If we know that the meeting house is an ancestor, what do
- you think the (name part of house using Māori and English) represents (face, arms, legs, heart, etc.)?
    - What do you see that makes you say that?
- Point out the poupou (ancestor panels), pou tāhū / pou tuarongo (ridge posts), and epa (side posts).
    - Why do you think images of ancestors are carved into the panels and posts?
    - How might they connect/are related to the whole house as an ancestor?
    - What do you see that makes you say that?
- The ancestor figures on the panels and posts look as if they are linked – or are standing on the shoulders of each other; what do you think the carver is suggesting by depicting the figures like this? (i.e. connected genealogy)
- What other evidence in the design (i.e ridgepole and rafters) suggests that the past and present – and all the stories of this community – are linked?
- See Critical Concepts & Vocabulary for explanations.

Note: Students are not required to know the Māori vocabulary, but you may choose to have them pronounce the Māori words after you as you go through each part of the wharenui.

Each part of the whare contains layers upon layers of stories. Spend as much time as you like allowing students to discuss, and feel free to share more of the stories from the Critical Concepts and Vocabulary List. Some important things to point out might include:

- The poupou and pou tokomanawa (ancestor panels and heart posts) depict individual ancestors who connect back to the main ancestor Ruatepupuke (as explained by Ayson Lewis, a descendant of the brother of Mōkena Rōmio Babbington).
- The tāhuhu and heke (ridgepole and rafters) and poupou are all a connected genealogy from the gods to ancestors to now. Note the connected designs and lines.

Closing Reflection
Step 5

5 minutes (if time)

End class by having students jot down on an exit slip:

- What is one thing you learned? AND/OR
- What one thing are you still wondering about the Māori meeting house?

Day 2:

Perspectives on Ruatepupuke II

Purpose

Continue the conversation and reflect on how perspective shapes interactions.

Community Call
Step 1

15 minutes

Share with students the land and ancestor acknowledgements and then complete the following opening activity to set the stage.

Name, Match, Compare
Review

This activity is a variation of the Name, Describe, Act thinking routine.

Share with students the image of Ruatepupuke II (the Māori meeting house – Slide 25). The image should remain displayed for the whole activity.

Then, ask students to:

1. **Name** or list as many parts or features of the whare whakairo (carved house) as they can remember. (1-2 minutes).
    a. This should be done silently, from memory, and include nouns. Students can write their list in a journal.
    b. Using the Māori vocabulary is not required. For example, instead of saying koruru, they might say “masks” or “gable masks.”
    c. Model the first one for students.
2. With a partner, take turns **matching** each item on their lists to a corresponding part of the ancestor (3-5 minutes).
    a. Student A will list an item. Student B will identify the match for the item from their partner’s list.
    b. Students should take turns until all items on each of their lists have been “matched.”
    c. An interaction might look like: Student A says, “masks,” and Student B might say, “Those are the faces of the ancestors.”

3. With the same partner, take turns **comparing** each part of the whare whakairo to a part of the body. (3-5 minutes)
    a. Reverse! Student B will list an item. Student A will offer the comparison.
    b. Use the stem: _____ is/are like _____because _____. (Thinking With Images)
    c. For example, if Student B says, “masks,” Student A then might say, “The gable masks are like faces because they have eyes and a mouth. These faces represent the ancestor Ruatepupuke and his grandson.”

Note: If you did not get through your discussion of the parts of the house yesterday, you can catch up through this activity.

Circle of Viewpoints

Step 2

15 minutes

Share images.

Share with students the images of Ruatepupuke II dismantled and awaiting shipment to Hamburg, Germany (after the purchase by J.F.G. Umlauff) as well as Umlauff’s catalog photo. (Slides 26-27).

Brainstorm perspectives. (5 minutes)

As a class, brainstorm a list of different perspectives on these photographs. Who might find looking at these images interesting, useful, important, upsetting, etc.? Record on chart paper/the board.

- Perspectives might include: a museum employee, someone purchasing the house for a museum, or a member of the Māori community in Tokomaru Bay.

Choose a perspective. (10 minutes) (small groups or whole class)

Explore each perspective using these sentence-starters:

- I am thinking of these images from the viewpoint of _____ (list the perspective).
- I think _____(describe what is going on in the image from your chosen viewpoint).
- A question I have from this viewpoint is _____.
- Record student responses on chart paper/the board.

Respond to student questions to the best of your ability. You may wish to share some of the information from p. 2-3 on **How did Ruatepupuke II come to be at the Field Museum?** How might varying perspectives respond to the sale, disassembly, and reassembly (with some inaccurate representations of Māori custom) of Ruatepupuke II?

Note:

- When Umlauff purchased the meeting house, he cut off the bottoms of the poupou to make them sit flat upon reassembly. This removed some of the names of ancestors written there. Visible names remain on 12 panels.
- In the 1820s, the community at Tokomaru Bay voluntarily disassembled Ruatepupuke I to keep the whare safe (p. 2).
- The sale in the 1890s was voluntary (as per Ayson Lewis, possibly for financial reasons to help the community or due to Mōkena Rōmio Babbington's conversion to Christianity).
- What do we make of these complexities?

Step Inside

Step 3

15 minutes

Share image.

Share with students the image of Ms. Mackey caressing the poupou in the practice of "keeping warm" the spirits of the ancestors who rest inside (Slides 28-29).

Discuss the image. (10 minutes)

As a class, discuss the following questions:

- What might the woman in the photo *perceive* or *understand*?
- What might the woman in the photo *know* or *believe*?
- What might the woman in the photo *care about*?

Note: Any of today's whole-class discussions also can be done as think-pair-share activities first.

Think about all the photographs we looked at today. (5 minutes)
Ask the class:

- In what way does viewing a wharenui not as an object but as an ancestor determine how one interacts with a meeting house?
- What makes you say this?

Closing Reflection
Imagine If
Step 4

10 minutes

End class by having students journal or discuss the following:

- How have museums created harm/contributed to and reinforced stereotypes about AANHPI and Indigenous communities?
- Imagine museums working to counter or fix this harm. What might that look like?

Day 3:

Creating a Poupou (Ancestor Panel)

Purpose

Apply the knowledge and make connections.

Community Call
Step 1

5 minutes

Share with students the land and ancestor acknowledgements and then complete the following opening activity to set the stage.

Video
Reflect

Share with students the following video featuring JP Brown, Regenstein Conservator:

- *Please Touch to Keep Him Warm* (29 seconds)

As a class, discuss:

- Why do people "warm" the meeting house?
    - Possible response: It provides comfort and company for the spirit of the ancestor who resides inside the carvings.

Frontloading
Step 2

10 minutes

Review.

As we have learned, remembering and honoring one's ancestors is incredibly important to the Māori people.

Discuss.

- What are some ways people might trace their ancestry?

Connect.
Māori people are taught to trace their origins through a whakapapa (*FAH-kah-pah-pah*), or genealogy (family tree/lineage) that is passed down orally. This genealogy connects the individual to their iwi (*ee-wee*) (tribe), hapū (*hah-POOH*) (sub-tribe), and whānau (*FAH-nau*) (family).

Extend.
However, the Māori also are genealogically connected to the land and to the waters.

In fact, in Aotearoa (New Zealand), the Māori people are known as tangata whenua (*TAHN-gah-tah FEH-noo-ah*) or "people of the land." When meeting someone new, a Māori person might begin with a pepeha (peh-PAY-hah) – or formula to introduce themselves from a Māori perspective.

- Pepeha are about connections. These connections are more important than identity as an individual.
- The pepeha does NOT start with one's name but by stating something like "This is my mountain. This is my river. etc." as well as community and family ties.
- It is where they are from and to whom they are connected that tell far more about a person than their name.

Source: Pepeha for Non-Māori

Note: You might show students a sample pepeha / explanation.

Apply.
The Māori people did not have a written language until the arrival of Europeans.

- Instead, they passed down stories and identified who they were through song, dance, oral tradition, and the carvings that we have been studying.
- This storytelling through carvings can even be seen on Māori moko (moh-koh) or tattoos (Slide 31)! Originally, Māori tattoos actually were carved into the face. These moko immediately identify a person's connections to their family and community.

Because the Māori are tangata whenua – "people of the land"— you often will see design elements in carvings, art, and tattoos that connect to the land and sea.

Creating a Poupou

Step 3

~ 40 minutes

Introduce Māori symbols and designs.

Have students look at the Māori symbols/designs (Slides 32-37). (5 minutes)

- Miss Takai's Art Class – Kōwhaiwhai (see @ 0:51)

Ask.

- What shapes from nature do you see in these designs?
- What do you think we are supposed to learn from each design?
- What is this ancestor teaching us?

Note: Show the images and prompt students with the questions before revealing the "answers."

Distribute materials.

Give each student a copy of Creating a Poupou (Ancestor Panel) (2 minutes)

Explain the activity.

Explain to students that they will now create their own ancestor panel using images and symbols from their own culture as well as Māori symbols. (3 minutes)

Provide the following instructions:

1. Select three ancestors, older people in your family, or other people (not related to you) who are important to you.
2. On the worksheet (or on larger pieces of butcher paper), draw visual representations of these people.
    a. These can be literal drawings of the person or symbols to represent them (things that reflect their interests, personality, your shared culture, why they are important to you, etc.).
    b. Typical colors in Māori art are red, black, and white, but you can choose any colors you like!
3. Incorporate at least one of the Māori symbols that speaks to you / fits with the people you selected.
4. You will have the rest of class to finish! (~ 30 minutes)

Conclusive Dialogue

Step 4

5 minutes

Share ancestor panels.

In the last 5 minutes of class, ask student volunteers (or select) to share and explain their poupou (ancestor panels) – who they chose, what symbols they chose, and why.

Feel free to continue this in class another day!

Extension 1: Connections

Connect to the Cyrus Tang Hall of China.

One way the Māori community remembers and honors ancestors is through the whare whakairo.

How did the people of the Ming and Tang Dynasties remember and honor ancestors?

Take a look at:

- Life Events: Birth to Death
  - Censor
  - Tomb Figure
  - Tombstone of Lady Wang

Extension 2: Pepeha

Have students create their own pepeha!

Show students the sample / explanation, and have them fill out this template.

See also: Pepeha for Non-Māori

Extension 3: Field Trip Class

Come visit us at the Field Museum!

In their book *Te Marae: a Guide to Customs and Protocol,* Hiwi and Pat Tauroa argue that

> A culture cannot be learned from a textbook. True understanding and appreciation come only from first-hand experience. This has been recognized by both Maori and Pakeha [non-Polynesian New Zealander / European New Zealander]; and so, since many Pakeha people have expressed the desire to take part in a "marae experience", Maori people, aware of their sincerity, are now making special efforts to make marae more widely available to visitors seeking to learn. (1990, p. 2)

Join us at the Field Museum for a Field Trip Class!

Register your field trip group here and select the Meeting A Māori Ancestor: The Māori House Field Trip Class.

Someone from the team will be in touch!

Extension 4: Read / Listen

Read a book!

Before or after these lessons, read *Lost in the Museum* by Victoria Cleal and Isobel Joy Te Aho-White to learn how a family connects to what they see at Te Papa Tongarewa (Museum of New Zealand).

Lost in the Museum, read by Suzy Cato
