

Hawaiian Alphabet

Ka Pī‘āpā ‘Ōiwi (*Hawaiian alphabet*)

The pī‘āpā ‘ōiwi consists of 5 **woela** (*vowels*) and 8 **koneka** (*consonants*):

nā woela – a, e, i, o, u

nā koneka – h, k, l, m, n, p, w, ‘ (‘okina)

Vowel pronunciation guide

All Hawaiian words include at least one vowel. Vowels are the key to good pronunciation of Hawaiian. The individual vowel sounds in the alphabet are pronounced:

a – <u>a</u> bove	(aloha, Hawai‘i)
e – b <u>e</u> t	(‘elepaio, Pele)
i – <u>e</u> at	(Hilo, Miloli‘i)
o – p <u>o</u> le	(Kona, Honolulu)
u – m <u>oo</u> n	(Puna, lehua)

Ka Hakalama

The hakalama is a chant recited by preschool and early elementary aged children to support their literacy development. The chant also helps to reinforce proper pronunciation of Hawaiian sounds. The hakalama consists of 80 consonant-vowel clusters and 10 vowel sounds.

It is helpful to use the hakalama when pronouncing Hawaiian words. For example, the word Kalaniana'ole includes 7 huahakalama: Ka | la | ni | a | na | 'o | le

ha	ka	la	ma	na	pa	wa	'a
hā	kā	lā	mā	nā	pā	wā	'ā
he	ke	le	me	ne	pe	we	'e
hē	kē	lē	mē	nē	pē	wē	'ē
hi	ki	li	mi	ni	pi	wi	'i
hī	kī	lī	mī	nī	pī	wī	'ī
ho	ko	lo	mo	no	po	wo	'o
hō	kō	lō	mō	nō	pō	wō	'ō
hu	ku	lu	mu	nu	pu	wu	'u
hū	kū	lū	mū	nū	pū	wū	'ū

a	e	i	o	u
ā	ē	ī	ō	ū

Ha'awina Hakalama

Count and identify the huahakalama used to spell each word below:

	<u>huahakalama</u>	<u># of huahakalama</u>
1. mālama	<i>mā – la – ma</i>	3
2. mo'ō		
3. ha'aheo		
4. kalahea		
5. 'Imiloa		
6. aloha		
7. kuamo'ō		
8. mahalo		
9. Kūhiō		
10. Ke'elikōlani		

Here is a list of words that are commonly mispronounced. Practice using hakalama to pronounce these words first incorrectly then correctly. Can you hear the difference?

<u>Incorrect</u>	<u>Correct</u>
kuliana	kuleana (responsibility)
poki	poke (way of preparing raw fish)
maili	maile (native twining shrub)
pikaki	pīkake (a flower)
lilikoe	liliko'i (a fruit)
Hanalulu	Honolulu (place)
Kameamea	Kamehameha (a chief)

Practice the different vowel combinations that are commonly confused.

au | ao

ai | ae

oi | oe

ou | ō

ei | ē

Practice the different vowel combinations.

ae

ai

ao

au

ea

ei

eo

eu

ia

ie

io

iu

oa

oe

oi

ou

ua

ue

ui

uo

Nā Woela i Puana Hemahema ‘ia
(Commonly mispronounced vowels blends)

The most common mispronunciations of vowel sounds are found in these vowel clusters:

au & ao

ai & ae

oi & oe

ou & ō

ei & ē

For example, the word “pau” is commonly mispronounced as “pao.” “Pau” means “finish, complete” whereas “pao” means “to scoop out, peck, chisel out.” In this example, pronouncing a word with the incorrect vowel sound completely changes the meaning of the word.

Another common mispronunciation is to “drop” the second vowel completely, as in the word “lei,” commonly mispronounced as “lē.” Again, you end up with two completely different meanings—“lei” is a garland worn around the neck, and “lē” means to “go about aimlessly, be lazy.”

Practice saying the different vowel sounds in the following sets of words. Notice how different the meanings are in each word pair:

mau (*always, steady, perpetual*) **mao** (*cleared, as rain; alleviated*)

kai (*sea, ocean*) **kae** (*refuse or rubbish*)

poi (*pounded taro mixed with water*) **poe** (*round, rounded*)

hou (*new, fresh, again*) **hō** (*to give; to wheeze*)

nei (*to rumble; this*) **nē** (*fretting, teasing*)

Features of Hawaiian Spelling & Pronunciation: **‘Okina and Kahakō**

‘Okina

It’s important to understand that the ‘okina is not just a punctuation mark but an actual letter, considered a consonant, in Hawaiian. This is clarified by the pī‘āpā song, memorized by all Pūnana Leo preschool students, which ends with “...a me ka ‘okina” demonstrating that the ‘okina is the last letter in the Hawaiian alphabet. The ‘okina is pronounced as a glottal stop which is the sound, or rather lack of sound, between the two vowels of “uh-oh”. A glottal stop is a tightening of the glottis in the throat to cut off sound for a moment. It’s also found in the British English Cockney way of saying “butter” as “bu‘er”. And it’s the stop between the two “i”s at the end of the Hawai‘i. This idea is emphasized by the nerdy but educational bumper sticker you may have seen:

“I brake for ‘okina.”

More and more people are understanding the importance of the ‘okina in Hawaiian words. For instance if you look at the County of Hawai‘i website, you will find that the ‘okina is included in the spelling of Hawai‘i. This is also true of system-wide UH websites and letterhead. And if you look at the new highway sign on Kamehameha Avenue near the turn-off to Bayfront Highway, you will see that the correct spelling of Honoka‘a and Hāmākua are included. Hāmākua includes two kahakō, a language feature which we will discuss in the next part of this lesson.

Let’s take a moment to think about the word Honoka‘a.

- With the ‘okina, it is pronounced correctly: Honoka‘a, which means a bay (hono) of rolling (ka‘a) stones.
- Without the ‘okina, we get the common mispronunciation: Honokā, which sounds more like a word ending in an “a” with a kahakō or extended vowel sound. This results in the meaning “Bay of Smiting.”
- I attended Honoka‘a Intermediate in 7th grade, and I was as guilty as mostly everyone at that time, of saying Honokā rather than Honoka‘a. This points out a big

pitfall of mispronunciation – the wrong sound will become normalized if enough people use it.

Another example of the importance of the ‘okina can be seen in the following possessive pronouns where the ‘okina makes a complete difference in meaning:

- kou (your)
- ko‘u (my)

And then there’s the name of the Hawaiian language center where I and my colleagues work, the Hale Kuamo‘o. Without the ‘okina, you get the mispronunciation Hale Kuamō, or as one literacy project team member who is new to Hawai‘i says, the Hale Kuamoo (Kuamū), which seems to have something to do with cows. Kuamo‘o means “backbone” but also refers to customs, traditions, and those aspects of language and culture that we strive to perpetuate. Kuamō could actually mean “severed backbone”, the exact opposite of the desired meaning, which is a continuity and revitalization of knowledge from the past. So you can begin to see how important the ‘okina is in terms of meaning-making in the Hawaiian language.

Another common mistake for English speakers is to insert an ‘okina where there is none, especially in Hawaiian words with multiple vowels in a row, like heiau (a temple), which some people incorrectly think is pronounced he‘iau or he‘iao.

Just so you know what an ‘okina is supposed to look like, it is often likened to a small “6” with the loop filled in. It is also the same as a single open quote so long as that single quote includes the solid dot at the bottom to form the shape of a tiny number six.

Now we will practice pronouncing the ‘okina with the kōkua of a partner. “Ma ka hana ka ‘ike.” This well-known traditional proverb, or ‘ōlelo no‘eau, means, “Doing leads to knowing.” The best way to master the ‘okina is to practice using it. See the ‘okina practice sheet.

Kahakō

Now let's turn our attention to the kahakō or macron. The kahakō is not a letter, but a diacritical mark, a line over a vowel which tells the reader to pronounce that letter with a longer vowel sound. The word "kahakō" is sometimes shortened and referred to as a **kō**, especially while spelling out loud. Both the long and the short forms of the word include a kahakō in their spelling.

Notice the difference of meaning for the three words below, based on the location of the kahakō stressed vowels [practice determining where the kahakō is for each word]:

pūpū – shell

pupū – to stall or move slowly

pupu – a small, humble shelter

Another example is found in the difference between the "e" in the greeting "Aloha e Māhealani" (used in proper Hawaiian when addressing someone, including in emails), and the word 'ē, which means "strange" as in "'ano 'ē" (kind of odd).

So, like the 'okina, the kahakō is essential in determining the meaning of some words as spelled in the written word, and as spoken in oral language. It does so by modifying the length of sound of a vowel.

Some words use a kahakō to show the plural form:

kanaka (a person) kānaka (people)

makua (a parent) mākua (parents)

kupuna (an elder) kūpuna (elders)

Another point that came up among our team as we were preparing for this lesson, is the tendency to overemphasize the kahakō. I have to admit, that I am still guilty of this from time to time.

You already practiced the kahakō a bit with Māhealani while doing the hakalama practice chart, but let's take a few minutes for more practice pronouncing the kahakō with a partner. Remember: Ma ka hana ka 'ike (Doing leads to knowing). See the kahakō practice sheet.

‘Okina Practice, featuring our friend the ‘Okina

Both Mac and PC computers now ship with Hawaiian keyboards included. Common fonts that generally have good ‘okinas:

- **Times New Roman**
- **Arial**
- **Lucida Grande**
- **Helvetica**

For other fonts in Mac where the ‘okina may not come out correctly, try the option close bracket (]) key combination.

With a partner for kōkua, practice pronouncing each of the following words with the correct ‘okina (glottal stop) included. Remember: “I brake for ‘okina”, “uh-oh”, and “Hawai‘i”. A few examples of words without ‘okina that are often mispronounced as if they had an ‘okina are also included at the end of the list.



Correct

Honoka‘a

Kea‘au

Kaua‘i

O‘ahu

Ha‘iha‘i (possibly a style of chant) St.

Punalu‘u

Ma‘ema‘e (Clean) School

Kapi‘olani

liliko‘i (passion fruit)

hāpu‘u (tree fern)

heiau

onaona (sweet smelling)

Moku Ola (“Coconut Island”)

hāiki (narrow)

Incorrect

Honokā

Keao

Kauai or Kauae

Oahu

Haihai (Following) or Haehae (Growling) St.

Punalū

Maemae (Fading Flower) School

Kapiolani

lilikoī; often mispronounced lilikoe

hapū (clan or subtribe, adopted from Māori)

he‘iau or he‘iao

‘ona‘ona (commonly mispronounced in songs)

Moku ‘Ola

hā‘iki

Kahakō Practice, starring the Kō (short for Kahakō)

Aloha!
'O au ke
kahakō.

To make a kahakō in Mac, first select the Hawaiian keyboard from the Language and Region menu in System Preferences (you can also toggle between the Hawaiian and U.S. keyboards in the top menu of the Mac desktop). Hold down the option key and type the desired vowel; it will appear with a kahakō.

On a PC, after selecting the Hawaiian keyboard, hold down the control and alternate keys while typing a vowel in order to get a vowel with a kahakō.



With a partner for kōkua, practice pronouncing each of the following words:

Commonly Used Meaning

Pāhoa

Waiākea (Broad Waters)

manō (shark)

Hāmākua (breath/life of the parents)

Kāwili (to stir) Street

A'ohōkū (learn about stars)

lānai (balcony)

Lāna'i (the island)

kālā (money)

pūpū (shell)

Haleakalā (House of the Sun)

kāne (man)

hānai (to adopt or raise)

Nā'ālehu (volcanic ashes)

Different Meaning or Lack of Meaning

Pahoa (meaningless)

Waikea (White Waters)

mano (many, numerous) or māno (water dam)

Hamakua (no meaning for ha without the kō;
makua is a single parent)

Kawili (the twisting or spirals)

A'ohoku (learn about the Hoku moon phase)

lanai (stiff backed); often mispronounced lanæ

Lanai; often mispronounced Lanæ

kala (unicorn fish)

pupu (humble shack)

Haleakala (House of the 6th note on a musical scale)

kane (a skin fungus)

hanai (meaningless)

Na'ālehu (ashy firm-seatedness)

Ho‘olauna ‘Imi Kanaka
(“Find Someone” Introductions Activity)

‘Ōlelo Ho‘olauna & Wala‘au (*Introductions and conversation starters*)

1. **Kanaka 1:** ‘O wai kou inoa?
(*What is your name?*)
2. **Kanaka 2:** ‘O ____ ko‘u inoa.
(*My name is ____.*)
3. **Kanaka 2:** ‘O wai kou inoa?
(*What is your name?*)
4. **Kanaka 1:** ‘O ____ ko‘u inoa.
(*My name is ____.*)
5. Wala‘au (converse) briefly with your partner to find out if they are someone with one of the qualities listed below.
6. Continue to mill about the room, practicing the Hawaiian introductions dialogue above and...

Find someone who:

- speaks another language
- has studied Hawaiian before
- ate breakfast this morning
- is from another island
- is from another part of the world
- enjoys the outdoors
- has a pet
- plays a musical instrument
- likes the ocean
- practices hula or some other cultural practice

Ha‘awina Pilihome: Ho‘oma‘ama‘a Puana & ‘Imi Hua‘ōlelo Hoihoi *(Homework: Pronunciation Practice and Finding Hawaiian Words of Interest)*

I – Practice puana (pronunciation) with someone at home or the office by:

- Refamiliarizing yourself with the hakalama (consonant-vowel combinations) and vowel pairs from today’s lesson using the voice recordings at the workshop website: papaolelo.weebly.com > Nā Ha‘awina > Puana / Pronunciation > Pronouncing the Pi‘āpā, Hakalama, Huēwoela, etc.
- Practicing correct puana for commonly mispronounced words on the ‘okina and kahakō handouts at the web location detailed above (below the hakalama and huēwoela recordings at the same web location as given above).
- Familiarize yourself with the project website, especially the additional learning resources at: Ha‘awina > Kumuwaiwai A‘o / Learning Resources.

II – Set up the Wehewehe Wikiwiki website/app on your device (iPhone, iPad, etc.), or use wehewehe.org



Created by Kaliko Trapp and Kamakalōli‘i (Sunny) Walker at UHH, "Wehewehe Wikiwiki" provides an efficient way to access the Hawaiian dictionary and place name resource databases through smart devices, including smart phones.

Note that the instructions below can also be found at the workshop website at papaolelo.weebly.com under the “Nā Kumwaiwai” (resources) menu. Please share these instructions and the website link with anyone who might like to have these Hawaiian language learning tools.

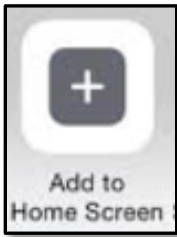
To download this link (which functions similar to an app) for your iPhone or iPad, follow these simple instructions:

(1) Navigate to the website at hilo.hawaii.edu/wehe/ using Safari, the icon may not be available through Chrome or other web browsers.

(2) Click on the share icon.



(3) Choose "Add to Home Screen".



(4) You will now have the Wehewehe Wikiwiki icon on your home screen for easy access to Hawaiian dictionaries.



III – Use Wehewehe Wikiwiki or wehewehe.org to find 10 hua‘ōlelo (words) of interest to you.

IV – Write down these hua‘ōlelo hoihoi and their meanings.

V – Come to the next class ready to share a hua‘ōlelo that you found interesting.