

My intention with this book is to create a memorable and effective way of learning some Hawaiian words—words that aren't “*Aloha*”, “*Lani*”, “*Ohana*” or others you might find in your typical phrasebook, or see as you walk down the streets of Hawai'i. I want to reach out to elementary learners of ‘*Ōlelo Hawai'i* through vibrant illustrations and meaningful proverbs, because art is a language we all speak.

In this collection you will find thirteen words that begin with the thirteen letters of *Pi'āpā Hawai'i* (a, e, i, o, u, h, k, l, m, n, p, w, ') accompanied by watercolour paintings. Besides the definition, I've also included an IPA transcription, words that are related in their meaning or morphology, the etymology if it could be ascertained, and a carefully selected proverb for each word.

Inspired by the study of linguistics in our course, I wanted to embark on a project that would allow me to explore ‘*Ōlelo Hawai'i* from the perspective of a beginner. By infusing elements of phonology, morphology, and lexicology and adding an artistic touch, I strive to facilitate the learning of Hawaiian language. The book is designed to be user-friendly with aesthetically pleasing art and no large blocks of text (*oh, the irony!*).

I'd originally started out intending to put together a collection of obscure words in the Hawaiian language, with no idea about what counted as “obscure” or what didn't. Because this term is dependent on one's skill level and therefore highly subjective, I found it necessary to tweak the nature of my project whilst maintaining the integrity of my original plan as far as possible (i.e. keeping away from using common words). Sifting out useful and reliable information on truly obscure words was also challenge.

Why did I choose the words I chose? I drew inspiration from one of our class discussions of the struggles the Hawaiian language presently faces, the crux of it being preserving the written and spoken word. I've arranged the words to fit six different “themes”—Adversity, Strength, Ignite, Divine, Blessing, and Sage—that present this challenge in a story-like manner.

With the threat the language faces of dying out (“adversity” words), we must conquer this (“strength” words) and keep its spirit alive (“ignite” words) to honour its cultural and spiritual roots (“divine” words), bringing peace (“blessing” words) as the life of the language is restored little by little. But not all the words are categorised according to these themes. The remaining three (“sage” words) were selected based on their use in proverbs or words of wisdom, which I thought were relevant to the overarching notion of language learning and usage. This veiled reference is also an allusion to a distinctive feature of the Hawaiian language, that is, the multiple meanings and implications each word carries.

I hope this has been helpful in providing insight and understanding on how I’ve crafted this little collection. Before we begin, I’d like to share the following quote:

“I ka ‘olelo no ke ola, i ka ‘olelo no ka make.”
“In the language is life, in the language is death.”