

Ka Pī'āpā 'Ōiwi - The Hawaiian Alphabet

a e i o u h k l m n p w ' (ā) (ē) (ī) (ō) (ū) (hē) (kē) (lā) (mū) (nū) (pī) (wē) ('okina)

Notes for the Alphabet

- There are a total of 13 letters in the Hawaiian alphabet
 - 5 vowels and 8 consonants.
- The 'okina (glottal stop) is considered a consonant.

13 Letters (Hua)
 5 Vowels (Leokani)
 8 Consonants (Leokanipū)

Spelling Rules

- Every Hawaiian word must contain at least one vowel.
- There are no consonant clusters. (eg. kw, lh, 'n, l')
- Words always end with a vowel.
- The *kahakō* can only be used with a vowel.
- Words may start with any letter, vowel or consonant.



Pronunciation Help

- The 'okina breaks the sound of a vowel.
- The *kahakō* can only be used with a vowel.
- The *kahakō* lengthens the sound of a vowel.
- The natural stress of pronouncing Hawaiian is placed on the next to the last syllable. (Penultimate)
- How do I pronounce the vowels?

' 'okina
 ā ē ī ō ū kahakō

a	like a in apart, above, alone
e	like e in bed, red, shed
i	like i in pique, or ee in seek, beep
o	like o in old, hole, pole
u	like oo in pool, spoon, moon

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 Hawaiian Alphabet, Spelling Rules, and Pronunciation Help

▸ How do I pronounce the consonants?

p, k	in speech, about as in English but with less aspiration
k	in chant like <i>thd</i> with minor aspiration
h, m, n	about as in English
l	about as in English, sometimes like <i>r</i>
w	after <i>i</i> and <i>e</i> usually a lax <i>v</i> after <i>u</i> and <i>o</i> usually like <i>w</i> after <i>a</i> or first letter, either <i>w</i> or <i>v</i>
‘	glottal stop (‘okina), similar to the sound between the <i>oh</i> 's in the English expression <i>oh-oh!</i>

▸ W-Glide

- Standard Hawaiian pronunciation of consonants is similar to English except for “w” which can be pronounced as an English “v”.
- Early written Hawaiian language sometimes included the “w” but it is never pronounced as a “v”.
- The *w-glide* is produced when gliding from the vowels “a, u, o” to another vowel.
- Today, most people do not write the *w-glide* because it can be confusing.
 - Old: auwē, ‘auwana, nowelo, kauwila, uwē
 - New: auē, ‘auana, noelo, kauila, uē

▸ HAKALAMA (basic)

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