

Grammar Lesson 0601: Introduction to Ka‘i and the Ka‘i “He”

In the accompanying video (V0601), you were introduced to the idea of a *ka‘i* by looking at English language examples. Here are some as a reminder:

the, a, an, this, that, some

We are very familiar with using those English *ka‘i* before nouns, as in:

the car, a boat, the canoe, an apple, this lesson, that pen, some deer

The Hawaiian grammar term “ka‘i” is taken from the word “alaka‘i” meaning to lead (as a verb) or leader (as a noun). So the *ka‘i* act as leader words for nouns in the most basic sense, much the same as in English.

The first *ka‘i* we learned was “he”. It is mostly the same as “a” or “an” in English, so you can use them the same way in these early lessons. For example:

he ka‘a : a car	he moku : a large boat	he wa‘a : a canoe	he ‘āpala : an apple
he peni : a pen	he alaka‘i : a leader	he mele : a song	(<i>make your own!</i>)

Note that we are only able to express *singular* objects with “he” at this time. By that, I mean we can say “a car” but not “some cars” which is the *plural* version.

Let’s learn some new vocabulary to use with our new *ka‘i*. Write these out on a separate sheet of paper and/or on flash cards and learn them well. We will use these words and many more like them to learn and practice our Hawaiian. You might also look up some of your own words in a Hawaiian dictionary, like the one online at wehewehe.org.

Hawaiian	English	Hawaiian	English
he moa	a chicken	he kao	a goat
he pueo	an owl	he pua‘a	a pig
he pīkake	a peacock	he nēnē	a goose
he ‘elepani	an elephant	he pea	a bear
he mo‘o	a gecko, lizard	he keko	a monkey
he hōkele	a hotel	he alanui	a road
he ka‘a	a car	he hale	a house
he kanaka	a person	he keiki	a child
he keikikāne	a boy	he kaikamahine	a girl
he kāne	a man	he wahine	a woman