



Disc 3, Part 5: Using “Ua” to make the Simple Past Tense

We have already learned how to say that something will happen in the future. For example, “e hele ana ke kanaka” means “the person will go”, because “hele” means to go, and the e-ana around it means that it will occur in the future. The last two words, “ke kanaka” is the subject - who or what is going to perform the action.

We can say things in the past very easily, by just replacing the e-ana with the single word “ua” before the action. For example, “ua hele ke kanaka” means “the person went”. “Ua” is the past marker; “hele” is to go; and “ke kanaka” is the person. See how easy?

We can use descriptive ‘a‘ano words with “ua”, past marker, too, just like with the future markers “e-ana”. So for example, we can say, “ua maika‘i ka hana” - the work was good: “ua maika‘i” means “was good”, and “ka hana” means “the work”. Ua maika‘i ka hana. In fact, “ua maika‘i ka hana” can also mean that the work is still good, since it was good in the past, and it still has not stopped being so. Ua maika‘i ka hana. Work is good. This only works with ‘a‘ano words that describe a state or condition: words like maika‘i, good, pololei, correct, ikaika, strong, pa‘akikī, difficult, and so on.

OK. Are you ready to practice? E ho‘oma‘ama‘a kākou. We’ll only try to change one word at a time to make it easy. Repeat each word or phrase after me. Ho‘omākaukau!

Ua ‘ōlelo ka malihini - the visitor spoke

Ua kū nā keiki - the children stood

Ua holoholo nā malihini - the visitors all went for a ride

Ua hele ke kanaka - the person went

Ua hele nā kānaka - the people went

Ua holo ka moku - the ship sailed

Ua maika‘i ka hana - the work was good, or, the work is good

Ua nui nā hale - the houses were big, or, the houses are big

Ua nui nā kānaka - there were lots of people, or, there are lots of people

A ‘o ia! Now it’s your turn to see how you remember those expressions! Try to say the Hawaiian after hearing the English. You’ll hear the correct answer after a brief pause. Ho‘omākaukau!

The visitor spoke - Ua ‘ōlelo ka malihini

The children stood - Ua kū nā keiki

The visitors all went for a ride - Ua holoholo nā malihini

The person went - Ua hele ke kanaka

The people went - Ua hele nā kānaka

The ship sailed - Ua holo ka moku

The work was good - Ua maika‘i ka hana

The houses were big - Ua nui nā hale

There were many people - Ua nui nā kānaka