



Disc 7, Part 5: The Hawaiian words for common colours

As in many languages of the world, some of the colour names we have in English were not present in Hawaiian before recent times. The word for “colour” itself is “waiho‘olu‘u”, which literally means something like “water-based dye for dipping things into”. Let’s all try it: waiho‘olu‘u [2x]. Many people today like to say “kala”, which is a Hawaiianised version of the English, “colour”.

Here are the names of the colours. Repeat after me. E ho‘omākaukau.

‘ula‘ula	- red
‘ōma‘oma‘o	- green
uliuli	- blue
lenalena	- yellow
‘ālanī	- orange
poni	- purple
‘ākala	- pink
māku‘e	- brown
‘ele‘ele	- black
ke‘oke‘o	- white
‘āhinahina	- grey

Would you like to try using them in some phrases? I’ll say the English, and you say the Hawaiian. We’ll use the Hawaiian form that you hear in your vocabulary lessons, and add the ‘a‘ano descriptive word, the colour, afterwards. For example, I’ll say “A white skirt”, so you’ll respond, “he pā‘ū ke‘oke‘o”. “He pā‘ū” means “a skirt”, and “ke‘oke‘o” is the colour. He pā‘ū ke‘oke‘o - a white skirt.

In each of the exercises, you’ll hear the correct answer after a short pause, so you can check your response. Ho‘omākaukau!

[Ma kekahi ‘ao‘ao - Next page]

a grey cliff	- he pali ‘āhinahina
a brown animal	- he holoholona māku‘e
a blue sea	- he kai uliuli
a yellow pineapple	- he halakahiki lenalena
a green mountain	- he mauna ‘ōma‘oma‘o
a pink flower	- he pua ‘ākala
a red lehua blossom	- he lehua ‘ula‘ula
a purple house	- he hale poni
an orange fruit	- he hua‘ai ‘ālani
a black coffee	- he kope ‘ele‘ele
a white restaurant	- he hale ‘āina ke‘oke‘o

Great! Now I imagine you are ready for the next step. I’ll say an English sentence, and you make it Hawaiian. The colour words, since they are just descriptions, come right after the word they describe or modify. E ho‘omākaukau!

There is a grey cliff on Moloka‘i	- Aia kekahi pali ‘āhinahina ma Moloka‘i
A brown animal will run on the ranch	- E holo ana kekahi holoholona māku‘e ma ke kahua pipi.
There is a blue sea in Hawai‘i	- aia kekahi kai uliuli ma Hawai‘i
The yellow pineapple was delicious	- Ua ‘ono ka halakahiki lenalena
A green mountain is standing there (at that place)	- E kū ana kekahi mauna ‘ōma‘oma‘o ma laila
I want a pink flower	- He pua ‘ākala
I carried a red lehua blossom	- Ua hāpau au i kekahi lehua ‘ula‘ula
There are two purple houses in Honolulu	- Aia ‘elua hale poni ma Honolulu
The five orange fruits were famous	- Ua kaulana nā hua‘ai ‘ālani ‘elima
There is a black coffee at the airport	- Aia kekahi kope ‘ele‘ele ma ke kahua mokulele
There are lots of visitors at the white restaurant	- Ua nui nā malihini ma ka hale ‘āina ke‘oke‘o

If you managed to get those exercises mostly correct, you are doing really well! It’s time to start thinking ahead, to get some more supplemental material to study Hawaiian language from when you finish this program. You can always check the website mentioned in the introduction to this Topics Entertainment program for some recommendations.