

Halau Hula

by ReadWorks



As the bright sun began to stream through her window, Maya lazily rubbed her eyes and wondered what day it was. She had been in a deep, deep sleep, dreaming about swimming in a vast pool of chocolate ice cream. She licked her lips, remembering what bliss it had been to have a constant supply of her favorite dessert. All of a sudden, she realized it was Monday, and she was late for dance practice. She whipped out of bed, hastily pulled on a long, white dress, and rushed out the door.

Five minutes later, she found the rest of her class sitting underneath a cluster of palm trees in the backyard of her *halau hula*, a school that teaches hula dance, the traditional dance form of Hawaii. Her *kumu hula*, or hula teacher, stood impatiently in front of the sitting students who were all fanning themselves in the humid, Hawaiian heat. The *kumu hula* was a huge proponent of punctuality. It was just one of her many rules, all of which formed the *kapu*-a set of regulations that all her students must obey. Traditionally, in *halau hulas*, the obedience of such rules would mean that dancers would receive blessings from the gods that could increase their talent in performing the hula. Maya's *kumu hula* also had high standards of personal cleanliness and restricted the eating of most sugar, including sugarcane, a popular snack in Hawaii. This was the hardest rule for Maya to follow. She thought back to her dream of ice cream while she quietly sat amongst the other students, hoping that *kumu hula* wouldn't punish her for being late.

"All right, well now that we're all here..." the *kumu hula* started, while giving Maya a knowing look. "Tomorrow we start our preparations for the graduation ceremony."

The girls and boys looked at one another in excitement-they had been training for months in order to graduate and become professional hula dancers. They would start off as *olapa*, meaning agile ones. They are given many dancing roles. When they had danced long enough and gained enough experience, they would become a part of the *ho'oppa*, meaning steadfast ones. The *ho'oppa* typically

sit on the ground and play heavier instruments while the *olapa* dance.

"That means that you all must stay in the *halau* unless you have a very good reason to leave. We'll only practice once a day in order to give your bodies rest," the *kumu hula* told her students.

Maya and her friends all let out a sigh of relief. They had been practicing more than usual in order to prepare for their big graduation performance. After the *kumu hula* finished explaining the schedule for the next week, the girls and boys got up to eat breakfast. They walked to the kitchen where fresh fruits were already scattered across the table. Maya picked up a mango and a knife and began to cut.

As she passed around dripping mango slices to her friends, they shared their excitement for graduation.

"I can't wait to see my family!" a boy named Keanu said. Everyone nodded their heads in agreement. It had been a month since everyone had seen their family and friends. Even though they loved living in the *halau*, it was sort of like a boarding school in the sense that they could not leave whenever they wanted to. They couldn't wait to share the celebration with their friends.

A week passed, and it was finally the night before graduation. They spent the evening in dress rehearsal in order to make sure the performance would go smoothly. Both the girls and boys wore *lei* around their heads they had each made for themselves out of native plants found near their *halau*. They strapped *kupe'e* around their ankles and wrists-bracelets made of whale teeth and bone that made a light percussion sound as they moved. Both girls and boys wore skirts, or *pa'u*, made out of stripped bark from a hibiscus tree, but the girls' skirts were painted with beautiful designs.

After they finished rehearsal, the entire group walked to the beach nearby and into the water as a ceremonial bathing ritual. "The water is meant to purify you before your performance tomorrow," the *kumu hula* told them as she walked into the white waves, too. When they returned to the *halau*, the *kumu hula* sprinkled each of their faces with holy water. Their *kumu hula* took pride in maintaining the traditional rituals her mother and grandmother had passed on to her-she wanted to preserve the art of hula through the passing generations. She hoped that her own daughter, who was graduating with Maya, would continue the traditions when she reached a certain age.

The students rested a bit before sitting down to eat with family and friends. After everyone hugged and kissed each other, rejoicing in their reunion, the *kumu hula* explained the purpose of the feast.

"Now, we partake in the '*ailolo* feast that marks the end of my students' training. After this meal, they will officially be hula dancers," she said as a pig was brought to the large table which is a traditional part of the feast. Maya looked around the table at all her friends' smiling faces. She was so relieved she had made it so far in her training, but was nervous to start her career as a professional dancer as well.

Once they finished the meal, the students went to prepare for the performance and donned their traditional hula costumes. They lined up, ready to perform for an audience for the first time ever. Maya looked out into the audience and could see the smiling faces of her mom, dad, and little brother. She felt the soft grass between her toes, and thanked the gods for letting them be there to see her dance. The music began, and she stepped out, finally, as a hula dancer.

preserve pre · serve

Definition

verb

1. to keep safe from loss or harm.

The court will preserve the right to freedom of speech.

noun

1. an area of land or water where plants and animals are protected.

Hunting is not allowed in animal preserves.

Advanced Definition

transitive verb

1. to protect from injury, harm, or mishap.

She prayed that the children would be preserved from harm.

Using this polish will help preserve the wood.

2. to keep safe from loss.

We don't know how many endangered species can be preserved.

Will the court preserve my right to dissent?

3. to maintain in a relatively unchanged condition, esp. historic buildings or wildlife environments.

They're doing what they can to preserve the animal's habitat.

4. to prepare (food) so that it can be kept for a long period of time.

They often preserved meat by preparing it with salt and smoking it.

intransitive verb

1. to treat fruit or vegetables so as to retard spoilage.

noun

1. (usu. pl.) fruit or vegetables that are preserved in sugar.

She opened a jar of strawberry preserves and spread some on her bread.

2. an area set aside for the protection and propagation of fish, animals, or plant life.
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They established a wildlife preserve in the wetlands.

Spanish cognate

preservar. The Spanish word *preservar* means preserve.

These are some examples of how the word or forms of the word are used:

1. Chances are, however, when you envisioned a swamp (or a marsh or a bog), you conjured up an image of a rather unpleasant place: creepy and shadowy, muddy, overrun with snakes and insects. Would it ever occur to you that this could be the kind of place we would want to save and **preserve**? Probably not.
2. How do we know that the mammoth existed? Scientists have found countless mammoth fossils, or bones, all over the world. In fact, scientists have even found very well **preserved**, or mummified, mammoth bodies in sheets of ice. These mummified remains are part of the reason scientists came to know exactly how hairy and woolly the mammoths actually were.
3. Because of overhunting and habitat loss, tree kangaroos are endangered. In 2009, after Dabek and her team spent 10 years working with hunters and landowners on the Huon Peninsula, the community set aside more than 70,000 hectares (173,000 acres) of forest for conservation. It's the first **preserve** of its kind in the country. People have agreed not to log, mine, or hunt tree kangaroos in the protected area, even though the animals are traditionally part of the local diet.
4. Paleontologists are always finding new squamate fossils. A fossil is the remains of an ancient plant or animal **preserved** in Earth's crust.
5. "This is one of the biggest traditional celebrations in Hong Kong," says Mason Hung, a Hong Kong Tourism Board senior manager. "It has been so well **preserved**."
6. As of 2013, construction of the athletic center was nearing completion. The building stopped whistling. However, the sound it made has been **preserved** on several recordings. The musical composer is thinking of turning the whistling into a new song.
7. By covering grass with cement, we may force the animals that live there to move into another area. It is important to understand that we have to work to **preserve** the habitat of the native plants and animals in order to keep the ecosystem healthy.
8. Some people would construct their houses with basements, so food could be kept cool there. Others built sheds that were used to store dried and **preserved** foods all year round. But there were certain items that needed to be kept cold-not cool or dry, but cold.
9. To combat the problem, some governments have designated certain stretches of cloud forest as protected, and it's illegal to clear or log them. This can help **preserve** cloud forests against mining companies and large commercial farmers. But it can be hard to enforce these rules against local populations.

purify pu · ri · fy

Advanced Definition

transitive verb

1. to free from dirt, contamination, or other unwanted elements.
2. to rid of guilt and sin; make spiritually pure.

intransitive verb

1. to become pure.

Spanish cognate

purificar. The Spanish word *purificar* means purify.

These are some examples of how the word or forms of the word are used:

1. The building **purifies** and reuses water, using 50% less water than a typical high-rise building.
2. Hydrochloric acid is found in food grade **purification** levels in products such as aspartame, fructose and citric acid, as well as in gelatin production.
3. While humans do have some water filtration plants, these plants are expensive and take a lot of energy to maintain. For centuries the water that flowed into New York City was naturally filtered by a northern watershed. As the water flowed south, it was **purified**.
4. Graphite is the same mineral that is used in pencils. Both sand and graphite are abundant, making them easy for rural villages to find and use to clean their water. Using sand to **purify**, or clean, water is an old approach, but the combination of both sand and graphite makes for a new material that "is several times more efficient at removing contaminants than sand alone," according to Rice University.
5. If you normally use a water **purification** system, it might not work during a power outage. Stay safe by using bottled water for drinking, cooking, and brushing teeth.

ritual rit · u · al

Advanced Definition

noun

1. an established and prescribed procedure for a ceremony, esp. a religious one.
2. a body of such established ceremonies; rites.
3. a pattern of behavior repeated in a fixed form and order as though prescribed by custom or authority.

his ritual of reading the mail from the bottom of the stack to the top

adjective

1. of or pertaining to a ritual or rituals.

ritual cleansing

Spanish cognate

ritual: The Spanish word *ritual* means ritual.

These are some examples of how the word or forms of the word are used:

1. The routines are courtship **rituals**, says Arengo. Flamingos seem to be attracted to others whose movements are similar to their own.
2. Today, the **ritual** of sending postcards has been somewhat supplanted by posting vacation pictures on Facebook, Instagram and other social media sites.
3. Like humans, elephants have their own **rituals**, or customs. After an elephant dies, the other family members cover the body with sticks and leaves and linger near the site for days. The animals often return to the site years later.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is a *halau hula*?

- A. a hula dance teacher
- B. a school that teaches hula dance
- C. a set of regulations that hula students must obey
- D. a group of young hula dancers, meaning "agile ones"

2. Where does this story take place?

- A. Hawaii
- B. California
- C. Mexico
- D. Fiji

3. Students at the *halau hula* must be disciplined. What evidence from the passage best supports this statement?

- A. "They would start off *asolapa*, meaning agile ones. They are given many dancing roles."
- B. "Maya's *kumu hula* also had high standards of personal cleanliness and restricted the eating of most sugar, including sugarcane, a popular snack in Hawaii."
- C. "Her *kumu hula*, or hula teacher, stood impatiently in front of the sitting students who were all fanning themselves in the humid, Hawaiian heat."
- D. "The *kumu hula* was a huge proponent of punctuality. It was just one of her many rules, all of which formed the *kapu*-a set of regulations that all her students must obey."

4. There are multiple traditional rituals before the *halau hula* graduation ceremony, including bathing in the ocean and the sprinkling of holy water.

Based on this information, what conclusion can best be made about the experience of graduating from the *halau hula*?

- A. It is a challenging experience.
- B. It is a boring experience.
- C. It is a spiritual experience.
- D. It is a long experience.

5. What is this story mostly about?

- A. Maya graduates from *halau hula* as a professional dancer.
- B. Maya misses her friends and family while at the *halau hula*.
- C. Hula is the traditional dance form of Hawaii.
- D. Maya's *skuma hula* has high standards of personal cleanliness.

6. Read the following sentences: "Their *kumu hula* took pride in maintaining the traditional rituals her mother and grandmother had passed on to her-she wanted to **preserve** the art of hula through the passing generations. She hoped that her own daughter, who was graduating with Maya, would continue the traditions when she reached a certain age."

As used in this sentence, what does the word "**preserve**" most nearly mean?

- A. bottle up
- B. neglect
- C. destroy
- D. keep alive

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

_____ the graduation performance, students at the *halau hula* take part in a ceremonial bathing ritual in the ocean.

- A. Finally
- B. Before
- C. However
- D. For example

8. What is the *kapu*?

9. "Tradition and ritual play important roles in the *halau hula* graduation ceremony." Explain whether this statement is accurate or not. Support your answer using information from the passage.

10. Why do students at the *halau hula* traditionally have to follow certain rules?
