

**Intended for Grades:** 4-8      **Estimated Time:** 30-45 min.

**Lesson Title:** HALA'EA - A Greedy Chief

**Lesson Purpose: Students will:**

- \* Learn the importance of community through the *mo'olelo* (story) of *Hala'ea*
- \* Think about their own *kuleana* (responsibility) to community

**Materials & Preparation:**

- \* Prepare copies or project the story of *Hala'ea*
- \* Journals or folder paper
- \* Pencils or pens

**Background Information:**

Everyone has a place in the community they are a part of. With that place comes inherent *kuleana*, rights and responsibilities. The practice of taking *kuleana* to care for place was the only way that communities in old Hawai'i survived and flourished. All members, no matter what class you were a part of, had *kuleana*, responsibilities to their community. The story of *Hala'ea* talks about the *kuleana* of both a chief and the people of his village. This lesson can be applied to all cultures and heritages within the classroom.

**Steps:**

1. As a group, discuss what community is and how each of us fits in those different kinds of communities. What are our roles? Have the students start to think about the communities they are a part of.
2. Read and discuss the story of *Hala'ea*. Question students about who was *pono* (doing the right thing) and who was not *pono*.
3. After discussing the story, ask the students to journal or write about their reaction to this story and their *kuleana* in their own community. Reinforce the concept that everyone can take *kuleana* to protect things they cherish. Create a way to identify and appreciate students who do hold community responsibilities. Discussion prompts:
  - Do you have responsibilities as a member of a community?*
  - What is your kuleana in your community?*
  - What does your community do for you?*

**Reflection Questions:**

- \* What do you think about the *mo'olelo* of *Hala'ea*?
- \* What was the role of *Hala'ea* in the community?
- \* What was the role of the fishermen? What was the role of the other villagers?
- \* What did you learn?

**Resources:**

[www.to-hawaii.com/legends/halaea.php](http://www.to-hawaii.com/legends/halaea.php)

### *Hala'ea*

A greedy chief was Hala'ea. Every day he visited the fleet of fishing canoes and took for himself and his retainers all the fish he could find. Then he held a feast, carousing and often wantonly wasting the food that remained. As for the fishermen, they were obliged to catch the fish without ever having any to take home to their families. Day after day, they ate herbs for food.

This conduct of the chief greatly vexed the people, and they sought means to rid themselves of his oppression. Never did they go out upon the ocean without hearing the voice of their chief crying, "The fish is mine! Give me the fish!"

At last came the season for *'ahi*, the tuna, and a proclamation was made, summoning the head fishermen to accompany their chief to the fishing grounds. So they gathered together and prepared their canoes, looking after the nets, the bait, and whatever else was required for the expedition. Also, they held a council at which it was agreed to deposit all their fish in the chief's canoe and themselves return to the shore without even a backward glance. At the day appointed, everything was in readiness from Wai'ahukini to Keauhou.

When the first canoe-load was conveyed to the chief's canoe, even then the voice of the chief could be heard protesting, "Bring me the fish! Bring me the fish!" But when the second, third, fourth, fifth, and succeeding canoes had deposited their loads into the chief's canoe and he saw there was danger of swamping the canoe with their weight, he called out, "The chief has fish enough!"

"Not so!" cried the men. "Here is all the fish that the chief desires!" They piled in the last load, and the canoe began to sink rapidly. The chief looked about for help, but there was no canoe at hand and no man to show compassion; all had gone back to land.

So perished Hala'ea in the sea, surrounded by the objects of his greed.

Reprinted from Pukui, M.K. (1995) *Folktales of Hawai'i. He Mau Ka'ao Hawai'i*. Honolulu, HI: Bishop Museum Press.