Hula: Dance That Tells a Story

Dancers sway gracefully, their grass skirts seeming to wave in the breeze. Their hands make soft flowing motions. This is hula dancing. In Hawaii, hula has been used for hundreds of years to tell stories and to pay respect to gods, goddesses, and nature. Hula was created long before the Hawaiian people created a system of writing. Instead they communicated through dance and song.

Although there are many stories about how hula was invented, some believe that Pele, Hawaii’s goddess of fire and volcanoes, wanted her sisters to dance for her. According to the story, only her sister Hi’iaka danced for the goddess. This sister is said to have been the first person to perform hula.

Over the years, both Hawaiians and visitors changed the dances. In the early 1800s, long before Hawaii became part of the United States, missionaries traveled there. The missionaries did not approve of hula. Although they tried to persuade the Hawaiian people to stop dancing, the missionaries could not erase hula from the Hawaiian culture. In addition, Hawaiians began to sail around the world and bring back ideas from other cultures. They added these ideas to hula to create new dances to tell a traditional story.

There are two types of hula. Hula kahiko uses the same traditional movements and instruments as did the ancient Hawaiians. When dancers perform hula kahiko, they dance to chanting and traditional musical instruments, such as rattles and drums. In contrast, hula ‘auana is considered modern hula. Modern hula is danced to modern Hawaiian music, which often features the ukulele, an instrument that looks like a small guitar. Dancers wear skirts made from leaves and bracelets and anklets made from flowers.

Today, visitors to Hawaii often go to see hula performances. The gentle, waving movements of the dancers remind them of soft winds blowing through the islands’ palm trees.
Name ____________________________

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Write all these words in the right places to complete this puzzle, which tells some things you learned about hula dancing and Hawaii. You can reread the article before you begin, but don’t look back at it while you are working. After you’ve completed the puzzle, read it to someone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dancers</th>
<th>drums</th>
<th>flowers</th>
<th>grass</th>
<th>Hawaii</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>imagine</td>
<td>story</td>
<td>ukuleles</td>
<td>world</td>
<td>written</td>
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Around the ____________________________, dance takes many different forms. In the state of ____________________________, people do a dance called hula. Hula ____________________________ wear skirts made of ____________________________ and leaves. Their bracelets and anklets are made from ____________________________.

While dancers perform, musicians play instruments, including rattles, ____________, and ____________. Ukuleles look like small guitars.

Many visitors to Hawaii don’t know that hula dances tell a ________________.

Long ago, before there was a ________________ language, the Hawaiian people created hula dances to tell about things that happened and about their travels around the world. As you watch the movements of hula dancers, try to ____________________________ the story they are telling.
Review

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Write keywords or phrases that will help you remember what you learned.