Culture and Language
Aboriginal Languages
Excerpt from Aboriginal Perspectives
Teacher Resource
ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES
Excerpt from Aboriginal Perspectives Teacher Resource

ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE VOCABULARY USED IN ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVES
One of the keys to a culture’s survival is the preservation of its language. Only through the language of a culture can the deeper concepts, understandings of the heart, and spirituality be truly expressed.

Vocabulary from many Aboriginal languages is used in Aboriginal Perspectives. It is important to try to give students a good approximation of how each word is pronounced. Some schools may be able to access speakers of an Aboriginal language; that, of course, is the ideal way to present the language. Another source for hearing examples of spoken languages is the Internet. Many sites offer sound files of fluent speakers. A number of such sites will be listed below.

Words and phrases present in the textbook are listed here, under each specific language, in the order in which they appear in the text, along with the page number on which each word or expression is located.

A brief description of pronunciation guidelines is provided below for some languages. Use these guidelines to practice speaking the vocabulary before you present it to students.

BLACKFOOT
Pronunciation Key
This pronunciation key is based on one prepared for the Blackfoot language courses developed by Duval House Publishing in conjunction with the Kainai First Nation. The sounds are described in terms of English sounds. Remember that Blackfoot is its own language; the English sounds are only an approximation of true Blackfoot sounds.

Vowels and Vowel Combinations

a  sounds like a in father  apinakosi  tomorrow
aa a dragged a sound  Aakitapoowa.  He/She will go there.
i  sounds like i in it  Nitaakitapoo.  I will go there.
i  sounds like long e  niistowa  me
oo  o dragged o sound  Aakitapoowa.  He/She will go there.
oii sounds like we  nohkoikso  my sons
ai sounds like a in apple  Aisimiwa.  He/She drinks.
aii sounds like a in lake  naiikopoto  sixteen
ao  sounds similar to ow in arrow  Aotahkoinamama.  It is orange./It is an orange.
aoo  a prolonged oo  Aooyiwa.  He/She eats.

Consonants

m, n, s, w, and y have the usual English sound.
k, p, and t are unaspirated (clipped, with no use of the voicebox and no puff of air)
k as in skin
p as in spin
t as in stop

Double consonants

mm  prolonged sound  ninna  my father
ss  prolonged sound  lsspommookit.  Help me.
mm  prolonged sound  lssammis.  Look at him/her.
kk  glottal stop  ksiksinattsi  white
pp  stop  kiiipipo  100
t  glottal stop  siksinattsi  black

A glottal stop is a break in the flow of the word in which all sound stops for a moment.

ks  x sound before consonant  Aikskimaa.  He/She is hunting.
ts  ts sound before consonant  Nitssapi ...  I looked . . .
ps  ps sound before consonant  Aipstomaahkaa.  He/She comes in.

Consonant combination before another consonant

kssa  Nitaakssammawa.  I will look at him/her.
tssa  Kitssaaki.  You washed dishes.
pssa  kitaaka’ pssammawa.  You will look for him/her.

Glottal Stop

A glottal stop is indicated by an apostrophe (’).

ni’ sa
Aii’ poyiwa.
Gutteral Fricative

There is a different sound when oo, o, aa, a, ii, and i precede an h.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ooh</td>
<td>koohkatsi</td>
<td>your foot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oh</td>
<td>Nohowa</td>
<td>He is my son.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aah</td>
<td>Saahkomaapiiwa</td>
<td>He is a boy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ah</td>
<td>Omahkinaawa</td>
<td>He is an old man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iih</td>
<td>piihksso</td>
<td>nine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ih</td>
<td>Ainihkiwa</td>
<td>He/She sings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Voiced and Voiceless Syllables

The syllable wa at the end of most words is barely audible. It is pronounced but not heard (voiceless).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syllable</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aooyiwa</td>
<td>He/She eats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aiyimmiwa</td>
<td>He/She laughs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siksinattiwa</td>
<td>It is black.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In names and questions, wa is voiced.

- Name: Mamiiwa aakao’ toowa. Fish is here.
  - wa in Mamiiwa is voiced.
  - wa in aakao’ toowa is voiceless.
- Question: Aisimiwa naa Tsaan? Is John drinking?
  - wa in Aisimiwa is voiced.

Difficult Sounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tsi</td>
<td>as in Tsimaa?</td>
<td>Where?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ts</td>
<td>as in Aissksinima’tstohkiwa.</td>
<td>He/She is a teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tss</td>
<td>as in ootsskoiinattsi</td>
<td>blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ksi</td>
<td>as in omiksi</td>
<td>those</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ks</td>
<td>as in aikskimaa</td>
<td>hunter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kss</td>
<td>as in Aokssksinima’tstohkiwa.</td>
<td>He/She is taught in a bad way.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BLACKFOOT WORDS APPEARING IN THE TEXT

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<tr>
<td>ix</td>
<td>oki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>iiini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Akóka’ tssin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pisskan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aamskaapipikani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Niitsitapi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aboriginal Languages cont.

Excerpt from Aboriginal Perspectives Teacher Resource

Walking Together

28 ksisskstaki
ponokámitaa
ahkihoa’s tis
imitaohkipistaa
beaver
horse
canoe
dog team
oral tradition, literally “stories from people who lived before us” or “ancestral stories”

39 ákaitapiitsinikssiistsi
41 Omahkitapii
story “Naapi and the Rock”
Elders

47 Móókoanssin
Belly Buttes

67 aisspoomootsiiyio’ pa
“helping one another”
important ceremony held as part of some Sundances

87 Ookáán

90 mammá’ pis
tipi rings
cairn or

97 Akóka’ tssin
Sundance

98 passkaan
powwow

104 aohko’ tisamaawa
provider
clan leader

108 ninaawa
wife of the clan leader

children

Pookaiksi

109 aisksimstatoomiaw opaitapiiwhsowayi
“thought out their lives”
sample Alberta clan names

108 Kanáttsoomitaiksi
Brave Dog Society, Police Society

109 Máóto’ kiikki
Buffalo Women’s Society

quote from Siksika Les Buckskin Jr.

121 Issapoomahksika
Crowfoot

Useful Websites

www.native-languages.org/blackfoot.htm#language
www.fp.ucalgary.ca/blackfoot/phonetics/phonetics.htm
www.schoolnet.ca/aboriginalaudiosaml/blackfot/black-e.html

Cree

Pronunciation Key

Consonants

Ten consonants are used to write Cree in the Roman alphabet: c, h, k, m, n, p, s, t, w, y
All are pronounced like in English except for c, k, p, and t.

c sounds like “ch” in chalk céskwa wait
k unaspirated like k in skin. kiyám It doesn’t t.
p is unaspirated as the p in spit. piyisk eventually
t is unaspirated as the t in Stan. tímìw It is deep

Unaspirated means making a consonant sound without a slight puff of air.
Vowels
There are four long vowels and three short vowel sounds.

Short Vowels
a  sounds like u in but  apisis  a little
i  sounds like i in pit  iskwew  a woman
o  sounds like oo in book  wapos  a rabbit

Long Vowels
To make vowels long in written Cree, a bar or a circumflex(\(^\)) is added above the vowel.
â  pronounced like a in father  âmow  a bee
î  pronounced like e in be  mînis  a berry
ô  pronounced like o in ore or oo in too  ôta  here
ê  pronounced like ay in say  pêyak  one

CREE WORDS APPEARING IN THE TEXT
Page  Words Appearing in the Text
viii – ix  Aboriginal Names
ix  tân’ si  hello
2  How the People Hunted the Moose  opening in Cree
17  names of the months
21  wetaskiwin spatinow  the place where peace was made
24  Nehiyaw  Real people, Cree
28  paskwâw mostos  buffalo
amisk  beaver
mistatim  horse
cîman  canoe
otâpahastimwewin  dog team
toboggan  dog sled
35  Interview of Glecia Bear
38  âcimostakewin  a regular story about everyday events
âtayohkewin  sacred story
mamâhtaw âcimôna  stories that relate a miracle or extraordinary experience

39  opwanîw âcimôna  sacred stories that emerge through a spirit quest
41  Kihteyaya  Elders
63  quote from Emma Minde
65  part of the story told by Bernie Makokis
70  manito sâkâhikan  Lake of the Spirit (Lac Ste Anne)
76  atâmaskîw asinîy  centre rock that holds Mother Earth together
79  pimiy  oil
81  listing of Cree words for types of moose
82 words for relatives in Plains Cree
87 Okâwimaw Askiy
   miyowichiwewin
   miyowictehtowin
   Mâhtâhitowin
   pesowew
   petâw
   pesowewospwâkan
96 mâskisimowin
   pîciciwin
   matotisân
   Pâhkwsimôwin
98 pwat’ simowin
   oskapiyos
   nistaw
   nitim
   niciwâm
 103 a helper
 107 brother-in-law (spoken by a man)
   “brother-in-law” (spoken by a woman)
 108 sample Alberta clan names
 109 young men who were part of the Warrior society
 161 smallpox (literally, scabbing)
 192 children of the Creator
 220 whitefish
 231 Flying Skeleton, a Cree spirit
   Nohkom Atayohkan
   nicimos
   nitotem
   my relative

USEFUL WEBSITES
http://www.native-languages.org/cree.htm
http://lalibert.sasktelwebsite.net/saycree/
http://collections.ic.gc.ca/tales/Cree.htm
http://www.sicc.sk.ca (Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre)

VARIOUS DENE LANGUAGE WORDS APPEARING IN THE TEXT
Page  Words Appearing in the Text
viii – ix Aboriginal names
ix   edlânétê   how are you? (Dene Suline)
    neeah   welcome (Dunne-za)
17   names of the months, (Dene Suline)
24   chatay   Beaver People (Dunne-za)
25   Dené   person, people
26   Dené Tha’   simple people (Dené Tha’)
   Tsa Des   river of beaver (Dene Suliné)
28 ejere       buffalo (Dene Suliné)
Haiklcho          buffalo (Dené Tha’)
Kaymoe hukgree   buffalo (Dunne-za)
tsa                beaver (Dene Suliné)
tsa                beaver (Dené Tha’)
cha                beaver (Dunne-za)
tjo’               horse (Dene Suliné)
k’ licho           horse (Dené Tha’)
Klanychnook        horse (Dunne-za)
tsi                canoe (Dene Suliné)
e-la               canoe (Dené Tha’)
alaka              canoe (Dunne-za)
k’ ljadeda         dog team (Dené Tha’)
Klayzha woosloozhy dog sled (Dunne-za)

39 wodih         stories, lectures, or news (Dené Tha’)
40 tonht’ onh wodihé stories of long ago
41 Deitye         Elders (Dené Tha’)
96 dawots’ ethe  dance, Tea dance (Dené Tha’)
shin              songs (Dené Tha’)
108               sample Alberta clan names
161 kedzowoti’ hi tuberculosis, literally sickness of the chest (Dené Tha’)

USEFUL WEBSITE
http://collections.ic.gc.ca/tales/Dene.htm Dene stories told by Elders

INUKTITUT
Page  Words Appearing in the Text
viii – ix  Aboriginal names
ix      atitu    hello
14      tuttu    caribou
15      inuksuk  likeness of a person
53      Nunam-shua Woman Who Dwells in the Earth
85      iquluit  place of fish
126     Isumataq (or ihumataq) leader; literally, one who thinks
127     mauliqtuq breathing holes; winter sealing technique

NAKODA
Page  Words Appearing in the Text
viii – ix  Aboriginal names
ix      abawastet   good day
27      isgabi       people of the Paul and Alexis band
              lyethkabi  people of the Morley band
ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES cont.

Excerpt from *Aboriginal Perspectives Teacher Resource*

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<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Word</th>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>tatanka</td>
<td>buffalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>coba</td>
<td>beaver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>shortā</td>
<td>horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>wa dah</td>
<td>canoe; literally, log carved into boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>shūga cushahā</td>
<td>dog sled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>ishaween</td>
<td>Elders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>wabasoka</td>
<td>Saskatoon bush, literally “tree spreads out”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>wagicibi</td>
<td>powwow; literally dancing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

USEFUL WEBSITE
www.sicc.sk.ca (Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre)

**ANISHINABÉ**

<table>
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<td>viii – ix</td>
<td>ânîn</td>
<td>Hello, how are you? (Saulteaux)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>miskotê-pisihki</td>
<td>buffalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>amihk</td>
<td>beaver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mištâtim</td>
<td>horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>w’ daebawae</td>
<td>telling the truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>168</td>
<td>pimatziwin</td>
<td>long life and well-being</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

USEFUL WEBSITE
www.sicc.sk.ca (See Nakawe)

**TSUU T’ INA**

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>viii – ix</td>
<td>da ni t’ a da</td>
<td>How are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Tsotli’ na</td>
<td>Earth People, Tsuu T’ ina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>hani tii</td>
<td>buffalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mi cha di ko di</td>
<td>beaver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ist/i</td>
<td>horse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MICHIF**

<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>viii – ix</td>
<td>tánishi</td>
<td>hello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>boefloo</td>
<td>buffalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kastôr</td>
<td>beaver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>zhwal</td>
<td>horse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
canoh  canoe
131  quote from Mary Wells, Elizabeth Settlement
147  sentences in Michif

USEFUL WEBSITE
www.saskschools.ca/curr_content/creelangllanguagelindex.html

SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR FURTHER READING AND RESEARCH


