

# SAHAPTIN INDIAN LANGUAGE

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## INTRODUCTION TO COLORS

Life would be dull without color. Imagine living in an environment where everything is grey color. The trees that cover the mountains would be different shades of grey, and grass would not be *mixishpyat* (green) at all.

I don't believe humans could live in an atmosphere like that. The people would experience so much stress they would die. Color is important to everyone and to everything. It teaches us to enjoy things. It teaches the wild creatures how to hunt and eat only those things that are good for them. The Sun, Earth and Water give our food color and it instills proper nutrients good for our body. Colors make it easier for us to identify them.

The Health experts tell us that *mixishpyat* and *mixish*, color food is good for us. These colors are in green vegetables and certain yellow fruits. Nature supplemented these with important nutritious proteins to give us the energy, and a healthy body to stay alive.

The other important role that color has in our life is; it gives humans and animals a feeling of well-being when the body responds to certain colors. There are also colors that influence feelings of sadness or anger..

The Indian people used natural herbal paint to decorate their face and the horse. A long time ago the Sahaptin people practiced this ritual:

Covered the entire body of a deceased person with *plash maxax*, (white clay).  
The woman's face was painted with *mixish shapinchaash*(yellow paint)  
The man's face was painted with *luts'a shapinchaash*(red paint)

The paint for the deceased covered the forehead down to the lower eyelid on the upper part of the cheekbones and spread to each ear. Their prophets who came back from the dead told them they were to do this. Everything they did followed the messages they were given by these prophets, because it came from God, *Tamanwila*.

The *tiinma* (people) have acquired the ability to give names and colors to things. We prefer one color over another. We can choose one color over another when we purchase things like a house, car, or clothing. Do you think color is important in our *wak'ishwit* (life)?

## SAHAPTIN INDIAN LANGUAGE I/II

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Date:

### INTRODUCTION TO SAHAPTIN COLORS

Life would be dull without color. Imagine living in a *grey* world where everything is all the same. The trees and grass in the mountains would be a dull color, not green. The flowers that bloom all around the foothills would not be pink, red, and yellow. Life would be dull indeed.

The Health experts tell us that *míxshpyat* (green) and *míxsh* (yellow) colored food is good for us. There are green vegetables and yellow fruits. Nature supplemented these with important nutrients with energy we internalize into our body to make it strong. The other role color plays in our life is; it gives *tiinma*, humans, *piniipt wíxanii*, four-legged animals, a feeling of well-being when the body responds to certain colors, and energy to respond in emergency. And the golden sun warms the reptiles and cold blooded animals to make them comfortable.

Colors are important during ceremonial rituals; in the Sundance ceremony the basic colors are *chmaakw lumt*, royal blue, *luts'a*, red, *míxsh*, yellow. The dancers wear these color red colored ribbons wrapped around their wrist circular sage brush prayer bracelets, and they tie blue and yellow ribbons on the tongs that hangs down from the Sacred Tree connected to the sharp sticks that pierce the dancer's body as he sacrifices the spirit to the Creator. Some dancers blacken their face when they dance. The Sahaptin people buried their dead covered with *maxax*, white clay, and they painted the female's face with *míxsh*, yellow paint, and the man's with *luts'a shapínchaash*, red face paint before they buried them. Also, during the *Ka'uyt*, First Food Ceremony, the men and women food gatherers painted their own face with the same colors, yellow for women, red for men, when they served the ceremonial food.

*Tiinma*, the People, acquired the ability to give names to colors and to name things as civilization progressed. Color is part of culture. People are not born with this knowledge, it is acquired or it happens by accident. There are special creatures, plants, earth, rocks, indigenous to certain parts of the land where native people live. The colors around them pertained to how things were used, and they put labels on them to describe the subject they represent. One Anthropologist discovered when the *chmuk*, black, originated with the Pueblo pottery. The original color of the clay was *luts'a*, red. For hundreds of years the pottery was red color before they made contact with *Shuyapu*, White people. Apparently it originated from the Mogollon culture, ancestors of the present Pueblo people. Later the Anasazi barrowed the Mogollon pottery culture, and instead of *luts'a*, their pottery turned out *plaash*

*chmuk*, dark grey, and that's how, by accidental firing, black pottery was discovered. One Pueblo woman is famous for her Black Pottery.

Modern colored beads came from Germany. The Indian people traded with the traders for the beads and incorporated it into their culture in art and crafts. Before that they dyed the, *taxus*, milkweed plant, grasses, and animal furs with natural dyes found in the local environment. Mud, bark, plants, and juices were used for dyes. There local plants and dried flowers that provide special colors.

### Exercise

Student will listen to dictation, write, spell, read and translate from the blackboard. Teacher will explain about animate and inanimate nouns.

1. Ichi iwa *chmuk* Anahuy.
2. Ichi iwa *plash puuy*.
3. Ichi iwa *kuyx* Waaw.
4. Ichi iwa *lampt wiwnu*.
5. Ichi iwa *mikil* Aan.
6. Ichi iwa *luts'a kakya*.
7. Ichi iwa *plash latit*.
8. Ichi iwa *mixish* spilya.
9. Ichi iwa *mixishpyat* papsh.
10. Ichi iwa *lumt lakas..*