

## NORTHWEST SHAHAPTIN LANGUAGE 1995-96

### The Key to the Alphabet

The key to the alphabet which appears on the following pages is meant to be used along with the tapes, or a native speaker of the Shahaptin, to say the words, given as examples, by sounding each letter or letter-group it represents. Some the letters or letter-combinations (like x, z, t, k, k', k', ch, ts, th, ti', kw, kw', zw, zw) represents sounds not found in English. For these sounds an explanation is given and demonstrated how these sounds are made. The best way to learn how to make these sounds correctly is to listen to your instructor, and imitate to the best of your ability. Listen to the cassette tape and practice the sounds as often as possible, and the speech sound will come more easily. Along with pronouncing the letters, students will learn to spell words used in the examples. Listening, spelling, and writing is a requirement in this class.

### VOWELS & DIPHTHONGS

<u>Symbols used for vowels</u>	<u>Examples containing sounds</u>
a	a'kak 'goose'; wa'na 'river'
i	ink, ini, 'i'; wi'yat 'far'; pipsh 'bone'
u	English oo      u 'or'; ku 'and'; plus 'brain'; tuta 'dad'
ay	a-why diphthong      ayi'k, 'sit down'; ay'ay 'maggie'
aay	long ay-diphthong      kaayx 'bright'; xaayxi 'daylight';
aw	a-dbl-you diphth.      xawsh 'bitterroot'; chaw 'no' <i>sikawya</i>
uy	short-yu-why diph.      anahuy 'blackbear'; uyt 'a beginning' <i>wiak'a mu</i> <i>Royal Blue flowers</i>
uay	long-yu-why diphth.      paay 'snow'; haay 'scarcely' <i>handy - can carry</i>
aa	long-a      taaminwa 'always'; kaastam 'long' <i>in length, tall in height</i>
ii	long-eye      aniiit 'house'; iiiiix 'fix'; tiicham 'land'
uu	long-yu      chuush, chuush 'water'; tsuutam 'buffalo'
w	eye-dbl-vu diphth.      iwsh 'urine'; piwnasa 'extended family'

### CONSONANTS

Most Shahaptin consonants are written and sound the same as English with the exception of special front, soft-back and hard sounds.

<u>Symbol used to represent sound</u>	<u>Examples of words containing each sound.</u>
Soft p	<i>k'p'p</i> ipa'p 'hand'; na'pt, na'pt 'two'; pipsh 'bone' <i>pipsh pipsh - bones!</i>
Soft k	kuu'ki 'to cook'; ka'kya 'animal, bird'; kwyaa'm 'truthful' <i>little children</i>
Soft t	tu'tik 'stand up'; tu'tni 'ground up'; i'mash 'paper, book'
m	may'iski 'morning'; mi'ma 'old'; mi'mi 'already'
n	na'esh 'one'; na'pt, na'pt 'two'; nu'sux 'salmon'
h	hu'i 'wind'; haashi 'breath, spirit'; hananuy 'bothersome'
w	wa'na 'river'; wata'm 'lake'; wa'wa 'mosquito'
y	ya'peesh 'grease'; wyapni 'bull elk'; wi'yat 'far away' <i>at (cave)</i>
i	la'mi 'blue, purple'; ku'dux 'shiny'

*ku'ku'*

s	asu'm 'eel, lamprey'; s'rwil 'language, speech'
ch	chaw 'no'; ch'ish, chuush 'water'; chmuk 'black(color)'
sh	shushaynsh 'steelhead trout'; tashlash 'carvesback duck'
ts	maytski 'morning'; musmustsin 'cattle'; ts'al 'a little white'

Consonants not found in English (Although we use letters used in English, the combination of symbols and letters make special sounds in Seheptin.

Symbols to represent sound

Examples of words containing sounds

Front	x	front-ax	iwix 'thin'; [This sound is seldom found in the beginning of a word. Linguists have used the letter "h" to make this sound. In Seheptin the front-x is found in many parts speech. ts'ix 'easy', Ts'ix iwa chag'ipa. "It is easy to open." ts'wii 'cone-shape'; ts'wii 'tip'
Back	ɣ	back-ax	ɣəbat 'mallard duck'; nusux 'salmon'; naxsh '#one' g'ulul 'trout'. [This guttural sound is made by raising back of your tongue(velum) until it nearly closes and let the air escape as though you are bringing up phlem.
Barred	ɸ	barred-ell	ɸaɸ 'dirt, soil'; ɸiɸ 'leaves'; ɸwɸwɸ 'meadowlark' [This sound is called a lateral voiceless ell. Your tongue is placed behind your front teeth and you blow air out from far back in your esophagus. The sound is like a 'juicy-rattle' sound.
Hard	tʃ	Tee-ell sound	watʃik 'club to death'; tʃag 'discarded, throw away' [This sound does not vibrate. It makes a flat flapping sound when the tongue touches the roof of the mouth.]
	tɸ	Tee-barred-ell sound	tɸup- 'jump'; tɸitɸumɣ redwing blackbird'
Soft	ʃs		tsuɸim 'buffalo'; ts + mɸ 'new'; tsawikisawik 'redhot'
Hard	tsʰ	Tee-ess	tsʰi 'sweet taste'; tsʰutsʰums 'boil on the skin' (infection) tsʰiɸiɸ 'round'; stsʰat 'night'; stsʰat 'dark'
Back	ɣ	soft-back-k	ɣu 'heavy(weight)'; maytski 'morning' ɣayli 'shoe' [This sound is made in the back of the roof of the soft palate, a good example is the name of a bird called Twis'kaka, the Robin.]
Front	kʰ	hard-front-k	kʰusi 'horse'; kʰusikʰusi 'dog'; kʰpis 'cold' of weather. kʰpiil 'round, circular' [This sound is made in the back of the throat in a 'clicking' sound.]
Hard-back	ɣʰ		kʰɸdi 'tule mar'; kʰishpeli 'buzzard(bird)'; kʰinu- 'look(at)'; wanakʰi 'Monday'; ɣʰam 'moccasin' [This sound is very guttural, made way back of throat]
Soft	kw		kwɸki 'to whistle'; kwyaam 'truthful'; ɸkwna, kwna, 'over there'; ɸkwsh 'fire'; shaykw 'star cluster'
Front	kwʰ	hard-front-kw	ɸkwɸi 'day'; kwɸipama 'skirt'; skwɸipa 'morning'
Back	ɣw		ɣwɸinkwin + a 'backpacker'; ɣwəat 'permanent' ɣwɸalkwɸal + a 'turkey'
Hardback	ɣwʰ		ɣwəashkwɸash 'heron'; shkwɸiy + mid 'haircut'

Soft	ch	chaw 'no'; chish, chuush 'water'; chay'nach 'groom' 'newly married male'.
Hard	ch'	nch'i 'large, big'; ch' + m 'sharp cutting edge'; ch + ch'iw 'cattail plant'
Soft	p	p'mush 'gooseberry'; pa'nim 'give it to me'; pipsh 'bone'
Hard	p'	p'p'i 'intestines'; + p'u'u's 'cat'; p'ushtay 'a hill' [This letter is usually referred to 'the popped-p' because when you make the sound with your lips closed and folded over your front teeth, when you blow air the out air, it makes a popped sound.]

**NOTE TO USER:** *In Shahaptin Indian language-translation, one expression usually involves several words to communicate to non-speakers. There are male and female expressions easily understood by native speaker and listener; there are number expressions for animate and inanimate. One cannot learn this in one semester or even a year. The language must be spoken at home or used in daily classroom activity. Learning a native language is similar to learning any foreign language in school. Using it is vitally important if you are serious about learning the language. All of the handouts must be read and exercises completed. Practice it with others, your children, visitors, and relatives. Form language learning groups or clubs and share what you have learned. Involve little children, they learn fast. Take field trips with children and point out the words about nature, name the colors of flowers and berries, plants, and animals. Make it a fun trip. It's difficult to do these things in school when we don't have access to transportation and the time allotted for full-time students. vrb*