

LESSON I -- VOWEL SOUNDS

The sounds of the Yakima Sahaptin vowels are written by these letters:

Short	Long
a	aa
i	ii
í	
u	uu

Sahaptin has two qualities of vowels, **long** and **short** vowels. The short vowels are represented by a single vowel and the long vowels with a double vowel sequence, such as *a* and *aa*. These sounds are illustrated in the following examples:

1. /a/ A short low unrounded central vowel, is like the vowel in the English word 'pup'. In Yakima Sahaptin the sound is illustrated in the words [am] 'husband', [ásham] 'wife', [wáshat] 'ride'.
2. /aa/ A long low unrounded vowel that never raises to mid high. In the Yakima Sahaptin words, the sounds are heard in [káatnam] 'long, tall', [taak] 'meadow', [wáashat] 'dance'.
3. /i/ A short high front unrounded vowel, often heard in English 'key'. In Yakima Sahaptin, it is heard in the words [imk] 'you', [iksíks] 'small', [pipsh] 'bone'.
4. /ii/ A long high front unrounded vowel that always has a tense quality. It is similar to the English 'keep', and is illustrated in Sahaptin with the words [ii] 'yes', [níipt] 'two', [tiin] 'person'.
5. /í/ A high central unrounded vowel that is shorter in duration than the other short vowels. Often referred to as a barred-i, it is found in the Yakima words [im] 'mouth', [áshim] 'come inside', [kítu] 'hurry up'.
6. /u/ A short high back rounded vowel. The short-u is illustrated in [útpaas] 'robe, blanket', [mups] 'fawn' (a baby deer), [púsha] 'paternal grandfather'.
7. /uu/ A long high back rounded vowel. The long-u is found in the words [puush] 'juniper tree', [ttuush] 'some', [ap'úus] 'house cat'.

The Yakima Sahaptin speakers who speak their native language say they are speaking 'chishkin', that means "the way we speak our native language". Periodically, the word 'chishkin' will describe the Yakima Sahaptin sounds.

DIPHTHONGS

In Yakima chishkin, as in other languages, there are more than two types of sounds. In these two sections of our lessons we will be discussing the "Vowels" and the "Diphthongs". At the beginning of this lesson some examples are given for the short-a vowel: [am] for 'husband' and [asham] for 'wife'. Sometimes a vowel is followed by a [y] or [w]. When [aw] is combined, it is called the "short-aw diphthong". They represent the vowel sounds [aw] in English words like 'loud' and 'crowd'. The Yakima words that have this sound in short-aw are [chaw] 'no' (a negative expression), [ka'áw] 'fast runner'. When [a] and [y] are written together as [ay], they represent the vowel sound in English words like "cry" or "buy". This sound in Yakima is heard in [áyat] 'woman', [áykw] 'cottontail rabbit', [p'ushtáy] 'hill'. Notice how the [ay] is the first letter in [áyat] and [aykw], but the letter is at the end of the word in [p'ushtáy]. This letter can also be doubled like in the word [ayáyat] 'beautiful', and separated by a glottal stop in [áy'ay] 'magpie'. Without the glottal stop the word [ayáy] means 'small generic fish' in Yakima.

/aa/ stands for a long drawn out vowel sound like in English 'bought' or 'caught'. Some Yakima examples are [taak] 'meadow', [mítaat] '(number) three'. When the long-a is combined with a [w] the sound is lengthened, [aaw] is called the "long-aw diphthong". Yakima words used to illustrate this sound are [ka'áaw] 'lightweight', [waaw] 'mountain goat'. A diphthong combination [aay], composed of [aa] and [y], makes a long drawn out sound, as in [yaay] 'beargrass', [laputaay] 'bottle'.

/i/ is pronounced short like in English 'ink' and 'incorporate'. Some examples in chishkin are [imk] 'you', [imink] (possessive) 'yours'. When the short [i] is combined with [w] to make the sound like in English 'chew' or 'feud', the result is the diphthong [iw]. Chishkin examples for this sound are [kiwkiwlas] 'rawhide drum', [wiwnu] 'huckleberry'.

/ii/ is a long drawn out sound pronounced like in English 'neat' or 'street'. Some examples in chishkin are [k'piit] 'round, spherical', [iniit] 'house'. The long [ii] can also be combined with [w] as [iiw], to produce a sound like in English 'dispute' (dis-pyoo-t). In chishkin, the examples for that sound are [iiwsh] 'urine', [piwnash] 'Indian wedding trade partner'.

/ī/ is called a "barred-i", because there is a dash through it. This letter is pronounced in English like the unvoiced letter [e] sound in 'petite'. Notice how the breath goes inward, not like the [i] sound [teet], the breath is expelled. Yakima examples are [k'ítu] 'fast', [áshim] 'come inside', [p'íitiit] 'damp' (of weather). The barred-i stands alone, it is never doubled.

/u/ is a short sound pronounced like in English 'push' or 'put'. Chishkin examples are [púsha] 'maternal grandfather', [tútsha] 'grinding with pestle', [túta] 'addressing one's father'. When this vowel is combined with [y] as [uy], the sound in the chishkin example is [anahúy] 'black bear', [ts'muy] 'warm' (and adjective to describe temperature).

/uu/ is a long drawn out sound like in English 'boot' and 'shoot'. To create the long sound, the vowel /u/ is doubled. Chishkin examples are [puush] 'juniper tree', [ttuush] 'another, other'. When this vowel is combined with the letter [y], written as [uuy], it is called the "long-uuy diphthong". Here are some examples of those sounds in chishkin: [puuy] 'snow', [huuy] 'can't', [Huuy itkw'anátisha púuypa.] 'He can't walk in the snow.'

Exercise A

Underline all of the long and short vowels and the long and short diphthongs. On a separate sheet of paper, identify the vowels and diphthongs you underlined, and explain them. For example: [chiish] is listed as number one (1.). When you underline the vowel in that word, explain whether it is a long-i or short-i vowel. Number and define each vowel and diphthong on the list. (This word list is taped on a cassette tape for this lesson).

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|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. chiish | 6. <u>Ka</u> 'áw |
| 2. ts'muy | 7. anahúy |
| 3. wíwnu | 8. chaw |
| 4. puuy | 9. piiwnash |
| 5. <u>ka</u> 'áaw | 10. ttuush |

LESSON II -- CONSONANTS

Consonants are all those sounds in a language that are not vowels. Some English consonants are [s], [t], [m]. The Yakima Chishkin consonants are the following:

ch ch' h k k' k k' kw kw' kw kw' l l' m n p p' s sh t t' t' t' ts ts' w x x xw xw y (glottal stop) '

/ ' / is called a "glottal stop," it stands for a "sound" like the break in the voice in the exclamations 'uh'oh' and 'unh'unh'. It is very common in chishkin words: [a'a] 'crow', [ay'ay] 'magpie'. The glottal stop separates two vowels to make a word: [pu'uul] 'blind'. Lacking the glottal stop, [puuu] would have no meaning.

/ch/ is like the first sound in the English word 'church'. The sound is exactly the same in Yakima, [chiish] 'water', [ichi] 'here', [chímti] 'new'. [ch] is occasionally doubled to make the sound [chchuu] 'silent, quiet', [chcháanwit] 'to keep secret, to deny'. It can be combined with a soft and hard [ch], as in: [chch'aal] 'noisy, din (loud annoying sound)'.

/ch'/ is a sound not heard in English. In chishkin there are words with this sound, like [ch'im] 'sharp, having a fine edge for cutting', [nch'i] 'large, big'. [ch'] can be combined with another consonant to make a plural [nch'inch'i] 'large ones'. An example of this usage can be seen in the following: [nch'inch'i pshwapshwa] 'large rocks'.

/h/ a sound like in the English words 'haunt' and 'honey'. The sounds is the same in Yakima, [haasht] 'breath', [hawláak] 'spirit, bottomless space, abyss', [hulí] 'wind'.

/k/ is similar to the first sound in the English words 'king' and 'cow'. The sounds is the same in Yakima, [kayáasu] 'arrow', [kápin] 'root-digging stick', [kálux] 'blueback salmon'.

/kw/ is a plain voiceless labio-velar stop found in some English words like 'quite' and 'quick'. In Yakim Sahaptin it can be found in the words [kwiwk-] 'whistle', [áykws] 'cottontail rabbit', [kwyaaam] 'truth'.

/k'/ is the Sahaptin "hard front k" letter and has a close resemblance to the sound of the [k] in English 'ticking' (as in the "the clock is ticking"), but in chishkin [k'] is a glottalized velar stop as heard in the Yakima word [k'usi] 'horse', [k'aywá] 'short (of stature)', [k'ámamul] 'bald eagle'.

/kw'/ is a glottalized labio-velar stop, not found in English. It can be heard in chishkin in [kw'ayawi] 'mountain lion', [skw'ípa] 'morning (time)', [íkw'ak] 'that'.

/k/ is the underlined-k sound is called the "soft back-k" and it can be heard in the English word 'jonquil'. This sound can be heard in the following Yakima words: [kashkáash] 'roan colored horse', [twískkáka] 'robin (bird)'.

/kw/ is the "soft-back-kw" sound and is made with the lips rounded. This sound is not usually found in English. In Yakima Sahaptin these sounds are heard in words like [ikwátsha] 'he is stuck in the mud', [kwinkwíná] 'peddler, backpacker', [pakwchtpmá] 'electric light socket, socket wrench'.

/k'/ is the "underline glottalized-k" and it is called the "hard back-k" sound. There are no words in English with this sound, and it can be heard in the following Yakima words: [k'ayík] 'colt horse, calf', [k'uxí] 'knee', [k'ishpali] 'buzzard (a bird)'.

/kw'/ is a hard back glottalized sound made with the lips rounded, not found in English, it is found in Yakima words like: [kw'íit] 'plain (sight)', [núkw'aash] 'throat', [kw'áshkw'ash] 'crane (bird)'.

/l/ is a voiced consonant similar to the [l] sound in the English words 'love' and 'alley'. In Yakima chishkin this is heard in the word [latit] 'flower', [lákas] 'mouse', [lulúu] 'smooth'.

/l'/ is a voiceless lateral spirant like Welsh /ll/. This sound is heard in the Yakima words [lmáma] 'old woman', [lk'am] 'moccasin', [hiikw'i] 'all day'.

/m/ is a voiced bilabial nasal like in the English words 'mama' and 'minute'. In Yakima chishkin it is heard in the words [mimím] 'dove', [miyáwax] 'head man, chief', [máamin] 'appaloosa horse'.

/n/ is a voiced dental nasal like in the English words 'now' and 'noose'. Likewise, in Yakima this sound is in words like [nawát] 'stomach, abdomen', [núshnu] 'nose', [núsu] 'salmon'.

/p/ is a plain bilabial stop like in English 'plan' and 'palomino'. In Yakima it is heard in the words [papsh] 'fir tree', [pamtá] 'toad', [plash] 'white (an adjective to describe the color of an inanimate thing)'.

/p'/ is a glottalized bilabial stop. In a plain description it is called a "popped-p". It is not found in English, but is heard in Yakima words like [p'íp'i] 'intestines', [p'ushtáy] 'hill, knoll', [p'iyu] 'swallow (a special type of bird)'.

/s/ is a voiceless dental spirant like in the English words 'seat' and 'seek'. Yakima chishkin words are [sawít] 'Indian carrot plant', [asúm] 'eel, lamprey', [Spilyáy] 'legendary Coyote (the common coyote is not capitalized)'.

/sh/ is called a voiceless alveolo-palatal spirant like the first sound in English 'ship' and the middle consonant in 'social'. In Yakima chishkin words with this sound are [shúshaynsh] 'steelhead trout', [sháxat] 'raspberry', [shwa] 'forehead'.

/t/ is a plain voiceless dental stop like the sound in the beginning of English 'tea'. In Yakima words we can hear it in the words [tiskáy] 'skunk', [táshtash] 'canvas-back duck', [táp'ash] 'fir tree'.

/t'/ is glottalized and not found in English. In Yakima chishkin this sound is heard in the words [t'ix't'ix] 'swallow (a special type of bird)', [t'alpt] 'wampam beads', [t'it'sh] 'grasshopper'.

/tł/ is a combination of the soft-t and barred-l voiceless sound, not found in English. This combination is in Yakima [tłpsha] 'jumping', [ptłak] 'bitter, peppery', [ktłak] 'jagged (to describe a jagged stump of a tree)'.

/tl'/ is a soft-t and glottalized-l which is a voiced lateral sound not found in English. It can be heard in Yakima [tl'alk] 'black-tailed deer', [tl'aaxw] 'all, everything', [tl'itl'úm̩x] 'red-wing blackbird'.

/ts/ a sound rarely found at the beginning of English words, but heard in 'sweets' at the end of the word. In Yakima this sound is at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of words, as in: [tsawktsáwk] 'red hot', [imtsnits] 'your younger sister (a man's word)', [pats] 'your younger brother (a woman's word)'.

/w/ is a soft labial glide like the soft sound in English 'willow' and 'water'. Yakima words with this sound are [wawá] 'mosquito', [watám] 'lake', [wilalik] 'jackrabbit'.

/x/ is a voiceless velar spirant like /ch/ in Scottish 'loch' or German 'ach'. In Yakima Sahaptin it is heard in words like [kawxkáwx] 'palomino horse', [p'isx] 'sour (taste)', [i'wix] 'thin (of texture)'.

Note the difference between [kawxkáwx] 'red hot' and [kawxkáwx] 'palomino horse', where the back-x sound is made farther back in the throat and the front-x sound is made like an [h] sound.

/x/ is a voiceless uvular sound made with the mouth and tongue in the position for making a [q] sound. There are no English words with this sound. In Yakima this sound is found in [xálish] 'wolf', [xátxat] 'mallard duck', [xásya] 'Indian celery plant'.

/xw/ is a voiceless labiovelar spirant like in English 'wheel' and 'squeal'. Yakima Sahaptin words are [ts'xwiilí] 'teepee, wigwam', [kwayxw] 'basket net' (an ancient word).

/xw/ is a voiceless labio-uvular sound not heard in English. In Yakima it is in the words [xwín] 'sucker fish', [xwayamá] 'golden eagle', [xwáshxway] 'blue jay'.

/y/ is a voiced palatal glide like the first sound in the English word 'yes'. In Yakima chishkin it is [yáxa] 'beaver', [yáamash] 'white-tailed deer', [yápaash] 'grease, oil'.