

paspêwi itwêwina

osci kiskinwahamâsowak kâ nohtê
kisâtahkik pîkiskwêwinihk ikospê
ê ayâcîk kiskinwahamâsowinihk

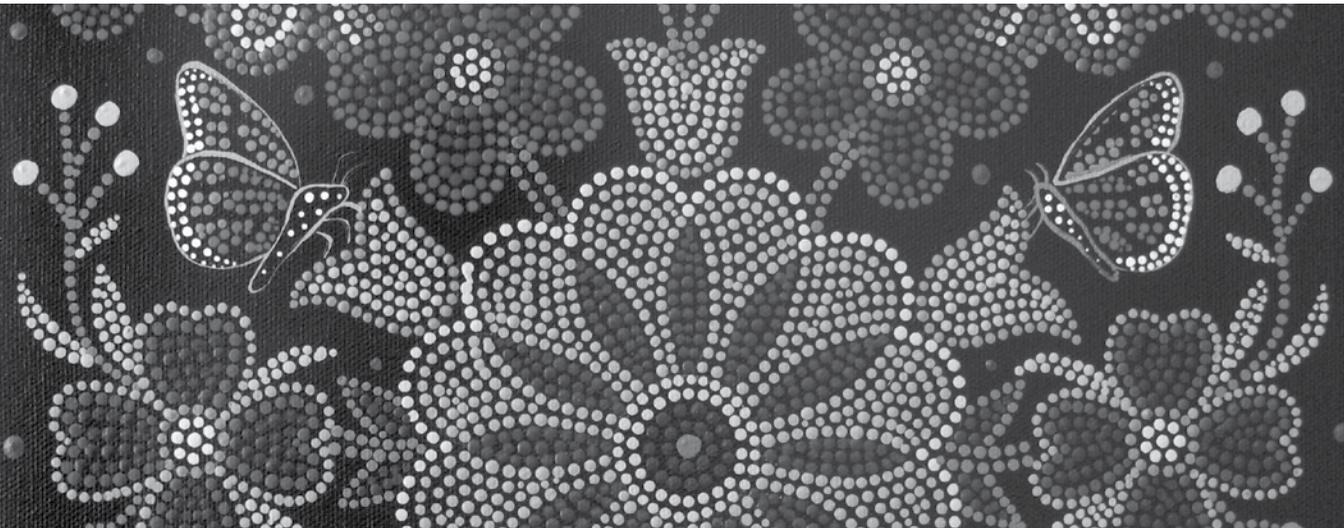
SURVIVAL PHRASES

For learners who want to stay
in the language while
in the learning environment

LET'S
SPEAK
CREE
(for a while)

mahti aciyaw nēhiyawētān

Written by Christi Belcourt, Belinda kakiyosêw Daniels & Randy Morin



LET'S SPEAK CREE FOR A WHILE

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Let's speak Cree for a little while, okay?
mahti aciyaw nêhiyawêtân, ahâw cî?

Yes
êha

Okay
ahâw

SURVIVAL PHRASES are sentences that help a learner to navigate language learning while staying in the language. This is especially important for learners who want to attend immersion events.

For example, knowing how to ask your teacher, “Can you say it again?” or how to say, “I don’t understand” helps learners to have basic ways to communicate in the language while learning.

“Staying in the target language” must be consensual by both learner and teacher. It will be easier to stay in the language if both the learner and the teacher agree to a learning plan. Being able to use these phrases while learning will add a tremendous amount confidence in beginning to understand, listen, and speak our language.

TIP FOR LEARNERS

Asking how to say things in the language or asking what nêhiyawêwin words mean is part of learning. But we have heard language speakers and teachers tell us that while in the middle of a lesson, when a student interrupts to ask, “How do you say this or that?” it can be hard on the teachers to have to translate single words or phrases and then quickly re-shift their mind back to the lesson they are trying to teach. Most often teachers will pause or provide time to ask questions. So, if you can, try to wait to ask for your translation question at the end.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

This booklet is intended to be used in two ways: as a quick reference book that can be used while you are in language classes and also as a study guide prior to attending immersion events. This booklet comes with an accompanying audio recording which can be found at: www.nehiyawak.org

This booklet is organized according to ideas you might be trying to express within learning environments. On the side of the pages, the sub-headings will allow you to quickly leaf through the pages to find the “idea” you are needing to express.

This booklet is intended for listening and speaking nêhiyawêwin. It is based on sounds. It’s important to mimic your teacher’s pronunciation as closely as possible. If possible, listen to the recording while learning this text and pay attention to where the stress is placed within the words and on which syllables. Follow along with the voices on the recording.

NOTE ON SRO

This book is not using SRO standard roman orthography to the fullest extent, although we recognize it to be the standard way of spelling nêhiyawêwin. Instead, we are spelling the Cree sentences how “a fluent” person is speaking. Some of the written Cree in this booklet appears contracted or collapsed as a result.

Within the y dialect of nêhiyawêwin there exists many regional differences in the way communities speak and pronounce words. The nêhiyawêwin words and phrases presented in this booklet are common to the Big River First Nation region where co-author Randy Morin is from.

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SEEING

Can you (singular) see me? kiwâpamin cî?

Can you (plural) see me? kiwâpaminâwâw cî?

Can you (singular) see it? kiwâpahtên cî?

Can you (plural) see it? kiwâpahtênâwâw cî?

See you (singular) next time. kihtwâm nika wâpamitin.

See you (plural) next time. kihtwâm nika wâpamitinâwâw.

notes

HEARING

Can you (singular) hear me? kipihtawin cî?

Can you (plural) hear me? kipihtawinâwâw cî?

Yes, I can hear you.
êha, nipihtâtin.

No, I can't hear you.
mwâc, moy (namôya) nipihtâtin.

I can only hear you a little bit. apisîs poko nipihtâtin.

Do you hear that? kipihtên cî kîkway?

Can you hear it? (eg. video or audio recording). kipihtên cî?

Yes, I can hear it.
êha, nipihtên.

No, I can't hear it.
mwâc, moy (namôya) nipitâtên.

LISTENING

Listen! nitohta!

Listen carefully. papêyâhtik nitohta.

SPEAKING

Please speak to me in the language. mahti nêhiyaw pîkiskwâsin.

Let's speak nêhiyawêwin only. nêhiyawêtân poko.

Let's not speak English. moy (namôya) êkâwiya akayâsimotân.

ASK

Ask me. kwêcimin.

Ask each other. kwêcimitok.

Ask me later. kwêcimin itâp.

Ask that person. kwêcim ana.

ANSWER

Answer me. wihtamowin.

Answer that person. wihtamôw.

WHO SAID?

I said nîkî itwân

You said kîkî itwân

S/he said kî itwêw

PRACTICE SPEAKING

Am I saying this correctly? kwayask cî nitwân ôma?

Speak to me. pîkiskwâsin.

Speak to him/her. pîkiskwâs ana.

I want to hear you speak. ninohtê pihtâtin ê-pîkiskwêyan.

I want to hear you (plural) speak now.
ninohtê pihtâtinâwâw ê-pîkiskwêyik mêkwâc.

Practice asking each other. sêsâwêk ê-kwêcimitoyêk.

Try speaking to each other. kocihtâk ta-pîkiskwâtoyêk.

Try to say it more quickly. ayiwâkês tâstapê pîkiskwê.

Try to say it more slowly. nanisihkâc pîkiskwê.

REPEAT / IMITATE

Repeat after me. ayisinawin kê êsi pîkiskwêyân.

Repeat after that person. ayisinaw kê êsi pîkiskwêyit ana.

Imitate something (animate).

(As in, "try to sound like that person, or that thing.")
ayisinaw.

Again.

asamîna.

WHO?

Who? awîna?

Who is that? (s/he or animate object). awîna ana?

WHAT?

What? kîkway?

What else? kîkway asici?

What about ____ ? ayahk mâka?

What is that? (inanimate). kîkway anima?

What does ____ mean? kîkway anima ____ itwêmakan?
(Insert nêhiyawêwin word.)

What is the name of this? (animate). tânisî isiyihkâsôw awa?

What is the name of that? (animate). tânisî isiyihkâsôw ana?

What is the name of this? (inanimate). tânisî isiyihkâtêw ôma?

What is the name of that? (inanimate). tânisî isiyihkâtêw anima?

I want you to translate what this is ____ ?
nitawêyimitin ta-itwêstamâkiyan kîkway ôma ____ ?

WHY?

Why? tânihki?

WHEN?

When? tânispî(hk)?

When will you be going? tânispî(hk) ê-wîsipwihtêyan?

When do you think she will be arriving?
tânispî(hk) kititêyihstên ê-wîtakohtê?

WHERE?

Where? tânitê?

HOW?

How? tânisî êsi?

How are you? tânisî kiya?

How do you say ____ ? tânisî êsi kê-itwân ____ ?

QUICK REFERENCE

Who? awîna?

What? tânisî?

Why? tânihki?

When? tânispî(hk)?

Where? tânitê?

How? tânisî isî?

ASKING YES & NO QUESTIONS

The word "cî" is used to ask yes or no questions and it is normally placed in the second position in a sentence. Generally speaking if you hear "cî" in the question it normally can be answered with a yes or a no answer.

Did you sleep well? kimiyohkwâmin cî?

Is s/he going to be arriving? ê-wî-takohtêt cî?

Are you having a good day? kimiyo kîsikânisin cî?

Did it taste good? wihkasin cî?

Is s/he cooking it? ê-piminawasot cî?

Did you clean this? kî-kanâcihtâyan cî?

Did you hang up your jacket? kitakotân cî kiskotâkay?

Did s/he do her work? atoskâtam cî otatoskêwin?

Can you drive me? kâ-kî-ê-sitâpâsin cî?

Can you bring that to me? kâ-kî-pê-itohtamowin cî êyakwa?

Did you have a good night? kimiyo tipiskânisin cî?

Did you have a good morning? kimiyo kî-kisêpâyânisin cî?

QUICK REFERENCE

A book masinahikan

A pencil masinahikanâhcikos

A picture masinipayiwin

DRAWING

S/he is drawing a picture. ê-tâpasinahahk masinipayiwin.

I will draw a picture. niwî tâpasinahîn masinipayiwin.

READING

Read it. ayamihtâ.

S/he is reading. ê-ayamihcikêt.

I am reading now. nitayamihcikân mêkwâc.

Can you read it? kâki ayamihtân cî?

WRITING

Write it down (command). masinaha.

Can I write it down? niya cî kâ-kî masinahîn?

I should write it down. mahti nika masinahîn.

I will write / text to him/her. ni-wî masinahamowâw.

I will help him/her to write it. ni-wî wîcihâw ta-masinahahk.

Don't write it down, just listen. êkâwiya masinaha, têpiyâhk nitohta.

TAKING A BREAK

Should we keep going? kayahkamêyimonaw cî?

Yes, let's keep going.
êha, ahkamêyimotân.

It would be good to have a break.
kamiywâsin aciyaw ayiwêpiwin.

I need a break.
nitawêhtên aywêpin.

My mind is full.
sâkaskinêw nimâmitonêhcikan.

I'm tired. I need to rest.
ninêstosin. ninohtê ayiwêpin.

I'll be right back.
kâwi nika pê-wâyinwân.

I'll be right there.
êkotî nika itohtân.

Do you want something / Do you need anything?
kinitawêhtîn kîkway?

Are you thirsty? ki-nohtêyâpâkwan cî?

Do you want something to drink?
kinohtê minihkwân kîkway?

Yes, I am thirsty.
êha, ninohtêyâpâkwan.

No, I am not thirsty.
mwâc, moy (namôya) ninohtêyâpâkwan.

INTERACTING DURING BREAKS

Are you hungry? kinohtêkatân cî?

Would you like something to eat?
kîkway cî kinohtê mîcin?

Do you want some more?
kiyâpic cî kîkway kinitawêhtîn?

I am hungry.
ninohtêkatân.

No, I'm not hungry.
mwâc, moy (namôya).

Do you want to lie down? kinohtê pimisinin cî?

I want to lie down for a little bit. aciyaw ninohtê pimisinin.

I want to rest a little. aciyaw ninohtê ayiwêpin.

Where is the washroom? tânitê wayawêwikamikos?

notes

DIRECTIONS

Up / Above. ispimihk.

Down / Below. nihcâyihk.

East. sâkâstênohk.

South. sâwanohk.

West. pahkisimôtâhk.

North. kiwêtinohk.

Right (direction). kihciniskêhk.

Left (direction). namahcîhk.

notes

LOCATIONS

Near. cîki.

Far. wâhyaw.

Here. ôta.

There. êkota.

Over there. nîfî.

Over here. ôfî.

Under. sîpayihk.

Behind. nâway.

Beside. sisonê.

In front of. nîkân.

On top of. tahkohc.

Inside. pihcâyihk.

In between. tastawâyihk.

In the middle. tâwâyihk.

notes

PLAYING GAMES

Do you want to play a game? kinohtê metawân cî mêtawêwin?

Let's play a game. mahti mêtawêtan mêtawêwin.

What game do you want to play? kîko mêtawêwin kinohtê mêtawân?

Do you know how to play this game?
kinihtâ mêtawân cî ôma mêtawêwin?

We will play in teams. kamôniyohtonaw.

Let's play cards. pêyakipêhikanak mêtawêtân.

Whose turn is it? / Who is next? awîna êkwa?

It's my turn / I'm next. niya êkwa.

It's your turn / you're next. kiya êkwa.

It's his/her turn / s/he is next. wiya êkwa.

It's their turn. wiyawâw êkwa.

notes

PLAYING GAMES

Pick it up. môsahkina.

Write your score down. masinaha kitakihcikan.

All of you, write down your scores.
masinahamok kitakihcikaniwâwa.

Throw it. pimosinî.

Catch it. kahcitina.

Cards. pêyakopêhikanak.

Dice. akihcikê asinîsak.

S/he won! otahiwêw!

They (plural) won! otahiwêwak!

notes

TOPICS FOR ONE-ON-ONE IMMERSION

Tell me a story about yourself, maybe your first childhood memory?
âcimostawin kiya osci, âpihtikwê nistam kâ-kî pê-awâsîwiyan?

Tell me a story of when you were little, what did you eat?
âcimostawin osci kâ-kî pê-awâsîwiyan, kîkway kîmîcin?

Tell me a story of when you were little, what did you do for fun?
âcimostawin osci kâ-kî pê-awâsîwiyan, kîkway kitôtîn ê-môcikhak?

Tell me a story of when you were little, where did you live?
âcimostawin osci kâ-kî pê-awâsîwiyan, tânitê kî-wîkin?

Tell me a story about your grandma.
âcimostawin osci ki-kohkom.

Tell me a story about your favorite aunt.
âcimostawin osci pêyak kîkâwês.

Tell me a story about your grandpa.
âcimostawin osci kimosôm.

Tell me a story about your favorite uncle.
âcimostawin osci pêyak kohcâwês.

Tell me a story about your cousins (male).
âcimostawin osci kiciwâmak.

Tell me a story about you and your best friend.
âcimostawin osci kiya êkwa kiwîcîwâkan.

Tell me an unusual story.
âcimostawin pîtosî âcimowin.

Tell me about your parents.
âcimostawin osci kinîkîhikwak.

TOPICS FOR ONE-ON-ONE IMMERSION

Tell me more about your mom.
âcimostawin osci kîkâwiw.

Tell me more about your dad.
âcimostawin osci kohtâwiw.

Tell me about your siblings.
âcimostawin osci kîsîmisak.

What is a favorite memory of yours?
kîko kîkîskîsowin ki-mâci miywêhtîn?

Let's go for a drive together.
sîsâwîpayitân (kiyânaw).

Let's look through these photos together.
kinwâpahtêtân masinipayiwina.

Let's cook together.
pîminawasotân.

Let's play cards.
pêyâkîpêhikanak mêtawêtân.

Let's play checkers or chess.
mêtawêtân kwâskohpîhcikanîsak.

Let's sit outside and describe what you see.
wayawêtimîhk apitan êkwa wihta kîkway ê-wâpahtaman.

Let's sit outside by a fire and learn the terminology for making and building a fire. wayawîtimîhk apitân sisonê iskotîhk êkwa kîskinwahamâsotân itwêwina osci ka-osihtâhk iskotêw.

TOPICS FOR ONE-ON-ONE IMMERSION

Let's go berry picking and you can teach me the terms in Cree for the process. nitawi mowisotân êkwa kiya ka-kîskinwahamowin nêhiyaw itwêwina osci kâ-itôtamahk.

Let's go visiting your relatives and I will sit and listen. nitawi kiyohkêtân kiwahkômâkanak êkwa niya nika apin êkwa nika nitohtên.

Let's go to the feast together and I will sit and listen. nitawi itohtêtân kîsîtipowin êkwa niya nika apin êkwa nika nitohtên.

Let's make soup and bannock and I will learn the terms for the process. piminawasotân mîcimâpoy êkwa pahkwêsikan êkwa niya nika kîskinwahamâson itwêwina osci kâ-itôtamân.

Can you show me how to sew and speak Cree? kâ-kî kîskinwahamowin tânisi ka-êsi kaskwâsoyân êkwa ka-nêhiyawêyân?

Can you show me how to knit and speak Cree? kâ-kî kîskinwahamowin tânisi ka asikanihkêyan êkwa ka-nêhiyawêyân?

Can you show me how to bead and speak Cree? kâ-kî kîskinwahamowin tânisi isi ka-mîkistahikiyân êkwa ka-nêhiyawêyân?

Can you show me how to embroider and speak Cree? kâ-kî kîskinwahamowin tânisi ka-masinistahikêyân êkwa ka-nêhiyawêyân?

Can you show me how to make ____ and speak Cree? kâ-kî kîskinwahamowin tânisi ka osihtâyân ____ êkwa ka-nêhiyawêyân?

I will wash your laundry, but help me identify and learn the terminology about clothes, the washing machine and dryer. nika sîpîkinîn kitayôwinisa mâka wîcihin ta-nawasônamân itwêwina osci ayôwinisa êkwa kîsîpêkinikan.

TOPICS FOR ONE-ON-ONE IMMERSION

I will wash your dishes but help me identify the words for dishes and the kitchen. nika sîpîkinîn ki-wiyâkana mâka wîcihin ka-nawasônamân itwêwina osci wiyâkana êkwa piminawasowikamik.

I will clean your house, but help me learn the words for sweeping, broom, vacuum, rug and wiping. nika kanâcihtân kîkîhk, mâka wîcihin ta-kiskêhtamân itwêwina osci wîpahikêwin, wîpahikan, ânâskân kanâcihcikêwin, êkwa kâsîhkêwin.

I will rake and clean the yard, but help me identify the items needed for this type of work, leaves, rake, grass, chilly outside, etc. nika mâsikopitên nîpiya êkwa nika kanâcihtân wayawêtimihk kîkîhk mâka wîcihin ta nawasônimân itwêwina osci ôma astoskêwin, nîpiya, mâsikopicikan, maskosiya, cahkâyâsin wayawêtimihk, mîna kotakwa.

I will take you to go and buy groceries, but teach me the language for the food items. nika itohtâhitin ta-nitawi atâwiyân mîcowina, mâka kîskinwahamowin anima pîkiskwêwin osci anihî nanâtohk mîciwina.

I will take you to the bank, but can you teach me the terms for banking, money, change, bag, wallet, and bank card? nika itohtâhitin sôniyawikamikohk mâka kîskinwahamowin itwêwina osci sôniyâwêwin, sôniyâw, pêwâpiskos, maskimot, sôniyâwiwat, êkwa sôniyâw masinahikanis?

Can we look at this picture book and can you describe what it is you see? kâ-kî kinwâpahtênaw ôma masinipayicikan masinahikan êkwa kâ-kî wihtîn kîkway ê-wâpahtaman?

Can you describe the weather for me, if it is sunny, rainy, snowing, dry, hot, thundering, etc.? kâ-kî wihtamowin anima wêpan kîspin ê-wâsêskwahk, kimowahk, mispohk, pâstêk, kîsitêk, kâ-kitocik, mîna kotakwa wêpan itwêwina?

ADVERBS OF FREQUENCY

Almost. kîkâc.

Always. tâpitaw.

Every day. tahto kîsikâw.

Frequently. sâsakamow.

In a little while. mwêscasîs.

Never. moy (namôya) wihkâc.

Occasionally. âskaw.

Slowly. nanisihkâc.

Sometimes. âskaw poko.

Still (more). kêyâpic.

During. mêkwâc.

notes

ADVERBS OF TIME

Again. asamîna.

Day after tomorrow. awasi wâpahki.

Day before yesterday. awasi otâkosîhk.

Early. wîpac.

Last week. ôtâhk ispayiw.

Late. namimayaw.

Later. itâp.

Next week. kotak ispayiki.

Next year. kotak askiy ispayiki.

Now. mêkwâc.

Soon. wêpac.

Then. ikospî(hk).

This week. ôma kê-ispayik.

This year. ôma askiy kê-ispayik.

Today. anohc kîsikâw.

Tomorrow. wâpahki.

Tonight. tipiskâki.

Yesterday. otâkosîhk.