

Blackfoot Language Workbook

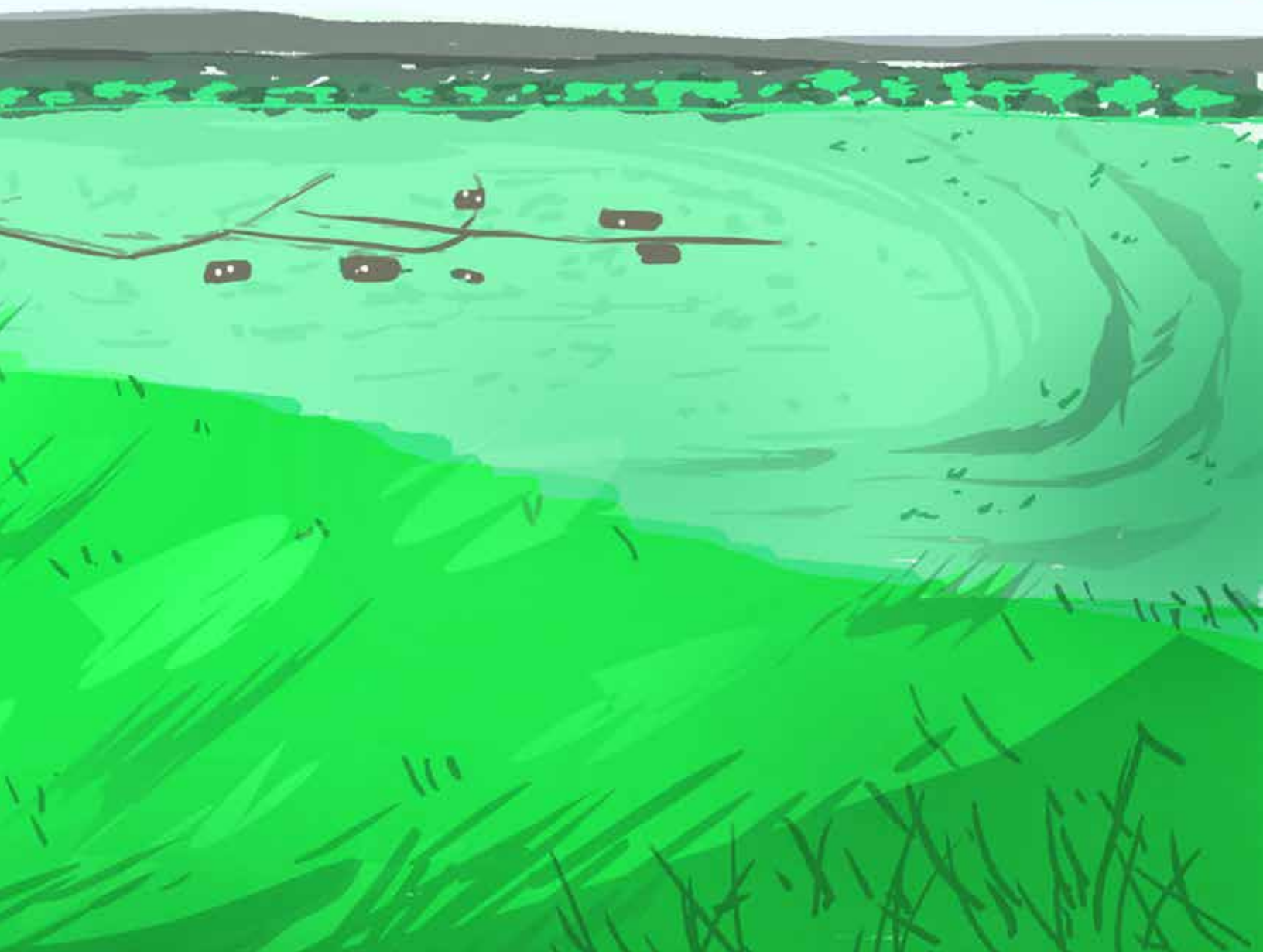


Table of Contents

Introduction	5
BLACKFOOT ALPHABET AND HISTORY	
Blackfoot Alphabet	6
Blackfoot History; Nipaitahpisinni	7
Treaty 7	7
Blackfoot Confederacy	8
Stories of the Land.	9
History of Blood Tribe Chiefs (1800s – present)	10
Prelude to Treaty Seven	12
Treaty Seven, The Blackfoot Treaty, 1877	14
The Blackfoot Genesis	21
ANIMALS AND STORIES	
Animals with furs, antlers and feathers, indigenous to the land.	24
Animals and birds introduced to the land	27
Stories of Animals	28
NATURE, WEATHER AND TIME	
Sun, Moon, Stars and Environments	38
Days of the Week	39
Calendar Moons.	40
Weather Reporting	42
Seasons	43
Stories	44
Directions	44
BLACKFOOT COLOURS	
Stories About Colour	45
Blackfoot Colours Word Search	46
Make a Tepee.	47
EATING AND DRINKING	
Actions, Food & Drink	48

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NUMBERS

Blackfoot Numbers **53**
Blackfoot ways of counting **55**
Stories about numbers **55**
Our Traditional Homes **57**
Our Homes Today **59**
Vehicles **62**
Match the Items. **63**

COMMUNITIES AND PROFESSIONS

Towns **64**
How the towns got their Blackfoot names. **65**
Professions and New Roles **67**
Word Description **68**
Places and Stories of Importance **69**

PEOPLE AND FAMILY

People **74**

CONVERSATIONAL BLACKFOOT

Common Blackfoot Conversation **78**
Common Blackfoot Commands. **78**

Introduction

This Blackfoot Language Project was sponsored by the Galt Museum for participants interested in learning the basics of Blackfoot language. In addition to being able to recognize, write and articulate the Blackfoot language, the participants will also learn about the history of the Blackfoot People, land, way of life and stories. Activities are included to support the acquisition of the knowledge base embodied in the Blackfoot language.

The Blackfoot language is descriptive.

Blackfoot language has survived. It has been passed down to us from generations of ancestors here on earth and the universe. It has alive and it has spirit; it is a living language. It is a responsibility we maintain our knowledge base, our practices and way of life as Nitsitapi People. Make connection to the living language.



Blackfoot Alphabet and History

Blackfoot Alphabet

Aa	Aa – has the quality of “a” in English “father”, except before double consonants, quality is more like the vowel of English in “cut”; as in sa – ‘no’, an nia – ‘ok now’
Hh	Hh – guttural sound, it is greatly affected by the preceding vowel, after “l”, sound is at the highest point of the mouth, “O” and “A”, guttural sound is made nearer the back roof of the mouth; ih – as in ihkitsika; seven, as in oh – ohkoto-ki; rock, ksaahkoi; dirt
li	li – has the quality of the English “l” as in the word “machine” when doubled as in is ska – ‘pail’, miini-‘berry’
Kk	Kk – sounds like the English “g” as in “gum”, kitsim; door
Mm	Mm – sounds like the English “M”, maamii; fish
Nn	Nn – sounds like the English “N”, as in ninaa; man
Oo	Oo – has the quality of English “O” like in “so”, before a double consonants, quality is more like the “O” of “woman” as in oki; hello, onniki ; milk
Pp	Pp – sounds like the English “B”, as in Poosa; cat
Ss	Ss – sounds like the English “S”, as in sa; no, kiisto; you
Tt	Tt – sounds like the English “D” as in taka; who?
Ww	Ww – same quality as the English “W” as in awaani; he says
Yy	Yy; same quality as the English “Y” as in ayo’kaa; he’s sleeping
’	’ glottal stop, an interruption made by momentarily closing the glottis (vocal cord) like in English speakers do between the expression “oh-oh” as in sa’ai; duck, ni’sa; my older brother, coyote; api’siass

Ts and Ks: though written as sequences, they are single sound units in the language called Affricates. To produce these sounds, one begins with the tongue position of the sound usually written with [k or t] but before it is released, the front part of the tongue assumes the position it normally has for the sound “s”, so that the “t” or “k” is released into the “s.”

Diphthongs: “ai” before double consonants, it is about like the “ai” of English “said”, as in aiksini; pig. Before the glottal stop [’] it is similar to the “ai” of English “paid”, as in ai’poyiwa; he/she speaks. “ao” is like the “aw” of the dawn, to approximate it, pronounce the “a” of English father with rounded lips as in Oakska’siwa; act bad.

“Oi” sounds like oi as in English coin

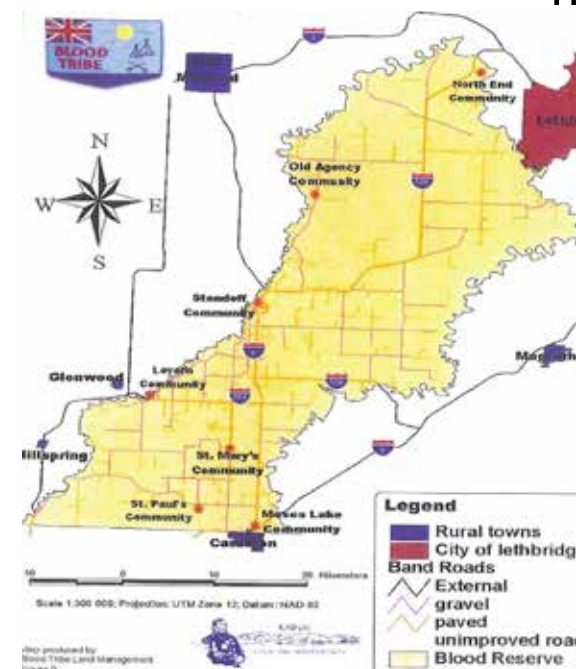
Blackfoot History; Nipitahpisinni

Traditional Blackfoot Territory and hunting ground extends from the South Saskatchewan River in the north, west to the Rocky Mountains, south to the Missouri River and east to the Cypress Hills. The vast hunting grounds was a huge tract of 50,000 square miles was surrendered through Treaty 7. The Blackfoot Confederacy, along with the Tsuut’ina and Stoney/Nakoda Nations, signed Treaty 7 at Blackfoot Crossing on September 22, 1877. Some of the people present included Blackfoot leaders Crowfoot and Red Crow, North-West Mounted Police commissioner James Macleod, Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territories David Laird, and interpreter Jerry Potts.



Treaty 7

In the 1877 treaty, the Bloods agreed on a reserve based on five people per square mile. Red Crow had no interest in the settling down—not as long as there were buffalo on the plains—so he accepted Crowfoot’s suggestion that they take a reserve down river from Blackfoot Crossing. However, when the reality of reserve life came home to him, Red Crow made it clear that he did not want to live on the barren plains along the Bow River. Rather, he wanted the tribes traditional wintering grounds along the Belly River.¹ The current location of the Blood Reserve is the largest Indian Reserve in Canada with a membership of 14,000 as of 2019.



¹ A. Hugh Dempsey, *Red Crow, Warrior Chief*. Fifth House Publishers, 1995.

Blackfoot Confederacy

Blackfoot Confederacy are the Blackfoot-speaking people who share one culture and way of life. The four bands to make up the Blackfoot Confederacy are Kainai, Many Chiefs or the Blood Tribe; Piikani (Northern) Scabby Robes; Amskapiipikani, Southern Pikani Scabby Robes; and Siksika, Blackfoot. The Blackfoot Confederacy signed Treaty 7 at Blackfoot Crossing.



Kainai

1. Kainaisksahko
2. Kainaikoan
3. Kainaki
4. Kainaipokaa

To make reference to the people from Kainai, you would say:

- Kai nai sksah ko: refers to the land
- Kai nai ko an: refers to the people
- Kai na ki: refers to women
- Kai nai po kaa: refers to child

Piikani

1. Piikanisskahko
2. Piikanikoan
3. Piikanaki
4. Piikanipokaa

To make reference to the people from Piikani, you would say:

- Pii ka nis skah ko: refers to the land
- Pii ka ni ko an: refers to the people
- Pii kan aki: refers to women
- Pii ka ni po kaa: refers to child

Siksika

1. Siksikaissksahko
2. Siksikaikoan
3. Siksikaki
4. Siksikaipokaa

To make reference to the people from Siksika, you would say:

- Si ksi kais skah ko: refers to the land
- Si ksi kai ko an: refers to the people
- Si ksik aki: refers to women
- Si ksi kai po kaa: refers to child

Amskapiipikani

1. Amskapiipika-nisskahko
2. Amskapiipikani-koan
3. Amskapiipikanaki
4. Amskapiipikani-pokaa

To make reference to the people from Amskapiipikani, you would say:

- Aam ska pii pi ka-nis skah ko: refers to the land
- Aam ska pii pi ka ni- ko an: refers to the people
- Aam ska pii pi ka naki: refers to women
- Aam ska pii pi ka ni-po kaa: refers to child

Stories of the Land

The story of Napi (also known as trickster) and the Elk teaches us about greed. Napi did not want to share his food when the injured Coyote asked for some. Instead he challenged Coyote to a race, knowing very well Coyote would never win the race with his sore foot. The race started from the Porcupine Hills and went south to Issapoo, Crow territory. This race also lay claim to the land as Blackfoot territory. Halfway through the race, Coyote tricked Napi; he did not really have an injured foot. Coyote turned back to Napi's camp and invited the other animals to share the food in Napi's lodge. When Napi returned there was no food left.² The lesson of the story is about greed and the importance of sharing with those experiencing difficulties.



² For an extended version of this story see Percy Bullchild, *The Sun Came Down: The History of the World as My Blackfeet Elders Told It*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005.

History of Blood Tribe Chiefs (1800s – present)

Ninaa: man that is a leader or chief of a band.

Bull Back Fat

leading chief of the Blood Tribe after the death of Spotted Calf. Two generations before, another two chiefs named Bull Back Fat also led the tribe. The Buffalo Followers band was controlled by the Bull Back Fat family.

Two Suns, Stookya tosi

leader of the Fish Eaters band. He turned the leadership to his son Seen From Afar, Peenakioyim (1810–1869). By the time Bull Back Fat died in the 1840s, Seen From Afar was recognized as the second head chief of the tribe.

Seen From Afar, Peenakioyim (1840s–1869)

a member of the Fish Eaters Clan. Considered a great chief for his decisive leadership. In 1832, the Chief and his wife Pretty Woman brought home the Long Time Medicine Pipe and his wife brought back the leader's medicine bundle for the Motoki society. One of his lodge designs, Gambling Painted Teepee depicts his war experiences with his nephew, Red Crow. His siblings include Black Bear, Big Plume, Medicine Snake Woman, Scalp Robe. Medicine Snake Woman's marriage to Alexander Culbertson of the American Fur Trade Co. secured trade relations for the Blackfoot People. Peenakioyim died in the smallpox epidemic.

His older brother **Black Bear** succeeded his leadership for a short time until he died from the smallpox epidemic.

Red Crow, Miikaistow:

son of Black Bear and Handsome Woman, was the head chief of the Blood Tribe from 1870 to 1900. Warrior, diplomat and statesman, and signatory of the 1877 Treaty 7 between the government and the Blackfoot Confederacy, his leadership dominated the affairs of the largest reserve in Canada and Mamioiksi, the Fish Eaters. Red Crow remained true to his Blackfoot Spirituality and way of life. He encouraged farming, ranching and education as a means to self sufficiency. Red Crow died on August 28, 1900 along the Belly River. Find these words related to the signing of Treaty 7.³

Crop Eared Wolf (1846–1913)

Before his death, Red Crow wanted his adopted son Crop Eared Wolf, to succeed him. Before his death, Crop Eared Wolf called his minor chiefs and people together and made them promise that they never sell the land to the white man. In 1913, on his deathbed Crop Eared Wolf wanted his son Shot Both Sides to be leader.⁴

Chief Shot Both Sides, Atsotoah

The son of Crop Eared Wolf and grandson of Red Crow, he became head chief in 1913–1956. He was a sacred society member and entrusted with the sacred. He was one of the first farmers of his tribe. He was a believer in progressive education.⁵

Chief Jim Shot Both Sides, Naatosapi (Son of the Old Man)

The great grandson of Red Crow. Chief Shot Both Sides assumed leadership in 1956–1964,

³ For more history about the signing of Treaty 7 please see Alex Tesar, "Treaty 7," in The Canadian Encyclopedia. Last edited Nov. 6, 2019, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/treaty-7>.

⁴ A. Hugh Dempsey, *Red Crow, Warrior Chief*. Fifth House Publishers, 1995.

⁵ <http://www.westerncanadianheritagemuseum.com/shot-bothsides>

1966–80.

Chief Rufus Goodstriker 1964-66

The first elected chief in 1964.

Chief Roy Fox 1980–1996

Chief Harley Frank 1992

Chief Chris Shade 1996–2004

Chief Charles Weaselhead, Taatsiikiipoyii 2004–2016

Chief Roy Fox, Makiinimaa 2016–Present

The Kainai Nation is governed by twelve elected council and one chief who serve a four-year term of office and may be reelected.

Terms of Reference for Leadership

- **Ninaaki:** woman that is a leader (chief)
- **Niinawaakii:** woman leader
- **Niina:** male leader
- **Isttsipihkiniinaa:** leader (refers to a crown)
- **Ohkinniinaa:** refers to medallion worn by leadership (Chief Roy Fox wears a medallion from 100 plus years ago. All Treaty 7 chiefs have a medallion.)
- **Maohkotooksskaiksi:** council members wear a jacket and pants with a red stripe. As part of the treaty negotiation, the process was to give the head chief a medallion and a suit to the council men to wear.

"He led his people from the buffalo days into the reserve days. Well respected, he was part of all the ceremonies and keeper of the thunder pipe. His son was the last hereditary chief and was taught by his father how to be a chief, which means father of his people."

—Kainai Blackfoot Elder Pablo Russell.

www.colouringitforward.com

Prelude to Treaty Seven

Before the signing of Treaty Seven, there was many forces moving in on the Blackfoot People and land that influence their decision to sign the treaty.

The 1855 Lame Bull Treaty with the Americans brought changes. It opened up traditional hunting grounds for government and missionary activities and settlers into the Upper Missouri regions. Treaty promises were broken.

In 1858, fur trader Alexander Culbertson retired and moved with his Blood Indian wife to Peoria, Illinois. Her family was to miss the influence of the trader during the coming confrontations with white settlers.

In the 1860s, miners arrived in search of gold through Blackfoot country almost to North Saskatchewan River. Whisky trade makes confrontations inevitable.

In the north, the Crees and Assiniboines consolidated their position near Fort Edmonton and Fort Pitt raiding Blackfoot trading parties. The killing of the Blackfoot chief started a war with enemy tribes.

Unsettled conditions on the American side between Indians and settlers erupted into open warfare.

In 1864, fur traders at Fort Benton preferred to sell goods to miners than Plains Indians. Traders altered their relations.

In 1865, the epidemic of measles that caused a score of deaths was blamed on the presence of the whites. Bloods raided Fort Benton and netted 40 horses. The retaliation was the murder of a Blood chief. A revenge party of Bloods that killed wood cutters shocked Montanans and proclaimed a "Blackfoot War" had started and the skirmishes that followed hardened the relations even more.

At the same time in the north, a leading chief of the Sarcee was killed by Crees. The Sarcee called for a grand council of the Blackfoot, Bloods and Peigan. A revenge party that was formed massacred 29 women and children within the Cree camp. The retaliation by the Crees resulted in the killing of their leader. The violence in Blackfoot country further resulted in 6 prospectors camped on the Oldman River being killed by the Bloods.

In the south, a Blood war party killed Charles Carson, nephew of Kit Carson.

An intertribal battle erupted and resulted in the deaths of Blackfoot and enemy tribes.

To halt confrontations on Montana frontier, the Americans presented treaty with the Bloods, Peigan and Blackfoot which reduced the size of the reservation and opened the southern part of hunting grounds for settlement. The treaty of 1855 was considered a farce by tribes because it was not attended by their leading chiefs. Authorities in Washington refused to ratify treaty.

In 1868, Americans made another attempt to negotiate a treaty with leading chiefs but it too was not ratified. Bloods were active participants in the US treaties and considered American Indians until the International Boundary was surveyed in 1874.

Conflict with Americans came to tragedy in 1869–70 after a prominent Montanan Malcolm Clark was killed. The US Marshal enlisted help from military Colonel Baker and conducted a mid-winter attack on a Peigan camp and massacred 173 men, women and children, known as Baker Massacre.⁶

The massacre which occurred on January 25, 1870 attacked the wrong camp in their effort to locate the murderer of the rancher. This event drove the Blackfoot tribes into Canada rather than face the hostility of the settlers in Montana.

In late 1869, Alfred Hamilton and John Healy, Sun River merchants, built a trading post called Fort Hamilton (known as Fort Whoop-Up) at the confluence of the Oldman River and St. Mary River (site of Lethbridge). They made a roaring business selling whisky and trade goods. Other traders followed until the area from the Belly River to the Bow was awash with whisky. The Blackfoot People were at the mercy of the whisky traders. The impact was devastating.

In 1870, the Canadian government was notified of the American invasion on its territory and the whisky trade and its impact on the Blackfoot people. The existence of the American forts destroyed trade with the Hudson's Bay Company as the Blackfoot People remained in the prairies as the American posts were established between Fort Benton and Edmonton. The Prime Minister's response was to introduce law and order by creating force as the immediate situation required police or military action, not peacemaking.

The Prime Minister introduced legislation to form the North-West Mounted Police to travel west to stamp out the illicit whisky trade. The force was organized in 1873 and commenced duties in 1874 in Blackfoot country. A site was chosen for a fort on the Oldman River. Assistant Col. James F. Macleod met with the leaders and explained to them: the Queen sent the police to enforce law for the Indians and whites and to protect the people from the liquor traffic and traders.

The arrival of the North-West Mounted Police opened up the region to incursions by their enemies and unwanted traders trespassing on their land and hunting buffalo. The leaders requested a meeting with the commissioner. They were concerned that treaties were being made elsewhere and the Queen was not recognizing Blackfoot possession of their hunting grounds. They wanted a stop to the invasion of their territory. White men were taking the best locations for settlement and police were protecting the white people against them. They expected to have a mutual understanding with the government.

Sioux under Sitting Bull crossed the line following their defeat of the United States Seventh Cavalry near Little Bighorn River and the RCMP and the settlers feared they might form an alliance with the Blackfoot People. Blackfoot antagonism towards Métis and Cree might have erupted into a violent confrontation. RCMP told the Blackfoot that a treaty gathering was to take place for making Treaty Seven in terms most favourable to the Government.⁷

⁶ A. Hugh Dempsey, *Red Crow, Warrior Chief*. Fifth House Publishers, 1995.

⁷ A. Hugh Dempsey, *The Great Blackfoot Treaties*. Heritage House Publishing Company Ltd, 2015, pp. 63-82

Treaty Seven, The Blackfoot Treaty, 1877

David Laird, lieutenant-governor of the North-West Territories was commissioned to negotiate Treaty Seven. Laird was escorted across the plains by NWMP assistant commissioner A. G. Irvine to Blackfoot Crossing where he learned the meeting place had been changed from Fort Macleod to Blackfoot Crossing as demanded by Crowfoot.

Laird and his escorts made their way south to Fort Macleod where Colonel Macleod handed Laird a dispatch from the minister of the interior "covering the Commission relating to the Treaty and a copy of the Order in Council of 12 July, in terms of which the commission was issue."

In Fort Macleod, a number of Blood chiefs asked to be treated at the fort but Laird refused their request as the commissioner wanted all the tribes together. After the refusal, some Bloods and Peigans indicated they would not attend the meeting but go buffalo hunting instead. To them, it was just another treaty like the ones they made in the past with the whites and other tribes.

In the days prior to the treaty, both Natives and whites began to congregate at the Crossing to lay out the campsite and to bring in supplies and goods for the distribution. On September 12, Colonel Macleod arrived at the Crossing followed by Laird on September 16 only to discover a few Blackfoot had arrived.

At the Crossing, the Blackfoot nation—Bloods, Peigan, Blackfoot and Sarcee—were camped on the south of the Bow River near the tents of the Mounted Police and stores of the American traders. Across the Bow were the lodges of the Stoney, a Treaty Six people who end up in Treaty Seven after there was no one around to implement a schedule as recommended. They were to meet a commissioner for Treaty Six two months before the Treaty Seven meeting. Governor Laird, commissioner for Treaty Seven assumed the Stoney would be part of Treaty Seven extended an invitation to them to attend. The Stoney arrived with their interpreter Rev. John McDougall expecting to sign their adhesion to Treaty Six, but once they got there, the subject never arose, and they dutifully signed Treaty Seven. Camped next to the Stoney was a trader for Hudson's Bay Company and a camp of Crees, made up of old women and children under the leadership of Bob Tail.

At Blackfoot Crossing, the Blackfoot refused to permit the cutting of trees to make permanent buildings. The conference area was a simple marquee. A canvas to protect the goods and supplies were in a stockade at the river bottom. The Mounted Police were not permitted near the camp of the Blackfeet except for distributing supplies. The Montanans kept their horses in roped corrals in the valley waiting to be traded. To the east, horses owned by those attending the treaty like Blood Chief Bull Back Fat had more than a hundred animals. The horses seemed unguarded, roaming at will but if the herd was approached, a Blackfeet head popped up among them. The Blackfoot hunted buffalo nearby and brought fresh meat to the camp. The women tanned the hides and prepared pemmican and dried meat for sale to the traders.

Upon his arrival to Blackfoot Crossing, Laird informed Crowfoot the treaty discussions would begin on September 17 even though there was not enough leaders present for the discussions. On September 17, Laird began the negotiations and Macleod spoke in response to specific questions asked by the chiefs in attendance. Many of the Bloods and Peigan had not arrived and after a brief meeting Laird suggested the negotiations be delayed for two days to allow time for other chiefs to arrive. The Mounted Police were instructed to issue rations but Crowfoot and other chiefs would not accept rations until they heard the terms offered to them by the Commissioner. Throughout the camp, old friends met and ceremonies and social activities were held.

While waiting for the other chiefs to arrive, the commissioner spoke with Bob Tail, party of the Crees who came to sign an adhesion to Treaty Six. Accordingly, an adhesion was signed on September 25, 1877 and payment was made to the band.

Government officials were still not sure how the Blackfoot would respond to the terms of the proposed treaty and there was no doubt the Blackfeet were in a position to command the situation. On September 19, the Union Jack flew and an honour guard of mounted men escorted the commissioner to the tent, while the police cannon signalled the opening of the negotiations. The Blackfoot, Sarcee, Stoney chiefs, and a few Blood and Peigan chiefs in attendance gathered in a semi-circle extending about a third of a mile around the council tent. Behind them sat several hundred men, women and children. At the tent were missionaries, traders and the wives of the commissioners. At the centre were the interpreters.

Crowfoot, head chief of the Blackfoot and his escort spread a robe on the ground in front of the council tent. Chief Crowfoot and Lieutenant-Governor Laird smoked the pipe of peace and the conference was underway. Laird had spoken only a few words when a problem arose. The interpreter, Jerry Potts was not able to convey the ideas expressed in English into appropriate Blackfoot language. Interpreter Jean L'Heureux was banned from the service as he was acting interpreter and advisor for Crowfoot. The best interpreter to be found for Laird was "Jemmy Jock" Bird, who was eighty years old and blind. He had been the official interpreter at the 1855 treaty with the American government. He was educated, experienced and fluent in seven languages including Blackfoot, Stoney, Cree and Sarcee. He was with a group of Métis at Blackfoot Crossing to dissuade Governor Laird from imposing restrictions on buffalo hunting.

In his opening speech, Laird tried to create the impression that the Great Spirit and the Queen were in harmony and that the Sun Spirit had given the Queen the power to rule over them. The Great Spirit has made the white men and red men as brothers and the Great Mother wishes them all good. The good Indian has nothing to fear from the Queen or her officers. She sent the police to end the whisky trade and punished the offenders and how much good this has done.

The Blackfoot people knew and respected the police for living up to their promise of one law for Blackfoot and the whites. The leadership of James Macleod had proved to be a crucial factor in affecting Blackfoot attitudes toward the government.

Laird added, "the Great Mother heard the buffalo were being killed very fast. The Councillors made laws that would protect the buffalo to save for your food. Treaties have been made with the Indians starting from the east and now the Queen has sent Col. Macleod and myself to ask you to make a treaty. In a few years the buffalo will probably be destroyed. For this reason, the Queen wishes to help you to live in the future in some other way. She wishes you to allow her white children to live on the land, raise cattle and grain and if in agreement, she will assist you to raise cattle and grain and give you the means of living when the buffalo are gone. The Queen wishes to make a treaty with equivalent terms as was accepted by the Crees. Some Indians wanted farming implements. Your lands are more adapted for raising cattle; would be better for you." There was no mention of surrendering the land.

In 1877, there was no cattle ranches or farms in southern Alberta that would allow the Blackfoot to make an informed choice. There was no suggestion that an immediate decision be made. The Blackfoot could only draw on their experience with the Americans and their 1855 treaty (Lame Bull). In Montana, the Blackfoot had seen their reservation chopped in size, rations were not consistent and the people were hunting buffalo. After twenty years under treaty, the Blackfoot in Montana had no farms, ranches and no examples for their Canadian relatives to follow.

Laird went on, "if you sign the treaty, every man, woman and child will receive an annual payment of five dollars and a one-time bonus payment of twelve dollars. The chiefs and councillors will be paid

a larger sum, suit of clothes, silver medal and flag. A reserve and timber land, roads, cattle, potatoes, ammunition, teachers will instruct your children to read," i.e., the Bible. These were the principle terms. A few questions from the chiefs were answered by Laird. The tribes were encouraged to further discuss in the council lodges. Some were in favour of the terms; but most were against them and one threatened to withdraw unless better terms were made. Crowfoot had dealings with the white people. Crowfoot may have been wise enough to see all sides of the treaty question and understood most or all the terms.

Council convened the next day and Laird made some clarifications about hunting rights on the prairies; a fair price for land, coal and timber sales; the Queen's promises being fulfilled; punctual payments; service of the police. Laird had his say and was now ready to listen and explain what the people needed to know.

Blood Chief Medicine Calf expressed his concern about the hunting ground belonging to them and not the Queen or government, and his bad experience with the 1855 treaty and broken promises. He tried to negotiate for higher annual payments and reimbursement for timber which was dismissed by Laird. Asked that Crees and half breeds to be sent back to their own country was outright refused by Laird.

The Peigan chief expressed his hope the promise made by the commissioners are secured as long as the sun shines and the water ran. Stoney Chief Bearspaw was in favour of the terms of the treaty. He was the first to accept the terms of treaty.

Any move to accept the treaty was discouraged by Crowfoot until the arrival of the Blood chiefs and prominent men of the tribe. Crowfoot seem to realize this meeting was something more than a promise of the Queen's friendship. On the evening the Bloods arrived led by Red Crow, Crowfoot immediately went into session with Red Crow and the other leaders. The main point Red Crow understood was that; Colonel Macleod as one of the commissioners favoured the treaty. Based on this and Crowfoot's favourable attitude towards the negotiations, Red Crow was inclined to accept the terms and gained the approval of his council. Both Crowfoot and Red Crow conferred with their elderly wise men whose advice they respected. Because he had participated in the negotiations from the beginning, the final word was left to Crowfoot.

In the meantime, Colonel Macleod visited the head chiefs of each tribe to discuss the location of their new reserves. Crowfoot sought to consolidate the tribes and suggested a common reserve near Blackfoot Crossing which passed as best game country but poorest farming land. The common reserve included the Bloods but other tribes preferred their traditional wintering grounds. Macleod got the land descriptions of the reserves to be included in the document. A list of government recognized chiefs, their councillors and band members were chosen and the list was prepared for treaty payment. At the negotiations, Laird read the entire treaty to the assembly which was translated by the interpreters at the site. The chiefs agreed to surrender 50,000 square miles of hunting grounds and other terms by touching the pen so his X could be marked. Indicated the final conclusion of the last treaty with the Indians of the North West.⁸

<https://www.treaty7.org/>

⁸ A. Hugh Dempsey, *The Great Blackfoot Treaties*. Heritage House Publishing Company Ltd, 2015, pp. 83-123.

Find the words:
Blackfoot Confederacy, Treaty Seven, Blackfoot Crossing,
SAYOHPAHKOO, encampments, Crowfoot, Red Crow,
Peigan, Kainai, Siksika, signing of peace treaty, surrender
Land, Colonel Macleod, interpreter, September,
commissioners, rations, reservation, chiefs

B	Q	W	C	E	B	M	S	A	Y	O	H	P	A	K	L	X	S	C	R
O	L	P	D	S	U	R	R	E	N	D	E	R	L	A	N	D	I	B	E
Q	V	A	D	T	V	C	X	H	V	N	Y	I	S	G	K	O	G	M	D
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C	N	I	X	K	T	I	F	O	J	M	Z	A	D	C	J	U	I	S	R
O	C	R	O	W	F	O	O	T	I	O	A	T	Z	Q	A	P	N	L	O
S	T	M	B	O	V	O	S	P	A	T	B	X	P	C	K	Z	G	Q	W
B	O	R	V	B	R	A	O	T	D	N	O	L	G	H	V	I	O	T	S
B	L	A	C	K	F	O	O	T	C	R	O	S	S	I	N	G	F	N	J
I	N	T	G	T	U	H	T	D	C	N	S	K	B	E	T	M	P	E	H
K	N	I	Y	M	E	B	J	I	E	O	T	R	N	F	E	G	E	B	U
A	T	O	N	I	B	R	L	V	K	N	N	G	U	S	N	A	A	Y	N
I	Z	N	T	N	E	V	E	H	Y	S	E	F	O	M	E	T	C	U	V
N	X	S	I	K	G	S	E	P	T	E	M	B	E	R	K	J	E	N	T
A	M	Q	J	O	Y	I	S	C	A	V	P	R	A	D	U	N	T	M	E
I	U	O	R	T	M	K	B	L	Y	K	M	F	G	U	E	S	R	V	A
Y	A	M	A	V	K	S	I	P	W	Z	A	T	N	D	O	R	E	X	P
T	Q	E	W	T	P	I	O	I	B	M	C	O	L	E	K	R	A	Y	V
L	R	O	B	F	S	K	Y	I	Q	A	N	T	B	J	I	O	T	C	S
T	I	G	F	S	K	A	N	A	M	L	E	K	J	E	J	F	Y	T	Y
P	E	I	G	A	N	S	I	N	T	E	R	P	R	E	T	O	R	S	U
U	Q	X	L	E	V	T	G	S	N	O	I	T	A	V	R	E	S	E	R
C	O	L	O	N	E	L	M	A	C	L	E	O	D	J	E	B	Y	R	S

Treaty Seven Quiz

1. Who were the commissioners assigned for Treaty Seven?
2. Where did the signing of Treaty Seven take place?
3. Who were some of the interpreters for the negotiation of Treaty Seven?
4. Who was the chief that spoke on behalf of the Blackfoot Confederacy?
5. Who were the commissioners representing?
6. What are some of the terms of Treaty Seven?
7. How many square miles of land were surrendered?
8. Which tribe was the first to accept the terms of the treaty?
9. Who was the last chief to arrive at the treaty negotiations?
10. Who else was at the treaty negotiations?

Treaty 7 Word Scramble

1. MOSCRIESINMO AIRLD _____
2. COL ASJME MCOEDLA _____
3. FHCIE DRE WROC _____
4. CHEIF OOWORFTC _____
5. PERNRTERTEI YRJRE STOTP _____
6. ACLTBFKOO SCGOSRIN _____
7. A YTERT ESEVN _____
8. MIORSISENMOCS _____
9. DOUHNSS BAY AOPCMNY _____
10. MNERACIA EDRTARS _____
11. UHINTGN BULOFAF _____
12. UEQNE _____
13. IEAITOSNTNOG _____
14. TRYETA SNATEYPM _____
15. ACPM FO REESC _____
16. TOENYS _____
17. WOB EIRVR _____
18. FTRO CLDAOME _____
19. REV OHJN AMLLD CGUO _____
20. ERTNEAMEG _____

Word Scramble Answers

MOSCRISINMO AIRLD: Commissioner Laird

COL ASJME MCOEDLA: Col James Macleod

FHCIE DRE WROC: Chief Red Crow

CHEIF OOWORFTC: Chief Crowfoot

PERNRTERTEI YRJRE STOTP: Interpreter Jerry Potts

ACLTBFKOO SCGOSRIN: Blackfoot Crossing

AYTERT ESEVN: Treaty Seven

MIORSISENMOCS: Commissioners

DOUHNSS BAY AOPCMNY: Hudson's Bay Company

MNERACIA EDRTARS: American Traders

UHINTGN BULOFAF: Hunting Buffalo

UEQNE: Queen

IEAITOSNTNOG: Negotiations

TRYETA SNATEYPM: Treaty Payments

ACPM FO REESC: Camp of Crees

TOENYS: Stoney

WOB EIRVR: Bow River

FTRO CLDAOME: Fort Macleod

REV OHJN AMLLD CGUO: Rev John McDougall

ERTNEAMEG: Agreement

The Blackfoot Genesis

All animals of the Plains at one time heard and knew him, and all birds of the air heard and knew him. All things that he made understood him, when he spoke to them, the birds, the animals, and the people.

Old Man came from the south travelling north, making the people, animals and birds as he passed along. He made the mountains, prairies, timber and brush first. He put rivers here and there with falls on them and red paint here and there on the ground—fixing up the world as we see it today.

He made the Milk River (the Teton) and crossed it, and being tired went up on a little hill and lay down to rest. As he lay on his back, stretched out on the ground with arms extended he marked himself out with the stones. You can see those rocks today. He went on northward and stumbled over a knoll and fell down on his knees. Then he said, "you are a bad thing to be stumbling against;" so he raised up two large buttes there, and named them the Knees, and they are called so to this day. He went on farther north and with some of the rocks he carried with him he built the Sweet Grass Hills.

Old Man covered the plains with grass for the animals to feed on. He marked off a piece of ground and in it he made to grow all kinds of roots and berries, camas, wild carrots, wild turnips, sweet root, bitter root, sarvis berries, bull berries, cherries, plums and rose buds. He put trees in the ground. He made the bighorn with its big head and horns, he made it out on the prairie. It did not seem to travel easily on the prairie; it was awkward and could not go fast. So he took it by one of its horns, and let it up into the mountains, and turned it loose; and it skipped about among the rocks, and went up fearful places with ease. So he said, "This is the place that suits you; this is what you are fitted for, the rocks, and the mountains." While he was in the mountains, he made the antelope out of dirt, and turned it loose, to see how it would go. It ran so fast that it fell over rocks and hurt itself. He was that this would not do, and took the antelope down on the prairie, and turned it loose; and it ran away fast and gracefully, and he said, "This is what you are suited to."

One day, Old Man determined he would make a woman and a child, her son; so he formed them out of clay. He said to the clay, "you must be people," and then covered it up and left it. Next morning he went back and took the covering off, and saw that the clay shapes had changed a little. The second morning and third morning there was more changes. The fourth morning, he looked at the images, and told them to rise and walk; and they did so. They walked down to the river with their Maker, and then he told them that his name was Na'pi, Old Man.

As they were standing by the river, the woman said to him, "How is it? Will we always live, will there be no end to it?" He said; "I have never thought of that. We will have to decide it. I will take this buffalo chip and throw it in the river, if it floats, when people die, in four days they will become alive again; they will die for only four days. But if it sinks, there will be an end to them." The woman turned and picked up a stone, and said; "No, I will throw this stone in the river; if it floats we will always live, if it sinks people must die, that they may always be sorry for each other." The woman threw the stone into the water, and it sank. "There," said Old Man. "You have chosen. There will be an end to them."

It was not many nights after, that the woman's child died, and she cried a great deal. She said to Old Man, "let us change this. The law that you first made, let that be a law." He said, "Not so. What is made law must be law. We will undo nothing that we have done. The child is dead, but it cannot be changed. People will have to die." That is how we came to be people. It is he who made us.

The first people were poor and naked and did not know how to get a living. Old Man showed them the roots and berries and the bark of trees they could eat at a certain time of the year. He told the people that the animals should be their food and gave them to the people saying, "These are your herds." He said, "All these little animals that live in the ground—rats, squirrels, skunks, beavers—are good to eat.

You need not fear to eat of their flesh." He made all the birds that fly, and told the people that there was no harm to eat them. He took the people through the timber, swamps and prairies and showed them the different plants and roots to pick at certain times of year to use for certain sickness.

In those days there were buffalo. The people had no arms but those black animals with long beards were armed; and once, as the people were moving about, the buffalo saw them, and ran after them, and hooked them, and killed and ate them. When Napi saw this, he was very sad. He said; "This will not do. I will change this. The people shall eat the buffalo." He went to the people and show them how to make a weapon to kill these animals. He cut some sarvis berry shoots, peeled the bark off and tied a string to it and made a bow. He caught a bird and took feathers and tied them to the shaft of wood. He found black flint stone and made arrow points. Then he taught the people how to use these weapons. He told the people not to run from the animals. When they run at you, shoot the arrows at them as they get close and you will see that they will run from you. The people did as they were told.

At this time these people had flint knives given them, and they cut up the bodies of the dead buffalo. It was not healthy to eat the meat raw. Old Man taught them how to make a fire with fire sticks and to cook the flesh of the animals and eat it. Then they got a kind of stone and used a harder stone to hollow out the softer stone and made a kettle of it.

Old Man said to the people; "Now, if you are overcome, you may go and sleep, and get power. Something will come to you in your dream, that will help you. Whatever these animals tell you to do, you must obey them. Be guided by them. Cry aloud for help, your prayer will be answered. That is how the first people got through the world, by the power of their dreams."

Old Man travelled and when he got to the north point of the Porcupine Mountains, there he made more mud images of people. They asked, "What are we to eat?" He made images of clay in the form of buffalo and made them to run. He said to the people, "Those are your food." They said to him, "Well now, we have those animals; how are we to kill them?" "I will show you," he said. He took them to the cliff, and made them build rock like this >; and he made the people hide behind the piles of rock, and said, "When I lead the buffalo this way, as I bring them opposite to you, rise up." After he told them how to act, he led the buffalo inside the lines, he dropped back, the people rose and the buffalo ran in a straight line and jumped over the cliff. He told the people to go and take the flesh. He broke off some pieces of stone with sharp edges and told them to cut the flesh with these. He taught the people to make mauls to

kill the buffalo that had not died from the jump. When the people had taken the skins of these animals, they set up poles and put the hides on them and made a shelter to sleep under.

After he taught those people these things, he continued to travel north until he came to where Bow and Elbow rivers meet. He made more people and taught them the same things. When he came nearly to Red Deer's River, he reached the hill where the Old Man sleeps. There he lay down and rested. The form of his body is to be seen there yet. He went farther north and came to a fine hill. He climbed to the top of it and sat to rest. He said to himself, "Well, this is a fine place for sliding; I will have some fun," and he began to slide down the hill. The marks where he slid down are to be seen yet, and the place is known to all the people as "Old Man's Sliding Ground."

In later times, Napi said, "Here I will mark you off a piece of ground, and he did so. Then he said, "There is your land, and it is full of all kinds of animals, and many things grow in this land. Let no other people come into it."⁹

⁹ George Bird Grinnell, *Blackfoot Lodge Tales: The Story of a Prairie People*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892; Scituate, Digital Scanning Inc., 2001, pp.

Animals and Stories

Animals with furs, antlers and feathers,
indigenous to the land

- **Aa pi' si:** Coyote
- **Ma ko yii:** Wolf
- **Si no paa:** Fox

Furs

- **Mii sin sski:** Badger (describes the white stripe on his face; known as the fastest digger of the animals)

Paws

- **Kaa nais ski naa:** Mouse
- **A pii ka yii:** Skunk (describes the white stripe on his body)
- **Aa paa:** Weasel (turns white in the winter time and red in the summer time)
- **Aaat tsi staa:** Rabbit (describes the way they walk)
- **Omah ko ka ta:** Gopher or Prairie Dog
- **Omah ka ta yo:** Cougar
- **Na tah you:** Bobcat or Lynx
- **Omah ksik'ksi na:** Rattlesnake
- **Kiaa yo:** Bear (there is names for the Brown Bear, Black Bear and Grizzly Bear)
- **Kai' skaa hp:** Porcupine

Antlers

- **A wa kaa sii:** Deer
- **A wa to yi:** White-Tailed Deer (describes tail up)
- **Sikih tsi soo:** Moose (describes a dark animal in water of a marsh area)
- **Po no ka:** Elk
- **So kia wa ka si:** Antelope (describes an animal of the prairie or the plains)
- **li nii:** Buffalo (describes an animal with hooves and antlers or horns)
- Gender: female-skim, napim, stamik-bull elk



Water Animals

- **Ma tsi ka pi sa:** Frog (describes how frog sits high on his hind legs)
- **Mi soh pis ski:** Muskrat (describes the face)
- **Aim mo ni si:** River Otter
- **Ksissk sta ki:** Beaver (describes how the beaver chews on trees and branches)

Iss'kssinaiksi: Insects

- **Aissko'kiinaa:** Ant
- **Ksiwa/Nakaasi:** Spider
- **Soy'sksissi:** Fly
- **Naamoo:** Bee
- **Ik'kstohksisi:** Mosquito
- **Tsikatsii:** Grasshopper
- **Naamsskii:** Lizard
- **Sspopii:** Turtle

- **Aoks spi aki:** Bat (described as the sticking bird. It is also known as bad eagle; Ma ka pi pi ta)
- **Ap ps pi ni:** Canada Goose (describes the white ring around the neck of the bird)
- **Pii taa:** Eagle
- **Ksi ski ni:** Bald Eagle (describes white head)
- **O tah ki mo to kan:** Golden Eagle (describes colour of the head)
- **Mai' stoo:** Crow

Birds

- **Sii pits' to:** Owl (also known as the Night Crier. It is also referred to as a messenger of bad news.)
- **Omah ksii pii' kssi:** Wild Turkey (describes big bird)
- **Kak'koo:** Pigeon
- **Sai' ai:** Duck (describes the sound the bird makes)
- **Kii to kii:** Prairie Chicken (the Prairie Chicken does a mating dance)
- **Omahkai:** Raven



Animals and birds introduced to the land

Animals & Birds

- **Ni to wa ki:** Chicken
- **Poo sa:** Cat
- **Omah kis to'ki:** Donkey (describes the big ears. It was the first animal used for travelling. It was driven: Oh ko mah ta kii.)
- **Ai ksi ni:** Pig (describes a happy animal in the mud)
- **Soo yai ksi ni:** Hippopotomus (water pig)
- **Po no kao mi taa:** Horse (The horse was described as an Elk Dog)
- **Ai sa yoh ko mii:** Bull (describes the behaviour: crying/hollering out in the pasture)
- **li mi taa:** Dog
- **Aa pot skina:** Cow (describes the white horns of the cow)



Stories of Animals

The Blackfoot People called the animals walking on the earth: kso wa po moh ka ksi. The Blackfoot People established a relationship with the animals and the birds and lived in coexistence with them on the land. Before the dog came among the people, the Blackfoot People domesticated the coyote by feeding them. The animals depended on the people for their well-being. Blackfoot names are named after birds and animals e.g., Eagle Child, Many Grey Horses. In the old days, an individual was called by their Blackfoot names. These names were later translated and became the surnames of Blackfoot families. The Blood People are also called the **Apatsitapi** (the Weasel People) and there was also a Blackfoot Clan by the name of Gopher Eaters. The present area of Red Deer and Ponoka was named after the abundance of elk in the area and the river is called **Po no ka sis**: Elk River. The area was a part of the Blackfoot territory. The campsites found in this area are made of rock circles used by the Blackfoot People to stake down their teepee lodges. The month of April is called Frog Moon; **Ma tsiyik ka pi sai ki'somm**, the time you hear the frogs in the meadows. Animals were also part of the dance. The Blackfoot men shake their legs in the Chicken Dance. The beaver is part of a sacred bundle. The porcupine hair is used for hair roaches. There is certain protocol one must follow to work with porcupine quills which requires a transfer of rite. The quills are used for quill beading on jewelry, clothing and a **Mii ni po ka**; a special child had quills sewn on the sole of their moccasins.

In the legends of Napi, Old Man, he creates the animal and birds and places them on the land. He talks with them and plays their games with them.

Antelope









Old Man covered the plains with grass for the animals to feed on. He marked off a piece of ground, and in it he made to grow all kinds of roots and berries; camas, wild carrots, wild turnips, sweet-root, bitter root, sarvis berries, bull berries, cherries, plums, and rosebuds. He put trees in the ground. He put all kinds of animals on the ground.... While he was in the mountains, he made the antelope out of dirt, and turned it loose. To see how it would go. It ran so fast that it fell over some rocks and hurt itself. He saw that this would not do. And took the antelope down on the prairie, and turned it loose; and it ran away fast and gracefully, and he said, "This is what you are suited to."¹⁰

¹⁰ George Bird Grinnell, *Blackfoot Lodge Tales: The Story of a Prairie People*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892; Scituate, Digital Scanning Inc., 2001, pp.139.

Decision about Life and Death






A Napi story of accepting death, inii, one becomes part of the buffalo spirit. One day Old Man determined that he would make a woman and a child; so he formed them both—he looked at the images, and told them to rise and walk; and they did so. He told them that his name was Na'pi, Old Man. Standing by the river, the woman said to him, "How is it? Will we always live, will there be no end to it?" He said: "I have never thought of that. We will have to decide it. I will take this buffalo chip and throw it in river. If it floats, when people die, in four days they will become alive again; they will die for only four days. But if it sinks, there will be an end to them." He threw the chip into the river, and it floated. The woman picked up a stone, and said: "No, I will throw this stone in the river, if it floats we will always live, if it sinks people must die, that they may always be sorry for each other." The woman threw the stone into the water, and it sank. "There" said Old Man, "you have chosen. There will be an end to them." It was not many nights after, the woman's child died, and she cried a great deal for it. She said to Old Man: "Let us change this. The law that you first made, let that be a law." He said; "Not so. What is made law must be law. We will undo nothing that we have done. The child is dead but it cannot be changed. People will have to die."¹¹

¹¹ Grinnell, *Blackfoot Lodge Tales: The Story of a Prairie People*.

Singular	Plural	
sa'ai	sai'aiksi	
kiaa yo	kiaa yoiksi	
ni'tawaaki	ni'tawaakiksi	
ponokaomiitaa	ponokaomiitaiksi	
aapots'kina	aapots'kinaiksi	
iimitaa	iimitaiksi	
kanaisskiina	kanaisskiinaiksi	
piitaa	Piitaiksi	

siipilstoo	siipitstoiksi	
mamia'tsikimi	mamia'tsikimiksi	
mai'stoo	mai'stoiksi	
sikihtsisoo	sikihtsisoo'ksi	
aisaavoohkomi	aisaavookkomiksi	
omah' ksstoki	omah'ksstokiksi	
piiksiksina	piiksiksinaiksi	
aimmoonisi	aimmoonisiksi	

iinii	iiniiksi	
natayo	natayoiksi	
sinopaa	sinopaiksi	
miiyattsi'kayi	miiyattsi'kayiksi	
poosa	poosiksi	
aiksini	aiksiniksi	
awakaasii	awakaassiksi	
aaattsistaa	aaattsistaaiksi	

omahkokata	omahkokataiksi	
aapiisi	aapiisiksi	
aapikayi	aapikayiksi	
kai'skaahp	kai'skaahpiksi	
miisinsski	miisinsskiksi	
ponoka	ponokaiksi	
omahksit'tsiksin	omahksit'tsiksinaiiksi	
aapaa	aapaiksi	

ksisskstaki	ksisskstakiksi	
kiitokii	kiitokiiksi	
omahkatayo	omahkatayoiksi	
mi'sohpsskii	mi'sohpsskiiksi	
naamski	naamskiksi	
maamii	maamiiksi	
matsikapisa	matsikapisaiksi	
sspopii	sspooiiksi	

Blackfoot Animal Word Scramble

- ISAP'IA _____
- KIYOMAI _____
- ISAIANOP _____
- KIISISSMIN _____
- AIIAAASKKSNAN _____
- YAIKIAPI _____
- PAAA _____
- IATSATSTAA _____
- MOHAKOAKTA _____
- ANHATOUY _____

Match the Animals

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| DEER | IINII |
| FROG | KIAAYO |
| BUFFALO | KAI'SKAAHP |
| MOOSE | AIMMONISIA |
| BEAR | SIKIHTSISOO |
| ANTELOPE | PONOKA |
| RIVER OTTER | OMAHKSI'KSINA |
| ELK | MATSIKAPISA |
| SNAKE | AWAKAASII |
| PORCUPINE | SOKIAWAKASI |

Answers to Word Scramble

- AAPI'SI; COYOTE
- MAKOYII; WOLF
- SINOPAAI; FOX
- MIISINSSKI; BADGER
- KAANAISSKINAA; MOUSE
- APIIKAYII; SKUNK
- AAPA; WEASEL
- AATTSISTAA; RABBIT
- OMAHKOKATA; GOPHER
- NATAHYOU; COUGAR



Ksi ski ni: Bald Eagle



Ap ps pi ni: Canada Goose



O tah ki mo to kan: Golden Eagle



Ma ko yii: Wolf



Soo yai ksi ni: Hippopotamus



Ik'kstohksisi: Mosquito



Aoks spi aki: Bat



Kak'koo: Pigeon



Omahkai: Raven



Naamoo: Bee



Tsikatsii: Grasshopper



Aisko'kiinaa: Ant



Omah ksii pii' kssi: Wild Turkey



A wa to yi: White-Tailed Deer



So kia wa ka si: Antelope



Ksiwa/Nakaasi: Spider



Soy'sksissi: Fly

Nature, Weather and Time

Sun, Moon, Stars and Environments



Naato'si: Sun



Ko'komiki'somm: Moon



Kakatosi: Stars



Miistakiitsi [plural **miistak'kiitsi**]: Mountain



Ksaahkoom: Earth



Nii'tahtaa: River



Sspoohtsi: Sky

Days of the Week

- **Naa to yi ksis tsi ko:** Sunday (holy day)
- **Is si ka to yi ksis tsi ko:** Monday (day after holy day)
- **Otomohstokissiskaatoyiksistsikohpi:** Tuesday (2nd day after holy day)
- **li to waa naok' kso' kii' pi:** Wednesday (half a day opening of stores)
- **li kai taist tsi no' pa:** Thursday (old ration day)
- **Ma mii ksis tsi ko:** Friday (fish day)
- **To' toh taa to yii ksis tsi ko:** Saturday (day before holy day)
- **A pi na kos:** tomorrow
- **Ma to ni:** yesterday

Calendar Moons



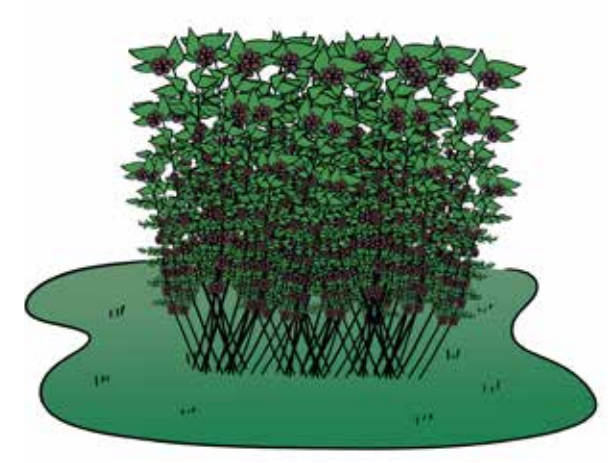
Omahksiki'soom: January (old moon)



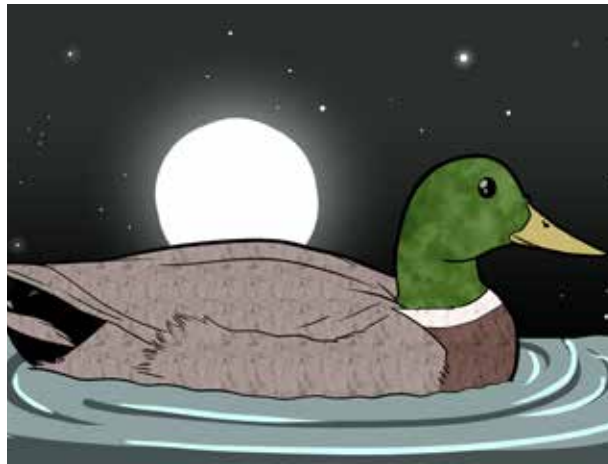
Piitaiki'soom: February (eagle moon)



Okonokistsi otsitai'tssp: July (blue berries ripe)



litayiitsimaahkao'p: August (chokecherries ripe)



Sa'aiki'soom: March (duck moon)



Matsiyikkapisaki'soom: April (frog moon)



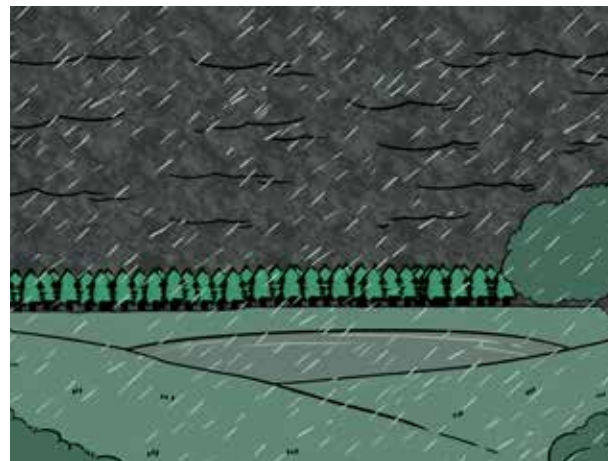
Awaasiiki'soom: September (deer moon)



Mo'kaato's: October (fall moon)



Aapitsisskitsaato's: May (flower blossom moon)



Miisamssootaa: June (long rains)



litao'tsstoyii: November (cold weather arrives)

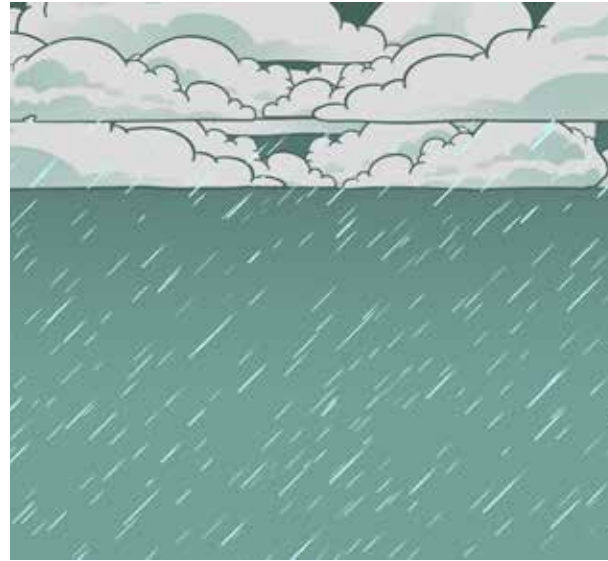


Misamiko'komiaato's: December (long nights)

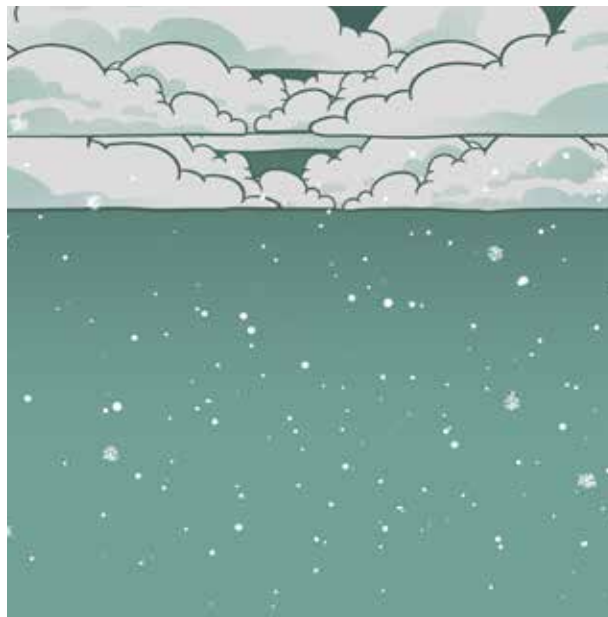
Weather Reporting



- **Ai soo poo:** it's windy
- **lisoopoowa:** it was windy
- **Aa ksoo poowa:** it will be windy
- **Ai siks soo poo:** chinook wind (describes how wind blows over snow)



- **Aaksikssoopoo:** there will be a chinook wind
- **Ai soot aa:** it's raining
- **lissotaa:** it rained
- **Aa ksoo taa:** it will rain



- **Aoh po taa:** it's snowing (koon'sko: snow)
- **lihpootaawa:** it snowed
- **Aa koh po taawa:** it will snow



- **li taa mi ksis tsi ko:** It's a nice day
- **likitamiksistsiko:** it was a nice day
- **Aa ki ta mi ksis tsi ko:** it will be a nice day

Seasons



Ssto yii: winter



Mo to: spring



Nii poo: summer



Mo ko: fall

Stories

Weasels and Rabbits

As the weather warms in springtime, animals such as weasels and rabbits move from sheltered wooded valleys and hills onto the plains. Another sign of spring is when **aapaikai**, weasels, and **aaataistaiks**, rabbits, change colour from white to brown.¹²

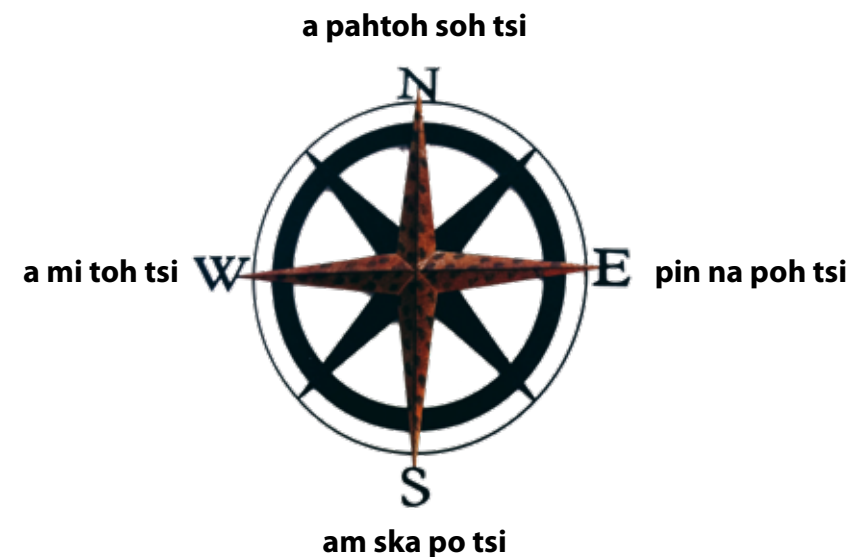
Ksistaki, beavers, are predictors of weather. If **ksistaki** build a dam in the middle of a river it means a severe, cold and harsh winter is ahead. If they build it near a bank the weather will be mild.

Napi and the Black Birch

One time Napi was out walking when a storm came up and a strong wind began blowing him around. He grabbed at the branches of fur, pine and spruce trees, but they all broke off. Finally, he was saved by a birch tree, whose flexible branches bent but did not break. When the wind calmed down Napi began beating the birch tree with a stick, irritated that the tree had stopped him from having fun being blown about in the wind. The marks left by Napi's stick are still visible in the striped bark of the birch trees.¹³

Directions

- **A pahtoh soh tsi**: north
- **Am ska po tsi**: south
- **A mi toh tsi**: west
- **Pin na poh tsi**: east
- **A mi soh tsi**: up (describes upper floor)
- **Spo moh tsi**: heavens
- **Sai ni soh tsi**: down (describes lower level)
- **Kso'wah tsi**: ground



¹² For more Blackfoot stories about seasonal changes and movements see Glenbow Museum, "Niitsitapiisini: Our Way of Life," https://www.glenbow.org/blackfoot/EN/html/onto_the_prairies.htm.

¹³ Glenbow Museum, "Niitsitapiisini: Our Way of Life," https://www.glenbow.org/blackfoot/EN/html/traditional_stories.htm. A longer version of the story appears in Frank Bird Linderman, *Indian Why Stories: Sparks from War Eagle's Lodge-fire*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996.

Blackfoot Colours

Stories About Colour

Colour of People

The Blackfoot People gained trust in the North-West Mounted Police because they did not try to hide who they were. The red coats they wore could be seen from a distance. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police are called **Maohksisokasim**: Red Coats.

The whisky traders were among the first white men in this area. They were called **Napikowan**: white men to describe the colour of their skin and their behaviour. They did not behave within the social standards and norms of **Siksikatsitapi**, the Blackfoot People just like Napi, Old Man.

Black White Man

The **Siksikatsitapi** also had a name for Black people, who were initially seen as an unusual variety of **Napikoan**. As Hugh Dempsey relates, "a Black was a **Sixapekwan**—literally 'black white man'—likely because the first Blacks appeared singly and in the company of white traders. This caused the Indians to conclude that just as an albino is sometimes found in a buffalo herd, a Black would be found among a group of whites." **Siksapikoan** has remained the word used to describe Black men, and **Siksapiaki** is used to describe Black women.¹⁴

Aotahkoinattsi: Orange	Maohksinaattsi: Red
Otsskoinaattsi: Blue	Saiaaksimokoinaattsi: Green
Otahkoinaattsi: Yellow	Apoyinaattsi: Brown
Siksinaattsi: Black	Ksiksinaattsi: White
Sikotssoinaattsi: Purple	I'kiinaattsi: Pink
Ikkitsinaattsi: Grey	

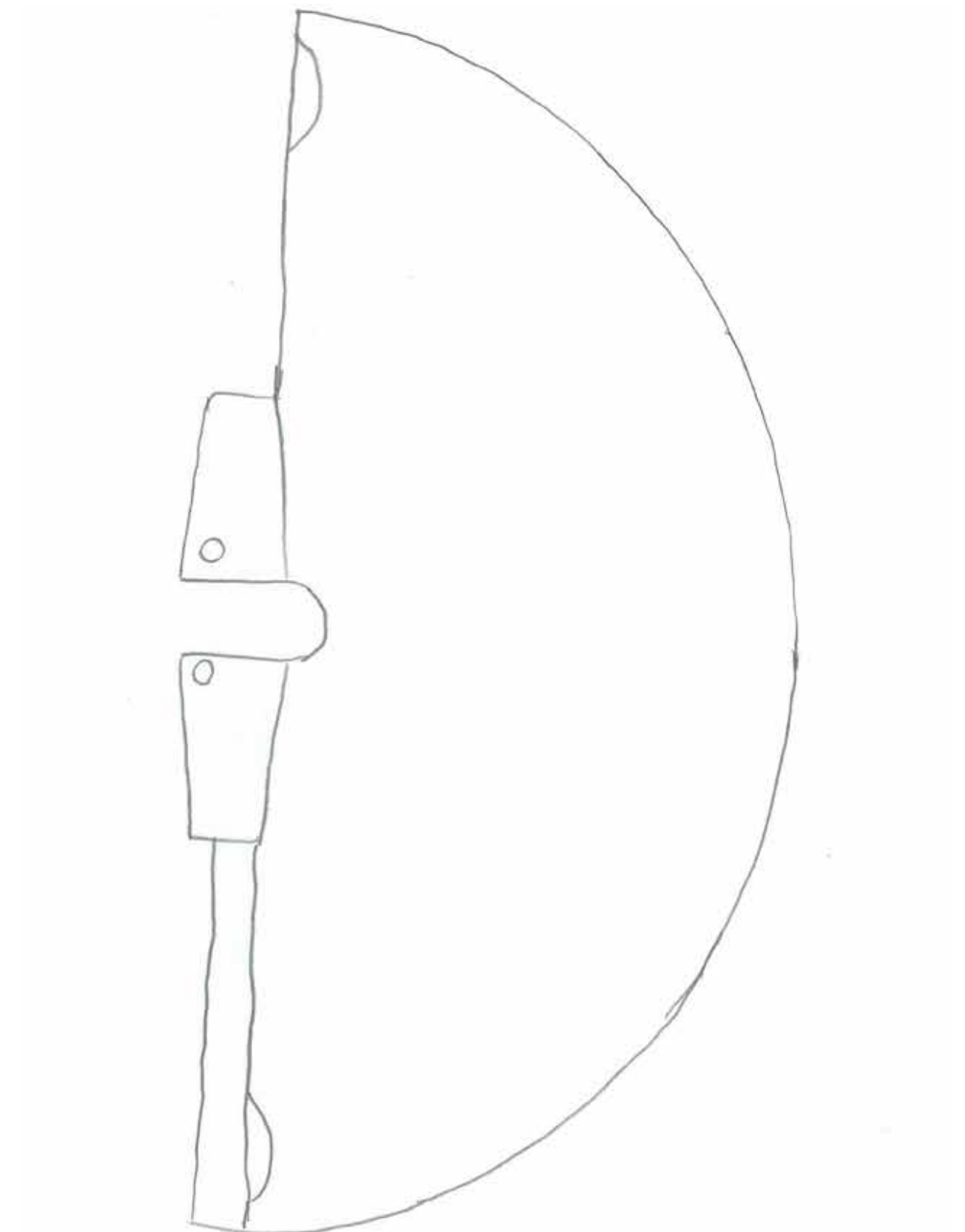
¹⁴ Hugh A. Dempsey, *The Amazing Death of Calf Shirt and Other Blackfoot Stories*. Markham: Fifth House, 1994, pp.94.

Blackfoot Colours Word Search

s	a	i	s	s	k	s	i	m	o	k	o	n	a	t	t	s	i
a	v	b	e	v	x	t	y	n	c	k	z	v	a	s	p	n	k
x	c	n	j	k	v	b	o	i	i	m	l	o	p	a	y	b	k
f	h	a	x	v	b	w	q	i	b	o	h	k	j	P	l	m	i
n	k	S	i	k	s	i	n	a	a	t	t	s	i	o	v	n	t
L	c	q	m	c	t	a	e	d	c	p	m	v	s	y	E	e	s
i	r	b	c	p	a	w	i	r	n	a	a	t	s	i	s	g	i
s	o	v	m	t	r	d	s	a	k	r	b	x	l	n	o	t	n
t	L	t	s	l	j	m	t	q	w	d	x	c	b	a	n	l	a
t	n	l	t	v	c	n	t	d	o	t	m	i	l	a	v	x	a
a	b	r	q	o	n	b	a	c	v	h	n	g	l	t	x	v	t
a	r	n	o	e	t	b	n	l	h	k	g	q	o	t	z	a	s
n	m	t	n	c	q	t	i	v	z	h	t	y	m	s	b	c	i
i	a	o	T	a	h	k	o	i	n	a	t	t	s	i	w	c	o
s	t	x	e	c	v	n	k	g	o	v	l	k	t	v	s	i	h
k	d	c	o	v	b	i	s	t	t	a	a	n	i	s	k	i	s
h	r	s	t	m	e	x	s	z	v	e	h	e	k	m	q	t	T
o	t	j	w	l	s	t	t	a	a	n	i	o	k	h	a	t	o
a	o	m	t	Z	c	r	o	h	f	a	l	m	i	k	h	f	n
m	s	l	k	o	t	s	s	o	i	n	a	a	t	t	S	i	a

- Siksinaattsi; black
- Ksiksinaattsi white
- Sikotssoinaattsi; purple
- I'kiinaattsi; pink
- Ikkitsinaattsi; grey
- Aotahkoinattsi; Orange
- Maohksinaattsi; Red
- Otsskoinaattsi; Blue
- Saissksimokonattsi; green
- Otahkoinaattsi; yellow
- Apoyinaattsi; brown

Make a Tepee



Eating and Drinking

Actions, Food & Drink

Proximity

- **Am:** here (refers to proximity)
- **Ai:** over there (refers to proximity)

Eating & Drinking

- **Niitoyi:** I'm eating
- **Nitaaksoiyi:** I will eat
- **Nitsstoyi:** I ate
- **Nitaissi:** I'm drinking
- **Nitaakssim:** I will drink
- **Nitssim:** I drank

Something to Drink

Ai saa ko tsii	pop (describes fizz)	
Aoh kii	water	
Si ksi ki mi	tea (describes black liquid)	
Kis tsi ki mi sta	herbal tea	
Ni ta pai si ksi kim	coffee	



- **Aisimmiwa:** Is drinking (present tense)
- **Simii:** drink (root word)
- **Amm ninaa aisimmiwa:** this man is drinking
- **Amm aki aisimmiwa:** this woman is drinking
- **Amm saahkomapi aisimmiwa:** this boy is drinking
- **Amm akikoan aisimmiwa:** this girl is drinking
- **Amm omahkinaa aisimmiwa:** this old man is drinking
- **Amm aattsissta aisimmiwa:** this rabbit is drinking
- **Amm ponokomiita aisimmiwa:** this horse is drinking
- **Amm iimitaa aisimmiwa:** this dog is drinking
- **Amm poosaa aisimmiwa:** this cat is drinking
- **Amm saa'ai aisimmiwa:** this duck is drinking



- **Aakssimiwa:** will drink (future, aak is the prefix)
- **Amm ninaa aaksimmiwa:** this man will drink
- **Amm aki aaksimmiwa:** this woman will drink
- **Amm saahkomapi aaksimmiwa:** this boy will drink
- **Amm akikoan aaksimmiwa:** this girl will drink
- **Amm omahkinaa aaksimmiwa:** this old man will drink
- **Amm kipitaki aaksimmiwa:** this old woman will drink
- **Amm apots'kina aaksimmiwa:** this cow will drink
- **Amm aapisi aaksimmiwa:** this coyote will drink
- **Amm awakasi aaksimmiwa:** this deer will drink
- **Amm apikayi aaksimmiwa:** this skunk will drink
- **Iisimiwa:** drank (past tense, ii is the prefix)
- **Amm ninaa iisimmiwa:** this man drank
- **Amm aki iisimmiwa:** this woman drank
- **Amm saahkomapi iisimmiwa:** this boy drank
- **Amm akikoan iisimmiwa:** this girl drank
- **Amm omahkinaa iisimmiwa:** this old man drank
- **Amm kipitaki iisimmiwa:** this old woman drank
- **Amm aiksini iisimmiwa:** this pig drank
- **Amm ponoka iisimmiwa:** this elk drank
- **Amm makoyi iisimmiwa:** this wolf drank
- **Amm omahkokata iisimmiwa:** this cougar drank

Write in Blackfoot the Action Shown in the Image



Pisstaahkaipoko: pepper



Pakkii'p: chokecherry



Aiksinoosak: bacon



Ootsistsiin: strawberry



Niipii: lettuce



Napayiin: bread



Kinii: tomato



Isttsiksipoko: salt



Isstonniki: ice cream



Immoyaapasstaamiinaam:
peach



linan: banana



Nitsikayaahsoyi: "I like to eat"



Okonikii: blueberries



Apasstaamiinaam: apple



Aotahkoinaam: orange



Aohpiikiinaatsi: corn

Numbers

Blackfoot Numbers

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Ni'tokskaa - ni'toksskam | 36. Niiippo naikopoto | 71. Ihkitsikippo ni'tsikopoto |
| 2. Naato'ka - naato'kam | 37. Niiippo ihkitsikikopoto | 72. Ihkitsikippo natsikopoto |
| 3. Niooska - niooskam | 38. Niiippo nanisikopoto | 73. Ihkitsikippo niikopoto |
| 4. Niiso - niisoiyim | 39. Niiippo pihkssikopoto | 74. Ihkitsikippo niisikopoto |
| 5. Nisito - nisotoim | 40. Niisippo | 75. Ihkitsikippo nisiksikopoto |
| 6. Naoi - noiyim | 41. Niisippo ni'tsikopoto | 76. Ihkitsikippo naikopoto |
| 7. Ihkitsika - ihkitsikam | 42. Niisippo natsikopoto | 77. Ihkitsikippo ihkitsikikopoto |
| 8. Naaniso - naanisoim | 43. Niisippo niikopoto | 78. Ihkitsikippo nanisikopoto |
| 9. Pihkssso - pihksssoim | 44. Niisippo niisikopoto | 79. Ihkitsikippo pihkssiikopoto |
| 10. Kiipo - kiipoim | 45. Niisippo nisitsikopoto | 80. Nanisippo |
| 11. Ni'tsikopoto | 46. Niisippo naikopoto | 81. Nanisippo ni'tsikopoto |
| 12. Natsikopoto | 47. Niisippo ihkitsikikopoto | 82. Nanisippo natsikopoto |
| 13. Niikopoto | 48. Niisippo nanisikopoto | 83. Nanisippo niikopoto |
| 14. Niisikopoto | 49. Niisippo pihkssiikopoto | 84. Nanisippo niisikopoto |
| 15. Nisitsikopoto | 50. Niisitsippo | 85. Nanisippo nisitsikopoto |
| 16. Naikopoto | 51. Niisitsippo ni'tsikopoto | 86. Nanisippo naikopoto |
| 17. Ihkitsikikopoto | 52. Niisistippo natsikopoto | 87. Nanisippo ihldtsikikopoto |
| 18. Nanisikopoto | 53. Niisitsippo niikopoto | 88. Nanisippo nanisikopoto |
| 19. Pihkssikopoto | 54. Niisitsippo niisikopoto | 89. Nanisippo pihkssiikopoto |
| 20. Naatsippo | 55. Niisitsippo nisitsikopoto | 90. Pihkssippo |
| 21. Naatsippo ni'tsikopoto | 56. Niisitsippo naikopoto | 91. Pihkssippo ni'tsikopoto |
| 22. Naatsippo natsikopoto | 57. Niisitsippo ihkitsikikopoto | 92. Pihkssippo natsikopoto |
| 23. Naatsippo niikopoto | 58. Niisitsippo nanisikopoto | 93. Pihkssippo niikopoto |
| 24. Naatsippo niisikopoto | 59. Niisitsippo pihkssiikopoto | 94. Pihkssippo niisikopoto |
| 25. Naatsippo nisitsikopoto | 60. Naaippo | 95. Pihkssippo nisitsikopoto |
| 26. Naatsippo naikopoto | 61. Naaippo ni'tsikopoto | 96. Pihkssippo naikopoto |
| 27. Naatsippo ihkitsikikopoto | 62. Naaippo natsikopoto | 97. Pihkssippo ihkitsikikopoto |
| 28. Naatsippo nanisikopoto | 63. Naaippo niikopoto | 98. Pihkssippo nanisikopoto |
| 29. Naatsippo pihkssikopoto | 64. Naaippo niisikopoto | 99. Pihkssippo pihkssiikopoto |
| 30. Niiippo | 65. Naaippo nisitsikopoto | |
| 31. Niiippo ni'tsikopoto | 66. Naaippo naikopoto | |
| 32. Niiippo natsikopoto | 67. Naaippo ihkit sikikopoto | |
| 33. Niiippo niikopoto | 68. Naaippo nanisikopoto | |
| 34. Niiippo niisikopoto | 69. Naaippo pihkssiikopoto | |
| 35. Niiippo nisitsikopoto | 70. Ihkitsikippo | |

Write the Scrambled Blackfoot Numbers in Order

- Niiso
- Naoi
- Piihksso
- Ihkitsika
- Naato'ka
- Kiipo
- Nisito
- Ni'tokskaa
- Naaniso
- Niooska

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Blackfoot ways of counting

- In the past, the Blackfoot People counted the months by marking notches on a stick; one month equals one full moon. Months were named after cold weather, variable weather, ducks, frogs, scents, rainy times, birds flyings, chokecherries ripening, leaves change colour, when leaves fall, when cold weather arrives, and holy moon month.
- Winter counts were painted on hides.
- There are different ways to count people and animals. For example, one person is **ni tsi tapi**, two people is **na tsi tapi**. The suffix is "itapi".
- To count animals, the suffix is "kom" e.g., **ni tos kom imitaa**: one dog. More than one dog is **l mi ta ksi**: ends with plural **ksi**. To count animals, the suffix is "yim" as in **Niisoyim** (4) e.g., skunks.
- Alive animated ends with "nom" for animals.

Stories about numbers

The Wonderful Bird

Old Man went walking in the woods. He came upon a little bird sitting on a tree limb, making a strange noise. Every time the little bird made the noise his eyes came out and stuck onto the tree. When it made another strange noise, the eyes came back into place. Old Man asked the little bird to teach him how to do it. The little bird agreed but told Old Man he could not do the trick more than three times per day or he would be sorry. Old Man agreed to do as he was told. He was happy that he could do the trick and did it three times right away. He wanted to do it again. He said to himself, that bird has no sense. So Old Man did the trick one more time. This time his eyes got stuck on the tree and he could not call them back. Old Man called for the little bird to help, but he had flown away. Poor Old Man could not see. He called to the animals to help him find his eyes. Wolf came along and he began to tease Old Man with a piece of buffalo meat. Old Man was hungry. He felt around all over the place but could not find the meat. Wolf had a good laugh until Old Man caught him. Old Man plucked out one of Wolf's eyes and put it into his own head. Old Man was able to see. He found his own eyes but could never again do the trick the little bird had taught him.¹⁵

¹⁵ Adapted from George Bird Grinnell, *Blackfoot Lodge Tales: The Story of a Prairie People*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892; Scituate, Digital Scanning Inc., 2001, pp.153-154.

The Elk and Deer

Old Man saw the elk and deer playing a game of “follow your leader.” He asked to join and they agreed. They were all having fun playing their game. Old Man was getting hungry. He saw a steep embankment up ahead and led the elk and deer to it. He told them it would be fun to jump off the embankment and that he would jump first to show them. Old Man jumped off the steep embankment and got his breath knocked out. After a while he got up and walked back up the hill. The deer and elk asked him why he had lain there for a long time. Old Man responded that he was laughing so hard that he could not get up; the game was so fun that they would lay there too. He encouraged the elk to jump and sure enough they did not move after they had gone over the embankment. Old Man encouraged the deer to follow. All the animals jumped off except for a pregnant elk and deer, who asked Old Man if it was okay if they did not jump off. Old Man agreed and told the deer and elk they could go and multiply in numbers. That is why the deer and elk are still with us today.¹⁶

Match the Blackfoot Numbers

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------|
| • Ni'tokskaa | • (8) Eight |
| • Naato'ka | • (3) Three |
| • Niooska | • (4) Four |
| • Niiso | • (9) Nine |
| • Nisito | • (1) One |
| • Naoi | • (6) Six |
| • Ihkitsika | • (5) Five |
| • Naaniso | • (2) Two |
| • Piihksso | • (10) Ten |
| • Kiipo | • (7) Seven |

¹⁶ Adapted from Grinnell, *Blackfoot Lodge Tales*, p.158; and Clark Wissler and D.C. Duvall, *Mythology of the Blackfoot Indians*. New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1908; Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 2007, pp.27-28.

Our Traditional Homes

- **Niitoiyiss:** teepee lodge for Nitsitapi People
- **Moiiyiss:** refers to any lodge

There are protocols one must observe in the teepee lodge. There is protocol in the seating order inside the lodge. The family and visitors sat on their bedding on the ground. The lodge owners and grandparents sat at the head of the lodge on the west end of the lodge and opposite the door at the east entrance. The family and visitors sat around in a circle. The lodge accommodate a sleeping area, cooking area and a storage area. The sleeping area was divided by back rests which were also used to hang personal belongs and to lean against. The backrests were made of willow sticks put together with sinew and decorated with coloured clothes, beads, leather straps.

To set up a teepee lodge, it requires teepee poles, pegs and buttons. In contemporary lodges, curtains are hung around the lodge for additional warmth in the winter and to keep cool in the summer. The campfire is at the center inside of the lodge and the bedding and resting area surround the campfire. The cooking area is usually located beside the east entrance. It is very pleasant and comforting to sleep in the teepee lodge. One could see the stars in the night skies if the teepee ears are open. The smoke rises out of the opening at the top of the lodge.

The Blackfoot People lived in a collective group. To be able to live and survive the harsh environment of the land, it required a highly skilled society. Each member had roles and responsibilities to attain their basic necessities: food, housing, clothing. The lodge required, at the minimum, 16 hides to fully cover it. The men were responsible for hunting the buffalo to obtain the hides for the lodge. The women were responsible for tanning the hides and sewing them together to make the lodge. It requires highly skilled individuals to make a lodge. They also had to make sure they had enough food to last through the winter. Every part of the buffalo was used as food, tools, shelter, clothing, and footwear.



Teepee Frame near Standoff.
Photo by Many Grey Horses, T., 2018.



Setting up Camp near Standoff.
Photo by Many Grey Horses, T., 2018.



Rear view of set up lodge near Standoff.
Photo by Many Grey Horses, T., 2018.



Top of teepee frame, 2018. Many Grey Horses, T. (Photographer). Blood Indian Reserve, Standoff, Alberta.

Our Homes Today

- **Napioyiss:** white man's house
- **Sopatsis ki litaisoyoap'a:** chair and table
- **Asoopop:** seating up
- **Innisopatsis:** long chair (describes couch or sofa)
- **Kot'tsii sopatsis:** stuffed chair (describes the stuffing of the chair)
- **Ik'kinisopatsis:** very soft chair (describes the softness of the chair)
- **Aisaiksit'to:** television (describes a person came into view)

When the television was first introduced to the household, the owners moved the antenna around until they caught a signal. There was only 3 channels and the picture was in black and white.

- **Ihtaiiiyohtsimoap:** radio (describes, we hear news from afar) The radio was introduced during the war for the people to hear the news about what was happening in war.
- **Ihtaioyoap'a:** telephone (describes, we talk with it).

When the telephone introduced, they had party lines. Depending, there was usually 3 households that had access to one line, so they had to take turns talking on the phone. There was a lot of eaves dropping going on.

With the introduction of a new way of life after the signing of Treaty 7, the Blackfoot People were encouraged to live in Napioyiss, white man's house, to live like them. There is no Blackfoot words to describe the new ideas and lifestyles, house and furniture. New Blackfoot words had to be created to describe the furniture, walls, ceiling, floor, rooms, windows, and more.



Niitoiyiss: teepee



Napioyiss: white man's house



Ksitsikomstaan: window



Sopatsis ki litaisoyoap'a:
chair and table



litayookoap'a: bedroom



Akssin: bed



Innoisooap'atsis: long chair /
couch



Kot'tsii sopatsis: stuffed
chair



Ik'kinisopatsis: very soft
chair



Anakimatsis: lamp



litapss'topoap'a: living
room



litoayo'saop'a: kitchen



litaisokohko'so'p: cupboard



litaissiskiohsaop'a:
washroom



litaisap'sskitsaop'a: sink



litaisap'ssitsaop'a: bathtub



Omahksisooap'atsis:
armchair



litais'saakiop'a: kitchen sink



litais'tois'toap'a:
refrigerator



litaisooyoap'a: table



Po'taa'tsis: oven



Ihtaipoyoap'a: telephone



Aisaiksit'to: television



Ihtaiyiiyohtsimoap: radio

Vehicles

- **Aiksisstoomatomaahkaa:** all automobiles (describes, it travels or moves on its own; it requires no energy from a horse)
- **litaisapopaop'a:** car (describes, we ride in it)
- **litawaai'pihtakio'p:** truck (describes, we haul with it)
- **Aapatataksaakssin:** box in the back of the truck
- **Aipakikitaka'si:** motorcycle (describes the backfiring sound)
- **Ihtahsoikapiksspop'a:** bicycle (describes the peddling action of the feet)
- **Aipot'ta:** airplane (describes, it flies)



Aipot'ta: airplane



Aiksisstoomatomaahkaa: all automobiles



litaisapopaop'a: car



litawaai'pihtakio'p: truck



Aapatataksaakssin: box in the back of the truck



Aipakikitaka'si: motorcycle



Match the Items

- **Aipot'ta** • Telephone
- **Aisaiksit'to** • Very soft chair
- **Ksitsikomstaan** • Bicycle
- **Innisopatsis** • Long chair / Couch
- **Ihtaipoyoap'a** • Television
- **Ik'kinisopatsis** • Teepee
- **Niitoiyiss** • Airplane
- **Ihtahsoikapiksspop'a** • Window

Communities and Professions

Towns



A kaa pio yiss: Fort Macleod



A'kaoh ki mi: Cardston



Ksaa mais ski nii: Magrath



Moh kins stsis: Calgary



Omah koi yiss: Edmonton



Po no kais siis aah taa: Red Deer



Si kooh ko tok: Lethbridge



Okotoks, photo by Coaxial at English Wikipedia

How the towns got their Blackfoot names

A kaa pio yiss: Fort Macleod

Fort Macleod was built by the North-West Mounted Police in 1874. It was named after the Lieutenant Colonel James Macleod. Macleod was instrumental in putting an end to the whisky trade and in negotiating Treaty 7 with the Blackfoot, Tsuut'ina and Stoney/Nakoda First Nations. Blackfoot people referred to James Macleod as **Stamix-otokan** or "Bull's head" because of a buffalo head mounted over his residence.¹⁷

A'kaoh ki mi: Cardston

Charles Ora Card, a son-in-law of Mormon leader Brigham Young, founded a community on the banks of Lee's Creek in April 1887. Card arrived with a small group of Mormon settlers fleeing anti-polygamy laws in the United States. A Blackfoot visitor to the community observed several women in one household, giving the community the name **A'kaoh ki mi**, many wives.¹⁸ Cardston was established as a village in 1898 and became a town in 1901.¹⁹

Ksaa mais ski nii: Magrath

This town took its Blackfoot name after Blood Tribe members sold hay to a man with humped back in this area. **Ksaa mais ski nii** also refers to 'talking into the ground.' The village of Magrath was established in 1901 and named after Charles A. Magrath, surveyor and then-manager of the Alberta Railway & Irrigation Company. Magrath was also a politician at local, territorial and national levels.²⁰

Moh kins stsis: Calgary

Moh kins stsis describes the shape of the Elbow River. The city of Calgary got its start as the second NWMP fort, established in 1876 at the place where the Elbow River flows into the Bow River. Lieutenant-Colonel James Macleod named the fort Calgary, after his ancestral home on the Isle of Mull in Scotland. In 1876, the federal government officially approved the name. There are different views on the original meaning of 'Calgary'; some suggest it is Gaelic for 'clear running water'; others say it is Gaelic for a 'bay farm'.²¹

Po no kais siis aah taa: Red Deer

Po no kais siis aah taa refers to Elk River, the area where the horse was introduced to the Blackfoot People. The city is named after the Red Deer River that flows through it. Scottish employees of the Hudson Bay Company named the river after seeing a large number of elk, which reminded them of the red deer in their homeland.²² In 1882, people began to settle in Red Deer Crossing, a point where the Calgary-Edmonton Trail crossed the Red Deer River.²³ When the Canadian Pacific Railway arrived in Calgary in 1883, a small trading post was built at the site as traffic increased. Red Deer was incorporated as a town in 1901 and a city in 1913.

¹⁷ Merrily K. Aubrey (ed.), *Concise Place Names of Alberta*. Edmonton: Government of Alberta, 2007.

¹⁸ Larry Donovan and Tom Monto, *Alberta Place Names: The Fascinating People and Stories Behind the Naming of Alberta*. Edmonton: Dragon Hill Publishing, 2006.

¹⁹ Merrily, *Concise Place Names*.

²⁰ Merrily, *Concise Place Names*.

²¹ Donovan and Monto, *Alberta Place Names*.

²² Merrily, *Concise Place Names*.

²³ Donovan and Monto, *Alberta Place Names*.

Siko ko toki: Lethbridge

Siko-ko-toki describes the black rocks, or coal outcroppings that Blackfoot people observed in the area. The North Western Coal and Navigation Company began extracting coal in 1882 from a site known as Coal Banks; the small settlement around the operation was also referred to as Coalhurst. In 1885 the name was formally changed to Lethbridge after the company's first president, William Lethbridge.²⁴ The town of Lethbridge was incorporated in 1890 and it became a city in 1906.

Spi tsi: both Pincher Creek and High River

Pincher Creek and High River are both named Spi tsi. In Pincher Creek the name refers to the high bush and in High River it refers to the high river. The name for Pincher Creek has been in use since the 1870s. There are different stories about its origins, but in every version a pair of pincers (later pinchers) used for re-shoeing horses or bulls was lost along the creek. Pincher Creek is a tributary of the Highwood River, and the Blackfoot people referred to it as unuk-spitzee, meaning "little highwood."²⁵ The trees growing along Highwood River and those on the banks of Pincher Creek are visible from far away.

Okotoks

The name Okotoks comes from a Blackfoot word meaning "rock." The name may refer to a rocky crossing point on the Sheep River, which Siksika people used before European settlement. The name may also have referred to the large glacial erratic west of Okotoks, which stands out on the otherwise flat prairie. Known as Big Rock, it was transported by the continental glacier during the last ice age.²⁶ Okotoks was established as a village in 1899, and a town in 1904.²⁷

²⁴ Alex Johnston and Andy Den Otter, *Lethbridge: A Centennial History*. Lethbridge: The City of Lethbridge, 1991.
²⁵ Donovan and Monto, *Alberta Place Names*.
²⁶ Frits Pannekoek, "Okotoks," in The Canadian Encyclopedia. Last edited Aug. 2, 2019, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/okotoks>.
²⁷ Donovan and Monto, *Alberta Place Names*.

Professions and New Roles

The focus of traditional roles and responsibilities of the Blackfoot People was to meet the basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter to survive the harsh environment. The people worked together as a collective to meet their needs. A new way of life was introduced; new roles and responsibilities to meet our basic needs.



Aisokinaki: doctor

Aisokinakiaaki: female doctor



Aisokinakiaaki: nurse



Issksinimatoski: teacher
Aissksinima'tstohki



Naotoyapiikoan: priest, holy white man

Naatowa'paaki: nun



Iyinnakiaki: police officer, female

Iyinnakiikoan: police officer, male

Word Description

- **I yin na kii koan:** police, describes the act of apprehension
- **I yin na kia ki:** female police, woman apprehender
- **Naa to ya pii koan:** priest/holy white man came into the area shortly after the police to introduce the people to religion. The Blackfoot People believe in **lhtsipaitahpiyop:** Source of Life, and the spiritual gatherings are carried out by the sacred societies. In their daily prayers the people give thanks to **Na to si**, the sun, source of energy and life.
- **Iss ksi ni mat os ki:** teacher, describes a person who is teaching us, learning us
- **Naa to wa'p a ki:** nun, refers to holy white woman
- **Ai so kin a ki:** doctor, refers to person who makes us feel better
- **Ai so kin a kia a ki:** female doctor, refers to woman who makes us feel better. The Blackfoot People made **ksi tsi kim sta**, herbal teas, for their medicine. They made tobacco offerings before they picked the plants. There are a few herbalists in the community.

Places and Stories of Importance

Buffalo and the Native People

Thousands of years ago, Blackfoot people did not eat buffalo (bison). They subsisted on berries, roots and small animals. Napi, Blackfoot Creator, saw his children killed by the buffalo. He declared he would change this so the people would eat the buffalo. He gathered a herd at the Porcupine Hills and taught the people how to use the **pis'kun** (buffalo jump) as a method to kill the buffalo. He taught them how to use sharp-edged stone to remove the hides and cut the meat.

Buffalo roamed in large herds. They grazed on the prairie during warmer seasons and in the river valleys during winter. Their thick hides protected them from the prairie winds and blizzards. In the springtime the buffalo rubbed against trees and rocks to shed their winter coats.

Buffalo became a central part of Blackfoot life, providing the people with food, clothing, shelter and tools. Hunting methods were perfected as they were passed down with each generation. The people did not take the buffalo for granted. They used ritual and "Buffalo Calling" ceremonies as part of the hunting process. During times of famine, the people called the buffalo to the camp to provide food.

The pis'kun was still in use as recently as 150 years ago. The V-shaped drive lines were marked off by cairns leading toward the pis'kun. The cairns were wedged with branches and the wind kept the branches moving. Cairns were also occupied by people who waved buckskins to scare the buffalo herd stampeding down drive lines. A grease and sage concoction smeared on the bodies of hunters prevented the buffalo from detecting their human scent. The warrior hunters kept the animals in their lanes. The buffalo jammed together and thundered forward. Once they reached the edge of the pis'kun it would have been too late to turn back.

The horse was introduced to the Blackfoot People around 1740. Horses are called po-no-kah-mita (elk dog) and they were quickly incorporated into the hunting process. Trained buffalo horses were fast and intelligent animals; they learned to charge the buffalo and made it easier for hunters to control the buffalo herd. In one technique known as the "surround," hunters on horses surrounded a herd of buffalo and attacked from all sides, yelling as they tightened their circle to finish off the wounded animals with mauls. Another technique was to herd the buffalo into "jumping pounds," in which corrals with a drop were camouflaged with branches with no escape. Once inside, the animal was promptly slaughtered. Sport hunting was taboo and solo hunting was discouraged.

The butchering and distribution of the buffalo carcasses was a communal operation. The preferred cuts of meat were awarded to the better hunters and prominent relatives. The liver, brains, hearts and kidneys were eaten raw at the kill site. Pemmican was made for the winter season. One buffalo could feed three hundred people for one day. Every part of the animal was used, and it was once estimated that First Nations had over three hundred separate uses for a buffalo.²⁸

²⁸ Reid, Gordon, *Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump*, Fifth House Ltd., Revised Edition (2002).

The Rock

Once Old Man was travelling, and becoming tired he sat down on a rock to rest. After a while he started to go on, and because the sun was hot he threw his robe over the rock, saying: "Here, I give you my robe, because you are poor and have let me rest on you. Always keep it."

He had not gone very far, when it began to rain, and meeting a coyote he said: "Little brother, run back to that rock, and ask him to lend me his robe. We will cover ourselves with it and keep dry." So the coyote ran back to the rock, but returned without the robe. "Where is the robe?" asked Old Man. "**Sai-yah!**" replied the coyote. "The rock said you gave him the robe, and he was going to keep it."

Then Old Man was very angry, and went back to the rock and jerked the robe off it, saying: "I only wanted to borrow this robe until the rain was over, but now that you have acted so mean about it, I will keep it. You don't need a robe anyhow. You have been out in the rain and snow all your life, and it will not hurt you to live so always."

With the coyote he went off into a coulee, and sat down. The rain was falling, and they covered themselves with the robe and were very comfortable. Pretty soon they heard a loud noise, and Old Man told the coyote to go up on the hill and see what it was. Soon he came running back, saying, "Run! Run! The big rock is coming!"; and they both ran away as fast as they could. The coyote tried to crawl into a badger hole, but it was too small for him and he stuck fast, and before he could get out, the rock rolled over him and crushed his hind parts. Old Man was scared, and as he ran he threw off his robe and what clothes he could, so that he might run faster. The rock kept gaining on him all the time.

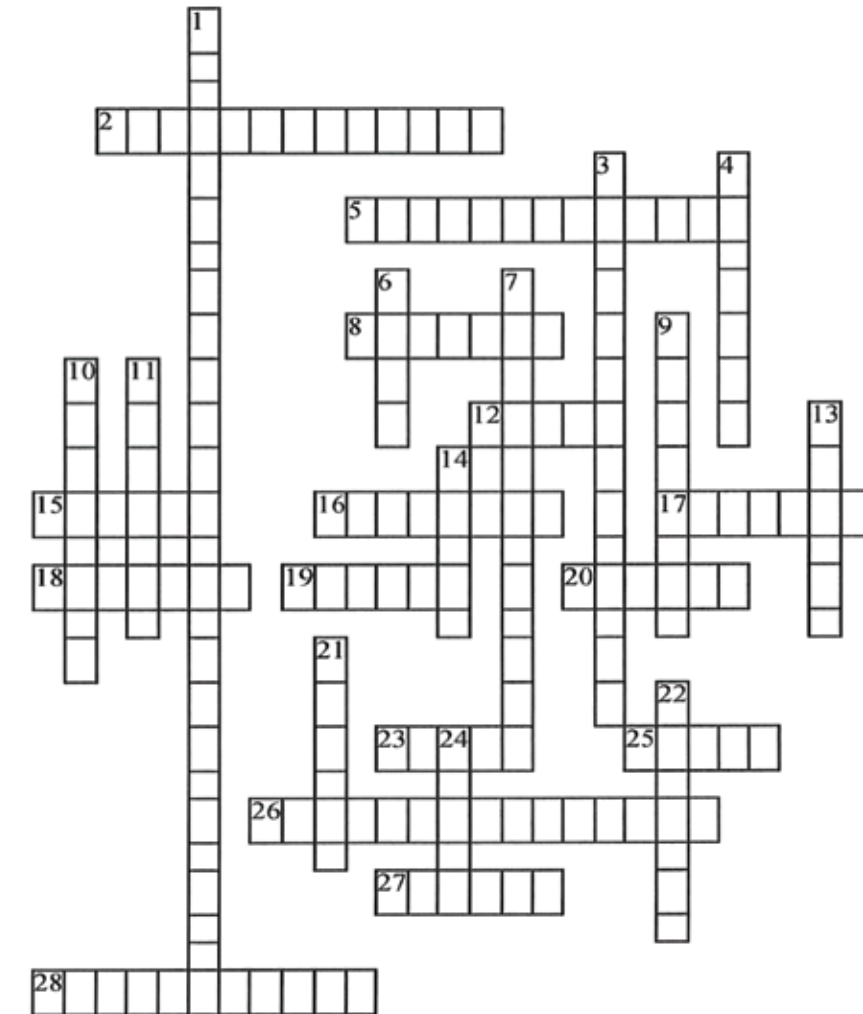
Not far off was a band of buffalo bulls, and Old Man cried out to them, saying, "Oh my brothers, help me, help me. Stop that rock." The bulls ran and tried to stop it, but it crushed their heads. Some deer and antelope tried to help Old Man, but they were killed, too. A lot of rattlesnakes formed themselves into a lariat, and tried to catch it; but those at the noose end were all cut to pieces. The rock was now close to Old Man, so close that it began to hit his heels; and he was about to give up, when he saw a flock of bull bats circling over his head. "Oh my little brothers," he cried, "help me. I am almost dead." Then the bull bats flew down, one after another, against the rock and every time one of them hit it he chipped off a piece, and at last one hit it fair in the middle and blown into two pieces.

The Old Man was very glad. He went to where there was a nest of bull bats, and made the young ones' mouths very wide and pinched off their bills, to make them prattle and queer looking. That is the reason they look so today.²⁹



²⁹ George Bird Grinnell, *Blackfoot Lodge Tales: The Story of a Prairie People*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892; Scituate, Digital Scanning Inc., 2001, pp.153-154.

Buffalo and the Native People Crossword



Across

- 2 sports hunting
- 5 jumping pounds
- 8 berries
- 12 BUFFALO
- 15 brains
- 16 pemmican
- 17 montana
- 18 butcher
- 19 ohkotoko
- 20 kidney
- 23 ponokamita
- 25 heart
- 26 Nitsitapi
- 27 BUFFALO JUMP

Down

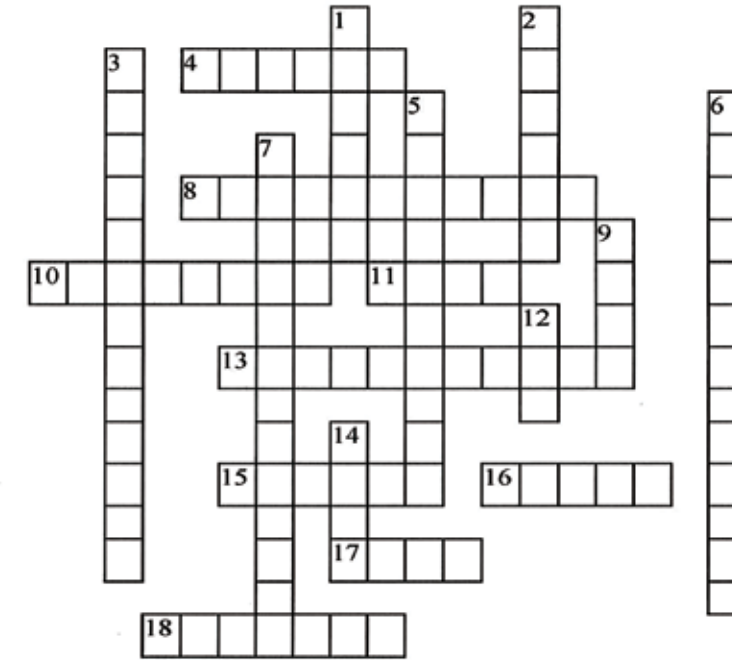
- 1 Estipah-Sikikini-kots
- 3 Porcupine Hills
- 4 vshaped
- 6 herd
- 7 heritage site
- 9 ceremony
- 10 surround
- 11 extinct
- 13 hunter
- 14 liver
- 21 corral
- 22 yelling
- 24 roots

Buffalo Jump Word Search

BU FFALOCALLINGCEREMONYNH
 BPHPJFBJRQDNUORRUSCNWYIE
 FZJEQJBUQEEZWIPIWCHAIUTA
 IJLMDOZSESVFRUTEACRRFRBD
 VSQMMSLLYMAIAXQJRRMVAXAS
 MSMIQNUAFPINLTUZIHMKEIGM
 EDJCVVCLFRHTXMWOIFHWRBFA
 LRVADNHUAFDMDFRBAAVMTUUS
 PJANSUJIHYUYNSPNKBPZYFIH
 OQIADSKZEHUBUUTCRDXGFKE
 ERPOPWSFJNBISOICBAAQJNAXD
 PYANAPNLEYYGPSIDRVBAILAI
 TSNRZZEIGZHUGBYQCEUGNORN
 OSLOYDZVICBSNMOGAKTUNHRB
 ORJHERITAGESITEDSUZPNOOU
 FKKCXCTFCJTKPTVNSBQFVRWF
 KNLSIZKBQOMEMOVULEQDJSSF
 CYARTDMOCSALUUEKCRNPTEBA
 AWPWUOKKXRUNJDISPRGZMSUL
 LXJSEXORRZLZDOEINICCDHTO
 BDOQMYURAQSVRBCPEEVRRSCJ
 LXHOCPJVVESCAIRNSSCMWHHU
 IMSLAMINALLAMSQEVKKNQXEM
 VTPORCUPINEHILLSXLKGHORP

- | | | |
|---------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| BRAVE | HERITAGE SITE | CARCASS |
| BUTCHER | HEART | LIVER |
| SURROUND | JUMPING POUND | MAULS |
| ARROWS | BUFFALO HORSES | PEMMICAN |
| WARRIORS | CAIRNS | BUFFALO CALLING CEREMONY |
| SMALL ANIMALS | BERRIES | ROOTS |
| NAPI | BLACKFOOT PEOPLE | PISKUN |
| BUFFALO | PORCUPINE HILLS | HEAD SMASHED IN BUFFALO JUMP |

Napi and the Rock Crossword



Across

- 4 Napi,
- 8 napi told the rock he has been in the
- 10 who helped Napi
- 11 he sat on rock to
- 13 the rock said he will
- 15 his friend
- 16 Napi got very
- 17 Napi walked away and it began to
- 18 what was coming behind Napi and coyote

Down

- 1 snakes threw a
- 2 rock
- 3 Napi asked a band of
- 5 coyote tried to crawl into a
- 6 other animals that tried to help Napi
- 7 what did Napi call coyote
- 9 he gave the rock his
- 12 the sun was
- 14 he gave the rock his robe because he was

Word Bank

- | | | | |
|----------------|-----------|---------------|----------------|
| keep the robe | bull bats | rain and snow | coyote |
| angry | old man | badger hole | little brother |
| hot | robe | big rock | rest |
| buffalos bulls | lariat | okotok | deers antelope |
| poor | rain | | |

People and Family

People

- **Ninaa:** man (could also refer to a leader or chief)
- **Aki:** woman
- **Saahkomapi:** boy
- **Akikoan:** girl
- **Kipitaki:** old woman
- **Omahkinaa:** old man
- **Pookaa:** child
- **Is'sitsimaan:** baby (refers to swaddled infant)
- **Ohkinniinaa:** leader who wears medallion
- **Maohkotooksskaiksi:** wears red on their pants
- **Niinawaakii:** Queen
- **Isttsipihkiniinaa:** King



Ninaa: man



Aki: woman



Saahkomapi: boy



Akikoan: girl

Pookaa: child



Omahkinaa: old man



Kipitaki: old woman



Is'sitsimaan: baby

My Family (Ni is prefix)

- **Nin na:** my dad
- **Ni ksi sta:** my mother (the same for aunt)
- **Nis skan:** my younger sibling for a male (men refer to younger male relative) The plural form of Nisskaiksi refers to more than one younger sibling.
- **Ni siss:** my younger sibling for a female (women refer to younger female relative)
- **Ni' ssa:** my older brother (refers to male relatives e.g., uncles and cousins)
- **Nin' ssta:** my older sister (refers to female relatives e.g., auntie)
- **Naah sa:** my grandmother (refers to maternal and paternal grandmother)
- **Naah sa:** my grandfather (refers to maternal and paternal grandfather)

My Children

- **Noo ko' sa:** my child
- **Noo ko' si ksi:** my children (society members who transfer out of a society become the grandparents and they adopt initiates as my children)
- **Nii taan:** my daughter (Ko ko naa is another term of reference to call one a daughter)
- **Nii taa ni ksi:** my daughters
- **N'oh ko:** my son (Ksiki is another term to call one a son)
- **N'oh koi ksi:** my sons
- **Ni sso kos a:** my grandchild
- **Ni sso ko si ksi:** my grandchildren
- **Ni tsi ta pii mi ksi:** my family
- The terms for the family signify the strength of the relationships.

Your Family (singular - 3rd person reference)

- **Kin na:** your father
- **Ki ksi sta:** your mother
- **Kis skan:** your younger sibling for a male
- **Ki siss:** your younger sibling for a female
- **Ki' ssa:** your older brother (Kisinoon: refers to our older brother)
- **Kin' ssta:** your older sister
- **Kaah sa:** your grandfather
- **Kaah sa:** your grandmother

Their Family (singular)

- **On ni:** their dad
- **Oo ksista:** their mother
- **Ois skan:** his younger sibling
- **O siss:** her younger sibling
- **O' ssa:** their older brother
- **Oin' ssta:** their older sister
- **Maah sa:** their grandparent

Their Family (plural)

- **On no wa:** their father
- **Oo ksis to wa:** their mother
- **Ois ska no wa:** their younger brother
- **O sis so wa:** their younger sister

Our Family

- **Kin noon:** our father
- **Ki ksis tsi noon:** our mother
- **Kis ska ni noon:** our younger brother
- **Ki sis si noon:** our young sister
- **Ki' si noon:** our older brother
- **Kin' stin noon:** our older sister
- **Kaah sin noon:** our grandparent

Conversational Blackfoot

Greetings

“Oki, Ni to mah to to, Si koh ko to ki”

Hello, I am from Lethbridge

The term Oki opens and establishes communication.

Common Blackfoot Conversation

Hello, how is everything?	Oki, tsanitapi?
See you later	Kaitama'tsin
What's your name?	Tsa kitsiska'sim?
My name is...	Nitsiska'sim...
Where are you from?	Tsima kitomahtotopa?
I'm from...	Nitomahtoto...
Good Morning	li-taa-mik-kss-ka-nao-to-ni
All is well	Sokapi
All is not well	Matssokapi
Where are you from?	Tsima kitomahtotopa?
Did you have a good sleep?	Kii-tai-soo-kso-kahp?
How are things?	Tsa-nii-ta-piwa?
You what is your name?	Kiis-to tsa-kitsisskasim?
What are you doing?	Kii-tai-kih-pa?
I am going to...	Nitaitapo...
I will go to...	Nitaakitapo...
I went to...	Nitsit'tapo...
Where are you going?	Tsima kitaitapohpa?
Where will you go?	Tsima kitaakitapohpa?
Where did you go?	Tsima kitsit'tapohpa?

Common Blackfoot Commands

Following is a list of instructions for parents to start using at home in an effort to teach your children the Blackfoot language. Tribes that have started to immerse themselves in their language say starting with instructions is an excellent area to begin.

Come in	piit [plural: piik]
Go outside	saksit [plural: saksik]
Come here	pohsapot'a [plural: pohsapok'a]
Go away	misstapot'a [plural: misstapok'a]
Sit down	makoapiit [plural: makoapiik]
Stand up	popoyiit [plural: popoyiik]

Open the door	kayinnit kitsim
Close the door	ookiita kitsim
Eat	ooyiita [plural: ooyiika]
Drink	simita [plural: simika]
Give it to me	ko'kiita
Give to him/her	kotsisa
Wait	oohkimaat [plural: oohkimaak]
Wake up	pokakita [plural: pokakika]
Get up	poo-waat
Wash your face	is-sis-kii-tsit
Wash your hands	is-tsi-mii-yit
Brush your teeth	is-sii-kii-niis-tsit
Comb your hair	ak-kss-kii-nii-yit
Go to sleep	ma-to-yoo-kaat
Go outside and play	sao-taa-wah-kaat
Help me	is-poom-mo-kit
Wash the dishes	is-sa-kit
Clean up/tidy up	ksik-ka-pis-to-ta-kit
Clean up your bedroom	kitsitayookahpa'
Put your clothes on	a-ksis-to-toh-sit
Put your coat on	maak-saap-ss-koh-sit
Sit down	makopiit [plural: makopiik]
Sit still	ikss' koopiit [plural: ikss' koopiik]
Sit and listen	isstsanopiit [plural: isstsanopiik]
Go and sit down	matoyakoapiit [plural: matoyakoapiik]
Sit here	amm istopiit [plural: amm istopiik]
Sit there	omm istopiit [plural: omm istopiik]
Look at me	issamokit [plural: issamokik]
Listen	isstsiivit [plural: isstsiivik]
Stand up	popoiyit [plural: popoiyik]
Come here	pohsapot [plural: pohsapok]
Get up from a sitting or lying position	powaata [plural: powaaka]
Hurry up	nitakit [plural: nitakik]
Let's go	oo'kii
Turn on the lights	anakimaat
Put it away	misstapoh'toota
Throw it away	misstapapiksit
Go ahead, do it	ka'koa'a

Help me	sspommokit
Help him/her	sspommos
Try hard	ika'kimaat [plural: ika'kimaak]
Line up	maaksipoyit
Put your shoes on	maks'tsitsikit
Put your jacket on	maks'saps'kohsit

There are three parts or steps to instructions: hearing, saying, and answering.

1. Hearing

The most important step hearing is repetition. When introducing a word, it needs to be repeated many times. It is no different from teaching a toddler a word: you repeat it over and over again until they learn the word. We think we don't know how to teach but as parents we are all teachers because we were the ones who taught our child how to talk.

You tell your child **oo-yit** (eat) and you repeat the word 3-4 times.

2. Saying

The next step is to start telling them to say the word (or to repeat after you). Most times once they feel comfortable they will automatically say the word.

Very important once they know the words: try not to go back to English.

3. Answering

Once they know the word get them to start answering you: **ooyit - aa ni-ta-ksoi** (eat - yes I will eat).

You can practice reversing your roles. Have your child tell you to "eat" and you answer "yes I will eat."



Stand up; **Popoiyit** [plural: **Popoiyik**]



Hello; **Oki**



Goodbye; **Kaitamatsin**



Sit down; **Makopiit** [plural: **Makopiik**]













Go outside; **Saksit** [plural: **Saksik**]



Hello, how is everything?; **Oki, tsanitapi?**

Look at this...

Saamis amm kiaayoo	look at this bear	
Saamis amm apotskina	look at this cow	
Saamis amm iimitaa	look at this dog	
Saamis amm aiksiniwa	look at this pig	
Saamis amm poos	look at this cat	

Saamis amm ninaa	look at this man	
Saamis amm akikoan	look at this girl	
Saamis amm aki	look at this woman	
Saamis amm kipitaki	look at this old woman	
Saamis amm saahkomapi	look at this boy	

- **ninna**
- **niksista**
- **nisskani**
- **niisissa**

My

- **ni'ssa**
- **nin'ssta**
- **naahsa**

- **kinna**
- **kiksista**
- **kisskani**
- **kiisissa**

Your

- **ki'ssa**
- **kin'ssta**
- **kaahsa**

- **onni**
- **oksista**
- **osskani**
- **oosissa**

His/Her

- **oo'ssa**
- **on'ssta**
- **maahsa**

My Family

- Ninna anisstawa** _____
- Niksista anisstawa** _____
- Nisskani anisstawa** _____
- Nisissa anisstawa** _____
- Ni'ssa anisstawa** _____
- Nin'ssta anisstawa** _____
- Naahsa anisstawa** _____



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