

ʔuwii • Introduction

Welcome to the Family Lessons for Nuuchahnulth. These lessons will support you to practise and speak your language in your home, with your family and friends, every day. They present useful, everyday language for activities like eating and cooking together, talking about your day, and playing games.

If you master the first eight lessons, you will be able to speak some Nuuchahnulth every day, and to facilitate others' learning. Other lessons introduce language for talking about nature and one's daily routine, for talking to children and playing games, and for sharing stories, news, and teachings.

In this first lesson, you will set up a rhythm for your regular practices. This will include the following steps.

- §1. making a weekly language plan
- §2. learning a basic greeting
- §3. learning an opening statement or prayer
- §4. learning language for taking turns
- §5. learning lifelines for when you need help

This lesson also introduces some of the learning techniques that are used in the Family Lessons, such as wordlists, mini-conversations, word-building, and hand signs.

The Family Lessons use a few technical terms, like *sentence*, *clause*, *ending*, *mood*, and *paradigm*. Aside from this, we have tried

to make the lessons as non-technical as possible. These lessons are about speaking, rather than about grammar.

In order to use these lessons, your group must have at least one member who can read Nuuchahnulth. With the guidance of a skilled mentor, the rest of the group can learn completely orally, without reading. Some communities provide audio or video versions for those who lack a live mentor.

The Family Lessons do not teach you to read or pronounce the language. We recommend the following resources to those who want to improve their pronunciation or reading.

- Language Circle unit 1: Alphabet
- Online Nuuchahnulth alphabet tutorial

We are grateful to our elders and learners for keeping our language alive, to Tseshaht and Ucluelet First Nations, and to Language Keepers Society for supporting the development of these lessons. See the acknowledgements after lesson 8 for a full list of contributors.

?unahp̓it • Beginning

§1. Language plan

First, we will walk you through the steps in making a *language plan*. By this, we mean a weekly schedule for practising your language, and finding partners to practise with.

(1) First, find an elder or mentor who will support your learning, and one or more learning partners. Although it is possible to learn a language on your own, you will be more successful if you have partners and a mentor. If you lack a mentor, some communities provide audio or video to guide you through the lessons.

(2) Make a weekly schedule for practising your language with your partners. You can practise as little as one hour a week, but

more is better. Short, frequent practices are better than long, infrequent practices.

(3) Use your language every day, even if it's just one complete sentence, like 'Good morning', 'Have a good day', or 'Sleep well.' Ask the people around you if you can speak Nuuchahnulth to them, even if they don't understand. People who are willing to be spoken to even when they don't understand are useful allies.

(4) Keep a short list of complete sentences that you find yourself using every day. After you finish lessons 1-8, you will turn this into a *phrase guide* for the benefit of your partners and allies. Then you will continue to use them every day.

(5) In lesson 8, you will learn how to facilitate and mentor other learners, and to plan your continuing learning journey.

§2. Basic greeting

Our basic greeting includes three *mini-conversations*, which start with ‘Are you okay?’, ‘It’s a nice day’, and ‘What are you doing?’
A mini-conversation consists of just a few lines for two speakers, who we call (A) and (B).

Here is conversation 1. Person (A) speaks first, then person (B), then (A) again. Practise it with your partners.

1A. čăčimḥiḥak..... Are you okay?

1B. čăčimḥimaḥ. I’m okay.

1B. ýuuq^waahak čăčimḥi. Are you okay too?

1A. haaʔa, ýuuq^waamaḥ čăčimḥi..... Yes, I’m okay too.

- ∞ Exercise. Whenever you see a mini-conversation, you should practise it with your partners. Practise conversation 1. Take turns speaking the (A) and (B) roles. Get at least three good repetitions before switching roles.
- ∞ Exercise. Most mini-conversations are followed by exercises. Once you have learned what the exercises are showing you, you should be able to run the conversation without reading. This is an important test that you should do before moving on. Can you run conversation 1 without reading?

- ▶ Note. If you have a group of four or more, we recommend alternating between one-on-one and group practice. You will get the most speaking time by practising with just one other person. Then when you come back together as a group, show the group what you have learned.
- ▶ Note. We say *mini-conversation* to distinguish it from *free conversation*. While a mini-conversation is scripted and short, a free conversation can be about anything, and of any length. We practise mini-conversations first, because you have to know a lot to be able to have free conversations.

Mini-conversations 2 and 3 are the rest of our basic greeting.

When two or more conversations are presented on the same page, you should practise just one at a time. Get several good repetitions of each conversation before trying the next one.

2A. ?uu?uuqukma..... It's a nice day.

2B. ?aanima ?uu?uuquk. It sure is nice.

3A. ?aaqin?aphak. What are you doing?

3B. huuhtakšiiḥaḥ quuquu?aca. I'm learning Nuuchahnulth.

- ∞ Exercise. When you're ready, run through conversations 1-3 one after the other, without reading. Together, these are a basic greeting that you can use every day.
- ∞ Exercise. Send it around. That is, if you have a group of three or more, the first speaker is (A) to their neighbour's (B), then that person speaks to their neighbour, and so on around the circle, until everyone has played both roles.

§3. Openings

It's good to start your practices with an opening statement or prayer. On the following pages are three openings that you can use. Choose one and use it at the beginning of every practice, until you can do it from memory. Then you can start creating your own openings.

4A. Opening statement. ʔuušʔakšiʔeʔicuu hišimyił ʔanisuu huuhtakšiiḥwitas quuquuʔaca. ʔuyačiʔataḥ ḥimaqsti ʔanis ḥačuul siiwa. ʔuḥmaa q^waaʔapqin. čuuč. • Thank you all for gathering to practise speaking Nuuchahnulth. I feel happy to look you all in the face. What we're doing is good. That's all.

4A. Learning prayer. ḥaałapi ḥaʷeeł, ḥačʰaaʔatuʔin q^waaʔapqin
huuḥtakšiiḥ quuquuʔaca. hupiiʔin huʔiip ciqʷakukqin. čuu. • O
Creator, watch over us as we learn. Help us to take back our
language. Amen.

∞ Exercise. These openings are monologues, meaning that they are spoken by just one person. But you can still practise them with a partner. With a partner's help, recite a monologue from memory, without reading. If you get stuck, your partner will prompt you either with the next Nuuchahnulth phrase, or an English phrase that you will then translate.

∞ Exercise. Once you've memorized an opening, don't just recite it without thinking. Think about what it means as you say it. Change it a little bit each time, adding words, taking words out, or changing their order. Keep working on your pronunciation, and try to say it a little more precisely and clearly each time. Eventually, when you're ready, you will be able to

make your own, original openings for different occasions.