



Sahaptin language lessons begin with the alphabet

The " " sound is used to modify sounds. It is done when the throat is made tense and the vocal cords close, closing and opening the lid to the esophagus. Known as the "glottal stop".
Examples:
'á'a crow ach'ai magpie
puúuf blind

The stress mark " " over letters indicates where a person will need to put more stress into the letter sound.

a
The "short a" is made by the tongue being slightly arched between the middle and lowest part of the mouth with a short breath of air. (Sounds like "o" as in the English word "hot")
Examples:
apáp hand ásham wife
am husband wáshat ride

aa
The long "aa" is made by the tongue being slightly arched between the front and back and lowest part of the mouth and held longer. (Sounds like the "a" in father.)
Examples:
káatnam long wáashat worship
táaminwa always dancing

c
The "c" sound is made by the tip of the tongue against the back of the front teeth then releasing the air softly. (Sounds like the "ts" in cats.)
Examples:
máicqi morning cqat quiet, still
músmusc cattle

c'
The "hard c'" is made by the tip of the tongue against the back of the front teeth then releasing the air with the throat. (Sounds like "c" with a catch in the throat.)
Examples:
c'áa near c'í sweet
sc'áat dark c'uníps oak trees

ch
The "ch" sound is made by the tongue against the gum ridge and the roof of the mouth, releasing the air softly. (Sounds like the "ch" as in church.)
Examples:
chúush water chchú be quiet
cháu no

ch'
The "hard ch'" sound is made by the tongue against gum ridge and roof of the mouth with the throat made tense and vocal cords closed. (Sonds like the "ch" with a catch in the throat.)
Examples:
ch'ím sharp nch'í big, large
ch'ich'l proud, arrogant

h
The "h" sound is made by the friction of air passing through the voal cords. (Sounds like the "h" in house.)
Examples:
háwital April hulí wind
háhan root

i
The "i" sound is made with the tongue raised toward the roof of the mouth and front of mouth with short breath of air. (Sounds like the "i" in piece.)
Examples:
ími you ikks little, small
pípsb bone

ii
The "ii" sound is made with the tongue raised toward the roof of the mouth and toward the front of mouth and breath held longer. (Sounds like the "i", but of longer duration.)
Examples:
íi yes íchishkiin in Indian
nífix good

k
The "soft k" sound is made toward back of mouth, stopping the breath and releasing it. (Sounds like the "k" in sky.)
Examples:
kápn digging stick kálxw blue back
kkayáasu arrow salmon

k'
The "hard k'" sound is made toward back of mouth, stopping the breath and releasing it, with throat tense and vocal cords closed. (Sounds like the "k" with catch in the throat.)
Examples:
k'úsi horse k'úsi k'úsi dog
k'áíwa short

kw
The "soft kw" sound is produced by lips forming an o-shape, with breath stopping at the back of the mouth at the piece of skin that dangles in the mouth. (The "k" sound with lips rounded.)
Examples:
áikws cottontail rabbit kwiyáam true
kwíkw whistle

kw'
The "hard kw'" sound is produced by lips forming an o-shape with breath stopping at back of mouth at the piece of skin that dangles in the mouth, but done with the throat tense and vocal cords closed. (The "kw" sound with catch in the throat.)
Examples:
tkwí day kw'ayawí cougar

l
The "l" sound is made when the tongue touches the back of the teeth and forms a grove allowing air out of both sides of the tongue (Sounds like the "l" in like.)
lákas mouse latít flower
lulúu smooth

I C H I S H K I N		a	aa	c	c'	ch	ch'	h
	i	ii	k	k'	kw	kw'	l	l'
	m	n	p	p'	q	q'	qw	qw'
	s	sh	t	t'	tt	tt'	u	uu
	w	x	xw	y				

l'
The "barred l (l')" is made when the tongue forms a groove allowing air out of both sides of tongue or just one side and made with a friction of hissing and hushing. (Sound somewhat similar to "l" in clash in a rapid speech.)
Examples:
famtX head wít' am moccasins
fáfx dirt

m
The "m" sound is made by the two lips coming together and touching and out through the nose. (Sounds like the "m" in mouth.)
Examples:
máamin appaloosa horse miimím dove
miyúux chief

n
The "n" sound is produced when the tongue touches the back of teeth and the sound comes out through the nose. (Sounds like the "n" in nice.)
Examples:
nawát belly núsux salmon
nushnu nose

p
The "soft p" sound is made by lips together and stopping the outgoing breath, then releasing the air. (Sounds like the "p" in spoon.)
Examples:
pápsh fir tree plásh white
napt two

p'
The "hard p'" sound is made by the lips together, stopping outgoing breath then releasing, with the throat made tense and vocal cords almost closed. (The "p" sound with a catch in the throat.)
Examples:
p'fp'i intestines p'fím nighthawk
p'ushtái hill

q
The "q" sound is made in as far back of the mouth as the tongue can go, but stopping the air then releasing. (There is no English sound similar to this; closest to it would be the "k" sound in key.)
Examples:
máicqi morning qu heavy
wísqaga robin

q'
The "hard q'" sound is made in as far back of the mouth as the tongue can go, but stopping the air then releasing, with the throat tensed and the vocal cords closed. (The "q" sound made with a catch in the throat.)
Examples:
q'aiq'ai calf, colt q'uxwí knee
q'shpali buzzard

qw
The "qw" sound is made by rounding the lips with the tongue almost touching back of mouth, stopping the air then releasing. (The "q" sound with the lips rounded.)
Examples:
qwítp healthy/strong/active qwalqwíá turkey
qwi smells good

qw'
The "hard qw'" sound is made by rounding the lips with the tongue amost touching back of mouth, stopping the air then releasing it, with the throat tense and vocal cords closed. (The "qw" sound made with a catch in the throat.)
Examples:
nuqw'ash throat qw'shím disobedient
persistently

s
The "s" sound is made by the tongue touching the back of the teeth allowing the air to pass through a narrow passage. (Sounds like the "s" in sing.)
Examples:
sawít Indian carrot spílya coyote
asm' eel

sh
The "sh" sound is made around the gum ridge and roof of mouth with a hissing or hushing sound. (Sounds like the "sh" in show.)
Examples:
sháxat raspberry shusháinsh steelhead
shwá forehead

t
The "t" sound is made with tongue touching the back of the teeth, stopping the air briefly then releasing it. (Sounds like the "t" in top.)
Examples:
táp'aash pine tree táshash fish duck
tiskái skunk

t'
The "hard t'" sound is made with the tongue touching the back of the teeth, stopping the air briefly then releasing it and done with the throat tensed and vocal cords closed. (The "t" sound made with a catch in the throat.)
Examples:
t'íxt'ix swallow t'xt'x grasshopper
t'álp wampum

tt'
The "tt'" sound is made with the tongue touching the back of teeth and forming a groove, allowing air out sides of tongue and made with a hissing/hushing sound. (Combinatin of "t" and "l" sounds.)
Examples:
ttúpt jump ktáak jagged
ptfx bitter, pepper

tt'
The "tt'" sound is made with the tongue touching back of teeth and forming a groove, allowing air out sides of tongue and made with a hissing/hushing sound, with the throat made tense and vocal cords closed. (Same as the "tt'" sound with a catch in the throat.)
Examples:
tt'álk blacktail deer tt'áaxw all
tt'tmx redwing black bird

u
The "u" sound is made with lips rounded with the tongue high and back area of mouth, and of short duration. (Sounds like "u" in pull.)
Examples:
útpas blanket, robe múps fawn
púsha father's father

uu
The "uu" sound is made with the lips rounded with the tongue high and back area of mouth, and is long duration. (Sounds like the "oo" in pool.)
Examples:
púush juniper tree ttúush some
p'úus cat

w
The "w" sound is made with the lips rounded and vocal cords vibrating. (Sounds like the "w" as in wool.)
Examples:
wawá mosquito watám lake
wiláfk jackrabbit

x
The "x" sound is made when the back of the tongue touches the back part of the roof of the mouth allowing a friction noise. (No sound in English, closest would be the "ch" in the word "Bach".)
Examples:
xúlxl trout xaslú star
muxláí fly xálísh wolf
xátxat duck

xw
The "xw" sound is made by rounding the lips, with the back of the tongue touching the back part of the roof of the mouth allowing a friction noise. (The "x" sound pronounced with the lips rounded.)
Examples:
xwtataí pillow c'xwílf teepee
xwáami high or above xwáshwai blue jay
xwayamá golden eagle

y
The "y" sound is made by the mouth in same position for the vowel "i", the moving to position needed for complete sound of "y". (Sounds like "y" as in yesterday.)
Examples:
yápash grease yáamash mule deer
wiyapníf bull elk

y
The "y" sound is made by the mouth in same position for the vowel "i", the moving to position needed for complete sound of "y". (Sounds like "y" as in yesterday.)
Examples:
yápash grease yáamash mule deer
wiyapníf bull elk

Language lessons will begin on Monday, October 30 on KWSO, 91.9 FM, during Talking Drum at 6:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 2:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. The lessons will run in their entirety on Sundays beginning at 12.

All information provided by the Tribal Language Program
For further information, call 553-2201