



Intro to
nêhiyawêwin
(Plains Cree, Y-dialect)



1.

What is Fluency?

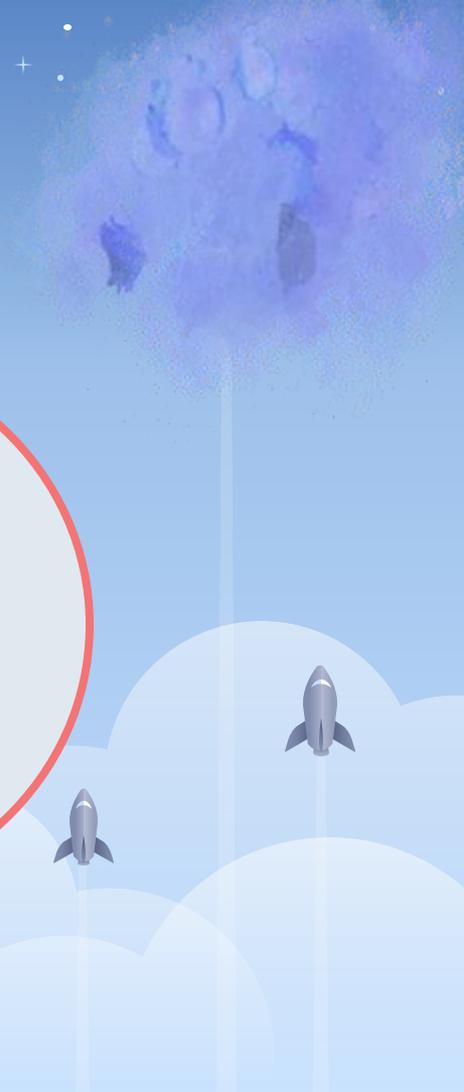
What can you expect when learning
nêhiyawêwin?



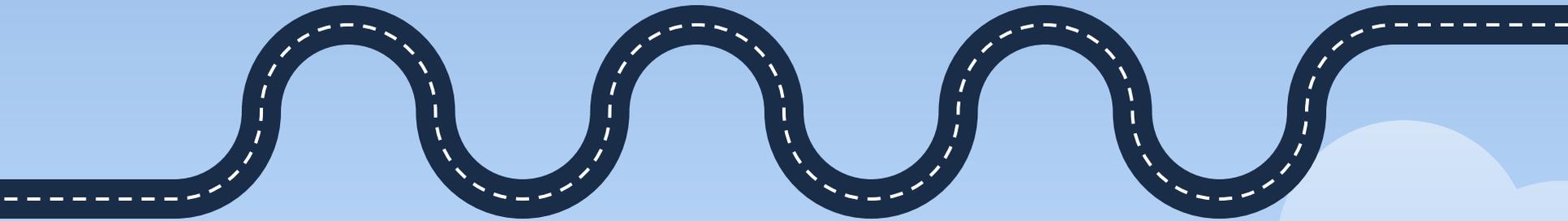
Fluency is not a binary

FLUENT

NOT
FLUENT



Fluency is a spectrum



Stages of Second Language Proficiency

Low Beginner

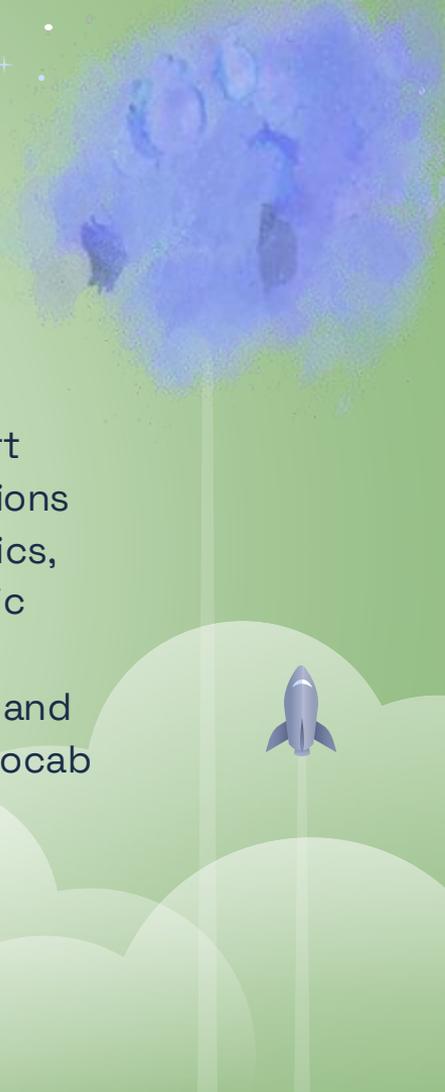
Limited vocab, difficulties with pronunciation. Single words or memorized sentences, can respond to basic questions. Can rely heavily on gestures and actions to communicate.

Mid Beginner

Short word sentences, ask and answer simple content questions (who, what, when, where) and used memorized introductions and phrases. Use basic present/past tense.

High Beginner

Participate in short routine conversations about familiar topics, communicate basic needs, talk about things in the past and present, enough vocab for basic communication.



Stages of Second Language Proficiency

Low Intermediate

Participate fully in certain social situations, and with effort in routine social conversations about topics such as weather or food. Use connective words (but, then, and). Still speak with hesitation and pauses.

Mid Intermediate

Communicate comfortably in most daily situations with fluent speakers. Problem solve and make decisions in certain situations. Speak about past, present, and future.

High Intermediate

Confidently participate in daily conversations with fluent speakers and provide descriptions and opinions on most topics. Fluent speakers can more easily understand the learner.



Stages of Second Language Proficiency

Low Advanced

Communicate accurately and effectively in most educational and social contexts. Incorporate humour, engage in debates, discuss topics like politics.

Mid Advanced

Participate in meetings and interviews using complex academic language, can lead meetings and interactions in small, familiar groups. Grammar and pronunciation no longer affect communication.

High Advanced

Lead large, formal discussions on complex topics and can speak accurately in a specialized field of study.

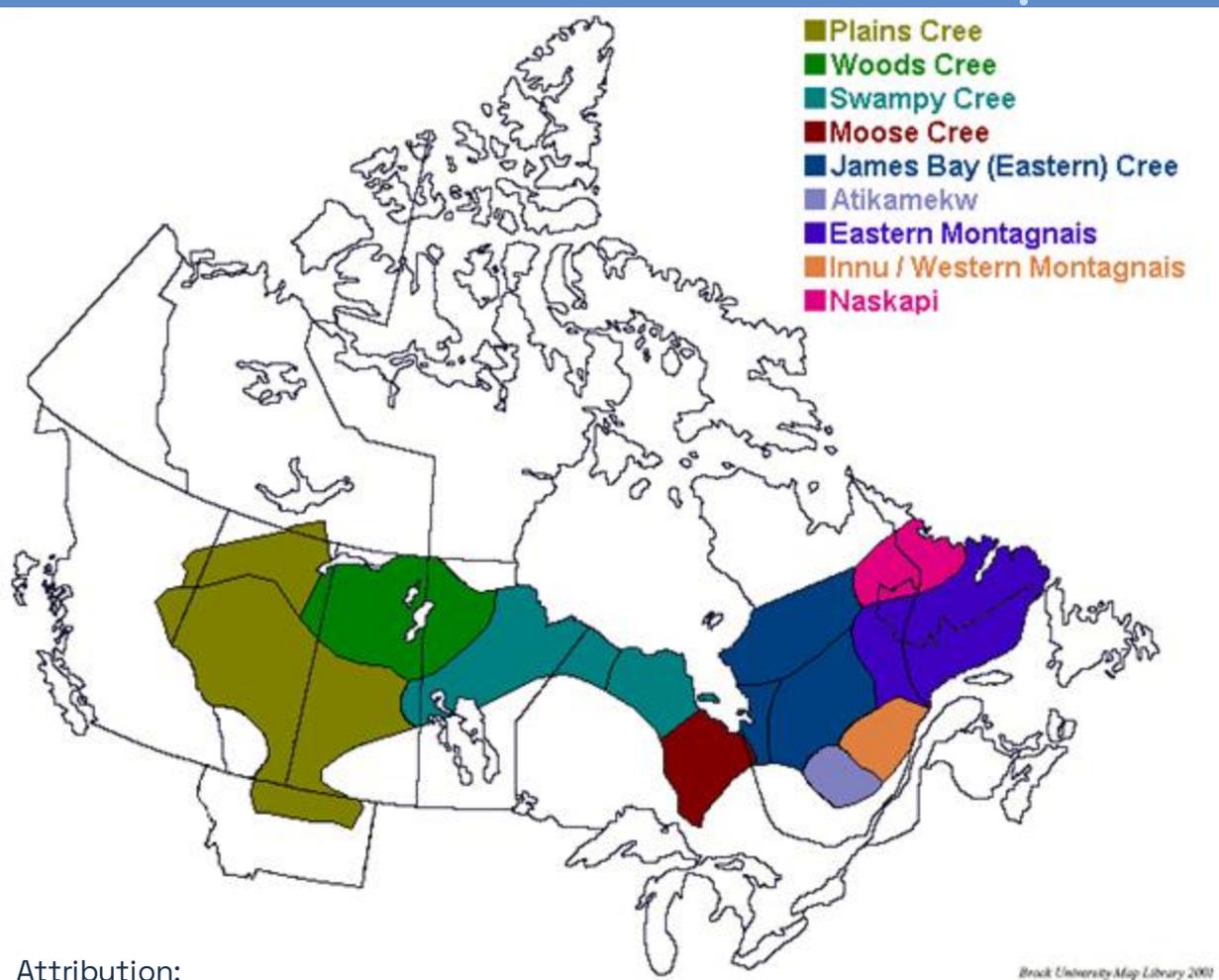


2.

Cree Language Breadth

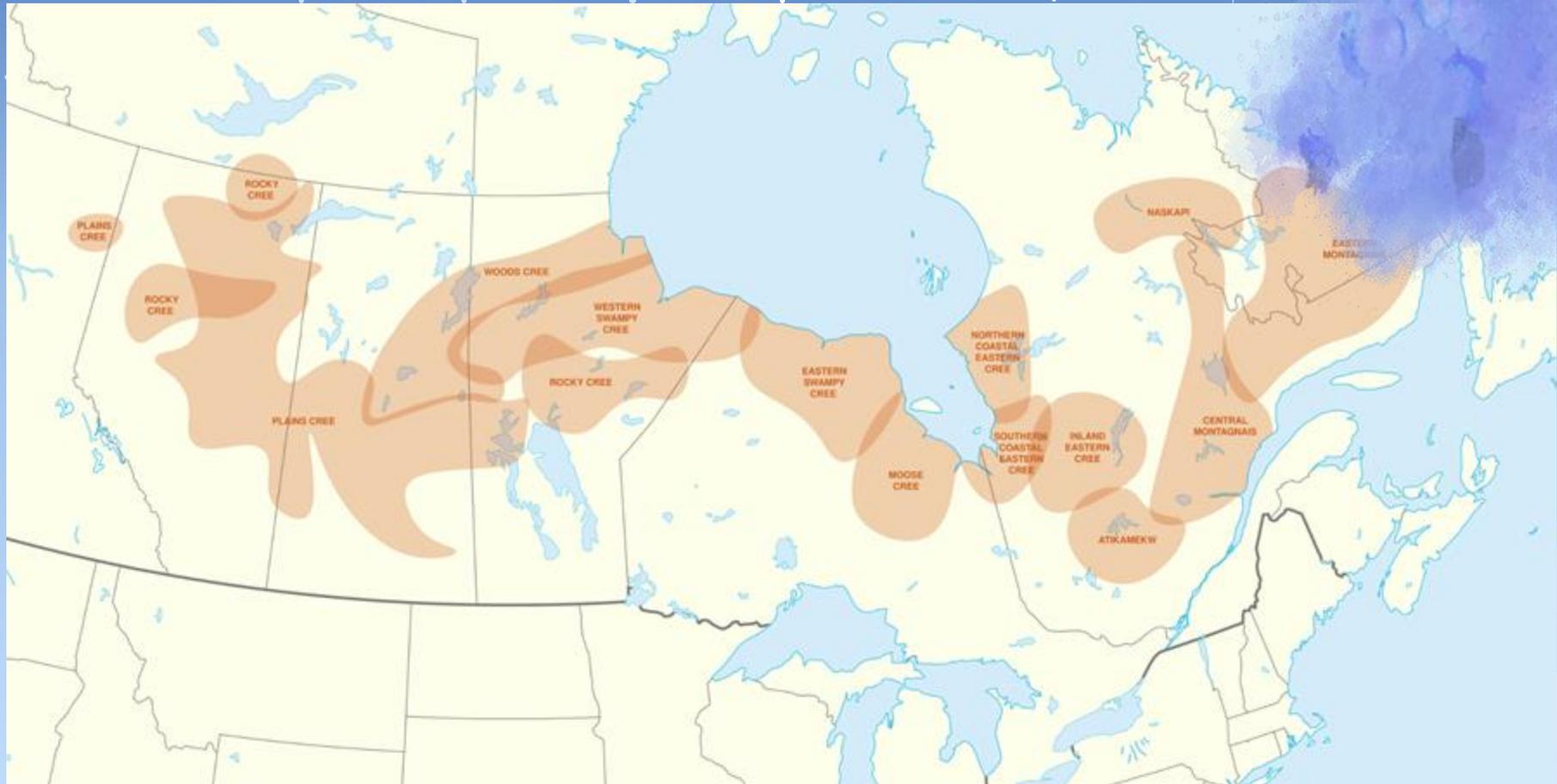
What's the use of learning one specific
dialect of Cree?





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Algonquian Languages



Differences in dialects

When you learn where the change happens, you can adapt to different dialects.

nêhiyawêwin Plains Cree	“Y” dialect	miywêyih ⁺ tam	central Alberta, southern Saskatchewan
Woods Cree (Rock Cree)	“TH” dialect	mithwêthi ⁺ htam	northern Saskatchewan, areas in Manitoba
Moose Cree	“L” dialect	milwêli ⁺ htam	Moose Factory and Hudson’s Bay area
Atikamekw Cree	“R” dialect	mirwêri ⁺ htam	Quebec
Swampy Cree	“N” dialect	minwêni ⁺ htam	east-central Saskatchewan, Manitoba, northern Ontario

y vs. ý

When marked, there is no difference in how you pronounce the y - it's just to mark a dialectical option.

kayâs vs ýôtin

 kayâs in all dialects

ýôtin, nôtin, thôtin 



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3.

Standardization

What are the issues?



Standard Cree Alphabet (SCA)

- More commonly called the Standard Roman Orthography (SRO)
 - But: every community has specific vocabulary,
 - every community has its own “accent”
 - How do we account for different dialects?
 - What about syllabics?

What does a “standard Cree” represent, and who decides?



English is not a phonetic language, and we cannot pretend that we can use it to accurately represent how Cree sounds.



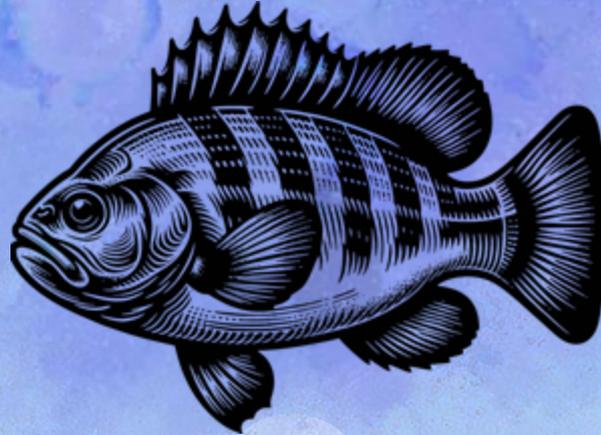


GHOTI

GHOTI



GHOTI



GH as in “enough” and “tough”
O as in “women”
TI as in “nation”

amisk	beaver	umisk, ammisk, amisk, aumisk, omisk
kâkwa	porcupine	caqua, cawqua, cawquaw, coquaw
sâkwês	mink, ermine	sac quaws, sacwess, sakuese

The Standard Cree Alphabet is a DIFFERENT alphabet, one specific to the Cree language. This isn't strange - Spanish, French, Portuguese, and other languages all use the same alphabet as English but the letters can be pronounced differently in each language.

The Standard Cree Alphabet is NOT phonetic either!

How to Spell it in Cree

(The Standard Roman Orthography)

a	á	ǎ	ǵ	h	i	k	m	n	o	ó	p	s	t	w	y
á	c	é	h	i	k	m	n	o	ó	p	s	t	w	y	
é	á	h	i	k	m	n	o	ó	p	s	t	w	y		
h	á	é	i	k	m	n	o	ó	p	s	t	w	y		
i	á	é	h	k	m	n	o	ó	p	s	t	w	y		
k	á	é	h	i	n	o	ó	p	s	t	w	y			
m	á	é	h	i	k	n	o	ó	p	s	t	w	y		
n	á	é	h	i	k	m	o	ó	p	s	t	w	y		
o	á	é	h	i	k	m	n	ó	p	s	t	w	y		
ó	á	é	h	i	k	m	n	o	p	s	t	w	y		
p	á	é	h	i	k	m	n	o	o	s	t	w	y		
s	á	é	h	i	k	m	n	o	o	p	t	w	y		
t	á	é	h	i	k	m	n	o	o	p	s	w	y		
w	á	é	h	i	k	m	n	o	o	p	s	t	y		
y	á	é	h	i	k	m	n	o	o	p	s	t	w		

Jean Okimásis and Arok Wolvengrey

miywásin ink

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