S.A.I.V.U.S.

SOCIETY TO ADVANCE INDIGENOUS VERNACULARS OF THE UNITED STATES

Lakota Language Tutorial

Mathias Bullerman

www.sioux.saivus.org

Last Updated: 04/29/2011

Disclaimer

SAIVUS recognizes that 'Sioux' is an Anglo term liberally applied to bands of Lakota, and Dakota nations. SAIVUS is adopting the term Sioux and using it for the URL http://sioux.saivus.org because we aspire to create a master guide for learning Dakota and Lakota dialects. For the time being, this resource is on the Lakota language. For more information, please see http://lakota.saivus.org.

Lesson 1: Pronunciation

Lakota pronunciation is fairly difficult for an English speaker to master, and impossible to explain adequately on paper. While most of Lakota's sounds are also found in English, Lakota has a quite a few sounds that the English language lacks, including a couple that are rarely found in any world language. But don't despair! With just a little practice, proficiency is certainly attainable.

The importance of good pronunciation cannot be stressed enough since language use differs substantially between the Lakota and other cultures. The Lakota are one of the only peoples in the world that refrain from 'motherese'; speech is never simplified when speaking to babies (Standing Bear 1978, 7).[1] Language also plays a complex role in religious ceremonies, where it is used to communicate with ethereal beings. The elders say that Lakota is even used to talk to the animals (White Hat Sr. 1999, 4), which the Lakota call **wamákȟaškaŋ** (literally: *living things that move about on the earth*). This statement is substantiated by reports that a meadowlark informed Sitting Bull of his future death, as well Black Elk's recollection of a kingbird that spoke to him.[2]

Be advised, this document describes how Lakota is pronounced based on various reports, but it should not be used as a rubric dictating 'proper' pronunciation. Native speakers of Lakota are the authority on their language, so you should never tell them their speech is incorrect if their manners of speaking differ from the information found here. After all, language is constantly changing and everyone has their own unique accent.

Although there is no vocabulary section in this unit, words for living things will be used in the examples and exercises. Grammatically, living things are treated differently than inanimate objects, so you should commit some of these terms to memory in preparation for the discussion on this matter.

1.1 Sounds

> "**Héčheš hokšíla waŋ kȟúŋšitku kičhílaȟči thí škhé'. Yuŋkȟáŋ aŋpétu waŋ él kȟúŋšitku kiŋ čhaŋk'íŋ iyáya čhaŋké hokšíla kiŋ išnála thiyáta yaŋké čiŋ ičhúŋhaŋ hitȟúŋkala waŋ táku yak'óğa-haŋ čha naȟ'úŋ kéye'. K'éyaš hé winúȟčala kiŋ wóyute mahél yuhá kiŋ hokšíla kiŋ hehánhuŋniyaŋ slolyé šni kéye'. Ho, tkȟá waná lé naȟ'úŋ kiŋ úŋ wóle yuŋkȟáŋ wasná waŋ líla wašté kȟúŋšitku kiŋ gnáka čha hé é čha hitȟúŋkala kiŋ yúta-haŋ kéye'**."

"*Once, a boy lived alone with his grandmother. And one day, when she was out in the woods getting fuel, the boy, who wasn't home by himself, heard a mouse gnawing at something. But until then, he did not know that his grandmother had any food put away; so now he peered around, and found that it was a very fine cake of pemmican, which the mouse was eating*."

- First paragraph of <u>The Turtle Moccasin Boy I</u> from Deloria's <u>Dakota Texts</u>

Lakota contains around the same number of sounds as the English language, but it does not have all the same types of sounds. While Lakota lacks English's 'interdentals' (TH-like sounds) and 'labiodentals' (F/V-like sounds), it is particularly rich in 'fricatives' (CH/SH/S/Z-like sounds). You may even decide that Lakota sounds a bit like French, Arabic or Hebrew, since it has a plethora of 'guttural sounds' (sounds made in the back of the throat).

Focusing on technical aspects of Lakota pronunciation can sharpen your ear, however, if you concentrate too hard on speaking correctly you could potentially over-articulate. Relax and don't be afraid to sound a little sloppy; remember that native Lakota speakers don't sound crisp all the time. It may be more to your advantage to simply get a feel for how the language flows.

In olden days, Lakota was written using pictographs that were painted spirally on hides during the winter, and later in ledger books. These drawings, though impressionistically simplistic, were far more intricate than childish doodles. The meanings of most symbols are not immediately obvious to foreigners, and some take on modifying marks. Illustrations were arranged in a special order, and once properly decoded, could contain as much information as an entire sentence.

A Selection from the Winter Count of Cloud Shield
(On display at http://wintercounts.si.edu)

It rained stars.

They fought with the Cheyennes.
(stripes on arm represent the Cheyenne tribe)

They killed a very fat buffalo bull.

They fought the Pawnees across the ice on the North Platte [River].

Today Siouan languages are written using Roman letters, which were introduced by various missionaries as early as 1840.

1.2 Oral Vowels

Lakota is written with the same five vowels as English, but in Lakota each of them are pronounced in one way only. These vowels are called ***oral vowels*** in contrast to ***nasal vowels*** (see ***1.3 Nasal Vowels***).

Oral Vowel	***Pronunciation***
a	"ah" as in 'tall', only shorter; ***IPA:*** /a/
e	"eh" as in the Australian pronunciation of the word 'bed'; ***IPA:*** /e/
i	"ee" as in 'ski'; ***IPA:*** /i/ ɪ?
o	"oh" as in 'okay'; ***IPA:*** /o/
u	"oo" as in 'duke'; ***IPA:*** /u/

See ***Appendix 1a*** for a discussion of the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet), an alternate transcription system.

Even though the Lakota **i** and English I both sound like "ee", this does not mean they are identical, and this goes for all other vowels. Lakota speakers consistently articulate vowels with slightly different mouth and tongue positions than English speakers, causing the vowels to sound somewhat different. In fact, not only is the English "ee" is different from the Lakota "ee", both the English and Lakota "ee"s sound different from Italian's "ee", which sounds different from Hawaiian's "ee", and so forth.

A Lakota speaker can detect your English accent simply by listening to the way you pronounce **o**. You may not realize it, but in English O is always pronounced with a W sound following it.[3]

This is obvious in words like 'low' or 'mow' because the W is written, but often times the W is not transliterated. Words like 'go', and 'toe' still end in a W sound, even though a W isn't included in the spelling. In fact, there is not a single English word in which the lips don't round after an O is produced!

In contrast, all of Lakota's vowels are ***pure***, which means **o** does not necessarily pattern with **w**. Therefore, a word like **no** is always pronounced as "noh" in Lakota and never as "nohw" like it would be in English.

'no'

English Pronunciation	***Lakota Pronunciation***
✖ "nohw"	✔ "noh"

To say **no**, try pronouncing the English word 'no' but freeze your lips exactly midway into the utterance. The resulting sound should resemble the Lakota pronunciation. The key is to keep your lips still.

Less noticeably, English speakers tend to form a W at the end of "oo" and a Y after "ee", and perhaps after "eh" as well. This is especially apparent if they have a western accent, and many people have a hint of one without realizing it. So, pay special attention to how native speakers of Lakota pronounce **u**, **i** and **e**. Make sure you are not producing them as **uw**, **iy** and **ey**.

1.3 Nasal Vowels

Like French, some of Lakota's vowels have nasal versions: **a**, **i** and **u**. When these vowels are nasalized, their sounds change to "uh" as in 'above', "ih" as in 'sick', and "euh" as in 'book'. Hold your nose and say "ih." The resulting sound should resemble what nasal **i** sounds like.

Of course, speakers of languages with nasal vowels don't go around holding their noses all the time. Try saying the word 'on'. Notice that the I in 'in' sounds exactly like the "ih" you produced while holding your nose. Pronounce 'in' again, only this time, try to wean away the N. This is how Lakota speakers produce **iŋ**; by directing the flow of air into their nasal cavity.

Nasal vowels are denoted by writing an 'engma' or 'eng', **ŋ**, after them (formerly the Greek letter 'eta': η). This **ŋ** is not pronounced; it merely signifies the fact that the preceding vowel is nasal.

You can think of **ŋ** like the letter E in English words such as 'shine' or 'wine'. Note that this E is not pronounced; it is merely there to have you read 'I' as "ay" rather than "ih", as opposed to 'shin' and 'win'.

Nasal Vowel	***Pronunciation***
aŋ	Nasal "uh", as in 'canola'. ***IPA:*** /ã/ [ə̃]
	čhaŋkátotola (*woodpecker*)
iŋ	Nasal "ih" as in 'din'; but without the -N; ***IPA:*** /ĩ/ [ɪ̃]
	ziŋtkáȟo (*bluebird*)
uŋ	"euh" as in 'book', only nasal. **Uŋ** is not found in English, but try pronouncing 'book' with an -N instead of a -K. ***IPA:*** /ũ/ [ʊ̃]
	uŋpȟáŋ (*female elk*)

In old texts, **uŋ** is sometimes written as **oŋ**, but in most cases this is just **uŋ** in disguise.[4]

In cases where changing an oral vowel to a nasal vowel (or vice versa) will not affect the meaning of a word, whether a particular vowel is nasal differs between communities of speakers and even individual speakers, especially in cases of **iŋ** versus **i** (Boas 1941, 4). For instance, some pronounce the word for *mourning dove* as **wakíŋyela**, but others as **wakíyela** (*mourning dove*).

Aside from nasal vowels, Lakota has many other sounds that are written using two letters. A set of two letters used to record a single sound is called a ***digraph***. In capitalization, only the first member of a digraph is capitalized, thus capital **aŋ** is **Aŋ** ***NOT*** **AŊ**.

1.4 Long Vowels

Vowels written two times in a row are called ***long vowels***, and they are twice as long in duration than single vowels. Thus, while **u** is "oo", **uu** is "oooo". Be careful not to pronounce **ee** as **i** "ee", and **oo** as **u** "oo". In slow speech, they are pronounced as if there was a space between; for instance **aa** is pronounced "ah ah", with no **khéze** or anything else in between.

When nasal vowels are long, their sound value changes to that of oral **a**, **i**, and **u**, but they still maintain their nasality.

Long Vowel	*Pronunciation*
aa	"ah ah" or "ahhh" as in 'f<u>a</u>ther'; ***IPA:*** [aa] or [aː]
ee	"eh eh" or "ehhh"; ***IPA:*** [ee] or [eː]
ii	"ee ee" or "eeee"; ***IPA:*** [ii] or [iː]
oo	"oh oh" or "ohhh"; ***IPA:*** [oo] or [oː]
uu	"oo oo" or "oooo"; ***IPA:*** [uu] or [uː]
aŋaŋ	nasal "uh uh" or nasal "ahhh" as in 's<u>o</u>ng'; only longer and without the -NG; ***IPA:*** [ə̃ə̃] or [ãː]
iŋiŋ	nasal "ih ih" or nasal "eeee" as in 's<u>i</u>ng'; only longer and without the -NG; ***IPA:*** or [ĩĭ] or [ĩː]
uŋuŋ	nasal "euh euh" or nasal "oooo" as in 'd<u>u</u>ne'; only longer and without the -N; ***IPA:*** [ʊ̃ʊ̃] or [ũː]

1.5 Shared Consonants

Below is a list of all of the sounds that the English and Lakota languages share. Some are written slightly differently in Lakota. The next two sections describe sounds that are foreign to English.

Consonant	*Pronunciation*
b h l m n s w y z	Same as English more or less; ***IPA:*** /b[5], h, l, m, n, s, w, y, z/

<u>b</u>lóza (*white pelican*)
<u>h</u>ečá (*turkey vulture/buzzard*)
há<u>l</u>a (*flea*)
<u>m</u>aká (*skunk*)
<u>n</u>akpáǧiča (*marten*)
<u>s</u>iŋkpȟé (*muskrat*)
<u>w</u>azí (*pine tree*)
šiy<u>ó</u> (*wild game bird*)
<u>z</u>ičá (*red squirrel*)

Between two nasal vowels, **h**, **y** and **w** are nasalized (Rood and Taylor 1996, 444).

hiŋ<u>háŋ</u> (*owl*)

čh	Same as English CH as in '<u>ch</u>alk'. The ***diacritic***, or 'marking', over **c** is called a 'wedge', 'caron' or 'háček' pronounced "hAH check". ***IPA:*** /tʃ[h]/

<u>čh</u>áŋ (*tree*)

g — Same as English G as in ‘gorilla’, but never pronounced as a J (as in ‘giant’). **G** is also never silent (as in ‘gnome’), which is important because **g** only occurs in clusters with **n**, **l** and **m**. ***IPA:*** /k/ [g][5]

gmahú (*black walnut tree*)

š — **S** with a wedge is the same as English SH as in ‘shell’. ***IPA:*** /ʃ/

šúŋka (*dog*)

ž — **Z** with a wedge sounds like English Z only less dental. This sound is present in a few English words such as ‘pleasure’ and ‘garage’, but not many. ***IPA:*** /ʒ/

tȟažúška (*ant*)

’ — (marks the **khéze**, known to English speakers as the ***glottal stop*)**. The glottal stop is a sudden pause in speech. This is the break you hear in the interjection “uh-oh”; the dash between ‘uh’ and ‘oh’ is where the glottal stop occurs. It can also be heard in the middle of the words ‘button’ and ‘kitten’, where the Ts are not actually pronounced.

In Lakota, the **khéze** is primarily written after certain consonants, especially **s**, **š** and **ȟ** (for **ȟ**, see ***1.7: Guttural Consonants***). ***IPA:*** /ʔ/

kȟokȟóyaȟ’aŋla (*chicken*/*poultry*)

The **khéze** goes at the end of a word that ends in a vowel, if it is the last word of a sentence.

The sounds you know as K, P and T in English are written with an **h** after them in Lakota. However, like the **ŋ** in nasal vowels, this **h** is not pronounced.

Aspirated Consonant	***Pronunciation***
kh	Same as English K as in ‘kin’. ***IPA:*** /k^h/
	khéya (*snapping turtle*)
ph	Same as English P as in ‘pill’. Note that in Lakota **ph** is never pronounced as F (as in ‘telephone’). ***IPA:*** /p^h/
	pheží (*grass*)
th	Same as English T as in ‘tin’. Note that in Lakota **th** does not represent English’s TH sound, which is found in words like ‘thorn’ and ‘bathe’. ***IPA:*** /t^h/
	thúki (*clam*)

1.6 Unaspirated Consonants

Aspiration is a short burst of air that sometimes follows K, P and T. In English, K, P and T are unaspirated after S, and aspirated pretty much everywhere else. So, while there is aspiration following the K in 'kit', there is no aspiration following the K in 'skit'. You will notice that the K in 'skit' sounds a bit cleaner or harder sounding than the one in 'kit'; there is less white noise following it.

English speakers generally do not notice the difference between aspirated and unaspirated K, P and T. In fact, it nearly impossible for an English speaker to distinguish K, P and T from G, B and D. The only difference between them is that the vocal chords vibrate when you say G, B, or D, but not when you say K, P, and T.

Touch your Adam's apple and say "aaah". You will notice a buzzing sensation. Now say "sss". Now there should be no buzzing. Sounds that make your vocal box buzz are said to be ***voiced***, otherwise they are ***unvoiced***. K, P and T are unvoiced, unlike G, B and D.

Aspiration is trivial in English because it does not affect the meaning of words. If you pronounce "skit" with an aspirated K instead of an unaspirated K, it just causes you to sound a bit of. On the contrary, aspiration is very important to the Lakota language in that it can change the meaning of a word. If you pronounce the word **kíza** (*to creak*) in Lakota with the K in 'kit' rather than the one in 'skit', you'll end up saying **khíza** (*to fight*)! For this very reason, the brains of native Lakota speakers are tuned to pick up on the difference.

In Lakota, unaspirated stops CH, K, P, and T written the same as regular **čh**, **kh**, **ph**, and **th**, only they lack the **h**.

Unaspirated Consonant	***Pronunciation***
č	Sounds something like an English J (as in 'jury'), however, it is unvoiced. When an English speaker says "ah jah" the vocal chords vibrate throughout the entire utterance, but when a Lakota speaker says **ača** the vocal chords vibrate for the initial "ah", temporarily pause for **č**, and start up again for the final "ah". Of course, this all happens more quickly than the blink of an eye, so for starters you can just pronounce **č** as English J. Hopefully the wedge above **č** will remind you never to pronounce it as a K or an S (as in 'corn' or 'cereal'); ***IPA:*** /tʃ/ **čaŋšká** (*red-tailed hawk*)
k	Sounds more like the K in 'skill' than the one in 'kill'. Whereas **kh** sounds like the K H sequence in 'ask hall', **k** sounds like the K in 'ask all'. Remember, the Lakota **k** is never silent (as in 'knife'). ***IPA:*** /k/ **kimímela** (*butterfly*)
p	As with **k**, **p** sounds more like the P in 'spill' than the one in 'pill'. Whereas **ph** sounds like the P H sequence in 'wasp hill', **p** sounds like the P in 'wasp ill'. ***IPA:*** /p/ **píško** (*nighthawk*)
t	As with **k** and **p**, **t** sounds more like the T in 'still' than the one in 'till'.

Whereas **th** sounds like the T H sequence in ‘nest hacked’, **t** sounds like the T in ‘nest act’. ***IPA:*** /t/

t̠áku (*creature*)

If you are having trouble producing unaspirated **k**, **p** and **t**, just pronounce them as English G, B and D, respectively. Doing so will not lead to a miscommunication; you will just sound slightly off. **K**, **p**, and **t** are approximately three times more frequent than **kh**, **ph**, and **th** and guttural K, P and T (See ***1.7: Guttural Consonants***) combined (Ullrich 2008, 697).

Exercise 1.6: Writing practice
Directions: Each of the following English words is spelled differently from how they sound. Pronounce each of the following words aloud in English. Think about the sounds carefully, then, record how these words would be written in Lakota.

		Example
tea (“tee”)	=	*thi*
1. peal	=	
2. step	=	
3. cheesy	=	
4. shoe	=	
5. Taj Mahal	=	

1.7 Guttural Consonants
Note that Lakota lacks the English consonants F, R, V, and the TH sound, however, Lakota contains a few sounds that are foreign to English called ***gutturals*** or ***uvulars***, named after the ‘uvula’, which is that upside down, keyhole shaped flap in the back of your throat. In all cases they are variations of other consonants found in Lakota like **ǧ**, which is like regular **g** only more guttural.

Guttural Consonant	***Pronunciation***
ǧ	Guttural **g**. **Ǧ** is articulated by closing the throat muscles as you would for **g**, only they don’t close all the way. Anatomically speaking, the back of the tongue approaches the uvula, which is that upside down, keyhole shaped flap in the back of your throat. This sound does not exist in English but it can be heard in French and German. Some people claim it sounds like a gargled or underwater G, or a G made while swallowing. ***IPA:*** /ʁ/ [ʁ, ɣ] **hoǧ̠áŋ** (*fish*) Before **i**, **ǧ** is ‘trilled’, meaning the uvula taps the back of the throat. Think of a sexy growl. ***IPA:*** /ʁ/ [ʀ] **kaŋǧ̠í** (*crow*)

There is also a guttural version of **h**:

Guttural Consonant	***Pronunciation***
ȟ	Guttural **h**. This raspy sound is somewhere between English K and English H. To produce **ȟ**, make an **h** sound as you would normally only you close your velar muscles more. Your velar muscles are the throat muscles that contract when you swallow. Have you ever heard someone imitate the roar of a large crowd by making a strong "hhh" noise? This is something like what **ȟ** sounds like in Lakota. You may have heard this sound[6] in other languages such as Hebrew: 'Chanukah', Spanish: "roja" ('red'), Scottish "loch" ('lake'), German "machen" ('to make'), or Mandarin: "nǐ hǎo" ('hello'). **Ȟ** is almost a voiceless version of **ǧ**. **Ȟ** is useful in creating onomatopoeias. **Ȟaȟá** (*waterfall*) imitates the sound of crashing water (White Hat 1999, 198). **Íȟaȟa**, similar to "ha ha" in English, means *to laugh at*. **Ȟná** means *to growl or grunt like a bear*. ***IPA:*** /χ/ **heȟáka** (*male elk*)

In Lakota, and some dialects of Dakota, guttural **ȟ** comes after the unaspirated consonants **k**, **p** and **t**. Some call **kȟ**, **pȟ**, and **tȟ** the ***ȟ-aspirated stops***.

Because both consonants that comprise **kȟ**, **pȟ**, and **tȟ** are pronounced in unison, they are considered single sounds, just like English CH is a single sound even though it consists of T and SH pronounced simultaneously. Recall that 'digraph' is the term for single sounds that are written as two.

Guttural Consonant	***Pronunciation***
kȟ	Guttural **k**; **k** pronounced simultaneously with **ȟ**. ***IPA:*** /k^h/ [$k^χ$] **kȟukȟúše** (*pig*)
pȟ	Guttural **p**; **p** pronounced simultaneously with **ȟ**. ***IPA:*** /p^h/ [$p^χ$] **pȟahíŋ** (*porcupine*)
tȟ	Guttural **t**; **t** pronounced simultaneously with **ȟ**. ***IPA:*** /t^h/ [$t^χ$] **tȟaŋpá** (*white birch*)

There is a rule governing where **kh**, **ph**, and **th** appear in relation to other sounds, as opposed to **kȟ**, **pȟ**, and **tȟ**: **kh**, **ph**, and **th** become **kȟ**, **pȟ**, and **tȟ** before **a**, **aŋ**, **o**, and **uŋ**, but before **e** they can be either. Since it is challenging to memorize and apply this rule, and it is not predictive before **e**, most find it easier to make the distinction in writing.

If guttural **kȟ**, **pȟ**, and **tȟ** are hard for you to make, you can pronounce them as if they were a normal English K, P and T (which are the same as **kh**, **ph** and **th** in Lakota). Doing so will not change the meaning of a word, and in fact this is how they are pronounced in some dialects of Dakota and

Nakoda. Besides, **k**, **kh**, **p**, **ph**, **t**, and **th**, are 90% more common than **kȟ**, **pȟ**, and **tȟ** in discourse (Ullrich 2008, 697).

Note that you cannot get away with pronouncing lone guttural **ȟ** as regular **h**, however, as this does make a difference in the meaning of a word:

hoká (*eel*) **ȟoká** (*badger*)

1.8 Ejective Consonants

There is one group of Lakota sounds that is never heard in English, and is quite rare among the world's languages. An apostrophe after a **č**, **k**, **p**, or **t** denotes ***ejective consonants***.[7] **Č'**, **k'**, **p'**, **t'** sound like they have a click after them, and are often described as 'explosive'.

To produce **p'**, per say, try pronouncing the word 'pea', but first take the break in "uh-oh" (represented by the dash) and put it right after the initial P: 'p-ea'. This should sound somewhat close to **p'**. There should be no aspiration after between **p** and **'**, which is why it is written as **p'**, not **ph'**.

Ejective Consonant	***Pronunciation***
č'	Ejective. **č**; **č** pronounced simultaneously with the **khéze**. ***IPA:*** /tʃ'/
	phutéwokič'u (*elephant*)
k'	Ejective **k**; **k** pronounced simultaneously with the **khéze**. ***IPA:*** /k'/
	ptewák'iŋ (*work-ox*)
p'	Ejective **p**; **p** pronounced simultaneously with the **khéze**. ***IPA:*** /p'/
	p'é (*American elm*)
t'	Ejective **t**; **t** pronounced simultaneously with the **khéze**. ***IPA:*** /t'/
	t'élanuwé (*sand lizard*)

Only about 1-2% of the time will you encounter an ejective **k'**, **p'**, or **t'** instead of their aspirated (**kh**, **ph**, **th**), unaspirated (**k**, **p**, **t**), or guttural (**kȟ**, **pȟ**, **tȟ**) versions (Ullrich 2008, 698)

1.9 Stress

Sometimes vowels are ***stressed***, meaning they are louder, higher pitched and therefore more noticeable than the other vowels of the word. Stress is indicated in writing by placing an acute accent mark, ´, directly above a vowel.

All stressed vowels are also long, so you must remember that **áŋ**, **íŋ**, and **úŋ** are pronounced as nasal "ah", "ee" and "oo" rather than nasal "uh", "ih" and "euh", even though they're not always written as **áŋaŋ**/**aŋáŋ**, **íŋiŋ**/**iŋíŋ**, or **uŋúŋ**/**uŋúŋ**.

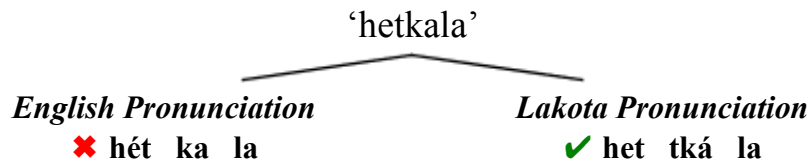
itȟúŋkala (*rodent*) **itȟúŋuŋkala**

The vowel in single syllable words is always stressed, unless it is a function word like **kiŋ** (*the*) or **šni** (*not*). Otherwise, stress usually occurs on the second syllable of words in Lakota, but about a third of the time it occurs on the first syllable. Very rarely, it can even occur on the third syllable.

bló (*potato*)
waŋyéča (*firefly*)

mȧ́yašle (*hill coyote*)

This is important because the way English speakers are naturally inclined to stress a word may not correspond to how Lakota speakers stress a word. If an English speaker sees the word **hetkala** (*chipmunk*) he or she will be most inclined to read it "hEHt kah lah"; putting stress on the first syllable. However, when a Lakota speaker pronounces this word, he or she accentuates the second vowel, saying "heh tkAH lah".



Some words over two syllables may have multiple stressed vowels, but the first is always more prominent than the second. Thus, the **úŋ** in **šúŋšuŋikpísaŋ** (*donkey*) is stressed more than the **í**.

šúŋšuŋikpísaŋ = **šúŋšuŋikpísaŋ**

It is vital to memorize how each word is stressed in Lakota, not only if you want to sound elegant, but also because there are cases where two words differ only in terms of which vowels are stressed. This is not unlike English where 'recórd' means 'to tape music', but 'récord' means 'a disk of music'. Improperly stressing words in Lakota could lead to some dire mistranslations!

maǧȧ́ (*duck/goose*)	**mȧ́ǧa** (*garden*)
pȟesȧ́ (*comb of a rooster*)	**Pȟésa** (*Quapaw*)
otȟȧ́ŋiŋ (*to spread*)	**ótȟaŋiŋ** (*to be visible*)

Exercise 1.9: Stress Practice
Directions: English words have stress just like Lakota. See if you can mark where stress occurs on the following English words. Listening for stress in English will help you notice it better in Lakota.

		Example
holy	=	*hóly*
1. relax	=	_____
2. refrigerator	=	_____
3. cataract	=	_____
4. numerical	=	_____
5. sentimental	=	_____

1.10 Alphabet & Spelling
Now that you know how each letter of Lakota is pronounced, why don't you practice your pronunciation by reciting the names of the letters in the Lakota Alphabet, or **Óowaptaya**; from **óowa** (*letter of the alphabet*) and **ptáya** (*together*). The order in which letters appear is the same as English's Alphabet,

only digraphs go after their single counterparts (**k**, **kh**), and English letters come before variations of English letters (**k**, **kh**, **kȟ**, **k’**).

Óowaptaya

A a	**a**
Aŋ aŋ	**aŋ**
B b	**be**
Č č	**ču**
Čh čh	**čhi**
Č’ č’	**č’ó**
E e	**e**
G g	**gli**
Ǧ ǧ	**ǧu**
H h	**ha**
Ȟ ȟ	**ȟe**
I i	**i**
Iŋ iŋ	**iŋ**
K k	**ku**
Kh kh	**khi**
Kȟ kȟ	**kȟa**
K’ k’	**k’o**
L l	**la**
M m	**ma**
O o	**o**
P p	**pu**
Ph ph	**phi**
Pȟ pȟ	**pȟa**
P’ p’	**p’o**
S s	**sa**
Š š	**še**
T t	**tu**
Th th	**thi**
Tȟ tȟ	**tȟa**
T’ t’	**t’o**
U u	**u**
Uŋ uŋ	**uŋ**
W w	**wa**
Y y	**ya**
Z z	**za**
Ž ž	**že**
’	**khéze**

Learning how to spell words could come in handy, say, if you want to talk about the sound system of Lakota, or spell a word to someone who can’t hear the difference between aspirated and unaspirated consonants. If you ever want to spell a word in Lakota, simply name off each letter in the word.

o gli la a la a o ya aŋ ku e

Remembering the names of Lakota letters does not require you to memorize 38 letters. After all, vowels do not really have special names and the names of most consonants end in **-a**, except for **b**, **ȟ**, **š** and **ž** which end in **-e**, and **g** which ends in **-li**. As for **č**, **k**, **p**, and **t**: unaspirated versions end in **-u**, aspirated versions end in **-i** (because aspiration is easiest to hear after **i**), and ejective versions end in **-o**. So, to memorize the alphabet you just need to remember six basic facts:

- **b**, **ȟ**, **š**, and **ž** end in **-e**
- **g** ends in **-li** and **ǧ** ends in **-u**
- unaspirated consonants (**č**, **k**, **p**, **t**) and **ǧ** end in **-u**
- aspriated consonants (**čh**, **kh**, **ph**, **th**) end in **-i**
- ejective consonants (**č'**, **k'**, **p'**, **t'**) end in **-o**
- otherwise, consonants end in **-a**

Refer to ***Appendix 1b*** for some printable Lakota alphabet flash cards.
Confusingly, although digraphs like **kh** and **kȟ** represent single sounds, in alphabetization the second letter of a digraph is treated as if it its own consonant. Thus, in the Lakota-English Dictionary (2008) we do not find the following sections for words starting with **k**-, **kh**- and **kȟ**-:

k: for entries starting with **ka-**, **kaŋ-**, **ke-**, **ki-**, **kiŋ-**, **ko-**, **ku-**, **kuŋ-**
kh: for entries starting with **kha-**, **khaŋ-**, **khe-**, **khi-**, **khiŋ-**, **kho-**, **khu-**, **khuŋ-**
kȟ: for entries starting with **kȟa-**, **kȟaŋ-**, **kȟe-**, **kȟi-**, **kȟiŋ**, **kȟo-**, **kȟu-**, **kȟuŋ-**

Instead, we find entries starting with **k**-, **kh**-, and **kȟ**-, all under one section:
k: for entries starting with **ka-**, **kaŋ-**, **ke-**, **ki-**, **kiŋ-**
→ then entries starting with **kha-**, **khaŋ-**, **khe-**, **khi-**, **khiŋ**, **kho-**, **khu-**, **khuŋ-**
→ then entries starting with **kȟa-**, **kȟaŋ-**, **kȟe-**, **kȟi-**, **kȟiŋ**, **kȟo-**, **kȟu-**, **kȟuŋ-**
and then continuing to entries starting with **ko-**, **ku-**, **kuŋ-**

This is because the single consonants **h** and **ȟ**, which comprise the second members of the digraphs **kh** and **kȟ**, are alphabetized after **iŋ** but before **o** in the Lakota Alphabet; just as you find H between I and O in English. As we would expect, words starting with ejective **k'** appear at the very end of the section since the **khéze** is the last letter of the alphabet.

The only other bit of information you need to know in order to alphabetize words is that stressed vowels go after non-stressed vowels, and words stressed on their first vowel go after words stressed on their second vowel: **ka**, **ká**, **kaká**, **káka**.

Exercise 1.10a: Spelling Practice

Directions: Spell the following place names, which are of great historical importance to the Lakota people. You can try to do this from memory, but feel free to refer to the alphabet for reference. Either way, this exercise will help you memorize the names of Lakota's letters.

Example

Wazí Aháŋhaŋ (*Pine Ridge*)	=	*wa a za i a ha aŋ ha aŋ*

1. **Ȟesápa** (*The Black Hills*) = _____

2. **Makȟóšiča** (*Badlands*) = _____

3. **Wakpá Wašté** (*Cheyenne River*) = _____

_____

4. **Čhaŋkpé Ópi** (*Wounded Knee*) = _____

5. **Pažóla Otȟúŋwahe** (*Martin, SD*) = _____

_____

Exercise 1.10b: Alphabetization Practice

Directions: Put the following nonce variations of the word **Lakȟóta** in alphabetical order. Here's a hint: don't look at whole word, rather, concentrate on pieces of the words. For example, **Lakȟó** comes before **Lákȟo-** and **-t-** comes before **-t'-**, therefore **Lakȟóta** comes before **Lákota**, and **Lákot'a** comes before **Lákot'a**.

At first seems like a lot to sort through, but the data gets more and more manageable as you cross out the words you have already used.

Lakótha
Lakótȟa
Lak'ótȟa
Lakhót'a
Lakóta
Lakóthaŋ
Lákhotȟa
Láŋk'ot'a
Lakhótȟa
Lák'ot'a

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____

10. _____

1.11 Syllabification

Lakota has some pretty long words, like the word for *donut*, **ağúyabskuyagmigma**, which is a mouthful in itself!

ağúyabskuyagmigma (*donut*)

Breaking this word into syllables, however, makes it much easier to sound out:

a	**ğú**	**yab**	**sku**	**ya**	**g**$_{uh}$	**mi**	**g**$_{uh}$	**ma**
V	CV	CVC	CCV	CV	C_V	CV	C_V	CV

Now it is the equivalent of nine small words. Native speakers can break down words like **ağúyabskuyagmigma** into syllables without even thinking about it because they have subconsciously mastered a handful of principles. By learning these principles yourself, reading long words like *donut* will be, well, a piece of cake.

In short, all you need to know is that each Lakota syllable must contain only 1 vowel, and it can have anywhere from 0-3 consonants: up to 2 at the beginning, and only 1 at the end but only if it's at the end of the word. But, let's break this down into two basic guidelines.

Syllabification Guidelines

1. V (Vowel): each syllable must contain one, and only one, vowel (oral or nasal). This means the number of syllables in a word is proportionate to its number of vowels.

   waúŋčhala (*monkey*) = **wa úŋ ča la**

   Long vowels can be put in two separate syllables in slow speech, or in the same syllable in fast speech. Note that once any syllables contain long vowels, the number of syllables of a word will no longer be proportionate to its number of vowels.

2. CV(C) (Consonant + Vowel) or CCV(C) (Consonant + Consonant + Vowel): Consonants always belong at the beginning of syllables, unless at the end of a word.[9] It doesn't matter whether you treat digraphs the same as single letters or two different letters.

   asápazila (*salamander*) = **a sá pa zi la**
   thať'éčhaŋnuğa (*dotted grayfeather*) = **thť'é čhaŋ nu ğa**
   wóš'iŋ (*bullfrog*) = **wó š'iŋ**

Guideline 1 signifies that the following combinations of vowels (and their equivalents with nasal vowels), never mix together as they would in English. Instead, each individual member should remain audible. In fact, in slow speech there is a **khéze** between the two, though this is never written.

iğúğaothila (*rock wren*) = **iğúğa'othila**
šuŋgwóilake (*work horse*) = **šuŋgwó'ilake**

Be especially wary of pairs like **au** and **oe**, which always mix together in English. **Au** is "ah oo" as in 'Raul' ***NOT*** as in 'automatic', and **oe** is "oh eh"; as in 'Noel' ***NOT*** as in 'Joel'.

Here is a complete list of sounds that always mix in English; be sure to keep these vowels separate when you speak Lakota.

English Diphthongs

ae	"ah" + "eh"	} ***NOT*** like the word 'eye'
ai	"ah" + "ee"	
ao	"ah" + "oh"	} ***NOT*** like the exclamation 'ow!'
au	"ah" + "oo"	
ei	"eh" + "ee"	***NOT*** as in 'rein'
oe	"oh" + "eh"	} ***NOT*** as in 'poignant'
oi	"oh" + "ee"	
ou	"oh" + "oo"	***NOT*** as in 'soul'

Even for assortments of vowels that do not mix in English, make sure you refrain from applying English spelling conventions. **Ea** is "eh ah" as in 'Leah' ***NOT*** as in 'leader', and **io** is "ee oh" as in 'Rio Grande' ***NOT*** as in 'riot'. **Iou** is "ee oh oo" ***NOT*** "ee uh" as in 'serious' or "ai uh" as in 'pious'.

The only exception[8] to this rule is **au**, but only in the word **háu** (*hello/yes*), which is pronounced like the English word 'how'. In this one word alone, the vowel sounds do mix together. It is believed to be a loanword, possibly from Cheyenne.

As for consonant clusters, it is worth noting that Lakota speakers put some consonants together that English speakers never pair up at the beginning of syllables.

Cluster	***Pronunciation***
pt	Similar to 'aptitude'
	pté (*cow*)
tk	Similar to 'Atkins'. In careful speech (in fast speech most English speakers pronounce the T as a glottal stop).
	ziŋtkála (*bird*)
kp	Similar to in 'stinkpot'
	ikpísaŋla (*pronghorn*)

Clusters that contain sounds foreign to English will be extra challenging for English speakers to produce.

Cluster	*Pronunciation*
ȟč	(no English equivalent)
	thá<u>ȟč</u>a (*deer*)
ȟm	(no English equivalent)
	te<u>ȟm</u>úğa (*fly*)
ngğ	(no English equivalent)
	suŋ<u>kğ</u>íla (*fox*) (pronounced as **suŋ<u>ngğ</u>íla**; See ***1.12: Sound Changes***)

Tiny fractions of vowels are audible between the two consonants in the following clusters: **bl**, **gl**, **mn**, **gm**, **gn**, and in **Sičáŋğu** Lakota, **ks** (White Hat Sr. 1999, 43). This mini vowel is called "schwa". It might sound to you like a little **a**, **e**, **i**, **o**, or **u**, but the actual sound value is none of those in particular. To English speakers the vowel fraction in the Lakota compound **mní-sóta** (*sky-tinted water*) sounds like an **i**, which is why the borrowed state name 'Minnesota' is spelled with one. In speech, the consonant and the mini-vowel form their own syllable, but in writing the mini-vowel is not written, so **bl**, **gl**, **mn**, **gm**, **gn** are syllabified as any other consonant cluster.

Cluster	*Pronunciation*
bl:	as in '<u>bal</u>oney'; ***NOT*** as in '<u>bl</u>ue'; ***IPA:*** [bəl]
	wá<u>bl</u>oša (*red-winged blackbird*) = **wá b$_{uh}$lo ša**
	Bl is pronounced **ml** after nasal vowels (See ***1.12: Sound Changes***).
gl:	as in '<u>gal</u>ore'; ***NOT*** as in '<u>gl</u>ow'; ***IPA:*** [gəl]
	a<u>gl</u>éška (*lizard*) = **a g$_{uh}$lé ška**
gm:	as in '<u>Gom</u>orrah'; ***NOT*** as in 'sti<u>gm</u>a'; ***IPA:*** [gəm]
	i<u>gm</u>ú (*cat*) = **i g$_{uh}$mú**
gn:	as in 'mahog<u>an</u>y'; ***NOT*** as in 'mag<u>n</u>et'; ***IPA:*** [gən]
	<u>gn</u>aška (*frog*) = **g$_{uh}$na ška**
mn:	as in '<u>mon</u>otony'; ***NOT*** as in 'a<u>mn</u>esia'; ***IPA:*** [mən]
	khes'á<u>mn</u>a (*stink turtle*) = **khe s'á m$_{uh}$na**

Be advised, compound and reduplicated words can potentially violate the guidelines you have learned. For instance, they can contain syllables ending in consonants that are not at the end of the word. Compound words can contain three adjacent syllables, as in **šuŋ<u>ngbl</u>óka** (*stud*) (**ng** is actually a digraph). In these cases, the first consonant belongs at the end of the previous syllable, and the next two belong at the start of the following syllable. Thus, **šuŋngblóka** is syllabified as **šuŋng blóka**.

Reduplicated words, are words that repeat a part of themselves. For instance **pispíza** (*prairie dog*) is syllabified as **pis pí za** rather than **pi spí za**. This is because the **pis-** was actually copied from the **piz** in **piza**, which was initially the beginning of the word (actually **piz-** was copied, but **z** changes to **s** before **p**).

For now, all you can do is be aware that exceptions like **šuŋngblóka** and **pispíza** exist. Once you become experienced Lakota speaker, and gain knowledge of how compounding and reduplication work, you will be able to recognize these exceptions right off the bat.

Exercise 1.11a: Syllabification Practice
Directions: Break the following Lakota animal words into syllables.

Example

hokȟá (*heron*)	=	*ho kȟá*

1. **tȟanáğila** (*hummingbird*) = _____

2. **maštíŋčala** (*rabbit/hare*) = _____

3. **siŋtíčhapȟe** (*scorpion*) = _____

4. **škípipila** (*chickadee*) = _____

5. **wablúška** (*bug*) = _____

Exercise 1.11b: Reading Practice
Directions: This exercise is designed to wean you off English spelling rules in reading Lakota. The following English words are theoretically possible in the Lakota languages. First, pronounce them as you would in English. Then, pronounce them as if they were Lakota words. You do not need to write anything down; simply check to see if your pronunciations match the descriptions given in the ***Answers*** section.

Example

hose	=	English pronunciation: "hohwz"
	=	Lakota pronunciation: "hoh seh"

1. manual

2. house

3. loathe

4. euphonious

5. automobile

1.12 Sound Changes
Words are generally spelled they way they are produced in careful speech, but sounds can change to ease pronunciation, and speech can get slurred when talking quickly. Interestingly, some of these changes are predictable:

1. **A**, **i**, and **u** in writing are pronounced **aŋ**, **iŋ**, **uŋ** after **m** or **n**. Because of this, after **m** or **n**, **aŋ**, **iŋ**, and **uŋ** are pronounced with exaggerated nasalization to emphasize the difference.

   matúgna (*crayfish*) = **maŋtúgna**
   čhuwínuŋğA (*camel*) = **čhuwínuŋğA**

2. **Aŋb**, **iŋb** and **uŋb** are pronounced **am**, **im** and **um**.

   waŋblí (*eagle*) = **wamlí**

3. **Aŋk**/**aŋk**, **iŋk**/**iŋk** and **uŋk**/**uŋk** are pronounced **ang/aŋng**, **ing/iŋng**, and **ung/uŋng**.

   škečáthaŋka (*wolverine*) = **škečáthaŋngka** (*wolverine*)

Other sound changes are not so intuitive:

4. Unstressed vowels, glides (**y**, **w** and **h**) and the **khéze** are likely to be lost in fast speech.

   wamníyomni (*cocoon*) = **wam$_{uh}$níom$_{uh}$ni**

5. **Aya**, **aye**, and **awa** become **aa**, a long 'ae' as in 'bat' (***IPA:*** [æː]), and **oo** (***IPA:*** [ɔː]) respectively.[10]

   wičhávažipa (*wasp/bee*) = **wičháažipa**

6. When words are pronounced in isolation or at the end of statements, stressed short vowels are devoiced at the end of words, causing them to sound whispered as if an **h** follows them.

   ...**khechá**... (*shaggy dog*) = ...**khecháh**...

While it would be infeasible for you to memorize and apply all of these rules in your speech, once aware of them, you can be sure to listen for them in speech. There is still hope that you can subconsciously acquire these speaking traits, even as an adult.

Other sound changes will be discussed in subsequent lessons; as they only relevant to the process of building words.

1.13 Sound Symbolism

The relationship between the sounds of words and their meanings is not always arbitrary in Lakota, which has an interesting property called ***sound symbolism***. In some words **s**, **š**, and **ȟ** (or their voiced versions **z**, **ž** and **ğ**) can sometimes be swapped to convey gradations; **s**/**z** implies subtlety, **ȟ**/**ğ** symbolizing extremity and **š**/**ž** is inbetween.

s/z **š/ž** **ȟ/ğ**

For instance, whereas the root **-sléčA** means *to split something with ease*, **-šlečA** means *to split something with difficulty*, and **-ȟléčA** means *to have a hard time splitting something*. Here, we went from painless to arduous in task. Likewise, whereas the root **-mnuza** means *to produce a light crunching*

sound as packed snow, **-mnuž̲a** means *to produce a heavy crunching sound* as a stale cracker, and **-mnuğ̲a** means *to produce a very loud cracking sound* as a tree branch.

The implications of trading consonants is not always intuitive, whereas, **s̲óta** means *transparent*, **š̲óta** is the word for *smoke*, and **ȟ̲óta** is the term for *gray*. Here, we went from mostly see-through, to translucent, to opaque, which has little to do with an amount of effort; plus, 'smoke' is a noun. We find a similar example with **z**, **ž** and **ğ**: whereas **z̲i** means *yellow*, **ži̲** means *tawny* and **ğ̲i** means *brown*. In this case we went from light to dark in the spectrum of warm colors (Lakota has no native word for *orange*).

This phenomenon is not always three-fold; sometimes only pairs of contrast exists; **za̲ze̲čа** means *full of small holes*, as in lattice work, and **ğa̲ğ̲éca** means *full of large holes*, but there is no intervening **ža̲žé̲ča** of the nature *full of medium-sized holes*.

While sound symbolism is a definite property of the Lakota language, be cautious of the fact there are many counterexamples to the generalizations we just observed. Just because two words differ only in terms of a select consonant does not necessarily imply they are related in meaning; **ȟá**, in contrast to **šá** (*white*), means *to bury something*, not *opaque white*. A related point is that you cannot freely swap them in any word you like; whereas **sutá** is the word for *strong*, **šutá** and **ȟutá** are meaningless, and therefore do not convey *quite strong* and *very strong*.

1.14 Orthography

The Lakota alphabet you have learned is relatively new. The way most Lakota speaking adults write their language using English letters is myriad, in some cases having been inspired by various missionary systems. Since these missionaries were used to hearing English, they could not distinguish all of Lakota's sounds; particularly the unaspirated contrasts **č**, **k**, **p**, and **t**. Resultantly, native Lakota speakers don't always identify every Lakota sounds in writing.

However, their method of writing Lakota is actually the most efficient because it uses the fewest number of letters and diacritics. It is true that some cases of ambiguity arise that occasionally result in miscommunications. However, in most cases context virtually always eliminates this threat. Given 'huha', if the conversation is about anatomy, a native speaker can tell that 'huha' is **huhá** (*limbs*), but if the conversation is about making leather, he or she knows that 'huha' is **ȟuhá** (*hide scrapings*).

Native speakers have familiarity with their vocabulary and knowledge of various spelling conventions working for them. They can get away with spelling a word like **thiwákiŋyela** (*rock dove*) as 'thiwakinyela' because they already have the word for *rock dove* memorized, and besides that, they're aware that that **ŋ** - not **n** - is typically found in clusters. Likewise, in English it doesn't unofficially matter if someone spells the word 'tomorrow' as 'tommorow' or 'tommorro', because any native English speaker can tell what word you're trying to write. This is because they already have the word – "tuh mah rohw" meaning 'next day' - stored in their brains. Given such, it would be tedious to spell this word 'tuhmahrohw' even though it would reflect the pronunciation more accurately. For native speakers of both languages, words function more as memory aids than a set of pronunciation instructions, and many of them view modern orthographies as unnecessarily complicated.

Problematically, since more and more children are growing up speaking English and learning Lakota as a second language, the traditional method of writing has become the least efficient for future generations. When kids try to acquire their language from reading ad-hoc spellings as opposed to verbal utterances, bad speaking habits form, and their confidence gets destroyed by the number of speaking errors they are inclined to make.

If you are monolingual in English trying to learn Lakota, you can definitely empathize. You've probably never heard the Lakota word for *bald eagle* before. Traditionally, this word is written as 'anukasan'. But if you're used to reading English, the spelling will tempt you to reconstruct it improperly. You might pronounce this word "ah noo kah san" or "ah nuh kah sah"; both of which will cause you to sound funny. On the other hand, if you are given the precise phonetic spelling **anúkȟasaŋ**, which identifies all the sounds of the word, your speech will come out a lot more accurate. I once heard a professor of Native American History butcher 'Wakan Tanka' (*Great Spirit*) as "wAHn

kuhn tAHn kuh", when it should really be pronounced **Wakȟáŋ Tȟáŋka**; this word does not have any Ns at all! While you may never be able to pronounce Lakota perfectly, careless recitation of the word for such a sacred term can be taken as a sign of disrespect.

In light of this fact, most reservations have developed and adopted more drawn out alphabets that identify more sounds of their dialect. Although many Lakota communities have decided on a particular writing system, to date there is no universal standard, and many individual teachers promote their own systems. While the David Rood records guttural H as **ȟ**, Albert White Hat Sr. writes it as **ḣ**, and Violet Catcher as **x**. Contrast the traditional, Williamson's, and modern orthographies used to transcribe the following song by Used-as-a-Shield:

Densmore's Orthography	***Williamson's Orthography***	***Modern Orthography***
Wića´ḣća la kiŋ	**Wića'ḣća la kiŋ**	**Wičháȟča la kiŋ**
heya´pelo´	**heya' pelo'**	**heyá peló'**
maka´kiŋ	**maka' kiŋ**	**makȟá kiŋ**
leće´la	**leće'la**	**lečhála**
tehaŋ yuŋke´lo	**tehaŋ' yuŋke'lo**	**thȟéhanyuŋké ló'**
eha´ pelo´	**eha' pelo'**	**ehá peló'**
ehaŋ´kećoŋ	**ehaŋ'kec'oŋ**	**eháŋkeč'uŋ**
wića´ yaka pelo´	**wića' yaka pelo'**	**wičáyakȟa peló'**

The old men
say
The earth
only
endures
You spoke
truly
You are right.

-<u>The Earth Only Endures</u> by Used-as-a-Shield (Densmore 1918, 357)

You will encounter variation like this in reading miscellaneous Lakota literature, but thankfully, each way of recording Lakota's sounds tend to be very similar.[11] For example, while **c**, **ċ**, **c̊**, **c̀**, **ć**, **č**, and **ç** are all different ways of recording the CH sound, each of them consists of some kind of line near the character.

It may surprise you to know that orthography is a very big deal, and has its own politics. In some cases, the act of white missionaries and linguists creating orthographies for Lakota was criticized as a form of patronization. Recently, programs have been established at major universities to train native speakers of American Indian languages in linguistics, and some have created orthographies for Lakota, but the issue by no means settled. Believe it or not there are articles and books written about Lakota transcription in particular, not to mention debates, committees and conferences dedicated to working out Lakota's orthography dilemma.

Forming the most concise, easy-to-learn, error-free alphabet for writing Lakota is a deceptively complex endeavor, as many considerations must be taken in mind. Should **Lakȟóta iyápi** (*Lakota language*) be written as one word or two? Given that **Lakȟóta iyápi** morphs into **Lakȟól**'**iyápi** in slow speech and **Lakȟótiyapi** in fast speech, should the spelling maintain such flexibility, as 'get you' versus 'getchya' in English? If **iyápi** (*language*) is pronounced the same as **iápi**, should **y** be included in the spelling?

SAIVUS conforms to the writing system of the best Lakota-English, English-Lakota Dictionary, in this case that of the Lakota Language Consortium, which uses an orthography that is widely approved by Lakota speakers. This orthography[12] consolidates the best attributes of previous systems, has been

field tested for usability, and contains a symbol for every sound of the language. Moreover, it has been officially adopted by a large number of Lakota speaking people.

Refer to ***Appendix 1c*** for a comparison of various orthographies. It contains a chart will help you navigate other texts that have been written on the language.

1.15 Common Words & Phrases

Now that you know all about the sounds of Lakota, why don't you try checking your pronunciation with these commonly used words and phrases. Unfortunately, there are not many to try because Lakota does not have so many formal expressions of etiquette. In the old days, courtesy was communicated through tone of voice and body language. Since literacy was nonexistent, there was little need for overt measures of politeness.

Like English, in Lakota some words are used only by children. Just as 'boo-boo' is a children's term in English for 'sore', **múla** is a baby word in Lakota for *cow*. Yet unlike English, in some cases Lakota words segregated according to gender as well. Some anthropologists believe that the emphasis of gender in Plains tribes derives from the division of labor necessary to support life on the range; only men were physically strong enough to hunt the fierce buffalo, so the women did domestic work instead. While it can be argued that the Lakota are more male-dominated than other tribes, say the Iroquois who were matrilineal, the Lakota view gender distinctions more as a means for celebrating male/female differences than preferring one sex over the other.

Gender rules may vary from tribe to tribe, and sometimes men use feminine forms because they grew up around female speakers. The Lakota consider correcting another's speech impolite.

Common Words & Phrases

háu or **háo** — *hello, yes*

Háu, pronounced like the English word 'how', is the classic Indian way of greeting that you've probably seen in the movies, and it is customary to raise your right hand while saying it. Contrary to popular belief, this greeting is restricted to Siouan languages and is not universal among Indians. Although the phrase **háu, kȟolá** (*hello, male friend*) is uttered frequently, **háu** is not used like 'hello' in English. It is restricted to formal occasions, as in a medicine man or a tribal council, and it is only used by men.

Tó also means *yes*, but more in terms of mild assent.

háŋ — *yes*

Unlike **háu**, **háŋ** is informal and today it is used by both sexes, though originally it was restricted to women. It does <u>not</u> mean *hello*.

oháŋ — *okay, sure*

This expression is only used by women. When stressed, **óhaŋ**, it means *among*. For **Sičáŋğu** speakers, the stress is reversed; **óhaŋ** means *okay* and **oháŋ** means *among* (White Hat Sr. 1999, 187).

hiyá — *no*

Hóȟ is a more emphatic version of **hiyá**, but is not used by women. Only use it if you really mean *no!*

To the confusion of English speakers, **háu** and **háŋ** can be translated *no*, but, only in response to a negative question. If someone asks you 'Do you eat meat', unless you are a vegetarian the customary

response in both English and Lakota is ‘yes’. However, if someone asks you the negative version ‘Don’t you eat meat?’ or ‘You don’t eat meat?’, whereas in English it is customary to say ‘no’ as in ‘no, I do not eat meat’, in Lakota it is customary to say ‘yes’, as in ‘yes, that’s correct; I don’t eat meat’.

‘You don’t eat meat?’

English Reply	***Lakota Reply***
no [I do not]	yes [that’s correct]

híhaŋni wašté — *good morning*
Literally, **híhaŋni wašté** means *something was good this morning*. It sounds a bit awkward only because it is a direct translation of the English expression ‘good morning,’ which is idiomatic. Originally, there was nothing equivalent to ‘good morning’ in Lakota. Some would say, as far as the nature-loving Lakota are concerned, all mornings are good.

hókahé! — *Welcome!*
Hókahé means *welcome* as in *welcome to my home* and is not used in response to someone thanking you. It is often exclaimed in response to **háu** (*greetings*). It is also said before races, similar to *get ready*!

Taŋyáŋ yahí. — *It is good that you came.*
This phrase is used as an alternative to **hókahé**.

lililili! — Yelled by women in a high pitched voice to praise warriors for acts of valor.

čhaŋtéšicé — *I’m sorry*
Čhaŋtéšicé literally means *heart feels bad*; i.e. *I am sad*.

You could also ask for forgiveness by forming one of the following verbs into a command:

- masculine: **ékiciktunža yo** (*pardon me*)
- feminine: **ékiciktunža wo** (*pardon me*)

- masculine: **akíčiktunža yo** (*forgive me*)
- feminine: **akíčiktunža wo** (*forgive me*)

hahó hahó! — *thank you!*
Hahó hahó! is an exclamation of gratitude, not a phrase.

- **Hayé hayé** is used in addressing sacred beings.

philámayaye — *thanks*
Today, **philámayaye** is more often used for *thanks* than **hahó hahó** in everyday conversation. It literally means *the deed made me feel good*. **Philámayaye ló** is the masculine form of **philámayaye**, but men often just use the feminine form.

tókša *bye*
Tókša is short for **Tókša akhé waŋčhíyaŋkiŋ kte**, which means *I will see you again eventually*.

Lesson 1 Notes

[1]This information was found in *Land of the Spotted Eagle* written by Luther Standing Bear, an Oglala (possibly Brulé) Sioux (1868-1939). I do not know how well it holds in the modern day. Polynesian cultures such as the Sāmoan people, are famous for lacking motherese.

[2]In his tale, Black Elk clarifies: "this was not a dream, it happened," (Niedhart 2008, 15)

[3]By 'W sound' I am referring to [ʊ].

[4]Ullrich comments that **oŋ** resulted from missionaries hearing **uŋ** as [õ] (Ullrich 2008, 695), but Manhart remarks **oŋ** is simply an alternate spelling of **uŋ** meant to distinguish words with nasal **u** from pronouns and the verbs **úŋ** *to be*, and **úŋ** *to use*, (Buechel & Manhart 1998, xiii).

[5]Some analyses of Lakota phonology classify **b** as phonemically /p/, and **g** as phonemically /k/, however, a very small set of words contain [b] that is not predictable. Rood and Taylor call /b/ 'marginally phonemic' (Rood and Taylor 1996, 443).

[6]Some of these sample languages actually have a velar fricative [x] in their standard dialects, but it sounds very much like the one in Lakota, which is a uvular fricative [χ].

[7]Some linguists consider **s'**, **š'**, and **ȟ'** ejectives.

[8]White Hat Sr. notes that in slang, the vowels in **ea** and **au** (in words besides **háu** (*hello/yes*)) can mix together (White Hat Sr. 1999, 13). His first example is **philámaya<u>ye</u>** → **philámaye<u>a</u>** where the sound change rules given by Rood and Taylor (1996), would predict [philámajæ]. His second example is **lil<u>a</u> <u>wa</u>šte** → **lil<u>au</u>šte**, where we would expect [lila:ʃte].

[9]The only consonants that can end words in Lakota are **l** (most frequent), **n** (second most frequent), **b**, **g**, **m**, **n**, **s**, **š**, and **ȟ** (Rood and Taylor 1996, 446).

[10]The rule, given in Rood and Taylor (1996), is actually more complicated than this. According to his wording, he further claims:

aŋya/ayaŋ/aŋyaŋ/aha/aŋha/ahaŋ/aŋhaŋ	become	**aŋaŋ**
ahe/aŋye/aŋhe	become	long 'ae' (as in 'b<u>a</u>t')
aŋwa/awaŋ/aŋwaŋ	become	**oŋoŋ**

[11]The fact that the diacritics used are somewhat similar to one another is, unfortunately, a drawback in some cases. For instance White Hat Sr. marks guttural consonants with overhead dots, but Manhart marks unaspirated consonants as such.

[12]Rood and Taylor claim, without supporting evidence, that a wedge easier to see than dot (Rood and Taylor 1975, 7). I strongly object to this assumption. An argument in support of dots is that they require less space, thereby consuming less ink, and intuitively are easier and faster to draw consuming one stroke rather than two, especially if permitted to morph into an accent mark in handwriting.

Lesson 1 Review

Oral Vowel	*Pronunciation*
a	"ah" as in 'tall', only shorter; ***IPA:*** /a/
e	"eh" as in the Australian pronunciation of the word 'bed'; ***IPA:*** /e/
i	"ee" as in 'ski'; ***IPA:*** /i/ ɪ?
o	"oh" as in 'okay'; ***IPA:*** /o/
u	"oo" as in 'duke'; ***IPA:*** /u/

e is not **ey**, **o** is not **ow**, **i** is not **iy**, **u** is not **uw**

Nasal Vowel	*Pronunciation*
aŋ	nasal "uh", similar to the U in 'sung'; but without the -NG. ***IPA:*** /ã/ [ə̃]
iŋ	nasal "ih" as in 'din'; but without the -N; ***IPA:*** /ĩ/ [ɪ̃]
uŋ	"euh" as in 'book', only nasal. **Uŋ** is not found in English, but try pronouncing 'book' with an -N instead of a -K. ***IPA:*** /ũ/ [ʊ̃]

Long Vowel	*Pronunciation*
aa	"ah ah" or "ahhh" as in 'father'; ***IPA:*** [aa] or [aː]
ee	"eh eh" or "ehhh"; ***IPA:*** [ee] or [eː]
ii	"ee ee" or "eeee"; ***IPA:*** [ii] or [iː]
oo	"oh oh" or "ohhh"; ***IPA:*** [oo] or [oː]
uu	"oo oo" or "oooo"; ***IPA:*** [uu] or [uː]
aŋaŋ	nasal "uh uh" or nasal "ahhh" as in 'song'; only longer and without the -NG; ***IPA:*** [ə̃ə̃] or [ãː]
iŋiŋ	nasal "ih ih" or nasal "eeee" as in 'sing'; only longer and without the -NG; ***IPA:*** or [ɪ̃ɪ̃] or [ɪ̃ː]
uŋuŋ	nasal "euh" "euh" or nasal "oooo" as in 'dune'; only longer and without the -N; ***IPA:*** [ʊ̃ʊ̃] or [ũː]

Consonant	*Pronunciation*
b h l m n s w y z	Same as English more or less; ***IPA:*** /b, h, l, m, n, s, w, y, z/ Between two nasal vowels, **h**, **y** and **w** are nasalized.
čh	Same as English CH as in 'chalk'. ***IPA:*** /tʃʰ/
g	Same as English G as in 'gorilla', but never pronounced as a J (as in 'giant'). **G** is also never silent (as in 'gnome'), which is important because **g** only occurs in clusters with **n**, **l** and **m**. ***IPA:*** /k/ [g]

š	Same as English SH as in ‘<u>sh</u>ell’. ***IPA:*** /ʃ/
ž	Sounds like English Z only less dental. ***IPA:*** /ʒ/
’	(marks the **khéze**, known to English speakers as the ***glottal stop***). ***IPA:*** /ʔ/ The **khéze** goes at the end of a word that ends in a vowel, if it is the last word of a sentence.
Aspirated Consonant	***Pronunciation***
kh	Same as English K as in ‘<u>k</u>in’. ***IPA:*** /k^h/
ph	Same as English P as in ‘<u>p</u>ill’, and never pronounced as F (as in ‘tele<u>ph</u>one’). ***IPA:*** /p^h/
th	Same as English T as in ‘<u>t</u>in’, and never pronounced as English’s TH sound (as in ‘<u>th</u>orn’ or ‘ba<u>th</u>e’). ***IPA:*** /t^h/
Unaspirated Consonant	***Pronunciation***
č	Sounds like an English J (as in ‘<u>j</u>ury’), only it is unvoiced, and ever pronounce it as a K or an S (as in ‘<u>c</u>orn’ or ‘<u>c</u>ereal’); ***IPA:*** /tʃ/
k	Sounds more like the K in ‘s<u>k</u>ill’ than the one in ‘<u>k</u>ill’. Whereas **kh** sounds like the K H sequence in ‘as<u>k h</u>all’, **k** sounds like the K in ‘as<u>k</u> all’. Remember, the Lakota **k** is never silent (as in ‘<u>k</u>nife’). ***IPA:*** /k/
p	Sounds more like the P in ‘s<u>p</u>ill’ than the one in ‘<u>p</u>ill’. Whereas **ph** sounds like the P H sequence in ‘was<u>p h</u>ill’, **p** sounds like the P in ‘was<u>p</u> ill’. ***IPA:*** /p/
t	Sounds more like the T in ‘s<u>t</u>ill’ than the one in ‘<u>t</u>ill’. Whereas **th** sounds like the T H sequence in ‘nes<u>t h</u>acked’, **t** sounds like the T in ‘nes<u>t</u> act’. ***IPA:*** /t/
Guttural Consonants	***Pronunciation***
ǧ	Guttural **g**. **Ǧ** is articulated by closing the throat muscles as you would for **g**, only they don’t close all the way. Before **i**, **ǧ** is ‘trilled’, meaning the uvula taps the back of the throat. Think of a sexy growl. ***IPA:*** /ʁ/ [ʀ]
ȟ	Guttural **h**. This raspy sound is somewhere between English K and English H. To produce **ȟ**, make an **h** sound as you would normally only you close your velar muscles more. Your velar muscles are the throat muscles that contract when you swallow. ***IPA:*** /χ/
kȟ	Guttural **k**; **k** pronounced simultaneously with **ȟ**. ***IPA:*** /k^h/ [$k^χ$]
pȟ	Guttural **p**; **p** pronounced simultaneously with **ȟ**. ***IPA:*** /p^h/ [$p^χ$]
tȟ	Guttural **t**; **t** pronounced simultaneously with **ȟ**. ***IPA:*** /t^h/ [$t^χ$]
Ejective Marker	***Pronunciation***

’	(marks ejectives). Ejection cannot be made alone, it can only be produced simultaneously with **č**, **k**, **p**, and **t**. **Č’**, **k’**, **p’**, **t’** sound like they have a click after them, and are often described as ‘explosive’. ***IPA:*** /tʃ’, p’, t’, k’/

Stress

- 2/3rd of the time on the second vowel of a word
- 1/3rd of the time on the first vowel of the word
- rarely, on the third vowel of a word
- the first stress of a word is always the loudest

Alphabet

- **b**, **ȟ**, **š**, and **ž** end in **-e**
- **g** ends in –**li** and **ǧ** ends in **-u**
- unaspirated **č**, **k**, **p**, **t** and **ǧ** end in **-u**
- aspriated, **čh**, **kh**, **ph**, **th** end in **-i**
- ejective **č’**, **k’**, **p’**, **t’** end in **-o**
- otherwise, consonants end in –**a**

Words are alphabetized according to each individual letter, even if a letter is within a digraph

Syllabification

1. V (Vowel): each syllable must contain one, and only one, vowel (oral or nasal). This means the number of syllables in a word is proportionate to its number of vowels.

   Long vowels can be put in two separate syllables in slow speech, or in the same syllable in fast speech.

2. CV(C) (Consonant + Vowel) or CCV(C) (Consonant + Consonant + Vowel): Consonants always belong at the beginning of syllables, unless at the end of a word. It doesn’t matter whether you treat digraphs the same as single letters or two different letters.

The number of syllables in a word is proportionate to its number of vowels, unless you syllabify long vowels as two separate vowels.

Vowels in clusters never mix in Lakota, especially **ae**, **ai**, **ao**, **au** (except in **háu** (*hello*/*yes*)), **ei**, **oe**, and **ou**.

The following consonant clusters are pronounced with a mini-vowel between each consonant: **bl** (except after nasal vowels where it is pronounced **ml**), **gl**, **gm**, **gn**, and **mn**.

Sound Changes

1. **A → aŋ**, **i → iŋ**, and **u → uŋ** after **m**/**n**. **Aŋ**, **iŋ**, and **uŋ** are pronounced with exaggerated nasalization after **m**/**n**.

2. **Aŋb → am**, **iŋb → in**, and **uŋb → um**

3. **Ak**/**aŋk → ang**/**aŋng**, **ik**/**iŋk → ing**/**iŋng**, and **uk**/**uŋk → ung**/**uŋng** in fast speech.

4. Unstressed vowels, glides (**y**, **w** and **h**) and the **khéze** are likely to be lost in fast speech.

5. **Aya → aa**, **aye** → long 'ae' as in 'b<u>a</u>t', and **awa → oo**

6. When words are pronounced in isolation or at the end of statements, stressed short vowels are devoiced at the end of words, causing them to sound whispered as if an **h** follows them.

Sound Symbolism
In some words, **s**/**z**, **š**/**ž** and **ȟ**/**ǧ** represent gradations.

Common Words & Phrases
háu or **háo** (*hello, yes - masculine/formal*), **tó** (*yes - mild assent*), **háu, kȟolá** (*hi, male friend*), **háŋ** (*yes - feminine or unisex/informal*), **óhaŋ** (*okay, sure*), **hiyá** (*no*), **hóȟ** (*no!*), **híhaŋni wašté** (*good morning*), **hókahé!** (*Welcome!*), **Taŋyáŋ yahí.** (*It is good that you came.*), **lililili!** (Yelled by women in a high pitched voice to praise warriors for acts of valor.), **čhaŋtéšicé** (*I'm sorry*), **ékiciktunža yo** (*pardon me - masculine*), **ékiciktunža wo** (*pardon me - feminine*), **akíčiktunža yo** (*forgive me - masculine*), **akíčiktunža wo** (*forgive me - feminine*), **hahó hahó!** (*thank you!*), **hayé hayé** (*thank you! - spiritual*), **philámayaye** (*thanks*), **philámayaye ló** (*thanks - masculine*), **tókša** (*bye*), **Tókša akhé waŋčhíyaŋkiŋ kte.** (*I will see you again eventually*)

Háu and **háŋ** are used in an affirmative reply to negative questions.

Lesson 1 Quiz

1. Which of the following nasal vowels does not exist in Lakota?
   a) **iŋ**
   b) **uŋ**
   c) **eŋ**

2. Which of the following English consonants does not exist in Lakota?
   a) Z
   b) G
   c) F

3. How many consonants are in the written word **héčhiŋškayapi** (*bighorn*)?
   a) 5
   b) 6
   c) 7

4. True/False: pronouncing **kh**, **ph** and **th** as **kȟ**, **pȟ** and **tȟ** will not make a difference in the meaning of a word.
   a) True
   b) False

5. Which of the following words contains a sound that is foreign to Lakota?
   a) seal
   b) locomotion
   c) maniacal

6. How many syllables does the word **pȟaŋkéska** (*abalone*) have?

a) 3
b) 4
c) 5

7. The sounds that comprise the English word 'emotional' would be written in the Lakota alphabet as:
   a) **imóšanal**
   b) **ímošanal**
   c) **imošanál**

8. Which of the following is not a digraph?
   a) **ph**
   b) **čȟ**
   c) **k'**

9. Which of the following sounds is/are unaspirated?
   a) **b**
   b) **ǧ**
   c) both **b** and **ǧ**
   d) neither **b** nor **ǧ**

10. True/False: **ž** is a voiced version of **š**.
   a) True
   b) False

Lesson 1 Answers

Answers to Exercise 1.6: Writing Practice

1. peal ("peel") = *phil*

2. step ("stehp") = *step*

3. cheesy ("cheez ee") = *čhizi*

4. shoe ("shoo") = *šu*

5. Taj Mahal ("tazh mah hahl") = *thažmahal*

Answers to Exercise 1.9: Stress Practice

1. relax = *reláx*

2. refrigerator = *refrígerator*

3. cataract = *cátaract*

4. numerical = *numérical*

5. sentimental = *sentiméntal*

Answers to Exercise 1.10a: Spelling Practice

1. **Ȟesápa** (*The Black Hills*) = *ȟe e sa a pu a*

2. **Makȟóšiča** (*Badlands*) = *ma a kȟa ó še i ču a*

3. **Wakpá Wašté** (*Cheyenne River*) = *wa a ku pu a wa a še tu e*

4. **Čhaŋkpé Ópi** (*Wounded Knee*) = *čhi aŋ ka pu e o pu i*

5. **Pažóla Otȟúŋwahe** (*Martin, SD*) = *pu a že o la a o tȟa uŋ wa a ha e*

Answers to Exercise 1.10b: Alphabetization Practice

1. *Lakóta* 2. *Lakótha* 3. *Lakóthaŋ*

4. *Lakótȟa* 5. *Lakhótȟa* 6. *Lákhotȟa*

7. *Lakhót'a* 8. *Lak'ótȟa* 9. *Lák'ot'a*

10. *Láŋk'ot'a*

Answers to Exercise 1.11a: Syllabification Practice

1. **uŋčíšičala** (*crow*) = *uŋ čí ši ča la*

2. **maštíŋčala** (*rabbit/hare*) = *ma štíŋ ča la*

3. **siŋtíčhapȟe** (*scorpion*) = *siŋ tí čha pȟe*

4. **škípipila** (*chickadee*) = *ški pi pi la*

5. **wablúška** (*bug*) = *wa blú ška*

Answers to Exercise 1.11b: Reading Practice

1. manual = English pronunciation: "maen yoo ehl"
   = Lakota pronunciation: "mah noo ahl"

2. house = English pronunciation: "hows"
   = Lakota pronunciation: "hoh oo seh"

3. loathe = English pronunciation: "lohw*th*"
   = Lakota pronunciation: "loh teh"

4. euphonious = English pronunciation: "yoo foh nee uhs"

= Lakota pronunciation: “eh oo poh nee oh oos”

5. automobile = English pronunciation: “ah tohw mohw beel”
= Lakota pronunciation: “ah oo doh moh bee leh”

Answers to Lesson 1 Quiz

1. Which of the following nasal vowels does not exist in Lakota?
c) **eŋ**

2. Which of the following English consonants does not exist in Lakota?
c) F

3. How many consonants are in the written word **héčhiŋškayapi** (*bighorn*)?
b) 6; **h**, **čh** (digraphs represent single consonants), **š**, **k**, **y**, **p**

4. True/False: pronouncing **kh**, **ph** and **th** as **kȟ**, **pȟ** and **tȟ** will not make a difference in the meaning of a word.
a) True

5. Which of the following words contains a sound that is foreign to Lakota?
c) maniacal; the I in ‘maniacal’ is pronounced as the English word ‘eye’. In Lakota, **a** “ah” and **i** “ee” never mix as they do in English.

6. How many syllables does the word **pȟaŋkéska** (*abalone*) have?
a) 3; **pȟaŋ ké ska**

7. The sounds that comprise the English word ‘emotional’ would be written in the Lakota alphabet as:
a) **imóšanal**; emótional

8. Which of the following is not a digraph?
b) **čȟ**; **čh** is a digraph, but not **čȟ**

9. Which of the following sounds is/are unaspirated?
c) both **b** and **ǧ**; there is no puff of air following **b** or **ǧ**, if there were, they would be written as **bh** and **ǧh**

10. True/False: **ž** is a voiced version of **š**.
a) True

Lesson 1 Appendices

Appendix 1a: IPA for Lakota
IPA stands for the ***International Phonetic Alphabet***; a special selection of characters devised by linguists in order to represent every sound, or ***phone***, of all the world’s languages. Of course, since many languages share the same sounds only about 100 letters are needed, especially since the IPA makes use of diacritics. Just a tiny fraction of the IPA is needed to record the Lakota language in particular.

The characters of the IPA derive mostly from European scripts since they are alphabets as opposed to abjads, syllabaries or other systems not suitable for the discussion of individual sounds. Further, many of the major world languages such as English, French and Spanish are written with the Latin alphabet, along with the majority of aboriginal languages from the Americas, Africa and Australia.

All sounds can be mapped out in charts for convenience, and consonants are graphed according to two parameters: their ***place of articulation*** (the part of your mouth most associated with the sound) and their ***manner of articulation*** (the way in which you use that part of your mouth to produce a sound).

For instance, P is similar to M in the sense that both of these sounds both require the lips to move. This would mean their place of articulation is the same. P and M are classified under ***labials***, which means 'two lips' in Latin.

In addition, P and K are also similar in that you cannot extend their durations for a long period of time. You can keep making the sound M for many seconds, but when you make a P or K you cannot continue the sound. This suggests that P and K are similar in terms of their manner of articulation. P and K fall under the category of ***stops*** because shortly after you start making them you are forced to quit.

With this in mind, each individual sound is identified by both its place and its manner. Thus, since P is a labial like M, but it is also a stop like K, P alone is called a ***bilabial stop***.

The following chart identifies all of the IPA symbols needed to transcribe Lakota consonants:

		labial	***dental***	***alveolar***	***palatal***	***velar***	***uvular***	***glottal***
nasal		m		n				
stop	***unaspirated***	p	t		tʃ	k		ʔ
	aspirated	p^h~p^χ	t^h~t^χ		$tʃ^h$	k^h~k^χ		
	voiced	b				(g)		
	ejective	p'	t'		tʃ'	k'		
fricative	***voiceless***			s	ʃ		χ	h
	voiced			z	ʒ		ʁ	
	(***ejective***)			(s')	(ʃ')		(χ')	
approximant		w		l	j			

Places of Articulation

- ***labial***: sounds made using both of the lips
- ***dental***: sounds made using both of the teeth
- ***alveolar***: sounds made using the front of the tongue and the alveolar ridge (the roof of the mouth right before the top row of teeth)
- ***palatal***: sounds made using the flattened, middle of the tongue and the palate
- ***velar***: sounds made using the back of the tongue and the velum (the muscles in the back of the throat)
- ***uvular***: sounds made using the uvula (hanging tab in the back of the throat)
- ***glottal***: sounds made using the glottis (the space between your vocal chords)

Notice that on the chart these places are ordered from the front-most area of the mouth to the back-most area.

Manners of Articulation

- ***stop***: sounds that cannot be continued
- ***unaspirated***: sounds that are not accompanied by a small puff of air
- ***aspirated***: sounds that are accompanied by small puff of air
- ***voiced***: sounds that make the vocal chords vibrate
- ***ejective***: ***stops*** that are glottalized
- ***fricative***: sounds made by making a buzz-like or static-like noise
- ***nasal***: sounds made by directing airflow through the nasal cavity (the sinuses)
- ***lateral***: sounds made by aligning the tongue vertically
- ***approximant***: sounds made by nearing (but not quite touching) a place of articulation

[χ], [pˠ], [tˠ], and [kˠ] are classified as ***uvular fricatives*** named after the 'uvula'.

[s'], [ʃˀ] and [χ'] are in parentheses because not all linguists consider them ejectives. [g] is in parentheses because it is considered a voiced variant of /k/ since its occurrence is predictable.

Vowels in IPA are graphed according to a different set of parameters. At minimum, languages must have at least three vowels, which contrast from one another based on they are produced in the mouth. At the very least, a language will contain these three vowels:

	front	***central***	***back***
high	i		u
low	a		

Part of what changes the way vowels sound is the mouth's amount of open space, and, where that open space is distributed. What determines such things is the position of the tongue. Thus, we can pinpoint the place where a vowel is being produced in the mouth as long as we know two things about the tongue; 1) its ***height***; whether the tongue is located in the top or the bottom of the mouth, and 2) its ***backness***; whether the tongue is located in the back or front of the mouth.

For instance, in producing an "ah" sound the tongue is relatively low, so **a** is called a ***low vowel***. In contrast, when producing the "oo" sound the tongue is relatively high, leaving empty space in the bottom of the mouth. This is why **u** is called a ***high vowel***.

In addition, the tongue is further back in the mouth when you produce "oo" than when you produce "ee," so **u** is additionally a ***back vowel***. All things considered, **u** is a ***high-back vowel***, **i** is a ***high-front vowel***, and **a** can vary from being a ***low-front vowel*** to a ***low-central vowel*** to a ***low-back vowel***.

The following is chart summarizes the IPA symbols used to transcribe Lakota vowels. In addition to the ***High*** and ***Low*** categories, Lakota (like English) has a pair of vowels that lie between, which we will call ***mid***.

	front	***central***	***back***
high	i		u
nasal	ĩ		ũ
mid	e		o
low		a	
nasal		ã	

Some call high vowels ***close vowels***, and low vowels ***open vowels***. Also, IPA users put a colon - consisting of two triangles - after vowels if they are long; thus **aa** would be transcribed as /a:/ in IPA if in the same syllable. If in different syllables **aa** would be transcribed [aa].

You may have been wondering about the slashes and brackets. Well, right angled brackets, / /, or square brackets, [ ], are placed around the IPA transcriptions, except in tables. Whereas / / are only put around sounds that cannot be predicted in the language, like /k/ or /a/, [ ] are put around any sound, like [g] or [æ]. Angled brackets, < > are put around orthography like <š> or <ŋ>.

Appendix 1b: Printable Lakota Alphabet Flashcards

These flash cards can be printed on standard paper, however, a stiffer paper such as 'Cardstock' works better. Cardstock may be purchased at any office store or print shop.

Directions: If your printer is capable of printing double-sided pages, go to File, select Print and make sure the box that says 'Collate' is checked. Print pages 37-46. Cut along the solid lines.

If your printer is not capable of printing double-sided pages you can print page 37, manually flip over the printed page, feed it back into the printer, and then print page 38. Depending on the specific nature your printer you may have turn the page upside down as well. Repeat this process for the rest of the document. Cut along the solid lines.

As an alternative to this method you could print pages 37-46 and then use a copy machine that is capable of making double-sided copies. This will also ensure that the boxes on both sides of the page will line up properly.

If this is too complicated, or if you cannot manage to find a stiff paper, you could always print out pages 37-46, cut along the solid lines, and then paste the pieces to the fronts and backs of note cards.

a	aŋ	b
č	čh	č’
e	g	ğ

a "ah"	aŋ nasal "ah"	be "beh"
ǰu voiceless j + "oo"	ǰhi "chee"	ǰ'o "ch-oh"
e "eh"	gli "guhlee"	ğu guttural g + "oo"

h	ȟ	iŋ
i	k	kh
kȟ	k’	l

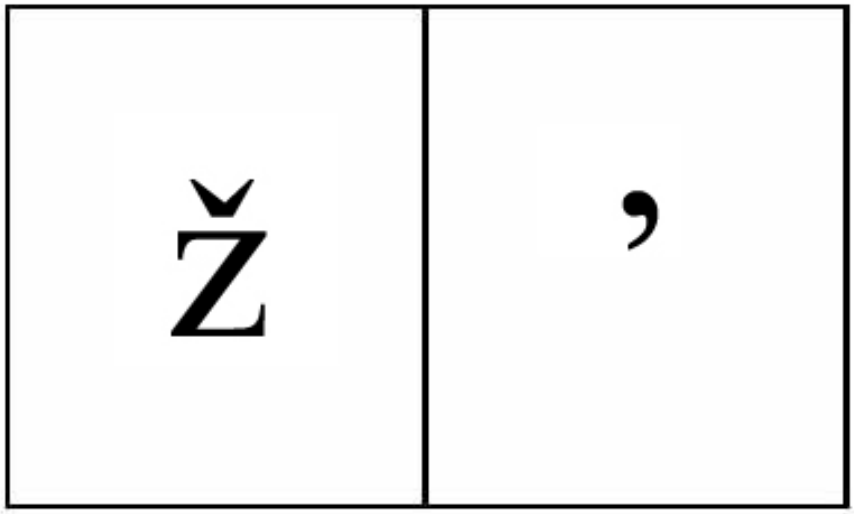
ha "hah"	ȟe guttural h + "eh"	i "ee"
iŋ nasal "ee"	ku voiceless g + "oo"	khi "kee"
kȟa guttural k + "ah"	k'o "k-oh"	la "lah"

m	n	o
p	ph	pȟ
p’	s	š

Ma "mah"	Na "nah"	O "oh"
pu voiceless b + "oo"	phi "pee"	pǐa guttural p + "ah"
p'o "p-oh"	sa "sah"	šę "shah"

t	th	tȟ
t’	u	uŋ
w	y	z

tu voiceless d + “oo”	thi “tee”	thǎ guttural t + “ah”
t’o “t-oh”	u “oo”	ų̃ nasal “oo”
Wa “wah”	Ya “yah”	Za “zah”


Ž
,

žе	khéze
less dental z + “eh”	“kEH zeh”

Appendix 1c: Lakota Orthographies

The following chart will be useful in deciphering the orthographies used by other publications, but note that not every author transcribes words accurately using these systems.

Nasal vowels, and the velar nasal

IPA	[ã]	[ĩ]	[ũ]	[ŋ]
Riggs	aŋ	iŋ	oŋ~uŋ	ng
Will.	aŋ	iŋ	oŋ~uŋ	ng
Trad.	an	in	un or un~on	ng
B & D	ą	į	ų	ng
Buechel	a^n	i^n	o^n~u^n	ng
MH I	aŋ	iŋ	oŋ~uŋ	ng
MH II	an	in	un	ng
CU	ą	į	ų	ň
LLC	aŋ	iŋ	uŋ	ng
WH Sr.	aŋ	iŋ	uŋ	ng
SICC				
Txakini	an	in	un	ng
NS	aN	iN	uN	ng

Aspirated, unaspirated, and pharyngeal and ejective p, t, k

IPA	[p]	[p^h]	[$p^ˤ$]	[p']	[t]	[t^h]	[$t^ˤ$]	[t']	[k]	[k^h]	[$k^ˤ$]	[k']
Riggs	p			ṗ	t			ṭ	k			ḳ
Will.	p			ṗ	t			ṭ	k			ḳ
Trad.	p			p'	t			t'	k			k'
B & D	p	p‘		p'	t	t‘		t'	k	k‘		k'
Buechel	p	p‘		p'	t	t‘		t'	k	k‘		k'
MH I	ṗ	p	ṕ	ṗ	ṫ	t	ṫ	ṫ	k̇	k	ḱ	k̇
MH II	p			p'	t			t'	k			k'
CU	p	ph		p?	t	th		t?	k	kh		k?
LLC	p	ph	p̌h	p'	t	th	ťh	t'	k	kh	ǩh	k'
WH Sr.	p̄	p	ṗ	p'	t̄	t	ṫ	t'	k̄	k	k̇	k'
SICC	p̄	p	ṗ	p'	t̄	t	ṫ	t'	k̄	k	k̇	k'
Txakini	p	ph	px	p'	t	th	tx	t'	k	kh	kx	k'
NS	p	ph		p?	t	th		t?	k	kh		k?

Fricatives, affricates, and the glottal stop

IPA	[ʒ]	[ʃ]	[tʃ]	[tʃʰ]	[tʃˀ]	[χ]	[ʁ, ʀ]	[ʔ]
Riggs	ź	ś	ć		ć̣	ȟ	ġ	
Will.	ż	ṡ	c		c̣ˀ	ȟ	ġ	ˀ
Trad.	j or z or ź	s or sh or ś	c or ch or ć		cˀ or chˀ or ć̣ˀ or q	h or ȟ or r	g or ġ	ˀ
B & D	ź	ś	c	cʿ	cˀ	ȟ	ġ	ˀ
Buechel	j	ś	c	cʿ	cˀ	ȟ	ġ	ˀ
MH I	j	š	ċ	c	cˀ	ȟ	ġ	ˀ
MH II	j	š	c		cˀ	h	g	ˀ
CU	ž	š	č	čh	čˀ	ȟ	ğ	ʔ
LLC	ž	š	č	čh	čˀ	ȟ	ğ	ˀ
WH Sr.	j	ṡ	c̄	ċ	cˀ	ȟ	ġ	ˀ
SICC	j	s̀	c̄	c̀	c̀ˀ	ȟ	ġ	ˀ
Txakini	zh	sh	c	ch	cˀ	x	gx	ˀ
NS	z^	s^	c^	c^h	c?	h^	g^	ˀ

Key

- ***IPA***: The International Phonetic Alphabet is a worldwide writing system used by linguists that can identify all the sounds of a language; see ***Appendix 1a: IPA for Lakota***.

- ***Riggs***: used by Reverend Stephen Return Riggs, who created Grammar and Dictionary of the Dakota Language (1852), and edited Dakota-English Dictionary (1892). It was also used by his comrade, Thomas S. Williamson. Both of these men had followed the work of fellow Episcopal missionaries Samuel W. Pond and Gideon H. Pond.

- ***Williamson***: used by missionary John Poage Williamson (son of Thomas Williamson) who published An English-Dakota Dictionary (1902).

- ***Traditional***: the way most native speakers of Lakota (who have not taken language classes) write their language using English letters, which may have been influenced by early missionary systems. Famous Native Americanists Mary Crow Dog, Vine Deloria Jr. (nephew of Ella Deloria), Luther Standing Bear Jr., and John Niehardt, translator of Black Elk Speaks, use this orthography.

  The ejectives S and SH, the ejective, guttural H, and the guttural G are not always recognized apart from plain S, SH, H and G, and the glottal stop is not always marked. Many of these elders view other orthographies as unnecessarily complicated, and unfortunately few linguists have acknowledged the efficiency of the traditional system before exploiting its weaknesses.

- ***B & D***: stands for the last names of the famous anthropologist Franz Boas, and the native Lakota speaker linguist Ella Cara Deloria, who collaborated on writing Dakota Grammar (1941). Raymond J. DeMallie wrote a short biography of her in Deloria's book Waterlily (1988).

Deloria created the orthography for transliteration of a wealth of materials and a dictionary. Most of her valuable projects were never published, but efforts are currently underway to publish them in the future. One unique characteristic of her system is dots (.) between the clusters **bl**, **gl**, **mn**, **gm**, **gn**, to represent the schwa.

- ***Buechel***: used by Eugene Buechel, a missionary who wrote A Grammar of Lakota: The Language of the Teton Sioux Indians (1939) and created a Lakota dictionary, which was published after his death in 1970 and includes a copy of his grammar. Buechel's orthography is the same as that of Boas & Deloria, only [ʒ] is recorded as **j** rather than **ź**, and nasal vowels are written with a superscript N, (^{n}). Note that Buechel's 1970 dictionary was edited by Manhart, and thus appears in the ***Manhart (I)*** orthography.

- ***Manhart (I)***: used by Reverend Paul Manhart S. J. who edited and published Buechel's Lakota Dictionary (1970). This modification of Buechel's orthography marks unaspirated stops with a dot above the letter, and pharyngeal stops with a superscript c (^{c}) or apostrophe (‘) above the letter, which in small print is indistinguishable with the dot. However, he was not always consistent in his conversion of Buechel's orthography.

- ***Manhart (II)***: used by Buechel to transcribe Lakota Tales & Texts (1978), which was edited by Manhart. This orthography is the same as ***traditional***, only Manhart included the glottal and consonant stops at the request of Deloria.

- ***WH Sr.***: stands for Albert White Hat Sr., a Lakota language teacher and native speaker linguist who wrote the 1999 book Reading and Writing the Lakota Language, where he explains the history of the orthography he uses. In 1982, during a three day workshop organized by the Committee for the Preservation of the Lakota Language, Lakota educators including White Hat Sr. consolidated the best attributes of missionary alphabets and created a new orthography that was reviewed by tribal elders.

- ***CU***: stands for the Colorado University Orthography developed by linguists David Rood and Allan Taylor wrote extensively on the Lakota language including the textbook Beginning Lakhota (1976). They also wrote an article that explains the reasoning behind their system entitled The Colorado System for Writing the Lakota Language, published in 1975 by the American Indian Culture and Research Journal volume 1, number 3, pages 3-12.

- ***LLC***: stands for Lakota Language Consortium at www.lakhota.org, which produces language teaching materials including New Lakota Dictionary (2008). In that dictionary, Jan Ullrich gives a good history of Lakota lexicography, and mentions that various tests were performed in the development of LLC's orthography, which were designed to identify and carry over the best features of previous orthographies. It is largely based on the Colorado system (in fact Rood is on the LLC's board of directors), only it lacks a symbol for **ng**, represents vowels using the engma instead of ogoneks, and represents the glottal stop using an apostrophe. Today LLC's orthography has pretty much become the standard, and this is what SAIVUS uses.

- ***SICC***: stands for Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre, which created free online courses for various American Indian languages at http://www.sicc.sk.ca/heritage/sils/ourlanguages/index.html. They use White Hat Sr.'s orthography, but change the dots on **ṡ** and **ċ** to grave accent marks (**s̀** and **c̀**), and accompany the ejective **č** with a diacritic.

- ***Txakini***: used by Violet Catches, a native speaker linguist who heads the Lakxota Kxoyag Language Preservation Project at http://lakxotakxoyag.org/language.aspx, which aims to produce language teaching materials. The website mentions a book that explains her orthography called Txakini-iya Wowapi, but as it is extremely hard to track down, I'm guess it's self-published.

- ***Net Siouan***: used by various websites as a way to type Siouan languages using ordinary keyboard characters.

Notes

Oral vowels, **b**, **h**, **g**, **l**, **m**, **n**, **s**, **w**, and **z** are consistent across transcription systems. Stress is indicated by ***Buechel***, ***Manhart (I)***, ***CU***, ***LLC***, and ***Net Siouan***.

Some linguists write <š> for [ʃ], <č> for [tʃ], <ǰ> for [ʒ], <x> for [χ], and <ğ> for [ɣ], and mark aspiration with an apostrophe.

Manhart viewed having separate symbols for **ŋ** and **h̵** unnecessary given the following spelling conventions, which I will paraphrase for clarity:

for **n**/**ŋ**
- **n** is always **ŋ** at end of a word
- **n** is always **ŋ** when anteceded by a consonant
- between vowels, **n** must be marked with a consonant stop (**n'**) to distinguish it from **ŋ**
- otherwise, **n** is **n**

for **h**/**h̵**
- **h** is always **h̵** at the end of a word
- **h** is always **h̵** in a cluster
- between vowels and at the beginning of words, **h** must be marked with a consonant stop (**h'**) to distinguish it from **h̵**
- otherwise **h** is **h**

(Buechel & Manhart 1998, xi-xiii)

There are some exceptions to the first rule for **n**/**ŋ**, like **hehán** (*then*). Rood and Taylor pointed out a good exception to the third guideline for **n**/**ŋ**: **čhanmáwašte** (*I am happy*) (Rood & Taylor 1975, 7).

For typing, use:

IPA	[ã]	[ĩ]	[ũ]	[ŋ]
Riggs	aŋ	iŋ	oŋ~uŋ	ng
Williamson	aŋ	iŋ	oŋ~uŋ	ng
Traditional	an	in	un or un~on	ng
B & D	ą	į	ų	ng
Buechel	a^n	i^n	o^n~u^n	ng

Manhart I	aŋ	iŋ	oŋ~uŋ	ng
Manhart II	an	in	un	ng
CU	ą	į	ų	ň
LLC	aŋ	iŋ	uŋ	ng
WH Sr.	aŋ	iŋ	uŋ	ng
SICC				
Txakini	an	in	un	ng
Net Siouan	aN	iN	uN	ng

IPA	[p]	[p^{h}]	[pχ]	[p’]	[t]	[t^{h}]	[tχ]	[t’]	[k]	[k^{h}]	[kχ]	[k’]
Riggs	p			ṗ	t			ṭ	k			ḳ
Will.	p			ṗ	t			ṭ	k			ḳ
Trad.	p			p’	t			t’	k			k’
B & D	p	p‘		p’	t	t‘		t’	k	k‘		k’
Buechel	p	p‘		p’	t	t‘		t’	k	k‘		k’
MH I	ṗ	p	p̣	p’	ṫ	t	t̤	t’	k̇	k	k̤	k’
MH II	p			p’	t			t’	k			k’
CU	p	ph		p^{ʔ}	t	th		t^{ʔ}	k	kh		k^{ʔ}
LLC	p	ph	pȟ	p’	t	th	tȟ	t’	k	kh	kȟ	k’
WH Sr.	p̄	p	ṗ	p’	t̄	t	ṫ	t’	k̄	k	k̇	k’
SICC	p̄	p	ṗ	p’	t̄	t	ṫ	t’	k̄	k	k̇	k’
Txakini	p	ph	px	p’	t	th	tx	t’	k	kh	kx	k’
NS	p	ph		p?	t	th		t?	k	kh		k?

Fricatives, affricates, and the glottal stop

IPA	[ʒ]	[ʃ]	[tʃ]	[tʃ^{ʰ}]	[tʃ’]	[χ]	[ʁ, ʀ]	[ʔ]
Riggs	ź	ś	ć		ḉ	ḣ	ġ	ø
Williamson	ż	ṡ	c		c̣’	ḣ	ġ	’

Traditional	j or z or ź	s or sh or ś	c or ch or ć		c’ or ch’ or ć’ or q	h or ḣ or r	g or ġ	’
B & D	ź	ś	c	c‘	c’	ḣ	ġ	’
Buechel	j	ś	c	c‘	c’	ḣ	ġ	’
Manhart I	j	š	ċ	c	c’	ḣ	ġ	’
Manhart II	j	š	c		c’	h	g	’
CU	ž	š	č	čh	č?	ȟ	ğ	ʔ
LLC	ž	š	č	čh	č’	ȟ	ğ	’
WH Sr.	j	ṡ	c̄	ċ	c’	ḣ	ġ	’
SICC	j	s̀	c̄	c̀	c̀’	ḣ	ġ	’
Txakini	zh	sh	c	ch	c’	x	gx	’
Net Siouan	z^	s^	c^	c^h	c?	h^	g^	’

References

Allen, Louis. 1931. Siouan and Iroquoian. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 6: 185-193.

American Tract Society and John Poage Williamson. 1902. *An English-Dakota Dictionary: Wasicun ka Dakota Ieska Wowapi*. American Tract Society.

Boas, Franz. 1937. Some traits of the Dakota Language. *Language* 13: 137-141.

Boas, Franz and Ella C. Deloria. 1941. *Dakota Grammar*. Memoirs of the National Academy of Science 32(2).

———. 1933. Notes on the Dakota Teton dialect. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 7: 97-121.

Buechel, Eugene, S. J and Paul Manhart. eds. 2002. *Lakota Dictionary*. Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska.

———. 1998. *Lakota Tales and Texts in Translation*. 2 vols. S.J. Chamberlain, SD: The Tipi Press.

Chafe, Wallace. 1964. Another look at Siouan and Iroquoian. *American Anthropologist* 66: 852-862.

Deloria, Ella C. 1932. *Dakota Texts*. Publications of the Ethnological Society 14. New York: G. E. Steehert.

Deloria, Ella C. 1988. *Waterlilly*. University of Nebraska Press.

Deloria Jr., Vine. 2000. *Singing for a Spirit*. Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers.

DeMallie Jr., Raymond J. 2001. Sioux until 1850. In *Handbook of North American Indians 12(2): Plains*, edited by R. J. DeMallie and W. C. Sturtevant. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution.

Densmore, Frances. 1918. *Teton Sioux Music*. Bureau of American Ethnology - Bulletin 61.

Grobsmith, Elizabeth S. 1970. Styles of Speaking: An Analysis of Lakota Communication Alternatives. *Anthropological Linguistics* 21(7): 355-361.

Ingham, Bruce. 2001. *English-Lakota dictionary*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press.

Lakota Language Consortium. *New Lakota Dictionary*. Bloomington: Lakota Language Consortium.

Matthews, Hubert G. 1955. A phonemic analysis of a Dakota dialect. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 21: 56-59.

Mithun, Marianne 1999. *The Languages of Native North America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Niedhart, John G. 2008. *Black Elk Speaks*. State University of New York Press.

Parks, Douglas R. and Robert L. Ranklin. The Siouan languages. In *Handbook of North American Indians 13(1): Plains,* edited by W. C. Sturtevant. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution.

Powers, William K. 1972. The Language of the Sioux. *Language in American Indian Education*: 1-21.

———. 1986. *Sacred language: the nature of supernatural discourse in Lakota*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

———. 1990. Comment on the Politics of Orthography. *American Anthropologist* 92(2): 496-498.

de Reuse, Willem J. 1987. One hundred years of Lakota linguistics (1887-1987). *Kansas Working Papers in Linguistics* 12: 13-42.

———. 1990. A supplementary bibliography of Lakota languages and linguistics (1887-1990). *Kansas Working Papers in Linguistics* 15(2): 146-165.

Riggs, Stephen Return. 1890. *A Dakota-English Dictionary*. James O. Dorsey, ed. Contributions to North American Ethnology 7.

Rood, David S. and Allan R. Taylor. 1973. Preparing Lakhota Teaching Materials. *Colorado Research in Linguistics* 3: RT1-RT9.

———. 1979. Siouan. In *The Languages of Native America*, edited by Lyle Campbell and Marianne Mithun. Austin: University of Texas.

———. 1996. *Sketch of Lakhota, a Siouan Language*. Handbook of North American Indians 17: Languages. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution.

———. 2001. Lakota. *In Facts about the World's Major Languages*, edited by Jane Garry and Carl Rubino, W. H. Wilson Company.

———. 1975. The Colorado System for writing the Lakhota language. *The American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 1(3): 3-12.

———. 1985. Boundaries and Lakhota Orthography. *Siouan and Caddoan Linguistics* 5: 5-10.

Standing Bear, Luther. 1978. *Land of the Spotted Eagle*. University of Nebraska Press.

Ullrich, Jan. 2008. Grammar. In *New Lakota Dictionary*. Lakota Language Consortium.

White Hat Sr., Albert. 1999. *Reading and writing the Lakota language*. Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press.

Williamson, John. 1902. *An English-Dakota dictionary*. New York: American Tract Society.

Wolff, Hans. 1948. Comparative Siouan I, II, III, IV. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 16: 61-66, 113-121, 169-178, 17: 197-204.