

Introduction to the Carrier Syllabics

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Preface

This little book is an introduction to the Carrier syllabics, the first and most distinctive writing system used for the Carrier language of the central interior of British Columbia. It is aimed primarily at those who wish to learn to read and write in syllabics, who all too often have had no recourse other than to try to teach themselves using the chart in the Roman Catholic Prayerbook and some other publications of Father Adrien-Gabriel Morice.

This approach leaves much to be desired. First, that chart is labelled in the Roman writing system used by Father Morice in his scholarly work, a writing system with which few people are now familiar. Second, a chart by itself does not explain the principles according to which the writing system is organized. Third, the chart is restricted to the sounds native to Carrier and leaves the student unprepared to read and write words containing sounds borrowed from other languages. Finally, the chart presents such information as it contains all at once rather than providing a graduated introduction.

This book may also be of interest to those who merely want to know how the system works and would like a more detailed exposition than the summaries available elsewhere. It is not an introduction to the Carrier language. Most of the book assumes no knowledge of the language beyond a basic acquaintance with its sound system and with the Carrier Linguistic Committee writing system now in common use. For those not familiar with the CLC writing system, a chart is provided that explains it in terms of the International Phonetic Alphabet and standard linguistic terminology. This will only be useful to those with some knowledge of linguistics.

The book consists of two main parts. The first provides a systematic explanation of the way in which the syllabics represent the sounds of Carrier. This is provided with a small set of exercises. The second works through some real text of various types so as to give the student some experience of reading real syllabic texts and the attendant difficulties. These texts are provided with transliterations into the CLC writing system and English translations but with the exception of particular points of interest are not otherwise annotated or analyzed. A full appreciation of the second part of the book will, therefore require a knowledge of the Carrier language.

In view of the relationship of the Carrier syllabics to the Cree syllabics, the nature of which is rarely appreciated, a brief comparison of the two systems is provided. In addition to the exercises, a small vocabulary is provided in a selection of dialects, and a few reading passages.

Thanks to Marlene Erickson, Chris Harvey, Cora MacIntosh and Shana Schwenter for their comments and suggestions, and to Kent Sedgwick for information on the history of the Fort George cemetery. All of the photographs were taken by the author. The image of the keyboard on page 38 is due to Chris Harvey and used by permission. The font used for the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet is the Summer Institute of Linguistics' Doulos IPA. The font used for the syllabics charts is Chris Harvey's OskiDakelh font. The font used for in-line syllabic text is FreeSerif.

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2026-10-04

Introduction

The first writing system used for Carrier was the “Déné syllabics” designed and introduced in 1885 by Father Adrien-Gabriel Morice, an Oblate missionary, at the Stuart’s Lake mission in Fort Saint James. This writing system is known in Carrier as ᑕᑭᑭᑭ *dulkw’ahke* “frog feet”. Father Morice always referred to syllabics in Carrier as ᑕᑭᑭᑭ *duchunk’ut* “on wood” but this term is not used by Carrier people today and there is no evidence of its use in the past.

The Carrier syllabics were inspired by a writing system used in the Northwest Territories, Alberta, and Saskatchewan for Slave, Dogrib, Blackfoot and Chippewyan, which in turn was derived from the Cree syllabics created in 1840 by the Reverend James Evans. The Reverend Evans originally created the syllabics to write Ojibwe but was refused permission to use them for publications by his missionary society, only to receive permission after his transfer to Cree territory. A variant of the Cree syllabics was subsequently adopted by the Ojibwe. Today both syllabics and a roman system are widely used to write Cree. Some Ojibwe communities use syllabics little if at all, while others use syllabics exclusively.

The syllabics used to write Inuktitut by most Inuit people in Canada outside of Labrador are also derived from the Cree syllabics. Although the Carrier syllabics are related to the other Canadian syllabic systems, they are quite different in detail.

The syllabics were used to write Babine as well as Carrier in the narrow sense. There are examples of small bits of English and Latin written in the Carrier syllabics. Sekani people also used the Carrier syllabics, but to write Carrier, which many Sekani people knew. There is no evidence of the use of the syllabics to write Sekani.

Father Morice taught the syllabics only a few times, but they spread rapidly from one person to another and soon came to be widely used. Within a few months of the introduction of the syllabics, a lengthy message was written on the wall of the Richfield jail (near Barkerville). This is the first known document in the Carrier language. Considerable material was published in syllabics, including two editions of the Roman Catholic Prayerbook, a reading primer, and 24 issues of a bimonthly newspaper published from 1891 to 1894.¹ Headstones were inscribed in syllabics. Carrier people corresponded with each other in syllabics and wrote messages on blazes on trees. Some kept diaries and business accounts in syllabics. For several decades there appears to have been mass literacy in syllabics.

Use of the syllabics began to decline in the 1920s due to the fact that most Carrier children began to go to residential school in 1922. There the use of Carrier was forbidden except for hymns and prayers. Furthermore, since the syllabics were taught primarily in the winter out on the trapline, when people had more leisure time than during the busy summer, children who were at residential school ceased to learn the syllabics in the traditional way. For a few years in the early 1930s, children at Lejac Residential School were actually taught the syllabics in school so that they could read the Prayerbook, but this soon came to an end with the publication in 1938 at the behest of the Bishop of a new version of the Prayerbook in a roman-based writing system.

At present, most people literate in Carrier use the Carrier Linguistic Committee writing system introduced in the 1960s. This English-based system is technically slightly better than the syllabics in that it makes certain distinctions, such as that between the lamino-dental (“fronted”) and apico-alveolar consonants in onset position, not made in the syllabics. Perhaps more importantly, it could be typed on an ordinary typewriter and set in type using ordinary fonts. Furthermore, although learning it requires new correspondences between letters and sounds to be learned, anyone who knows how to read and write in English already knows all of the letter shapes. The syllabics, on the other hand, are perceived by proponents as distinctively Carrier, more attractive, and easier to learn. The technological advantages of the CLC system are no longer of much significance since typewriters are no longer in use and

1 In the second issue of the newspaper, dated November 1891, Father Morice reported that 84 people in 16 communities had subscribed.

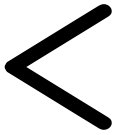
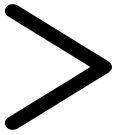
syllabics are easily entered and printed using computers. As a result, there has been a recent resurgence of interest in the syllabics, and even people who cannot actually read or write in syllabics like to use the syllabics for tattoos and decorative inscriptions.

How the Syllabics Work

Consonant-Vowel Units

H

Let us begin with the letter V, which represents *hoo*. Like most of the characters in the Carrier syllabics, this character represents a consonant followed by a vowel. Each such character comes in six related forms. If we rotate this letter 90° so that it points to the left instead of down, we get <, which represents *ha*. If we rotate this letter another 90° so that it points upward we get ^, which represents *ho*. Finally, if we rotate it yet another 90° so that it points to the right we get >, which represents *hu*. The principle is that the shape of the letter tells us what the consonant is while its orientation tells us what the vowel is. Since there are only four orientations but six vowels, the vowels *e* and *i* are provided for by adding diacritics to the *u* orientation. Adding a vertical bar gives us >|, which stands for *he*. Adding a dot gives us >•, which stands for *hi*. Here are the six letters in the *h* set.

					
hoo	ha	ho	hu	he	hi

Exercise 1 is appropriate here.

The Alveolar and Velar Stops

Here are the six combinations of the consonant *d* with the six vowels. They are just like the combinations with *h* except for the rounded shape.

					
doo	da	do	du	de	di

Here are the six combinations of *t* with the six vowels:

					
too	ta	to	tu	te	ti

And here are the six combinations of *t'* with the six vowels:

					
t'oo	t'a	t'o	t'u	t'e	t'i

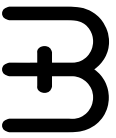
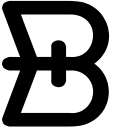
You can see that in each case the symbol points downward for *oo*, to the left for *a*, upward for *o*, and to the right for *u*. The vowel *e* is represented by the orientation for *u* and a vertical stroke. The vowel *i* is represented by the orientation for *u* and a dot.

The three consonants just introduced are related. The unaspirated consonant, *d*, is open: C. Closing it off with a single line produces the aspirated consonant *t*: D. Adding an indentation produces the glottalized member of the set: *t'* Q.

		
da	ta	t'a

You can see the same relationship in the letters for the velar consonants *k*, *g*, and *k'*. *ga* is open: E. Closing it off with a single line yields *ka*: F. Adding an indentation yields *k'a*: G.

		
ga	ka	k'a

					
goo	ga	go	gu	ge	gi
					
koo	ka	ko	ku	ke	ki
					
k'oo	k'a	k'o	k'u	k'e	k'i

Exercise 2 is appropriate here.

The Alveolar Affricates and Fricatives

The affricates *dza* 𐌆, *tsa* 𐌇, and *ts'a* 𐌈 work the same way.

𐌆	𐌇	𐌈
dza	tsa	ts'a

They are based on the fricatives *sa* 𐌉 and *za* 𐌊.

𐌊	𐌉
za	sa

soo	sa	so	su	se	si
zoo	za	zo	zu	ze	zi
tso o	tsa	tso	tsu	tse	tsi
dzo o	dza	dzo	dzu	dze	dzi
tso	tsa	tso	tsu	tse	tsi

ts'o o	ts'a	ts'o	ts'u	ts'e	ts'i
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Exercise 3 is appropriate here.

The Nasals and B

Here are the letters *ma* ㄇ, *na* ㄋ, and *ba* ㄅ. Pay attention to the way *m* and *n* look in the different orientations:

ㄇ	ㄇ	ㄇ	ㄇ	ㄇ	ㄇ
mo o	ma	mo	mu	me	mi
ㄋ	ㄋ	ㄋ	ㄋ	ㄋ	ㄋ
noo	na	no	nu	ne	ni
ㄅ	ㄅ	ㄅ	ㄅ	ㄅ	ㄅ
boo	ba	bo	bu	be	bi

The *m* Ǝ and *g* Ǝ series resemble each other. They are distinguished by the fact that the three prongs of *g* are the same length while in *m* one is markedly longer than the other two.

Ǝ	Ǝ
ma	ga

The *t* Ɔ and *b* Ɔ series resemble each other and may be confused, especially in handwriting. They are distinguished by the fact that the cross-bar is at the very end in *t* Ɔ but within the U shape in *b* Ɔ.

Ɔ	Ɔ
ta	ba

It is also possible to confuse *bu* with *de*.

D	D
bu	de

In theory the vertical bar of *bu* should meet the sides of the curve as shown here, while the bar diacritic of *de* should not. In handwriting, however, the vertical bar of *bu* may not extend as far as it should and the diacritic that distinguishes *de* from *du* may touch the sides of the curve.

Exercise 4 is appropriate here.

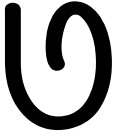
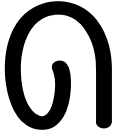
The Laterals and Lateral Affricates - l, lh, dl, tl, tl'

Another set of related letters are: *la*  *lha*  *tla*  *dla*  and *tl'a* . *lha* differs from *la* in the presence of a back-hook at both ends. The three affricates differ from *la* and *lha* in the presence of a crossbar. The ejective affricate has the characteristic indentation.

ᵛ	ᶜ	ᶛ	ᶜ	ᶑ	ᶑ
loo	la	lo	lu	le	li
ᵛ	ᶜ	ᶛ	ᶜ	ᶑ	ᶑ
lho	lha	lho	lhu	lhe	lhi
ᵛ	ᶜ	ᶛ	ᶜ	ᶑ	ᶑ
tloo	tla	tlo	tlu	tle	tli
ᵛ	ᶜ	ᶛ	ᶜ	ᶑ	ᶑ
dlo	dla	dlo	dlu	dle	dli
ᵛ	ᶜ	ᶛ	ᶜ	ᶑ	ᶑ
tl'o	tl'a	tl'o	tl'u	tl'e	tl'i

The Palatal Affricates and Glide

The relationship among *cha* ᶑ, *ja* ᵛ, *ch'a* ᶑ, and *ya* ᶑ is not quite what you might expect. With ᵛ for *ja* and ᶑ for *ch'a*, we would expect ᶑ to stand for *cha*. In fact, *cha* is written ᶑ and ᶑ is used for *ya*.

					
cho o	cha	cho	chu	che	chi
					
joo	ja	jo	ju	je	ji
					
ch' oo	ch'a	ch' o	ch' u	ch'e	ch'i
					
yoo	ya	yo	yu	ye	yi

SH

Here is *sh*. It is like *s* but with an additional line like the one that makes *ta* from *da*.

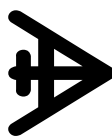
					
sho o	sha	sho	shu	she	shi

Exercise 5 is appropriate here.

W and WH

Finally, we have *wa* ⇐ and *wha* ⇐.

					
wo o	wa	wo	wu	we	wi

					
wh oo	wh a	wh o	wh u	wh e	whi

❧ *whoo*, Ⓐ *who* and ➤ *whi* should not occur in modern Carrier text since *wh* cannot precede *oo*, *o*, or *i*. *who* Ⓐ is however found in the writing of Father Morice, who seems to have heard *whu* as *who*. Also, people sometimes miss the *e* in the sequence *whei*, which may be quite short, and may write ➤ *whi* for what should really be ➤➤ *whei*.

Exercise 6 is appropriate here.

It is important to note that although in all cases the orientation of the character is associated in the same way with the vowel, it is not always possible to derive one orientation of a character from another by rotating it 90°, 180° or 270°. This works for the many characters that are symmetric about the x-axis in their a-form, such as *da* Ⓒ, and for some others, such as *ja* ⓪, but not for *ma* Ⓔ, *na* Ⓒ, *la* Ⓒ, *tla* Ⓒ, *dla* Ⓒ, *tl'a* Ⓔ or *ya* Ⓒ. For example, rotating *moo* Ⓛ 90° yields Ⓜ, which is not the same as *ma* Ⓔ. When reading, you can rely on the rule that pointing left means *a*, pointing upward means *o*, pointing to the right means *u* (or with a dot or bar, *i* or *e*), and pointing downward means *oo*, but when writing the orientation alone is not sufficient to determine the shape of the assymetric characters and you cannot in all cases rely on rotation. This inconsistency is no doubt a defect in the design of the syllabics.

Isolated Consonants

Thus far we have only dealt with consonants that immediately precede a vowel. What about consonants that do not immediately precede a vowel, such as syllable final consonants? They are written with a separate set of symbols. There are only about half as many isolated consonant letters as CV shapes since many consonants occur only preceding a vowel.

Ⓛ	Ⓣ	↖	/	∨	Ⓢ	Ⓢ	Ⓩ	Ⓢ	\$	//		h	l	Ⓛ	Ⓒ	Ⓟ	u
b	t	k	g	k'	s	ṣ	z	ḡ	sh	kh	gh	h	l	lh	m	n	ng

For example, *bulh* "with" is written ⒹⓁ, *yoh* "interior" is written ⓪h.

Note that there are distinct letters for the fronted versions of *s* and *z*. The distinction between the ordinary and fronted *s* and *z* is rarely made in practice. The syllabics do not provide any way of making this distinction immediately preceding a vowel.

The three isolated nasals are easily confused as they differ only in orientation.

Ⓒ	Ⓟ	u
m	n	ng

One sound is written in a way that is unexpected from the point of view of the Carrier Linguistic Committee writing system. This is syllable-final *k*, which is written with the isolated *g* character. For

example, *gak* “nothing” is written $\Xi\prime$, not $\Xi\backslash$; *lugok* “chicken” is written $\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{M}\prime$, not $\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{M}\backslash$. The reason for this is that although there are three different velar stop consonants that can occur at the beginning of a syllable, namely /k/, /g/, and /k'/, only one of them can occur at the end of a syllable. The phonetic properties of this sound are not the same as either /k/ or /g/ at the beginning of a syllable, so the whether to treat it as the syllable-final variant of /k/ or of /g/ is somewhat arbitrary. The CLC system treats it as a variant of /k/, but Father Morice treated it as a variant of /g/.

Another situation in which consonants do not immediately precede a vowel is when there are two consonants at the beginning of a syllable. To write *s*, *g*, or *lh* followed by another consonant at the beginning of a syllable we use the same isolated versions of these letters as we do at the end of a syllable. For example, *sdus* “my lungs” is written $s\mathfrak{C}s$ and *lhnalh* “in each other's presence” is written $\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{L}$.

The last situation in which consonants do not immediately precede a vowel is when the nasals are syllabic at the beginning of a syllable before another consonant. Here again the isolated letters are used. For example, *mbat* “your mitts” is written $\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{L}\mathfrak{r}$ and *nludi* “your tea” is written $\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$.

Labiovelars

We have not introduced any letters for the labiovelar consonants *kw*, *gw*, *kw'*, and *ghw*, nor will any be found in the chart. The reason is that these are written with the *w*-series preceded by the appropriate isolated consonant symbol. That is, *kwV* is written *k-wV*, *gwV* is written *g-wV*, *kw'V* is written *k'-wV*, and *ghwV* is written *gh-wV*. Some examples are *kwun* “fire” $\mathfrak{v}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{z}$, *gwada'* “25 cents” $\mathfrak{r}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$, *kw'usul* “beads” $\mathfrak{v}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{z}$, *ooghwuz* “his thighs” $\mathfrak{v}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{z}$. This creates a context in which isolated consonant symbols may stack up, as in *skwun* “my fire” $s\mathfrak{v}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{z}$, *sgwada'* “my quarter” $s\mathfrak{r}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$, *skw'usul* “my beads” $s\mathfrak{v}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{z}$, and *sghwuz* “my thighs” $s\mathfrak{v}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{z}$.

It is not always easy to distinguish $\mathfrak{C}$ *kh* from $\mathfrak{C}$ *gh* since they are identical but for a 30° difference in orientation.

	
kh	gh

In practice, this is not much of a problem. In present-day Carrier, neither consonant occurs in syllable-final position and only *gh* appears before *w* as *khw* is not distinct from *wh*. Indeed, for many speakers *ghw* has merged with *w*. For such speakers, neither of these letters has a use. In older materials, *khw* and *ghw* both exist and contrast, but *gh* should not occur in syllable-final position.²

Bare Vowels

Since Carrier syllables do not have to begin with a consonant, there is a set of letters for the vowels

² The existence of a separate set of characters for isolated characters demonstrates that the syllabics are not actually a syllabary. These characters do not represent syllables, and many syllables cannot be written with a single character.

by themselves:

					
oo	a	o	u	e	i

Exercise 7 is appropriate here

Velar Fricatives

The *h* <, *kh* <, and *gh* < series are similar in shape although they do not follow the pattern described above. Notice that *kh* and *gh* differ in how far out the cross-bar is. In print this is usually clear, but in handwriting it may be difficult to tell which letter is intended.

		
kha	gha	a

kh oo	kh a	kh o	kh u	kh e	khi
gh oo	gh a	gh o	gh u	gh e	gh i

Final W and WH

There is no character for isolated *w*. What is treated as a syllable-final *w* in the CLC system is treated as an *oo* in syllabics. For example, *wadlaw* “sandpiper” is written $\Leftarrow \text{C} \nabla$ and *'aw* “not” is written $\cdot \triangleleft \nabla$. Similarly, there is no character for isolated *wh*. What is treated as a syllable-final *wh* in the CLC system is treated as an *oo* followed by an *h* in syllabics. For example, *nawh* “two (abstract)”, is written $\text{C} \nabla^h$.

Glottal Stop

Glottal stop is written differently from the other consonants. It consists of nothing but a raised dot: $\cdot$. A dot obviously cannot point in different directions, so it stands on its own and is written together with the symbols for pure vowels. The six vowels preceded by a glottal stop are therefore written:

'oo	'a	'o	'u	'e	'i

The same symbol is used in syllable-final position, e.g. *'oozi* “a name” $\cdot \nabla \text{C}$.

Exercise 8 is appropriate here

Punctuation

With one exception, no special punctuation is used with the syllabics: the punctuation is the same as in English. The exception is that an asterisk is placed before proper nouns, that is, the names of people and places. For example, the name “Mary” *mali* is written *ᑭᑦ. This convention, perhaps intended to make up for the lack of a distinction between upper- and lower-case letters, is observed only in the writings of Father Morice. It appears that Carrier people never adopted it.

Problematic Cases and Extensions

The syllabics were originally designed for pure Carrier, without any sounds borrowed from other languages. There are adaptations for writing some borrowed sounds.

r is written in two different ways. At the beginning of a syllable, it is written like an English *r*. For example, *roomudis* “rheumatism” is written ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑦᑦ. At the end of a syllable, *r* is written with a little cross or plus sign. For example, the English month name October is written ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑦᑦᑦ.

p is written by putting the isolated form of *b* before *b*. For example, *pol* “Paul” is written ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑦᑦᑦ.

In the Prayerbook, Father Morice used an *h* rotated 180 degrees ᑭᑦ to write both /f/ and /v/. This letter is used only for writing Latin words in the Prayerbook, such as *Ave* ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑦᑦ. No examples of its use by Carrier people are known. On one headstone, *v* is written by putting the isolated form of *k'* before *b*. The English month name *November* is written ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ.

There is no established way to write *f*, which has entered the language only relatively recently. Failing a decision to create a new set of characters, the easiest thing is to treat it like *r* and use the English letter. *lugafi* “coffee” could be written ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ.

Another problem is *ts* at the end of a syllable, of which there are only a few examples. There is no special letter for isolated *ts*, so we use the isolated letters for *t* and *s* in sequence. For example, we can write *'oots* “oats” ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑦᑦᑦ and *balhats* “potlatch” ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ.

A more difficult problem is syllable-final *kw*. Father Morice did not provide for this since it did not occur in the Stuart Lake dialect in his time. Since there is no way to write a final *w*, we cannot handle this the same way as final *ts*. However, since final *kw* is always preceded by *u*, and in the dialects in which final *kw* occurs, *oo* is never followed by *k* within the same syllable, we can just write words with final *kw* the way they used to be pronounced. For example *lhukw* “fish” can be written ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑦᑦᑦ, as if it were *lhook*. Adding a symbol for isolated *w* like the ° used in some other languages would be simpler. Then *lhukw* could be written unambiguously as ᑭᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ.

Exercise 9 is appropriate here.

Common Errors and Variants

It is very common both in material written by Carrier people and in the work of Father Morice for glottal stops to be left out, especially in syllable-initial position. The dot that represents the vowel *i* and the vertical bar that represents the vowel *e* are often omitted. Errors are especially frequent on headstones. Most headstone inscriptions were carved by stonemasons with no knowledge of Carrier or syllabics who merely copied from a work order. They often distorted the shape of the unfamiliar

characters and left out diacritics like the dot and vertical bar.

It is common for the *n* series to be rotated in a non-standard way. For example, while the standard form of *na* is C , it is not uncommon for it to be written C .

Mistakes to Avoid

One mistake that people learning syllabics often make is to use an isolated consonant symbol followed by a bare vowel instead of the symbol for the combination, e.g. sa instead of sa . If a symbol exists for a CV combination, it must be used. Isolated symbols followed by bare vowel symbols are used only when there is no CV symbol.

A similar error is to write *ts* as *t+s*, *dz* as *d+z*, *tl* as *t+l*, and so forth. For example, *tso* should be written ts , not t .

Another mistake that beginners often make is in a way the opposite, that is, using a CV symbol instead of an isolated C symbol followed by glottal stop and a bare vowel symbol, e.g. ni-lhe-n instead of ni-lh'-en for *nilh'en*. This kind of mistake is probably not so much an error in writing as an error in hearing the sounds: people who are not first language speakers of Carrier often find it difficult to hear the glottal stop in such sequences.

Reading Real Text

Printed Text

Printed text is in most respects the easiest to read since the characters are clear and in their standard forms. Moreover, since the great bulk of what is available consists of the Prayerbook and newspaper published by Father Morice, it was written and set by an expert. The main difficulty with these materials is that they were written by Father Morice in a somewhat old-fashioned version of the Nak'azdli dialect as spoken by Father Morice, who, though evidently a very talented language learner, was not a native speaker of Carrier. Also, Father Morice frequently failed to write glottal stops at the beginnings of words.

Glottal stops are also frequently missing from things written more recently, partly because non-fluent speakers often cannot hear them (and even fluent speakers may miss them), partly because people may follow Father Morice's erroneous spellings. Father Morice frequently missed glottal stops in the roman writing system he used in his scholarly publications and in the third edition of the Prayerbook, so people who learn words from these materials may also omit glottal stops whether they write in the CLC system or syllabics.

The Cheslatta Trail Sign

This photograph shows a recently erected sign at Dry William Lake beside Highway 16 marking the crossing of the old trail between Nadleh and Cheslatta.



It reads: $\text{BC}^{\text{C}} \text{D}$ *tsetl'adak whuti* “trail to Cheslatta”. (The round white thing beneath the C is the head of a screw, not a character.)

The Prayerbook

Here is the hymn “Ave Maria” as it appears on pages 223 and 224 of the Prayerbook.

N° 34.—Ave, Maria.

AIR populaire.

1.

אָנ-ענ, נל דא,

דלדל אה,

ענ דא דא

דאז נאדלני:

"אָד. ענע"

— 224 —

2.

דא דאז: "אנל

"דאנל דא,

"אנל נאדל דאז

"דאז ענ דא".

"אָד, ענע"

Note the use of the letter *y* to write the *v* of the Latin word *ave*.

אָנ-ענ, נל דא,

דלדל אה,

ענ דא דא

דאז נאדלני:

"אָד ענע"

Ndo-Mali, neloo en,

tenadudli hoh,

yat'en yughu dinde

ink'ez nduyulhni:

"Ave Maliya"

דא דאז: "אנל

דאנל דא

אנל נאדל דאז

et ink'ez: "whonilhni

bets'inzoo dimbun

ndo moodih nyulh uske

ᐃᐃᐃ ᐃᐃᐃ ᐃᐃᐃ"

ink'e nyaz tileh"

"ᐃᐃᐃ ᐃᐃᐃ"

"Ave Maliya."

Saint Mary, who is our mother, while she prayed an angel approached her and said "Hail Mary".

and then: "Rejoice. Thou art full of grace. The Lord is with you and will become your son. Hail Mary".

Father Morice missed the glottal stops at the beginning of *'ink'ez*, *'et*, and *'ink'e*.

The Newspaper

Here is the first page of the first issue of the newspaper issued by Father Morice for four years every other month beginning in October of 1891.

333 333 333

*333 333 333

333 333 333

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333 333 333

333 333 333

333 333 333

333 333 333

333 333 333

333 333 333

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333 333 333

333 333 333

The first line reads: ɔsʔs ʈɔɪ dustl'us nawhulnuk. This means “the paper that tells a story” and is the title of the newspaper. The second line reads: *ʈɛzɔɪ ɔɪ ɔɪʈɔɪ nak'azdli et uts'inla. This omits two glottal stops: it should be *ʈɛzɔɪ ɔɪ ɔɪʈɔɪ nak'azdli 'et 'uts'inla. The fronting of the z of Nak'azdli is not marked in the syllabics. Note the asterisk * preceding ʈɛzɔɪ, which identifies it as a proper noun. The meaning is “we made it at Fort Saint James”.

After the masthead is a brief appeal for subscriptions. The remainder of the page consists of two sections. The first contains news from Carrier country, the second news from "downstream".

The first item in the news from Carrier country is:

* $(\mathcal{L}^{Z^2})^\triangleright - \mathcal{C}^\triangleright \mathcal{H}^s \mathcal{C}^\triangleright \mathcal{C}$, * $\mathcal{A}^\triangleright \mathcal{B}^\triangleright \mathcal{C}$, * $\mathcal{K}^\triangleright \mathcal{L}^\triangleright \mathcal{C}$, * $\mathcal{M}^\triangleright \mathcal{N}^\triangleright \mathcal{C}^\triangleright \mathcal{D}^\triangleright \mathcal{E}^\triangleright \mathcal{F}^\triangleright$
 $\mathcal{G}^\triangleright \mathcal{H}^\triangleright \mathcal{I}^\triangleright \mathcal{J}^\triangleright \mathcal{K}^\triangleright \mathcal{L}^\triangleright \mathcal{M}^\triangleright \mathcal{N}^\triangleright \mathcal{O}^\triangleright \mathcal{P}^\triangleright \mathcal{Q}^\triangleright \mathcal{R}^\triangleright \mathcal{S}^\triangleright \mathcal{T}^\triangleright \mathcal{U}^\triangleright \mathcal{V}^\triangleright \mathcal{W}^\triangleright \mathcal{X}^\triangleright \mathcal{Y}^\triangleright \mathcal{Z}^\triangleright$

nak'azdli et - dit lusman inle da, aluksi cha, domyaz cha, tsabungghun ndet la uda lhane
yahadla et ilhut lhdzis za dahuszai. too buba yoo suli k'e hutja lent'oh. buba tenaduhdli..

At Necoslie - Four weeks ago, Alexie and Little Dom died one night at Beaver Lake where many people once died together. It seems that the water went bad. Pray for them.

The next item is::

U'e D^zB^h ᖃᖅᖅ ᖅᖅᖅ. ᖅᖅᖅ ᖅᖅᖅ.
zoolya buzkeh ts'ekeyaz whuzdli. bilomen ts'utni.
Julia's child, a girl, was born. She is called Philomène.

The second item of the news from downstream, in the next-to-last line at the bottom of the page, is:

ᐃᑦ ᑦᐱᑦ *ᐃᐸᐸᐸᑦ ᐱᐣᑦ ᐸᐣ.
Bel Mashal Oganagan whomoodih suli.
Father Marchal has become boss of the Okanagan.

ᑯᑦ *bel* is a loan from French *père* and is the title of a priest. Note the use of the asterisk before the placename "Okanagan". ᐱᐣᑯᑦ *whomoodih* is the areally possessed form of *moodih* “boss”. In modern Stuart Lake Carrier it would be ᑯᐣᑯᑦ *humoodih*.

The next item, on the last line of the page, is:

ilhughun ts'ilhkoht'en uda chaimun silhghi andit za nelhghel yilhchoot
A policeman has finally caught a Chilcotin who killed a Chinese man some time ago.

Glottal stops are missing from the words $\cdot\text{Ḑ}\text{Ḑ}\text{Ḑ}\text{Ḑ}$ 'ilhughun', $\cdot\text{Ḑ}\text{Ḑ}$ 'uda', and $\cdot\text{Ḑ}\text{Ḑ}\text{Ḑ}$ 'andit.

Sometimes the news was about Father Morice himself. In the second issue of the newspaper he reports that:

יָבֹלֶט דִּזִּין נְדוּהוּלִיז, בֶּל מוֹלִיס וּגְחֻוּ נְדוּדָא הֹגְחְוָא, אַו יַאֲכ'וּסְדָא וּגְחֻוּנִי יֶע
 kwulat dzin nduhoolyiz, bel molis ooghwoo nduda hoghwa, aw yak'usda ooghwuni ye
 yaoolhduk ghait'oh inle.

For five days Father Morice was unable to preach the word of God because he had a toothache.

גַּהַיִּת'וֹה *ghait'oh* is old fashioned for אֵיִת'וֹה *ait'oh*.

Headstones

This is the gravestone of Agatha John in the Saik'uz (Stony Creek) graveyard.



It reads:

אָגאַדָּא' וּוּטְס'אָנְק'אָט
 בָּא טֵנאַדוֹנְדְּלִי

agada' oots'unk'ut
 ba tenadondli

“Agatha's grave. Pray for her.”

Note that the initial glottal stop of 'Agada' is not written (the correct spelling would be 'אָגַע'). The verb *tenandonli* is the second person singular optative affirmative. The use of the optative in place of the imperfective *tenadindli* טֵנַדִּינְדְּלִי makes the command softer and more polite. A literal English translation would be “mayst thou pray”, but in English this is very old-fashioned whereas the Carrier is not.

People acquainted only with the Stuart Lake dialect are likely to take *ba* “for her” to be a mistake for *ooba*, or to think that the translation must be the odd “pray for Agatha's grave”, but in fact *ba* is correctly interpreted as “for her”. The Saik'uz dialect differs from the Stuart Lake dialect

in that, when the prefix ∇oo is added to $\sqsubset ba$, the result is not $\nabla \sqsubset ooba$ but just $\sqsubset ba$.

Here is a gravestone from Nak'azdli.



It reads:

Belzeni dazsa'
 November 9
 1918

Belzeni dazsa'
 November 9
 1918

“Virginia died November 9, 1918.”

ᐃᐃᐃ *Belzeni* is the Carrier adaptation of the French name “Virginie”, equivalent to English “Virginia”. ᑕᑭ is an error for ᑕᑭᐃ *dazsai*. The /v/ of the English month name “November” is written with the isolated *k'* symbol ᐅ preceding ᐃ *be*.

Here is a gravestone from Nadleh:



It reads:

1906
11 ᑭᐃᐃᐃᐃᐃᐃᐃᐃ
ᐃᐃᐃᐃ 5 ᐃᐃ
ᐃᐃᐃᐃ ᑕᑭᐃᐃᐃᐃᐃᐃᐃ

1906
11 sanun udechoo dzen
bundada 5 dlok
et dazsai malizini

“Marie-Eugénie died at five o'clock in the morning on November 1st, 1906.”

As is so often the case, the initial glottal stops of *'udechoo* and *'et* are missing.

Next we will look at one of the gravestones from the Lheidli T'enneh graveyard in Fort George Park in Prince George. The original graveyard was ploughed up and some of the dirt and its contents pushed to the centre and covered by a concrete monument by the City in 1957 when improvements were made to the park for the British Columbia Centennial. The headstones that could be recovered were later placed in a circle in a new cemetery area. Most of them had been damaged in the course of

time, by vandalism, or during the clean-up operations, so they were reassembled to the extent possible and placed face-up on the ground.



It reads:

ᑭᑦᑭᑦ ᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦ
ᑕᑦᑕᑦ 1888ᑦ ᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦ ᑕᑦᑕᑦ ᑕᑦ
ᑕᑦᑕᑦ
ᑕᑦᑕᑦ ᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦ

gadlin oots'unk'ut
wholh 1888t nawhonizut inle hoh
dazsai
ooba tenadoohdli

“The grave of Catherine. She died in 1888. May you (plural) pray for her.”

The form ᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦ *oots'unk'ut* “her grave” is either Stuart Lake or Stony Creek dialect. In the Lheidli dialect, as in all other dialects, it would be ᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦ *buts'unk'ut*. Similarly, the form ᑕᑦ *ooba* “for her” is distinctively Stuart Lake dialect. In Lheidli dialect it would be just ᑕ *ba*. The use of Stuart Lake dialect is not surprising in such a context since the Stuart Lake dialect came to function to a certain extent as the religious and literary language. Furthermore, given the date of this inscription, it is possible that it was composed by Father Morice himself, who would have used the dialect he knew.

The /t/ after 1888 indicates that the year is in the multiplicative form, which would end in the multiplicative form of the number eight, namely ᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦ *lhk'udit*.

The spelling ᑕ *who* in the words ᑕᑦᑕᑦ *wholh* and ᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦ *nawhonizut* is typical of the period. At present such syllables do not exist. The equivalent in the modern language is ᑕᑦ *whu*.

The verb ᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦ *tenadoohdli* is the second person plural optative of “to pray”.

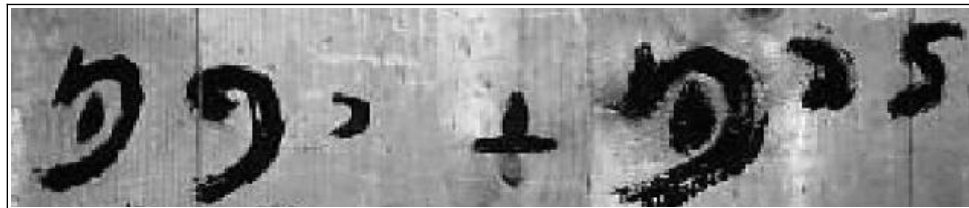
Handwriting

We'll begin with an example of handwriting by an expert user of syllabics and artist. The drum

below, held by its owner, Pete Erickson, was made for his father, Lewis Erickson, by Nicholas Prince as a gift from his sister Mavis. The inscription reads: ԾԶԶ ԵՂԴ Ժ ԹԵՐ ԵԶԻՆՆ *tungule yalhduk te ts'iyane yoozilhts'ai* “When the drum speaks, everyone listens to it.”. (The fronting in *ts'iyane* and *yoozilhts'ai* is cannot be marked in syllabics.)



Here is one of the graffiti written on the inside wall of the fur warehouse at the former Hudson's Bay Post in Fort Saint James, now the Historic Park.



It reads ԼԵՅՈՆ ԲԼԻՆ *leyon blins*. This is the name “Leon Prince”, a prominent figure in Nak'azdli known in Carrier as “Leyoncho”. Notice how he has written the clusters /bl/ and /ns/, neither of which occurs in native Carrier words and neither of which was directly provided for by Father Morice.

Here is another of the graffiti from the same place.



It reads ᑕᑭᑦᑯ “Nak'azdli”.

A Little Vocabulary

English	Stuart Lake	Saik'uz	Lheidli	Cheslatta	Ulkatcho	Nadleh
man	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ
woman	ᑭᑭ	ᑭᑭ	ᑭᑭ	ᑭᑭ	ᑭᑭ	ᑭᑭ
dog	ᑕ	ᑕ	ᑕ	ᑕ	ᑕ	ᑕ
sockeye	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ
char	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ
horse	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ
cow	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ
moose	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ
deer	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ
cariboo	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ
black bear	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ
rabbit	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ
goose	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ
loon	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ
water	ᑕ	ᑕ	ᑕ	ᑕ	ᑕ	ᑕ
fire	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ
stone	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ
tree	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ
mountain	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ
forest	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ
river	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ
house	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ
spoon	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕ
fork	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ
knife	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ
basket	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ
canoe	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕ
shirt	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ
shoes	ᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ	ᑕᑕᑕᑕ

English	Stuart Lake	Saik'uz	Lheidli	Cheslatta	Ulkatcho	Nadleh
man	dune	dune	dune	dune	dune	dune
woman	ts'eke	ts'eke	ts'eke	ts'eke	ts'ekoo	ts'eke
dog	lhi	lhi	lhi	lhi	lhi	lhi
sockeye	talo	talukw	talukw	talook	talook	talook
char	bit	bet	bet	bet	bet	bet
horse	yeztli	yeztli	yeztli	yeztli	yeztli	yeztli
cow	musdoos	musdus	musdus	musdus	musdus	musdus
moose	duni	duni	duni	duni	duni	duni
deer	yests'e	yests'e	yests'e	yests'e	yests'e	yests'e
cariboo	whudzih	whudzih	whudzih	whudzih	whudzih	whudzih
black bear	sus	sus	sus	sus	sus	sus
rabbit	goh	goh	goh	gah	gah	goh
goose	khoh	khoh	khoh	khah	khah	khoh
loon	dadzi	dadzi	dadzi	dadzi	dadzi	dadzi
water	too	too	too	too	too	too
fire	kwun	kwun	kwun	kwun	kwun	kwun
stone	tse	tse	tse	tse	tse	tse
tree	duhun	duhun	duhun	duhun	duhun	duhun
mountain	dzulh	dzulh	dzulh	dzulh	dzulh	dzulh
forest	chuntoh	tintoh	tintoh	tintah	chuntah	tintoh
river	'ukoh	'ukoh	'ukoh	'ukoh	'ukoh	'ukoh
house	yoh	yoh	koo	koo	koo	koo
spoon	kechub	tsunts'alh	tsunts'alh	tsunts'alh	tsunts'alh	tsunts'alh
fork	be'ooget	be'ooget	be'ooduget	be'ooduget	be'ooduget	be'ooget
knife	lhuztih	tes	tes	tes	tes	tes
basket	telh	tilh	tilh	tilh	tilh	tilh
canoe	ts'i	ts'i	ts'i	ts'i	ts'i	ts'i
shirt	dzoot'an	dzoozt'an	dzoozt'an	dzoozt'an	dzoozt'an	dzoozt'an
shoes	kegon	kegon	kegon	kegon	kegon	kegon

Reading Passages

Amazing Grace – Stuart Lake Dialect

ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ

ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ.

ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ

ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ

ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ.

ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ

ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ.

ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ

ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ

ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ.

ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ

ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ

ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ

ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ.

ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ

ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ

ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ

ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ.

Stoney Creek Veterans Memorial Dedication – Stoney Creek Dialect

ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ

ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ. ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕ ᑭᑭᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕ.

[illegible][illegible]

Transcription and Translation

Amazing Grace

Yak'usda yeunzoo-i unzoo
 'Et 'i gha za dusjih.
 'Oh da' nintanisja
 'Awet sghu tileh
 Yeunzoo-i tube unzoo.
 Yeunzoo-i gha yak'uz tisyalh
 Whus Sizi ooghu tisjun.
 'Oh da' nintanisja
 'Awet ooch'e' usli
 'Et huwa yak'uz tisyah.
 Sizi 'en nemoodihti unli
 'Oh da' ooghuni ushoot
 'Et huwa ts'ih'un 'int'oh inli sulhni
 Yeunzoo-i tube unzoo.
 'Andit whuts'un oot'aninustan
 Ooghuni ook'une' tist'en
 Yeunzoo-i gha 'ilhiz hutisnalh
 'Awet nedzi doghelh.

Here are the usual English lyrics:

Amazing grace (how sweet the sound)
 That saved a wretch like me
 I once was lost, but now am found
 Was blind but now I see
 It was grace that taught my heart to fear
 And grace my fears relieved
 How precious did that grace appear
 The hour I first believed
 Through many dangers, toils and snares
 I have already overcome
 It was grace that led me safe thus far
 And grace will bring me home
 When we've been there a thousand years
 Bright shining as the sun
 We've no less days to sing God's praise
 Than when we first begun

Stony Creek Veterans Memorial Dedication

Saik'uz whut'en lhuhudughan ts'i ahdel-ne nahts'udilhiti. Soo nusahba 'et hoowa Saik'uz whut'en ts'inli neba oodezti. 'Ahoohlhyez nahnats'ulnih.

In recognition of Saik'uz veterans. Your courage makes us proud to be Saik'uz people. We will always remember you.

The Raven and the Deer

This is a traditional story as told by the late Robert Hanson.

Datsancho 'ink'e Yests'e

'Uda' datsancho tube ooye'ilt̥s'ul inle'. Khuntsul yests'e tilh'en. Datsancho yuzih nat'o 'ink'e: "Yests'e, sba whuts'odutni. Šulh nuhoolyeh?" ni. Yests'e "dugwe'," yulh yatilhduk. D̥zulhk'uz tot'aš 'ink'e 'et nuholyeh." ni Datsancho. D̥zulhk'uz whehan'az. D̥zulhk'ut whuts'un yo honilh'en. "Yests'e, dilk'un!" ni Datsancho. Huwuhudloh. "Datsancho, dilhgus!" ni Yests'e. Doochaza huwuhudloh. 'Et 'awet "Yests'e, nkechun dalhjut lhe'unt'oh!" ni Datsancho. Huwuhudloh. Yests'e tube whuts'udutni. 'Et 'uyulhni: "Datsancho, nyun n'untalkuk-i in'alh!" Datsancho tube hunilch'e! Yests'e d̥zulh k'ubeyutilhtal. Nalt̥s'ut-un 'et daz̥sai. 'Et Datsancho yo whet'o. Nyo yests'e yan'al. Datsancho yests'e yanuš 'uyoonli. 'Aw ooyelhe'ilt̥s'ul.

The Raven and the Deer

Once the raven was very hungry. Suddenly, he spotted a deer. The raven flew down beside him and said: "Deer, I am bored. Will you play with me?" The deer answered: "Alright." "Let's go to the mountaintop and play there" said the raven. They went up to the top of the mountain. From the mountaintop they looked down. "Deer, your skin is red!" said the raven. They laughed. "Raven, your skin is black!" said the deer. Again they laughed. Then Raven said, "Deer, your legs look rotten!". They laughed. Deer was not happy with this insult so he said, "Raven, you eat garbage!" Raven got very angry. He kicked the deer off the mountain. He died where he landed. Raven went flying down, down, down where he feasted on deer meat. The raven outsmarted the deer and is no longer hungry.

Mary John, Sr.'s Desiderata

'Et hoowa ndi neghunek 'i ts'otun. Neye'ut'en cha 'ink'ez neyun cha 'et ndi yun Kanada huyulhni 'i kw'utuzdelht̥s'i 'et hoowa neyun ts'utni. 'Et ndi ts̥'iyawh ts'uhooontun de 'et si nuš de njan dakelhyun k'udelht̥s'ine soocho ho:dool'eh. 'Et si nus de ts̥'iyanne buba 't'en holeh. 'Et hoohoont'i hoh si dahoot̥sai.

Therefore, we must keep our language. We must keep our culture, and our land so that even in Canada we can still feel that we have our own country. While we preserve all this I hope people will be able to get an education here on Carrier land, and in the future there will be work for everyone and they will die happy.

Writing English Words

Many people these days want to write English words in syllabics, often for tattoos or for facepainting kids. The key thing to keep in mind when doing this is that the Syllabics were designed to write Carrier and that English has sounds that do not exist in Carrier, which there is therefore no way to write in Syllabics. In order to write an English word in Syllabics, you may have to adapt it to the sound system of Carrier.

To write an English word in syllabics, the first step is to consider how it is **pronounced**. English has a defective writing system in which the same sound can be written in several ways and in which there are quite a few irregularities. English words written in syllabics should reflect the sound, not the English spelling. There is, for example, no difference in Syllabics between the English names “Michel” and “Michelle” since they have the same pronunciation. Both are: ʔᑭʔ.

You should also keep in mind that even when an English sound also exists in Carrier, the English spelling may be different from the Carrier Linguistic Committee spelling. Suppose, for example, that you want to write the name **Susan**. In the CLC system, this would be written **Soozun**. The corresponding Syllabics are therefore ʔᑭʔ. If you follow the English spelling in converting to Syllabics the result will be ʔᑭʔ, which people who know Syllabics will read as what we might spell in English as **Sus Ahn**. Similarly, English **Simon** is Saimun in the CLC system and is therefore properly written in Syllabics as ʔᑭʔ ʔᑭʔ not ʔᑭʔ.

The next step is to adapt the English pronunciation to the sound system of Carrier. Sounds that do not occur in Carrier must be replaced with a Carrier equivalent. In some cases there is a choice because Carrier has added some sounds that did not occur pre-contact. For example, early loans into Carrier replaced /r/ with /l/. Later loans use /r/, which has become a Carrier sound. You may need to consult an expert on how to adapt a word to the sound system of Carrier. Here are some examples of English names adapted to the sound system of Carrier:

English	CLC	Syllabics
Grace	Dles	ʔᑭʔ ^s
Frank	Blank	ʔᑭʔ ^r
Violet	Baioret	ʔᑭʔ ʔᑭʔ ^r
Donovan	Danubun	ʔᑭʔ ʔᑭʔ ^r
Chris	Tlis	ʔᑭʔ ^s

Some English names have traditional Carrier equivalents, dating to the 19th century when people who spoke no English received the names of French saints as baptismal names. Here are some examples:

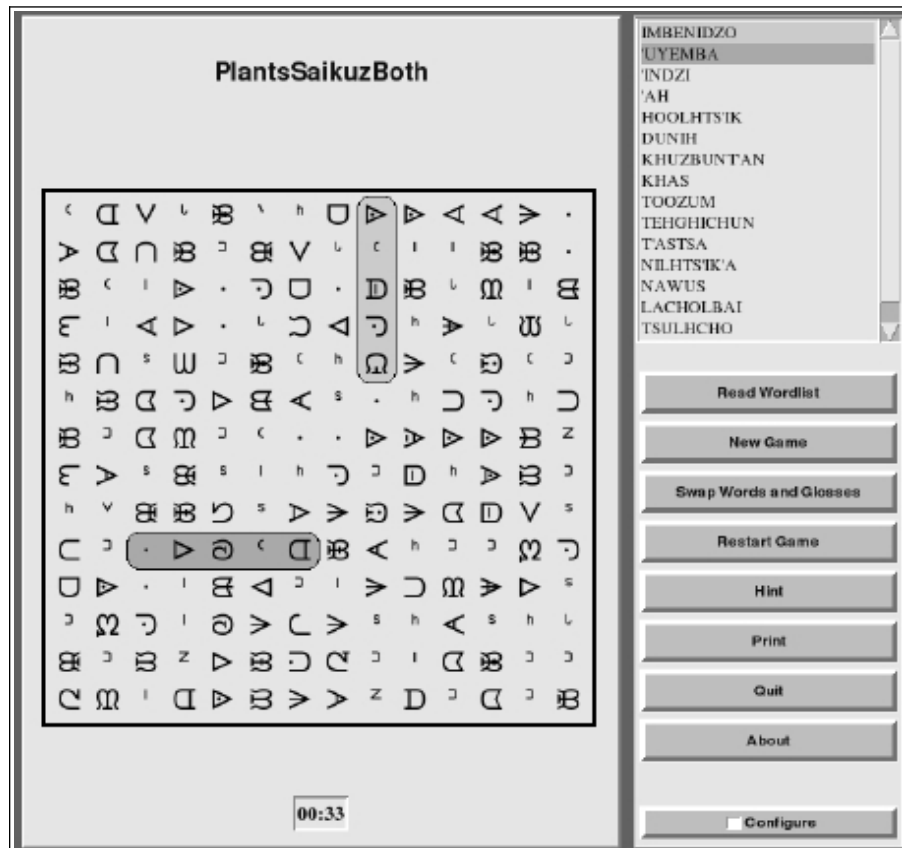
English	CLC	Syllabics
David	Dabit	ʔᑭʔ ^r
John	Za	ʔᑭʔ
Mary	Mali	ʔᑭʔ
Mary Anne	Melyan	ʔᑭʔ ^r
Sarah	Sela'	ʔᑭʔ
Virginia	Belzeni	ʔᑭʔ ʔᑭʔ

You may wish to use the traditional equivalent of a name rather than the closest approximation of the English pronunciation.³

3 For more information on Carrier names, see my book *Carrier Baby Names*, available from Carrier Sekani Family

Games

A game that may be used to practice syllabics is WordSearch, in which words are presented mixed with meaningless characters and the user is required to find the real words. A version of WordSearch with some Carrier wordlists is available at no charge from the Yinka D  ne Language Institute web site: <http://www.ydli.org/download.htm>. Here is a screenshot:



In this case, the list of words to find is in the CLC writing system. It could also be in syllabics or in English. Although the program comes with several sample word lists, new word lists are easily added.

Another game that is useful for drilling one's knowledge of syllabics is Scramble, which presents words with the letters out of order and requires you to put them into the correct order. It too is available from the YDLI web site. Like WordSearch, it comes with several sample lists of words but others are easily added. The unscrambled word may be entered either by typing in the space provided or by clicking on the scrambled characters in the order desired. This makes it possible to play the game even if you have no keyboard definition for the syllabics.

In the screenshot below, the word **      chunihcho** "fisher" has been presented out of order and the user has entered the first two characters in the correct order.



Publications

For further information on the Carrier language itself, an overview may be found in the author's *The Carrier Language: A Brief Introduction* published by the College of New Caledonia Press, ISBN 978-0-921087-45-8. This book contains some discussion of the syllabics and includes a mini-dictionary of 229 words written in both the CLC system and syllabics. A full bibliography is to be found on the web site of the Yinka Déné Language Institute at <http://ydli.org>, from which several dictionaries and other works are available. Laminated pocket-sized syllabics charts are also available.

For the development of the Cree syllabics and the more closely related variants, see the paper “The early development of Inuktitut syllabic orthography” by Kenn Harper in *Études/Inuit/Studies* 9.1.141-162 (1985).

For those interested in the Unicode encoding of the syllabics, the syllabics are found in the Canadian Aboriginal Syllabics range. The relevant sections of the standard may be downloaded from:

<http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U1400.pdf>

<http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U1800.pdf>

The Unicode standard is not easy to use for dealing with Carrier because the names used do not correspond to anything normally used for Carrier and because the Carrier characters are mixed with a large number of other characters used for Cree, Inuktitut, and other languages. For a Carrier-oriented exposition of the Unicode encoding, see:

<http://www.ydli.org/dakinfo/dulktop.htm>

Exercises

Exercise 1

Without looking up the character, say what the vowel is and how you can tell:

- (a) ᠤ
- (b) ᠴ
- (c) ᠨ
- (d) ᠮ
- (e) ᠪ
- (f) ᠬ

Exercise 2

(a) Rewrite the following words in the CLC writing system:

- (1) ᠸᠴ
- (2) ᠮᠮ
- (3) ᠴᠪ
- (4) ᠪᠤ

(b) Rewrite the following words in syllabics:

- (1) gaga
- (2) togo
- (3) tak'e
- (4) t'idoo

Exercise 3

(a) Rewrite the following words in the CLC writing system:

- (1) ᠪᠴ
- (2) ᠪᠮ
- (3) ᠪᠪ
- (4) ᠴᠨ

(b) Rewrite the following words in syllabics:

- (1) dadzi
- (2) took'o
- (3) tseda
- (4) ts'it'a

Exercise 4

(a) Rewrite the following words in the CLC writing system:

- (1) ᠴᠨ
- (2) ᠨᠨ
- (3) ᠨᠴ
- (4) ᠴ ᠪ

(b) Rewrite the following words in syllabics:

- (1) neke
- (2) taba

- (3) nedotoo
- (4) k'ani

Exercise 5

- (a) Rewrite the following words in syllabics:
 - (1) neloo
 - (2) neghatl'i
 - (3) dunetighudli
- (b) Rewrite the following words in the CLC writing system:
 - (1) ɲɔɲ
 - (2) ɲɛɬ
 - (3) ɲɛɬ

Exercise 6

- (a) Rewrite the following words in syllabics:
 - (1) whuch'a
 - (2) nuya
 - (3) jeyo
- (b) Rewrite the following words in the CLC writing system:
 - (1) >Dɔ
 - (2) ɔɔ
 - (3) ɲɔ

Exercise 7

- (a) Rewrite the following words in syllabics:
 - (1) schan
 - (2) nawhechak
 - (3) yests'e
- (b) Rewrite the following words in the CLC writing system:
 - (1) ɲɔɲ
 - (2) ɲɛɬ
 - (3) ɲɛɬ

Exercise 8

- (a) Rewrite the following words in syllabics:
 - (1) hukw'ut
 - (2) wadlaw
 - (3) skwunlawh
- (b) Rewrite the following words in the CLC writing system:
 - (1) <·<ʰ
 - (2) ɲɛɬ
 - (3) ɲɛɬ·ɲɛɬ

Exercise 9

- (a) Rewrite the following words in syllabics:
 - (1) roomudis
 - (2) payus

(3) waldur

(b) Rewrite the following words in the CLC writing system:

(1) $\mathfrak{D}^{\perp}\mathfrak{r}\Delta^{\top}$

(2) $\mathfrak{D}\Xi\mathfrak{f}\triangleright$

(3) $<^{\perp}\mathfrak{D}^{\perp}$

Answers to Exercises

Exercise 1

Without looking up the character, say what the vowel is and how you can tell:

- (a) ㄣ - *oo* since it points downward
- (b) ㄘ - *a* since it points to the left
- (c) ㄛ - *o* since it points upward
- (d) ㄷ - *i* since it points to the right and has a dot in it
- (e) ㄹ - *e* since it points to the right and has a bar in it
- (f) ㄺ - *u* since it points to the right and has no dot or bar in it. (This is not actually a Carrier character.)

Exercise 2

(a)

- (1) k'ooda
- (2) koko
- (3) tagi
- (4) kit'oo

(b)

- (1) ㄷㄷ
- (2) ㄱㄴ
- (3) ㄱㄹ
- (4) ㄷㄹ

Exercise 3

(a)

- (1) seza
- (2) sadzi
- (3) tsak'e
- (4) tazo

(b)

- (1) ㄱㄷ
- (2) ㄱㄴ
- (3) ㄹㄱ
- (4) ㄹㄷ

Exercise 4

(a)

- (1) dune
- (2) nedo
- (3) neba

(4) nami

(b)

(1) נב

(2) נד

(3) נס

(4) נז

Exercise 5

(a)

(1) נו

(2) נז

(3) נזנז

(b)

(1) lheidli

(2) tsenadli

(3) k'atle

Exercise 6

(a)

(1) זא

(2) זע

(3) זס

(b)

(1) hubuch'a

(2) yooya

(3) wheni

Exercise 7

(a)

(1) זא

(2) זאז

(3) זאז

(b)

(1) se'uch'ak

(2) tankelh

(3) ntsetselhyaz

Exercise 8

(a)

(1) >v>τ

(2) $\leq \mathcal{C}^{\vee}$

(3) $s^{\vee} \triangleright \mathcal{C}^{\vee h}$

(b)

(1) a'ah

(2) gweh

(3) lhghuna'whudilhghuz

Exercise 9

(a)

(1) $r \nabla \mathcal{B} \mathcal{D}^s$

(2) $^{\perp} \mathcal{C} \mathcal{D}^s$

(3) $\leq \mathcal{D}^+$

(b)

(1) lubrot

(2) lugafi

(3) harpur

	Carrier	Cree
<	h	p
Δ	o	i
▽	oo	e
▷	u	o
'	isolated l	isolated p
'	isolated g	isolated t
"	isolated gh	isolated h

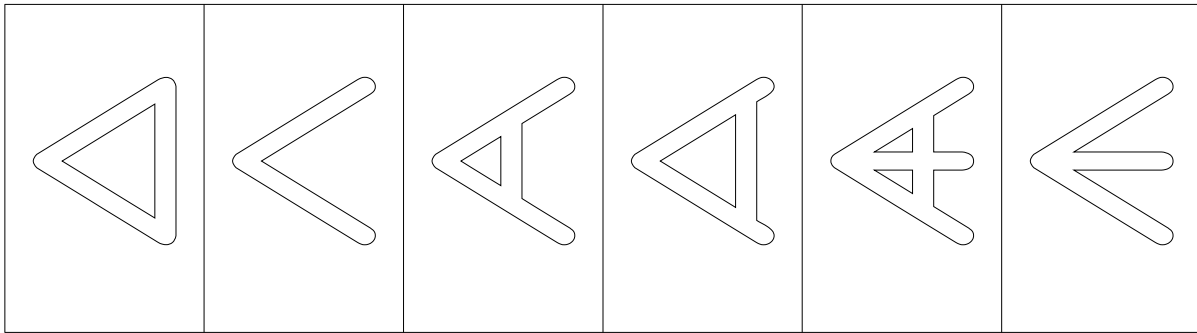
In short, although the two systems have a similar structure and some characters of similar shape, they are completely different writing systems.

The Carrier Linguistic Committee Writing System

CLC	Description	IPA
'	Glottal stop	ʔ
a	Low back unrounded vowel	a
b	Unaspirated bilabial stop	p
ch	Aspirated palato-alveolar affricate	tʃ ^h
ch'	Ejective palato-alveolar affricate	tʃ'
d	Unaspirated apico-alveolar stop	t
dl	Unaspirated lateral affricate	tl
dz	Unaspirated apico-alveolar affricate	ts
<u>d</u> <u>z</u>	Unaspirated lamino-dental affricate	t͡s
e	Mid front unrounded vowel	e
f	Voiceless labio-dental fricative	f
g	Unaspirated velar stop	k
gh	Voiced velar fricative	ɣ
gw	Unaspirated labio-velar stop	k ^w
h	Voiceless laryngeal glide	h
i	High front unrounded vowel	i
j	Unaspirated palato-alveolar affricate	tʃ
k	Aspirated velar stop	k ^h
k'	Ejective velar stop	k'
kh	Voiceless velar fricative	x
kw	Aspirated labio-velar stop	k ^{hw}
kw'	Ejective labio-velar stop	k' ^w
l	Voiced lateral approximant	l
lh	Voiceless lateral fricative	ɬ

CLC	Description	IPA
m	Bilabial nasal	m
n	Alveolar nasal	n
ng	Velar nasal	ŋ
o	Mid back rounded vowel	o
oo	High back rounded vowel	u
p	Aspirated bilabial stop	p ^h
r	Voiced alveolar approximant	ɹ
s	Voiceless apico-alveolar fricative	s
<u>s</u>	Voiceless lamino-dental fricative	<u>s</u>
sh	Voiceless palatal fricative	ʃ
t	Aspirated apico-alveolar stop	t ^h
t'	Ejective apico-alveolar stop	t'
tl	Aspirated lateral affricate	tɬ
tl'	Ejective lateral affricate	tl'
ts	Aspirated apico-alveolar affricate	ts ^h
ts'	Ejective apico-alveolar affricate	ts'
<u>ts</u>	Aspirated lamino-dental affricate	<u>ts</u> ^h
<u>ts</u> '	Ejective lamino-dental affricate	<u>ts</u> '
u	Mid central unrounded vowel	ʌ
w	Labio-velar glide	w
wh	Voiceless labio-velar fricative	x ^w
y	Voiced palatal glide	j
z	Voiced apico-alveolar fricative	z
<u>z</u>	Voiced lamino-dental fricative	<u>z</u>

Character Outlines



a

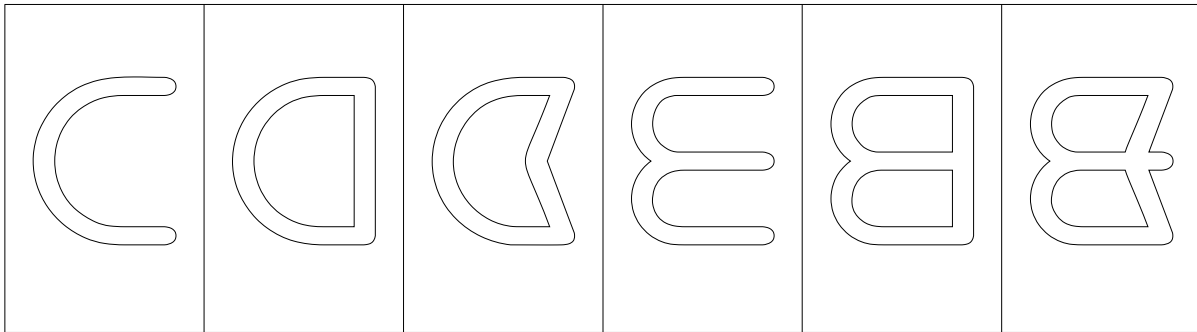
ha

kha

gha

wha

wa



da

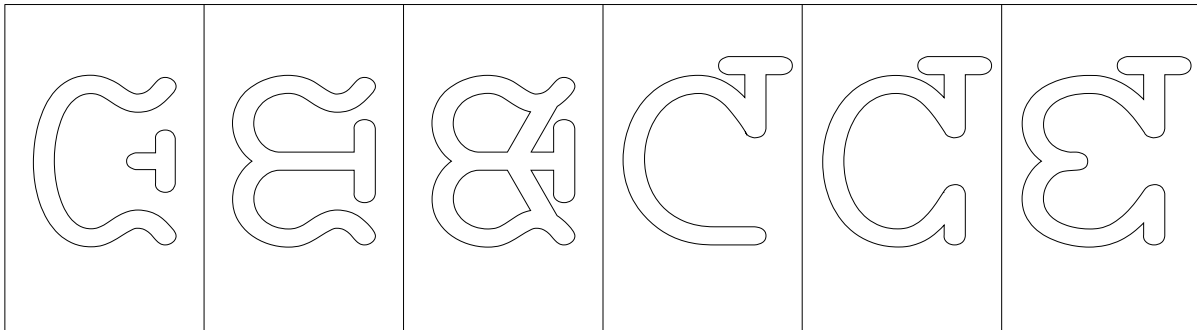
ta

t'a

ga

ka

k'a



dza

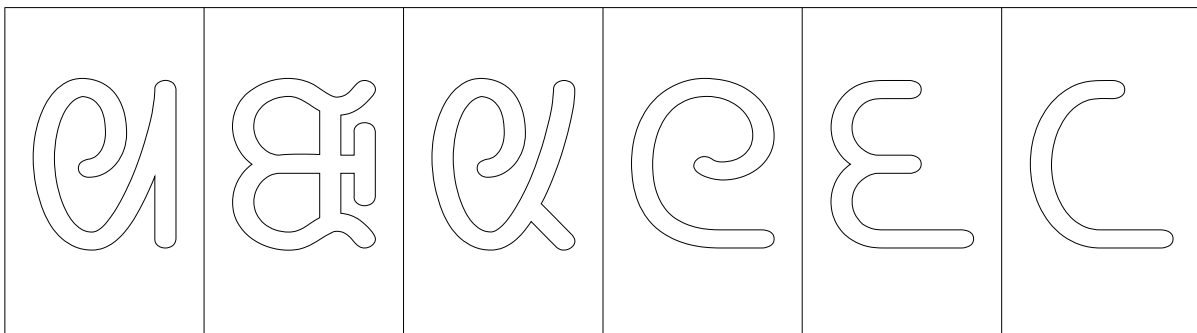
tsa

ts'a

dla

tla

t'l'a



ja

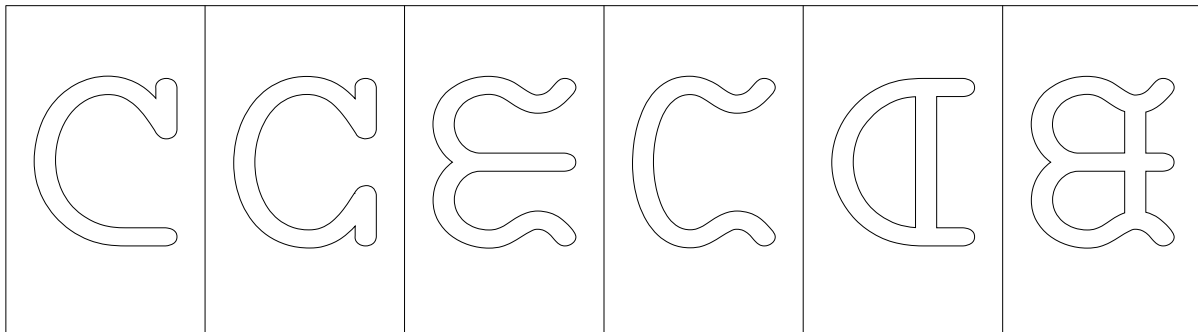
cha

ch'a

ya

ma

na



la

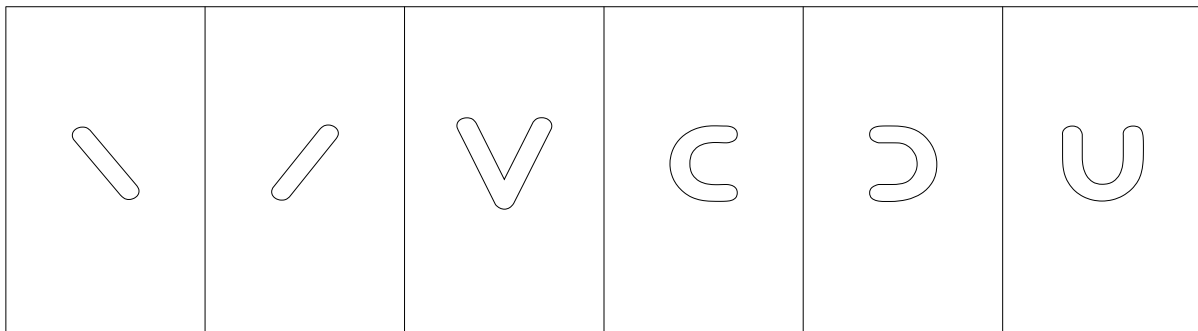
lha

sa

za

ba

sha



k

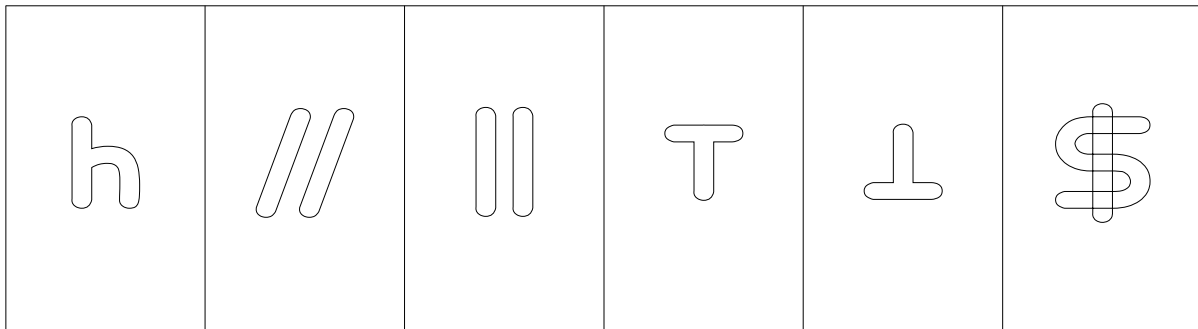
g

k'

n

m

ng



h

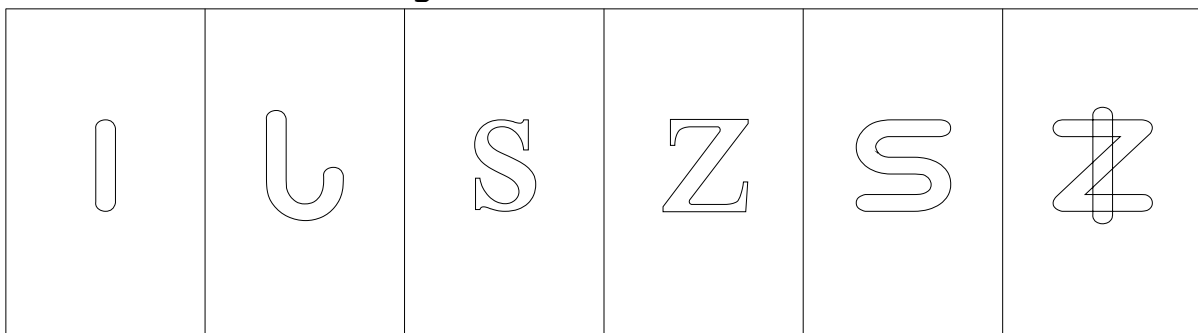
kh

gh

t

b

sh



l

lh

s

z

s

z

C	oo	a	o	u	e	i	Isolated
NONE	▽	◁	△	▷	▹	▸	
h	∨	<	∧	>	▷	▹	h
kh	∨	◁	△	▷	▹	▸	//
gh	▽	◁	△	▷	▹	▸	//
w	∨	◁	△	>	▷	▹	
wh	∨	◁	△	>	▷	▹	
d	U	C	∩	∪	∩	∪	τ
t	∪	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	τ
t'	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	
b	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	⊥
g	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	/
k	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∖
k'	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∨
n	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩
m	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	c
ng							u
y	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	
j	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	
ch'	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	
l	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	l
tl	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	
lh	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	l
dl	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	
tl'	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	
z	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	z
<u>z</u>							z
dz	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	
s	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	s
<u>s</u>							s
sh	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	\$
ch	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	
ts	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	
ts'	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	

C	oo	a	o	u	e	i	Isolated
NONE	▽	◁	△	▷	▹	▸	
b	Ɑ	Ɱ	Ɐ	Ɒ	ⱱ	Ⱳ	ɓ
ch	ⱳ	ⱴ	Ⱶ	ⱶ	ⱷ	ⱸ	
ch'	ⱹ	ⱺ	ⱻ	ⱼ	ⱽ	Ȿ	
d	Ɀ	Ⲁ	ⲁ	Ⲃ	ⲃ	Ⲅ	ɗ
dl	Ⲇ	ⲇ	Ⲉ	ⲉ	Ⲋ	ⲋ	
dz	ⲍ	Ⲏ	ⲏ	Ⲑ	ⲑ	Ⲓ	
g	Ⲕ	ⲕ	Ⲍ	Ⲏ	ⲏ	Ⲑ	ɠ
gh	▽	◁	△	▷	▹	▸	ɢ
h	∇	<	^	>	▹	▸	ɦ
j	ⱹ	ⱺ	ⱻ	ⱼ	ⱽ	Ȿ	
k	Ɀ	Ⲁ	ⲁ	Ⲃ	ⲃ	Ⲅ	ɥ
k'	Ɀ	Ⲁ	ⲁ	Ⲃ	ⲃ	Ⲅ	ɥ
kh	▽	◁	△	▷	▹	▸	ɥ
l	Ɀ	Ⲁ	ⲁ	Ⲃ	ⲃ	Ⲅ	ɮ
lh	Ɀ	Ⲁ	ⲁ	Ⲃ	ⲃ	Ⲅ	ɮ
m	Ⲑ	ⲑ	Ⲓ	ⲓ	Ⲕ	ⲕ	ɯ
n	Ⲑ	ⲑ	Ⲓ	ⲓ	Ⲕ	ⲕ	ɯ
ng							ɯ
s	Ⲑ	ⲑ	Ⲓ	ⲓ	Ⲕ	ⲕ	ɯ
<u>s</u>							ɯ
sh	ⱳ	ⱴ	Ⱶ	ⱶ	ⱷ	ⱸ	ʃ
t	Ɀ	Ⲁ	ⲁ	Ⲃ	ⲃ	Ⲅ	
t'	Ɀ	Ⲁ	ⲁ	Ⲃ	ⲃ	Ⲅ	
tl	Ⲇ	ⲇ	Ⲉ	ⲉ	Ⲋ	ⲋ	
tl'	Ⲇ	ⲇ	Ⲉ	ⲉ	Ⲋ	ⲋ	
ts	Ⲑ	ⲑ	Ⲓ	ⲓ	Ⲕ	ⲕ	
ts'	Ⲑ	ⲑ	Ⲓ	ⲓ	Ⲕ	ⲕ	
w	∇	<	^	>	▹	▸	
wh	▽	◁	△	▷	▹	▸	
y	Ɀ	Ⲁ	ⲁ	Ⲃ	ⲃ	Ⲅ	
z	Ⲑ	ⲑ	Ⲓ	ⲓ	Ⲕ	ⲕ	z
<u>z</u>							z

