

# LESSON 1 (NITÓXKA)

## Vocabulary:

### Verbs

- APO**- = to go, come
- APOTAKI**- = to work
- OMAHKA**- = to run
- ITOMO**- = to lead, go first
- OTO-ITO**- = to come, go, arrive
- UPI**- = to sit (down)
- ITAUPI**- = to live, dwell

### Other Words

- anon** = here
- ómi** = there, over there
- anóhk** = now
- itom-** = first, leading
- oki** = hello! come in!
- ki** = and
- nitóxka** = one
- nit-** = I, me, real, one, Indian
- sokápi, sokap-** = good

Each lesson will have a word list or vocabulary, including verbs, nouns and other kinds of words or stems. Often these “words” are only stems and cannot be used by themselves. *If the “word” has a hyphen in front of it or behind it or both, it is a combining form and must have something attached to have it make sense.* How to make these combinations will be one of the main things to learn in the Blackfeet language. You must also learn to tell verbs from nouns, and for that reason they will be listed separately. The verbs are so important in Blackfeet that they will be given to you in capital letters and only as stems to which you will have to link other terms. It may be a good idea if you try to find the verb stem first of all and then consider all the particles that come attached to it in front and behind:

## Verb Stem:

Now let's start to use a few of these verb stems to make sense out of them:

|            | singular                     | plural                                   |
|------------|------------------------------|--|
| 1st person | <b>nitAPOTAKI</b> = I work   | <b>nitAPOTAKIhpinan</b> = we work        |
| 2nd person | <b>kitAPOTAKI</b> = you work | <b>kitAPOTAKIhpuwaw</b> = you (pl.) work |

Notice that to say “I” you add **ni-t-** in front of the verb stem. The **-t-** must be inserted in some words as a “go-between”. Some people use just the **-t-** and omit the **ni-**. To say “you” the prefix is **ki-t-** and must not be omitted. What do you add to end of the stem to say “we”? To say “you pl.” (“you guys”)? we should note that this way to say “we” is not the only way and is used only when “we” does not include “you”.

*Exercises:*

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Take each one of the verb stems listed in the vocabulary and treat it just the way APOTAKI is treated here.

|            | singular | plural |
|------------|----------|--------|
| 1st person |          |        |
| 2nd person |          |        |

It will be a good habit to use this table-like form to conjugate verbs from now on. To conjugate means to “yoke up” and is a Latin word used to describe what we do to verbs. With one of our verb stems, there is a little trick to remember: -OMAHKA drops the final -A if nothing is attached to it, becoming -OMAHK' (note the use of the apostrophe.) There is another trick to remember if you use ITAUPI or ITOMO: The “go-between” -t- of nit- and kit- turns into ts in front of the i. (I usually write Z in place of TS or TZ.) Many verbs act like OMAHKA, ITAUPI and ITOMO. That will help keep us awake.

Translate:

1. I live here. you live there. We live here. you (pl.) live there.
2. Now I am working. (“am working” is the same as just “work”.)
3. (Make up your own.)

## LESSON 2 (NÁTOKA)

### *Vocabulary:*

#### Verbs

- ANI- = to say, tell
- SAMI- = to hunt, seek
- SAXI- = to go out
- XIKAI- = to walk
- PUYI- = to speak
- OHKIMA- = to wait
- OKA- = to sleep
- PAPOKA- = to dream
- ASAINI- = to cry, weep
- YIMI- & -IMI- = to laugh

#### Nouns

- aki = woman
- akíkoan = girl
- nápikoan = white man
- Pikúni = Piegan
- Síxika = Blackfoot, Blackfeet
- Káina = Blood(s)
- nápi = old man
- napí = friend, partner! (in address only)
- mahkúyi = wolf
- mistáki = mountain
- iníw = buffalo

### *Other Words:*

- amóyauk, amóye = here is.....(on handing things)
- a = yes
- kíka! = wait!

- nat-, nátoka = two
- sá = no
- kakó! = go on!

### *AKI and KOAN:*

Algonquian languages usually do not distinguish male and female. In some cases, however, Blackfeet uses these two terms as suffixes in this manner: -AKI is frequently attached to feminine personal names and to tribal and ethnic terms; e.g. nápiaki = white woman; Pikúni-aki = Piegan woman. -KOAN is sometimes attached to masculine tribal and ethnic terms: e.g. Pikúni-koan = Piegan man. For other functions of ; -KOAN, see Lesson.

### *Timeless Verbs:*

Blackfeet does not need to distinguish time or tense in its verbs as English does, though it can make such distinctions if the speaker wants to. In other words, a Blackfeet verb may refer to the past or the present and be translated "I do ..." or "I did ...", "I was doing". Prefixes ÁI and ÁU: Most verbs in Blackfeet require one or the other of these two prefixes, usually accented. You just have to remember which of these two goes with which verb. Some verbs, however, require neither but may use one if the speaker wishes. The verbs given in Lesson I and SAXI do not require such a prefix. Of the verbs given in this lesson, ANI takes ÁU and so does ASAINI: áuANI, áuASAINI. The other verbs in this lesson take ÁI: áiSAMI, áiXIKAI, áiPUYI, áiOHKIMA, áiOKA, áiPAPAUKA, áiYIMI.

Here is how it works:

nitáuANI = I am saying etc.

kitáuANI = you are saying etc.

nitáuANIhpinan = we are saying etc.

kitáuANIhpuwaw = you(pl.) are saying etc.

These prefixes can be translated by the “progressive” forms in English: e.g. “I am (was) doing”. The pronunciation of ÁI varies from AY as in English “day” to the Y in English “sky” and sometimes even to the U in English “but”. From here on the prefix ÁI or ÁU will be given with each verb in the vocabularies that requires such a prefix, or usually uses one.

***Exercises:***

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Conjugate each one of the new verbs using the appropriate prefix if one is needed. But be careful! áiSAMI and SAXI are like OMAHKA; they drop their final vowel (I) when nothing follows it and put an apostrophe in its place.

Reminder: As you utilize this text book please remember the special formatting. **If the “word” has a hyphen in front of it or behind it or both, it is a combining form and must have something attached to have it make sense.**

## LESSON 3 (NIUÓXKA)

### Vocabulary:

#### Verbs

- áuAMISO** = to go up, climb  
**áiINISO** = to go down, descend  
**áiSUMOSI** = to get water, go for (often drops final I)  
**áuAHKAI** = to go home  
**kokit!** = give me! (command only)  
**piít!** = come in! ( “ ” )  
**istúpit!** = sit here (there)! (command form)

#### Nouns

- matapi** = person  
**nizítapi** = Indian (real person)  
**sahkúmapí** = boy  
**poka** = child  
**ímita** = dog  
**nitómitam** = my dog  
**kitómitam** = your dog  
**kos** = cup, dish

### Other Words:

- (n)api-** = white  
**niuóxka** = three  
**in-** = down  
**inisóhzi** = down  
**isuóhzi** = near the water, on the shore

- sahk-** = short  
**ami-** = up  
**amítóhzi** = up, upstream, west  
**suyi-** = water, in the water

### Command Forms:

We have just a few of these, but you can see from them that to form a command we add -T to the verb stem when only one person is addressed. e.g. UPIt = sit down!

### Interrogatives:

To ask a question with either of the singular forms we have had, simply add the suffix -HPA to the verb stem. To ask a question using either of the plural forms, add -A at the end of the word. For example:

|            | singular    | plural            |
|------------|-------------|-------------------|
| 1st person | nit-ANI-hpa | nit-ANI-ihpinan-a |
| 2nd person | kit-ANI-hpa | kit-ANI-puwaw-a   |

These words mean: “Am I telling...?”, “Are you telling...?” Some people drop the final -A in accordance with the tendency in the Blackfeet language to silence final vowels.

### *Negatives:*

To form negatives with any verb in the forms we know, prefix MÁT- to the interrogative forms just given. But the -T- of nit- and kit- disappears in front of MAT-, and the accent falls back from AI or AU to MÁT-. For example:

1- ni-mát-ANI-hpa = I do not say

ni-mát-ANI-hpinan-a = we do not say

2- ki-mát-ANI-hpa = you do not say

ki-mát-ANI-hpuwaw-a = you do not say

These words can also be translated: "I am not telling" etc. If we use the prefix AU- with ANI we get these forms:

1- ni-mát-auANI-hpa

ni-mát-auANI-hpinan-a

2- ki-mát-auANI-hpa

ki-mát-auANI-hpuwaw-a

### *Exercises:*

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Conjugate all the verbs we know in the interrogative and negative forms.

Translate:

1- Come in and sit down here! 2- Give me the cup! 3- Give me one cup (two cups, three cups)! (You do not need plural forms with numerals.) 4- I am not laughing. Are you laughing? 5- Do you live near the shore? 6- No, I live here. Yes, I live there. The pupils should ask each other questions for each possible verb: "Are you...?" and then reply "Yes, I am..." or "No, I am not..."

## LESSON 4 (NISO)

### Vocabulary:

#### Verbs

- áiSÁPI** = to look at, see  
**áiKOANI** = to play  
**UNOZI** = to be hungry  
**INAKI** = to be thirsty  
**áiKAKIAKI** = to chop (wood) bat, hit (in baseball)  
**AMI** = to be the one  
**óhKOTAKI** = to give  
**KITA** (**ohKÍTA: áihKIT'**) = to bake, cook  
**kitan(i)** = loaf of bread, cooking; pl. -anisz  
**POHSAPO** = to come here  
**MISTAPO** = to go away  
**áuZIMOTA** = to run away

#### Nouns

- kon** = snow  
**kónsko** = snow (on the ground)  
**napayéni** = bread (from French *la farine*)  
**áisixikimi** = coffee  
**niétahta** = river, stream  
**-kimi** = water  
**ohkí** = water (in.)  
**pokún (a)** (an.) = ball; pl. pokúyix;  
**nóhpokún** = my ball; mióhpokún =  
baseball (the game & the ball)

### Other Words:

- sko** (collective suffix)  
**nisó** = four; nisuím(an) nisúí (in)  
**mist-** = away (from here)  
**ik-, ix-** = very  
**-it-** = there, here (at a point in space-time)

- sik-, sixi-** = black  
**puhs-** = here, to here  
**-ikip-** = funny, quick  
**im-** = true, truly

### Plurals:

To form plurals, we must first know the gender of the noun: Is it “animate” or “inanimate”? In Algonquian languages it has become customary to divide nouns into these two genders even though the terms “animate” and “inanimate” do not seem adequate. Nouns for people and animals are animate, of course, but some things, like stars are also considered animate. Nouns for some trees are animate, some inanimate. Some terms are animate with one meaning and inanimate in another: e.g. kos(a) means “cup” if animate and “a pottery dish” if inanimate. The plurals of animate nouns are formed by adding -IX. The plurals of inanimate nouns are formed by adding -ISZ. If a noun ends in -N the -N is dropped before changing to the plural. It is not necessary to pluralize nouns in Blackfeet, however, especially if they are accompanied by a numeral or some other indication of plurality. Here are some examples: imitaix = dogs; kosix = cups; kosisz = dishes; akikoaix = girls.

We should not take the words “animate” and “inanimate” literally. Long ago missionaries assigned this dualism to Algonquin languages. It is more likely that the native speakers thought of things on a scale of animation (more or less animated) according to its degree of manito or efficacy.

**Numerals:**

Numerals have several forms: counting forms, animate and inanimate forms and one or more combining forms each. Here are some of the extra forms for the numerals we already know by their counting forms:

1 - nitóxka ('toxka); nitóxkam; nitóxkai 2 - nátoka; nátokam; nátokai. 3 - niuóxka; niuóxkam; niuóxkai. 4 - nisó; nisuum; nisúí.

**Exercise:**

Read and understand: Nápikoaix; kosix; kosisz; mistakisz; akiix. Nitupi anon; kizitupihpuwaw. Kitáíok' isoóhzi. Kitaiyimi; Kitáíniso. Kitáínisohpuwaw. Kika! Kitáíohkimahpuwaw. Píít! Oki, napí! Kokit kos! Sokápin iksokápi. Amoyauk kos. Otot! Mistapot! Puhsapot! Anohk nitáipuyihpinan. Nitáuamisohpinan amítóhzi. Isoóhzi nízitáupihpinan. Amítóhzi kizitúpi. Isoóhzi nitapotakihpinan. Isoóhzi nízitapohpinan. Anoma kizitotóhpuwaw. Nizipikúnikoan. Nitáíok'. Kimátapokihpuwawa. Nimátapokihpinana. Nizitsam'. Nimázitsamihpa. Anóm nitáhkaii. Kitáíkípa-nihpa?

Compound verbs: You can make up new verbs by combining ANI (which drops final -I of course) by prefixing im-, ikíp-: e.g. kiz-im-AN' = you're right, you tell the truth. Kiz-ikíp-ANI-hpa? = Are you joking?

**Translate:**

You are speaking. We are speaking. I am a Piegan. I am working. I'm not working now; are you working here? We are running near the water. You (pl.) stay here; you (pl.) laugh and sleep. We are sleeping. We laugh. I am waiting. You sit down over here and I sit on shore. Are you joking. I'm not joking. I'm telling the truth. Speak up! You live there. You are going down. I'm joking and you are laughing. We live near the water. I sleep. I do not sleep. I am hunting now. I'm not hunting now. Are you going home? Come here! Go away!

**Complete Exercise:**

In each group of three sentences, there is one question, one affirmative answer and one negative answer. Fill in whichever sentence is missing: KitáuANIhpa? A, nitáuANI. Sá, ni-mátauANIhpa.

Kizikipanihpa? A, \_\_\_\_\_ Sá, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_? A, nitomahk'. Sa, \_\_\_\_\_

Omi kizitapohpuwaw? A, \_\_\_\_\_ Sa, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ A, \_\_\_\_\_ Sa, nimátahkaiihpinana.  
\_\_\_\_\_? A, \_\_\_\_\_ Sa, nimátauasainihpa.

Kitáixikaihpa amítóhzi? A, \_\_\_\_\_ Sa, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_? A, nitáipapauk'. Sa, \_\_\_\_\_

Reminder: As you utilize this text book please remember the special formatting. **If the "word" has a hyphen in front of it or behind it or both, it is a combining form and must have something attached to have it make sense.**

## LESSON 5 (NISITÓ)

### *Vocabulary:*

#### Verbs

**APIXISTAKI** = to throw

**ohKITUPI** = to ride, sit on, straddle

**áiSOTA** = to rain

**ohPOTA** = to snow

**áiSOPU** = to be windy, blow

**áiPIUO** = to be far off

**áiPUTA** = to fly

**áiputaw** = airplane

**NISIZÍiaw** (an ), **NISITÓiaw** (in.) = there are five

#### Nouns

**notas** = my horse, pet

**kotas** = your horse, pet

**otas** = his/her horse, pet

**otomitam** = his/her dog

**nínaw** = man, chief

**pokún(a)** = ball (a.) **pokúyix** (pl.)

### *Other Words:*

**pi-** = far

**akai-, akau-** = many

**mazoap-** = beautiful

**kit-, ihkit-** = on top of

**oma** = that, the

**nisitó, nisizí** (an.), **nisitoí** (in.) = five

### *The Rest of the Conjugation of the Verb:*

The first portion of the conjugation of a verb included the first and second persons. It did not include the 1st person plural (that refers to “you” or the persons spoken to), nor any third, fourth or fifth persons. These are all part of the second configuration, made up mostly of suffixes. Fourth and fifth persons may seem strange to you because English does not have them. The fifth person is now so rarely used that we shall skip it for the present.

### *Third Person:*

Third person forms are usually made with suffixes only. Since there is no distinction for sex, we may translate it by either “he” or “she” and occasionally by “it”, for the singular, and by “they” for the plural. (Note the verb NISIZI-. In another lesson we’ll discuss a distinction between the so-called “animate” and “inanimate”.) The 3rd person singular is formed by suffixing -WA to the stem or root. Usually the A of -WA is final and therefore silenced, and all we may hear is the W sounded like the W in English “few”. Some people, especially south of the border, do not even say that. There are also instances where a final -A or final -M is the 3rd person ending, but we can discuss those cases when we come to them. The 3rd person plural (“they”) is formed by adding -IAW to the stem. If the stem ends in -I, the two I’s blend into one, so it will be optional whether you write them as one or two. Obviously, some verbs will only be used in the 3rd person singular: e.g. óhPOTAw = it is snowing (the OH- is drawled when initial, like English “AW”.) Obviously too, when the verb stems end in O or U an added -W does not change the sound of the word and so may be optional in writing, though the meaning will be clearer if it is written.

Many nouns add the 3rd person -W or -WA or even -A. This fact shows that nouns too can become 3rd person and in fact are then really verbs. Such nouns would be translated "it is a man", "it is an airplane", and so on: nína-w; áiputa-w. Thus, other nouns we have had would be written: ímitaw, iníw, napiw, pokaw, niétahtaw, ponokaw.

#### **Fourth Person:**

Algonquian languages sometimes have "fourth person" that represents someone (or something) that would be a subordinate 3rd person in an Indo-European language: e.g. "the boy's horse ran away". (In this sentence in Algonquian the "boy" is 3rd person" and "his horse" is 4th person.) The 4th person has only a singular form and is made by suffixing -ÍNAI to the stem. (The AI here sounds like Y in "sky".)

#### Sample Conjugation of these forms:

|            | singular     | plural      |
|------------|--------------|-------------|
| 3rd person | (áu)ÁNI-w'   | (áu)ÁNI-iaw |
| 4th person | (áu)ÁNI-ímai |             |

Since the two I's blend in such forms, you can write them áuANIaw and áuANIímai instead of the way I have used above.

First Person Inclusive: When "we" includes the person addressed, the form is called "inclusive" and is made by suffixing -OP to the stem: e.g. áuANIop, APOTAKIop etc. This is a combination of English 1st and 2nd person plural. Many other languages do this: e.g. Cree, Maori. It really does not matter whether you call it 1st or 2nd person it is both.

#### The Full Conjugation: (We'll take SUMOSI as an example.)

|            | singular                    | plural  |
|------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 1st person | nitáiSUMOS'                 | nitáiSUMOSIhpinan (exclusive)<br>áiSUMOSIop (inclusive) |
| 2nd person | kitáiSUMOS'                 | kitáiSUMOSIhpuwaw                                       |
| 3rd person | áiSUMOSIw                   | áiSUMOSIaw (áiSUMOSI-iaw)                               |
| 4th person | áiSUMOSInai (áiSUMOSI-ímai) |   |

Agents: The stem of the verb automatically becomes the noun agent, that is, the noun that indicates the doer. The APOTAKI means not only "to work" but (with the -W suffixed) means also "the worker". And áiYIMI means "to laugh" while áiYIMI-w means "he laughs" or "the laugher."

The Prefix -OH-: Many words with a root beginning in K (occasionally another letter) prefix -OH-. If the prefix then becomes initial, it changes to IH-. Examples: ihKOTAKI, ihKITA; The singular conjugation of ihKITUPI runs this way: nitohKITUPI, kitohKITUPI, ihKITUPIw, ihKITUPIinai. The plural conjugation is nitohKITUPIhpinan, ihKITUPIop, kitohKITUPIhpuwaw, ihKITUPIiaw.

#### **Exercises:**

Apotakiw'; apotakiaw. Akikoan aunoziw' ki aiinakiw'. Sakhumapi ki ninaw aunoziaw. Auamisow' ki aipiuow'. Nitaipiuo. Nitaiokahpinan. aio-kaop; kitaiook'. Omi kizitapotakihpuwaW. Itow. Izitotow.

The man is working there. They are running near the water. They are running in the water. She is staying here; the woman is staying here. The Piegan man is chopping wood. My horse ran away. Your horse ran away. The boy's horse ran away. His/her horse ran away. The boy is playing in the snow. The boy's dog is playing in the snow. Not I! (I'm not the one.) That Piegan man is the leader. I'm hungry; I'm very hungry. You are thirsty; You are very thirsty. The boys are very thirsty.

Let each student select a verb to conjugate in all known forms.

## LESSON 6 (NAW)

### Vocabulary:

#### Verbs

**UYI** = to eat  
**áiSIMI** = to drink  
**NAIiaw** = there are six (an.)  
**NAWiaw** = there are six (in.)  
**ÁISTO** = to approach, come near  
**OXTAKI** = to count  
**áiIHZI** = to recline, be located, lie

#### Nouns

**píxiw** = bird (large)  
**aázistaw** = rabbit  
**siszíw** = bird (small)  
**isk(a)** = kettle, bucket (a.)  
**nohk** = my kettle  
**kohk** = your kettle  
**ohk** = his/her kettle  
**maáuyi** = mouth  
**naáuyi** = my mouth

Interrogative of 3rd and 4th Persons: Add -WAZ to the singulars and -WEXAW to the plural. Sometimes -A' or -WAZIX is used instead of -WAZ in the singular. In 4th person -ÍNAI is attached after the -WAZ.

|            | singular         | plural        |
|------------|------------------|---------------|
| 3rd person | (áú)ANI-waz      | (áú)ANI-wexaw |
| 4th person | (áú)ANI-waz-ínai |               |

Negative of 3rd and 4th Persons: Prefix MÁT- to the interrogative. To say “never” use KÚT- instead of MÁT-. (Pronounce KÚT- like English “cut”;) )

|            | singular         | plural        |
|------------|------------------|---------------|
| 3rd person | mát-ANI-waz      | mát-ANI-wexaw |
| 4th person | mát-ANI-waz-ínai |               |

Examples: aníwaz? = does he/she say? Za aníwaz? = what does he say? what does he (it) mean? (the reply would be: áuaníwa = it means, he/she says.... kútaniwaz = does he/she never say? doesn't he/she ever say (mean)?)

### **More on -KOAN:**

Sometimes -KOAN does not involve gender. It may also be used as a diminutive, as in akkoan and imitáikoan (puppy). Its basic function seems to be as a particularizing agent; that is, it narrows down the noun to which it is attached in order to designate an individual member of a set or a smaller member of a set.

**The Verb UYI:**

The verb "to eat" is somewhat eccentric, maybe because it gets so much use. Y and W tend to be interchangeable in Blackfoot (Y<>W). So some people will pronounce this verb ÚYI, so ÚWI and some ÓI, and some people assibilate (T>Z) the T. of the pronoun prefix. To illustrate:

- |            |              |
|------------|--------------|
| 1- nitIYI  | nitÚYIhpinan |
|            | ÚYIop        |
| 2- kitÚYI  | kitÚYIhpuwaw |
| 3- ÚYIw    | ÚYIiaw       |
| 4- ÚYIínai |              |

And yet we meet alternates like nizÓI, kizÓI, ÓIw, ÖIop etc.

**Exercises:**

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Let each student conjugate a verb of his/her choice in the interrogative and negative of all four persons.

Apotakiw'; mátapotakiwaz; apotakiwazix; kútapotakiwazix? Apotakiiaw; mátapotakiwexaw; apotakiwexaw? kútapotakiwexaw? Napikoan kútapotakiwaz, mátaikakiakiwz ki mátaisumosiwaz. Zimá kizitapohpa? Mistakisz nízitapo. Nímátapohpa. (In translating add "anywhere".) Kitóihpa píxi? Sa, nimátaihpa. Taká otasaz? Sakhúmapí ki imitáikoan áunoziaw; mátaunoziwexaw; kútaunoziwexaw.

She is staying here. They are seated over there. He is sitting at the shore. That Piegan is climbing on the mountain, on Chief Mountain. Where are you (pl.) going? We are not going anywhere. Eat! Drink! What does "Piegan" mean? It means "Pikúni". The chief goes away (went away). The chief's horse went away.

# LESSON 7 (IHKIZIKA)

## Vocabulary:

### Verbs

**áuAZIMOIHKA** = to pray  
**AKOMITAKI** = to love  
**APISTO(TÁKI)** = to create, make, fix, arrange  
**OTÁKO (áuTÁKO)** = to turn, go around  
**áiAHSI** = to feel good about, want to, like to  
**AHSI** = to be good  
**APATO** = to go behinds be last  
**OXKASI** = to run  
**SINAKI** = to write, draw  
**OTAKSIw** (an.), **OTAKI** (in.) is round, a circle, zero

### Nouns

**nato-, natoap-** = holy, spirit(ual)  
**natósi** = sun, holy one  
**Ápistotóki** = God  
**kísum** = sun, moon  
**kakatósi** = star  
**azótaki** = square  
**píta-w** = eagle  
**áwakási** = deer  
**natáiyó** = cat (wild)  
**(m)otáki** (in.) = shadow, spirit;  
**otáki** = his/hers shadow spirit.  
**nitákaw** = my friend

## Other Words

**ihkizíka, ihkizíkam** (an.), **ihkizíkai** (in.) = seven  
**sotam-, s'tam-** = now, soon  
**spóhzi** = up, above, in the sky  
**apatóhzi** = behind, in the North

**ahs(i)-** = good  
**ás-, áso-** = trying  
**isohzi** = ahead, in front  
**oták-** = round, circular

## The suffix -AKI, -ÁKI:

This suffix can be attached to various words for the sake of emphasis: e.g. napíaki! = hey partner! It often appears on the intransitive forms of verbs: e.g. APIXISTAKI, APISTOTÁKI, AKOMITAKI.

## How To Talk About the Past:

The verb forms we already know are timeless and may refer to the present or the past. But if we wish to clarify or emphasize the past action, we simply switch the -T- of nit-, kit- to a -K-: nik-, kik-, and in 3rd and 4th persons we prefix ak- or ik-: e.g. nikÚYI (or nikÚI), nikÓTO (nikÁUTO), akÓTOw(akAUTOw), íkitAPOw. To add more stress, we can use a reduplication: nikáuk-, kikáuk-, akáuk-: nikáukÚI, akáukÚIw.

## How To Talk About the Future:

This is even easier. Just prefix ÁK (ÁX-) right in front of the verb root. This gives the meanings "shall, will, going to, about to, intend to, want to" e.g. ákSOTAw, nitákOTO, nitákit-OTO, nitákUYI (nitáxUYI).

### *Combining Verb Roots in the Same Manner:*

We often use two verbs together, one dependent upon the other. Let's take some examples: To say "can, be able to" we combine the two roots AK- and -OT- (from OTO?) producing a new prefix AKOT- (AKOZ-): nitakozáíPUYI (nitakotáíPUYI). To say "wish, want to, feel like, like to" we use the verb áíAHSI (áíAHS') with some other verb root: nitáíAHS-UYI, kitáíAHS-SIM', nitáíAHS-APOhpinan. To say "go to do....", use OTO in the same manner (though it may be cut down to OT-) : niták-OTO-áíSUMOS'. To say "try to", combine AS- with AK- to form ASAK-: nitasákSAM'. Sometimes AS- is used by itself with the same meaning: ásANIT! To say "must, have to", couple AK-with -S'TAM to get a more urgent form: nitáks'támitAPO.

### *Exercises:*

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Ómi nitákitoto. Nitákitotohpinan. Nizikitapo. Akitapow. Asohkokit! Sapit! Awakasix ihzikamiaw. Za kitáuanihpa: Nimátakot-sápihpa. Oma awakási áuzimotaw. Omi kitáiahsitapohpa? Oma napiwa ákazímoi hkaw, asákazímoi hkaw, akotazímoi hkaw, áiahsazímoi hkaw, áks'tamazí-moi hkaw. Za kitáiahsuíhpa? Nimátaiahsuíhpa.. Nikáiook'.

That star is not round. There are seven elk over there. Do you feel like eating (something)? Where are you going? Where did you go? Where will you go? You can pray; you try to pray; you will pray; you did pray; you must pray.

## LESSON 8 (NÁNISO)

### Vocabulary:

#### Verbs

**áiSAKO** = to hail  
**NIPUYI, áiPUYÁw** = to rise, get up, stand up  
**NINIHKI-** = to sing  
**MAKITA(KI)** = to load, pack, saddle  
**MAHKIZI-** = to get to bed  
**MANISTAP-** = to be of some sort (a specifier)  
**NATÓSIw** (an.), **NATOYÍw** (in.) = to be holy, spiritual  
**áiSKO** = to go back

#### Nouns

**móyis** = house, lodge (in.) moyísz (pl.)  
**nitóyis** = tipi (real lodge)  
**ponokáumitaw** = horse  
**isókinaki** = doctor  
**ánisin** = word, meaning

### Other Words:

**nániso, nánisuími** (an.), **nánisúi** (in.) = eight  
**omahk-** = big, great  
**za ánistap(i)** = what is it? What do you want?  
**za anistap-ánisin** = what does (it) mean?

**amiskápohzi** = south, in the south  
**(k)inok-** = small, little  
**za kánistapaupíhpa** = How  
**ánistap-ánisin** = it means

### INITIAL M-, N- and P-:

When these sounds are initial to a root they often are dropped to make room for a prefix. This happens to verbs, nouns, adjectival particles, but more often with M- and N- than with P-. When they are dropped, we get the combining form of the root and frequently the vowel that follows them is weakened. Examples: *mistáki* turns into the combining form *-istáki*; *napi-* becomes *api-* (an ancient root for “white”), *móyis* becomes *-oyis* as in *nitóyis* (tipi or “real lodge”), *nato-* (the basic root for “holy”) becomes *-ato-*, *ponoká* becomes the combining form *-inok-*, and so of course *natósi* becomes *-atósi* (as in *kakatósi*, “just a sun or holy one”). But the P- of *píta-w* is not dropped (maybe it’s a relic of *api-* “white”). As examples of verbs, let’s take the following: *ITOMO* is a shortened form of *MATOMO*, and *NINIHKI* becomes *-INIHKI-*. Here is the sample conjugation of *MAKITA-* :

1- nitáiAKIT'

nitáiAKITAhpinan

AKITAop

2- kitáiAKIT'

kitáiAKITAhpuwaw

3- áiAKÍTAw

áiAKÍTAiaw

4- áiAKÍTAINai

But notice that the M- reappears on the command: *Makítat!*.

Here is the conjugation of MAHK'ZI (MAHKIZI) (cf. IHZI, Lesson 60):

|                 |                                 |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 1- nitáiAHKIZ'  | nitáiAHKIZIhpinan<br>áiAHKIZIop |
| 2- kitáiAHKIZ'  | kitáiAHKIZIhpuwaw               |
| 3- áiahKIZIw'   | áiahKIZIiaw                     |
| 4- áiahKIZIínai | _____                           |

Now let's conjugate napikoan to make a verb out of it: "to be a white man" (remember that the -T- of the prefix becomes -Z-, for reasons unknown!):

|                  |                                  |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1- nizÁPIKOAN'   | nizÁPIKOANIhpinan<br>NAPIKOANIop |
| 2- kizÁPIKOAN'   | kizÁPIKOANIhpuwaw                |
| 3- NAPIKOANIw    | NAPIKOANIiaw                     |
| 4- NAPIKOANIínai | _____                            |

But the verb NIPUYI presents some peculiarities and has to be memorized separately. It derives from the root NIPU- (rising, standing). When the N- is suppressed and the prefix ÁI- replaces it, this verb becomes practically indistinguishable from áipUYI (to speak). Perhaps for that reason, the Y interchanges with W and we get a new conjugation that is now the more common one, meaning "to stand, to stand up, stop, rise, get up":

|                |                               |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1- nitáiPUWAU  | nitáiPUWAUhpinan<br>áipUWAUop |
| 2- kitáiPUWAU  | kitáiPUWAUhpuwaw              |
| 3- áipUWAUw    | áipUWAUiaw                    |
| 4- áipUWAUínai | _____                         |

But the command forms are nípuyít, intensified to nipúpuyit and alternating with nipuwáut!

But notice that the M- reappears on the command: Makitat!.

Here is the conjugation of MAHK'ZI (MAHKIZI) (cf. IHZI, Lesson 60):

|               |                            |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| 1- nitÁTOS'   | nitÁTOSIhpinan<br>NATÓSIop |
| 2- kitÁTOS'   | kitÁTOSIhpuwaw             |
| 3- NATÓSIw    | NATÓSIiaw                  |
| 4- NATÓSIínai | _____                      |

(PLEASE NOTE: In this lesson you will notice that a number of blank lines, \_\_\_\_\_, exist in the lessons. These lines usually appear in the 4th and 5th persons. These blank lines throughout this book refers to word forms unknown or non-existent. Future study of the sequence may reveal the actual word.)

The inanimate forms will be given in the next lesson.

***Exercises:***

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Explain: Omahkastósi; nitóyis; nizítapi; isokinaki.

Conjugate all the verbs in this lesson. Alternates for the question “What does (it) mean” are Za aníwazt and for the reply “It means...”, áuaníwa. Using these and the other expressions composed of MANISTAP-, hold a question-answer conversation about the meaning of Blackfeet terms.

## LESSON 9 (PÍHXO)

### Vocabulary:

#### Verbs

- áuAWAHKA = to walk  
OZISI = to smoke  
PIHXÍiaw (an.), PIHXÓiaw = there are nine  
OMA = to marry (a husband)  
ohKIMA = to marry (a wife)  
áiPIKIAKI = to mash, grind  
áiSIKSOPU = to blow a chinook

#### Nouns

- akáitapisko = town  
mázitapisko = nobody  
óhкотóki = stone, rock (in.)  
istoán = knife (an.)  
sinaxin = a writing  
spíksinaxin = book  
aiskatopi = corn  
kópi = soup, coffee  
íxisako = meat (in.)  
nóma = my husband  
ómi = her husband  
nitohkíman = my wife  
otohkíman = his wife  
mostum(i) = body, self too

### Other Words:

- píhxo, píhxí (an.), píhxói (in.) = nine  
nistówa = I, me  
kistówa = you  
spik- = thick  
ustói = he, she  
mazoap- = beautiful, handsome, fine  
mazi- = beautiful, fine  
námisz, nam- = east  
nímisz, nim- = west  
mat- = again, also,

### ***Construct Case:***

This paragraph could have just as well been labeled “Obviative Case” or “Nouns in the 4th Person”. A noun in the fourth person replaces the suffix -W or -WA or -A by an -I. Some nouns, however, do not distinguish 4th person from 3rd person. The 4th person often serves as the combining form of a noun (e.g. imítái-koan = puppy) and even as the verbal root of a noun conjugated in the 1st and 2nd persons (e.g. niPITAI or niziPITAI = “I’m an eagle”, used in an old song). (Note that 3rd person for “he’s an eagle” is simply PITA*w*.) The personal pronouns are based on the word mostum(i) or “someone’s body”, so that the pronoun for “I, me” can really be considered a noun meaning “my body, self”, nistówa, while kistówa similarly means “Your body, self”. But ustói or “his/her body, self” must carry the U- prefix for 3rd person and the -I suffix for the “body” as 4th person. This “construct case” is also called non-particular, unindexed and subordinate. Note that final -N or -S are usually dropped before adding it, that the -I is used for both animate and inanimate, and that singular and plural have the same form. It can be used as the object of ordinarily intransitive verbs, e.g. pokai, istoai, owai, ponokai, sinopai, pítai, ohkíi, otákái. Declension of Nouns: Nouns have some or all of the following cases, though only a few of them have all four cases. The basic case is called “unindexed” for lack of a better name. Only a few nouns have the 4th case or Vocative (e.g. naps = partner). It is only the singular that these cases are distinguished, so the plural of them all is the same. We shall take nina as an example, the plural of which is nínaix in all four instances:

Unindexed: NÍNA  
3rd Person: NÍNA*w*  
4th Person: NÍNA*i*  
Vocative: NINÁ

Examples of the Construct Case or 4th Person nouns: akíi, akikoani, otohkíman(i), niétahtai, nizINAI = I am a man (initial N- dropped). Prepositions are often omitted, but adverbs in -OHZI (-OHZIM, -OHZ') function as either prepositions or postpositions, that is, they may follow or precede the noun at the speaker’s option. Itápotakiw apatóhzi moyísi = he is working behind the house; moyísi is 4th person, of course, since the “he” (understood, not expressed? is the 3rd person. But, Nizitupi moyís pistóhzi = I am sitting in the house. (Can you explain why moyís is only 3rd person here?). A few more samples: ísohzi notas; niétahtai aistóhzi; moyís(i) aistóhzi.

### ***Exercises:***

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Conjugate NINA, NIZITAPIKOAN.

Nimátapohpa (add “anywhere” in the translation). Kikútaiiitsápihpa matápi (translate this last word as “anybody”). Kitáisapihpa matápi? Mazitapísko .

Behind the tipi; in front of the tipi. I am in front of my horse. You are in front of your horse. He is behind his horse. He is in front of his house. They are living near the river.