

Lesson 1 · Greetings and Introductions

A complete thirty-minute class. You do not need to speak Nakoda and you have nothing to prepare.

Taught by **Theresa O'Watch**, Carry the Kettle Nakoda Nation · canadianlanguages.org

TIME	WHO IT'S FOR	WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
30 minutes · video 10 min, activities 20 min	Any classroom, Kindergarten to Grade 12	Nothing. You do not need to speak Nakoda

1 Start here

Three minutes of reading and you are ready.

This is a complete thirty-minute class. A Nakoda language teacher, Theresa O'Watch, teaches seven expressions in a ten-minute video. Your students follow on a printed sheet, then talk to each other for twenty minutes.

WHAT YOU NEED

A screen and sound. The student sheet printed, one per student. The poster printed, one for the room. The check printed, one per student, if you have time for it.

WHAT YOU DO NOT NEED

You do not need to speak Nakoda. You do not need to prepare anything. You do not need to say a single word out loud in front of the class: Theresa teaches, you run the room.

2 The thirty minutes, minute by minute

Follow this in order. It is everything you have to do.

0-3 min	Introduce it Tell your students they are about to be taught by a Nakoda language teacher, and that Nakoda is spoken here, on these plains, today. Ask whether anyone already knows a word in an Indigenous language. Hand out the student sheet. Do not pre-teach the words. The first voice your students hear should be Theresa's.
3-13 min	Play the video Straight through, without stopping. Students follow on their sheet and repeat aloud in the pauses. Every time a student says a word out loud, they tick a box. Do not worry if the room gets restless: they are speaking, which is the point.

13-20 min Put them in pairs
Students turn to the conversation on the back of their sheet. One takes role A, the other role B. Twice, swap roles, twice more. **Circulate and listen, do not correct.** The room will be loud. That is exactly what you want.

20-26 min Check
Hand out the check. Four minutes alone, then mark it together out loud so every expression is said once more. The answer key is in section 7.

26-30 min Close
Put the poster on the wall. Ask each student which expression they will use at home tonight. End with the whole class saying **Āké Wacímnagikte** together.

IF YOU ONLY HAVE FIFTEEN MINUTES

The video and the pair practice. Skip the check, send the sheet home, and put the poster up anyway. The poster is what brings your students back to the expressions during the week.

AND AFTER? THIRTY SECONDS A DAY

The most effective thing you can do costs nothing. Every morning you say **Āba wašté** and the class answers. After a week your students will not be looking at the poster.

3 What your students will be able to say

Seven expressions. The middle column tells you how they sound.

NAKODA	SAY IT LIKE	ENGLISH
1 Āba wašté	/ Umm-baah Wah-shtay /	Hello!
2 Dokén yá ȩ hé	/ Doh-ken Yah-oo Hay /	How are you?
3 Dayá wá ȩ	/ Duh-yah Wah-oo /	I'm fine
4 Né duwé hé	/ Neh Do-wehh Hay /	What's your name?
5 Né miyé	/ Neh Me-yeah /	My name is ____
6 Pinámaya	/ Pee-nom-my-ya /	Thank you
7 Āké Wacímnagikte	/ Ah-kay Wah-chim-nah-gink-tah /	Goodbye

THE LITTLE HOOK IS PART OF THE LETTER

The small hook under **ȩ**, **ȩ** and **Ā** is called an ogonek. It means the vowel is nasal. A word without its hook is a different word. Never drop it.

4 Which subject does this lesson belong to?

Everyone asks this. Short answer: almost anywhere.

You do not need an Indigenous language course to exist in your school to teach this lesson. Here is where it fits naturally.

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE COURSE	If your division offers one, this is its obvious home. It is an absolute-beginner lesson, so it is a first lesson of the year.
SOCIAL STUDIES	This is where most teachers put Indigenous content, and it works well. The Ministry's framework says its contexts "lend themselves to the integration of subjects".
TREATY EDUCATION	Required K-12, in every subject. The first Treaty Education goal names languages as the first element of a people's identity. A class in which children speak Nakoda <i>is</i> Treaty Education. See section 5.
ENGLISH OR FRENCH LANGUAGE ARTS	As a language-awareness lesson. Comparing how you greet someone in three languages is a language exercise in its own right.
ARTS, MUSIC, PHYS ED	The seven expressions work as an entry routine in any subject at all.
MORNING ROUTINE	Thirty seconds a day, attached to no subject. This is where the hours actually add up.

ONE PRACTICAL TIP

If you have to write something in your plan, write the Treaty Education outcome for your grade, in section 5. It is official, it is required, and this lesson serves it directly.

5 The curriculum, for your planning

This section is for filling in a lesson plan or answering an administrator. You can teach the lesson without reading it.

FIRST, ONE THING TO KNOW

Saskatchewan **does not publish a ready-made Nakoda course** for elementary and middle years. It publishes a document called the **First Nations and Métis Language Framework**, and that document is not a curriculum: it is a **template**. A fill-in-the-blanks document the Ministry hands to a nation or a course developer who wants to build a course in their own language. It sets the structure, the goals and the codes, and leaves the statements to be written. That is why the outcomes below are **proposed** rather than quoted: there is no official set for Nakoda at these levels yet. The version of the template listed in the provincial curriculum registry is marked **preliminary (2026)**.

Steps are not grades

The template divides learning into nine **steps**, and it is explicit: steps "are defined by language levels and not by students' grade levels" and "may not coincide with the actual grade of students". This lesson is **Step 1**. It therefore suits Kindergarten and Grade 11 alike, because a beginner is a beginner.

The four goals of the template

Strategies (ST)	Use a variety of strategies to learn and to communicate.
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Language Concepts (LC) Acquire knowledge of the language's concepts.

Applications (AP) Use the language in a variety of situations.

Culture (CU) Recognize the value of the language and of the cultures that carry it.

It also sets three compulsory contexts: Land, Identity and Worldview. **This lesson sits in Identity**, because a student says their own name in Nakoda for the first time.

The outcomes proposed for this lesson

Written in the Ministry's format. They should be confirmed by the Nakoda language authority before a school division adopts them formally.

ST1.1 Use simple strategies to understand and be understood.

INDICATORS

- Listen for the whole expression rather than for individual words.
- Use gesture and tone to support meaning.
- Repeat aloud after the speaker, even when unsure of the meaning.
- Ask for a repetition without embarrassment.

LC1.1 Recognize the sounds and written marks that distinguish one word from another.

INDICATORS

- Identify nasal vowels in speech and in writing.
- Recognize that the ogonek marks a distinct letter and not an ornament.
- Reproduce the seven expressions with recognizable pronunciation.
- Copy the written forms accurately, with all their marks.

AP1.1 Greet, take leave of, and thank someone in Nakoda.

INDICATORS

- Greet with **Ába wašté** and respond to the same greeting.
- Thank with **Pinámaya** in a real classroom situation.
- Take leave with **Aké Wacímnagikte**.
- Accompany the greeting with eye contact.

AP1.2 Exchange personal information in a short conversation.

INDICATORS

- Ask and answer how someone is.
- Ask another person's name and give your own.
- Sustain the full conversation with a partner, in both roles.
- Start a greeting in Nakoda outside the lesson.

CU1.1 Recognize that Nakoda is a living language of this place.

INDICATORS

- Locate Carry the Kettle Nakoda Nation and the Nakoda-speaking territory.
- Explain why eye contact matters to the speaker who teaches this lesson.
- Name one person outside school with whom to use an expression.
- Recognize that a language stays alive because people speak it.

Treaty Education: the outcome to write down

Treaty Education is required in every classroom, K–12. Take the outcome for your grade.

K • TRK1	Examine the diversity of First Nations peoples living in Saskatchewan.
1 • TPP14	Explore what is meant by <i>We are all Treaty People</i> .
2 • HC23	Analyze traditional forms of leadership in practice prior to European contact.
3 • TPP34	Explore how the use of different languages in treaty making presented challenges that still affect people today.
5 • TR51	Examine the concepts of colonization and decolonization.

For any other grade, take that grade's outcome from *Treaty Education Outcomes and Indicators* (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2013).

AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL, A DIFFERENT DOCUMENT APPLIES

Nakoda also exists as a separate course at **levels 10, 20 and 30**, with its own outcomes **already published** by the Ministry and organized differently. You can teach this lesson inside those courses, but you will record outcomes against that document. Careful: the same letters do not mean the same thing there. **LC** means "Language Concepts" here and "Language Use Context" there.

6 Assessment

What to look for, and what not to grade.

OBSERVE	Does the student speak aloud during the pair practice, in both roles? You gather this by listening, not by testing.
COLLECT	The student sheet, especially the line naming the person they taught an expression to at home.
MARK OUT LOUD	The check, with the class, so the marking is one more repetition.
DO NOT GRADE	Pronunciation or spelling. Grading either will silence the shy students, and neither is the point of this lesson.

WHY WRITING IS NOT GRADED

The Ministry's template says it: Indigenous languages are grounded in oral tradition, and successful learning requires hearing the language **before** reading or writing it. The written words on the sheet support the ear; they are not the object of the lesson. A student who says **Ába wašté** well and writes it badly has succeeded.

7 Answer key

1	Ába wašté	5	Né miyé
2	Dokén yá ʉ hé	6	Pinámaya
3	Dayá wá ʉ	7	ʉké Wacímnagikte
4	Né duwé hé		

8 If you retype these words

This is the most common way a language gets damaged by accident.

Nakoda is written with nasal vowels: **ǎ**, **ʉ**, **Ǻ**. Two expressions carry an accent above the letter at the same time: **ǎ́** and **ʉ́**. A word that has lost its hook is a different word.

A THREE-SECOND TEST

Type the word, select it, copy it, paste it somewhere else. If both marks survive, your software is fine. If they vanish, it is not. To type Nakoda properly, install the free fonts **Andika** or **Charis SIL** from SIL International.

And if a student tells you their family says it differently at home, that student is not wrong. The forms taught here are Theresa O'Watch's, from Carry the Kettle. Other communities sometimes say it differently. That is a conversation worth having in front of the class.

9 Questions teachers ask

The real ones, the night before.

WHAT IF I SAY IT WRONG?	You will not be saying it. Theresa teaches it. And if you do try and get it wrong, your students will see an adult attempting a language without being afraid of making mistakes. That is a good lesson on its own.
I HAVE AN INDIGENOUS STUDENT IN THE ROOM	Do not put them on the spot. Do not ask them to check the pronunciation or to speak for their nation. If they offer something themselves, welcome it. The lesson gives three ways to practise precisely so that nobody has to perform in front of the class.
WHAT IF A STUDENT MOCKS THE LANGUAGE?	Handle it exactly as you would for French or Spanish. It almost always comes from discomfort rather than malice. A quiet "we're listening" usually does it.
DO I NEED PERMISSION?	No. It is free, for any classroom, in any school, in any country. Print and photocopy as much as you like.

CAN I TEACH IT AGAIN NEXT YEAR?	Yes. You can even repeat it with the same class: repetition is the heart of learning a language.
I HAVE NO SCREEN	Sound matters more than picture. A speaker and the printed sheets are enough to run the lesson.
SHOULD I TELL PARENTS?	Nothing obliges you to. But the take-home task means someone at home will hear about the lesson that same evening. Some teachers send a short note, others do not. Both are defensible.
HOW LONG UNTIL STUDENTS REMEMBER?	With the thirty-seconds-a-morning routine, most classes hold all seven expressions within two weeks. Without it, they fade within a month.
CAN I USE ONLY PART OF IT?	Yes. The poster alone on the wall already does work. So does the video on its own. Take whatever fits your timetable.
MY STUDENTS ARE VERY YOUNG, OR MUCH OLDER	Step 1 suits both, because it describes the language level and not the age. With younger students, do the conversation standing up and with gestures. With older ones, ask them to add a sentence of their own invention at the end.

10 Credits

LANGUAGE TEACHER	Theresa O'Watch, Carry the Kettle Nakoda Nation
SERIES	Canadian Languages, free Indigenous language lessons for teachers across Canada. Cree, Dakota, Dene and Michif are in development.
PRODUCED BY	ZARRY MEDIA INC., Regina. Director: Wahbi Zarry. Documentaries <i>10 Days of Nakota</i> (2022) and <i>10 Days of Cree</i> (2020).
EVERYTHING IS FREE	canadianlanguages.org. The video, this guide, the student sheet, the check and the poster: download, print and photocopy freely.
A CORRECTION?	If a word is said differently in your community, write to us through canadianlanguages.org. We want to know.