



Early Learning Classroom Package

Northern Michif





Michif Language Development Labels

How to Use the Labels

1. Label Placement:

- For larger items, place the label directly on or near the object to create a visual connection between the item and its Michif name. For example, attach the label “chair” to a chair in the classroom.
- For smaller or abstract items, use the image-based labels to reinforce recognition. These can be placed on posters, in learning centers, or on flashcards.

2. Interactive Language Practice:

- Educators and caregivers can reference the labels during daily routines, introducing the Michif term naturally. For instance, while setting up for snack time, point to the labeled “plate” and say the word in Michif.
- Begin with just a few key labels in your space, and slowly add more as children become familiar and confident with the Michif words.
- Use online recordings and Michif dictionaries to support accurate pronunciation and model the words confidently for children.

3. Language Games:

- Use the labels for matching games where children pair objects with their Michif labels or images.
- Create a scavenger hunt where children find items with their matching labels around the classroom.

4. Routine Integration:

- Incorporate the labels into daily songs, stories, or discussions to foster familiarity and repetition.
- Encourage children to repeat the Michif words and use them in sentences during play and structured activities.



About Michif Language

Métis people have been multilingual since the birth of the Métis Nation, speaking the languages of their neighbours and trading partners in addition to their own. This multilingualism allowed the Métis to prosper during the fur trade era, and language remains an important part of Métis identity in contemporary times. You may have heard of Michif, a language spoken among some Métis throughout the homeland; in fact, “Michif” has come to refer to any of three unique languages that formed alongside Métis culture: Heritage Michif, Northern Michif, and Michif French.

Heritage (Southern) Michif: Heritage Michif, also known as Southern Michif, or Michif, is spoken mainly from western Manitoba all the way to central Alberta, in addition to Northern North Dakota and Montana. It originated among the bison-hunting Métis who lived on the plains. Today in Saskatchewan, it is spoken especially in the Yorkton, Cypress Hills, Qu’Appelle Valley, Regina, and Round Prairie/Saskatoon areas.

Linguistically, it is considered to be one of the most unique languages in the world – described somewhat simplistically – as a blend of French nouns and Cree verbs. The French element of Heritage Michif mostly comes from Michif French, with the majority of the Algonquian element coming from the Plains Cree (Y dialect) and a small Western Ojibwe (Saulteaux) influence. That said, Heritage Michif has solidified into its own language: it contains elements from its source languages, but also has characteristics that are unique to it alone. A good example of this is the way in which some French elements are “sandwiched” in Cree grammar, like the French noun *le vieux* (‘old man’) becoming a verb in phrases like *ni maachi li vyeu-iwin* (‘I am getting old’). It is important to note that for the majority of its existence Heritage Michif has been an oral language passed down through oral transmission. Today, there is no universal standardized spelling system in Heritage Michif. Spelling systems can vary from speaker to speaker, or province to province. At MN-S we have adopted the double vowel spelling system used by mother tongue speaker Norman Fleury and linguist Peter Bakker. Other examples of spelling systems exist, with different variations of the double vowel system being used, as well as a phonetic spelling system used by some speakers.

Northern Michif: Northern Michif is primarily spoken throughout North-Western Saskatchewan and parts of Northern Alberta. Notable communities in Saskatchewan include Green Lake, Meadow Lake, Beauval, Île-à-la-Crosse, and Buffalo Narrows. Many consider it a dialect of Cree, but with a noticeable French influence. Northern Michif is a historic language that holds stories and cultural teachings. It is likely that as Métis began moving north in greater numbers, they began to speak Cree to easily communicate with their First Nations kin and neighbours. Speakers say that the French vocabulary in Northern Michif was introduced by the clergy and school system, rather than coming from Michif French, and the Cree (Plains Cree Y-Dialect), came from First Nations neighbours. As missionaries and voyageurs followed the river systems from Red River to Northern Saskatchewan, Cree was the language they heard. It is through this connection to the land that Northern Michif gives identity to those who speak it, a connection to where they come from. In terms of a writing system, Northern Michif follows the Standard Roman Orthography (SRO). SRO is a system for writing the Cree language that uses a modified form of the Latin alphabet. It provides a consistent way to represent Cree sounds, assigning one letter to each distinct sound or phoneme.



Michif French: Michif French, sometimes referred to as French Michif and Michif, is known to be spoken in regions such as St. Laurent, St. Eustache and Saint Ambroise in Manitoba, St. Louis, Batoche, St. Laurent, Duck Lake areas in Saskatchewan, and the Lac la Biche, St. Paul, St. Albert and Bonnyville areas in Alberta, with slight variations in the language within regions. It is said to have been the language primarily spoken in the Red River area in the 1870s. Linguists often refer to Michif French as a dialect of French; however, traditional speakers of the language refer to it as Michif, the language of their Red River Métis families. It is said to have been influenced by the phonological and syntactic features of Algonquian languages, as noted in examples such as the word 'window' in French, which is 'fenêtre' but is shaasii or vett in Michif French, and the term 'skunk' in French is 'moufette' but is shiikawkw in Michif French.

For more information on the Michif languages, please visit: [Three distinct languages | Metis Gathering](#)

*If your classroom or center is interested in using this resource in a different Michif language, please contact metisgathering@mns.ca

Special Thanks

This important cultural resource was created in cooperation with several Michif language speakers in Saskatchewan. Métis Nation-Saskatchewan would like to give thanks to these contributors. We are grateful to have their expertise during the creation process.

A special thank you goes out to the people listed below:

Heritage Michif Contributors:

Dr. Elder Norman Fleury
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Northern Michif Contributors:

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Sandra Laliberte
Leda Corrigan
Laura Burnouf
Maureen Belanger

Michif French Contributors:

Mataant Ang
Pawpaw Sonny
Maymair Phyllis

Use these apps for pronunciation:



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language, & culture
resources!

metisgathering.ca



Classroom Labels





latâp

the table





la shåsh



a chair



la pohrrt

door





I'balå

broom



tahkas'ciḵan



the fridge



la pwål

a stove



la plâñshî



the floor



lishâsi



window



I'cimili

the bathroom



**wîpin'kêwinêw
l'kan**

the garbage can



Il'savöñ

the soap



I'papi

the paper

I'bas

the bus _____





I'sîzô

the scissors



lakwal

the glue



tân'si î
isihkâsoyin?
what's your name? _____





kasıpeyiķanis



eraser



mitawi

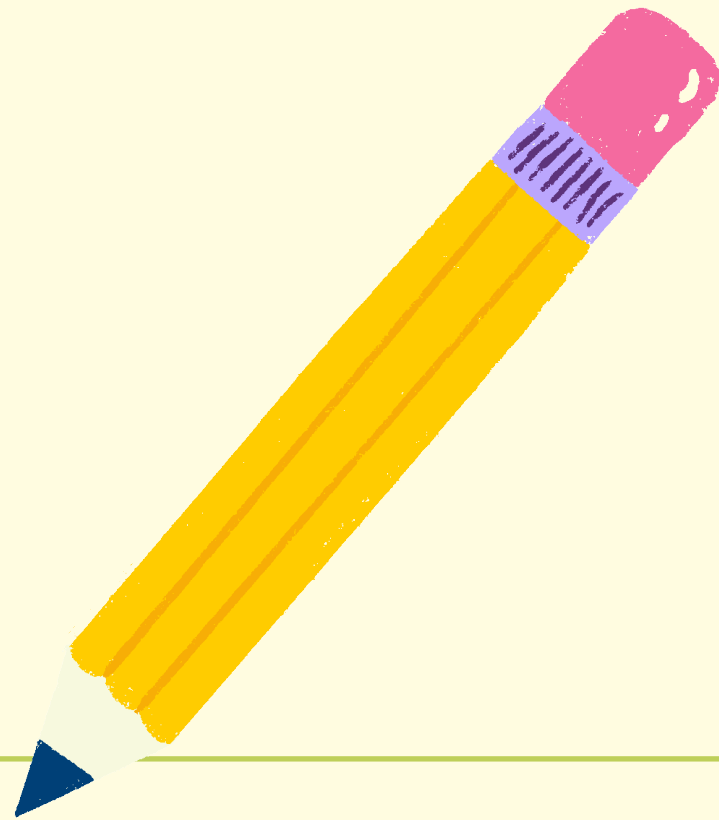
play





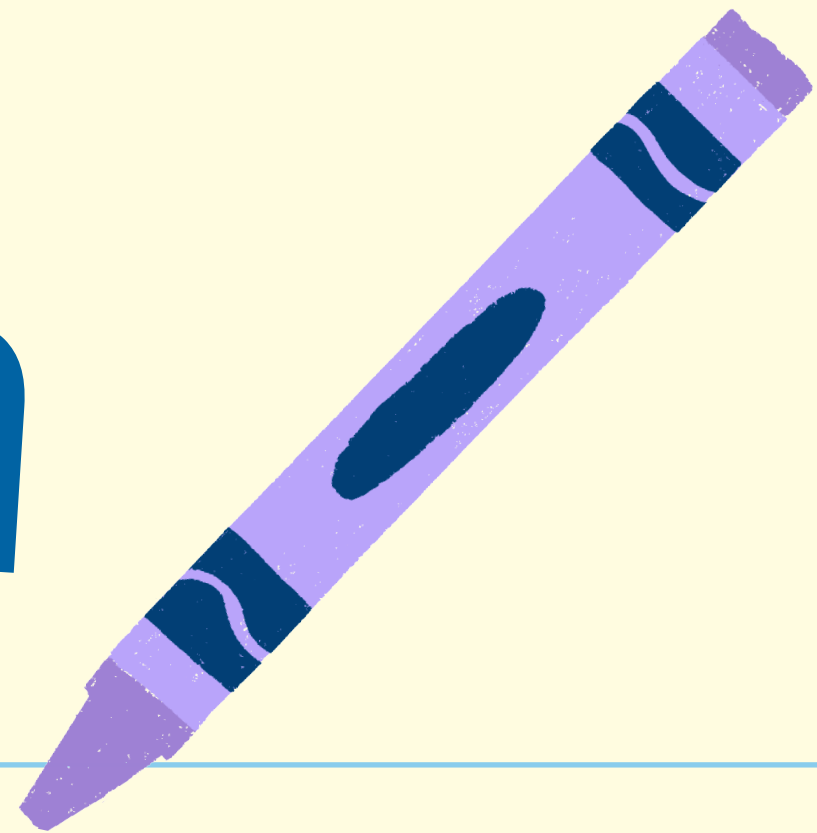
I'krriyöñ

a pencil



I'krriyöñ

a crayon



èkosi

that's it; that's all



m'wîstas
kawâpâm'tin
see you later



tân'si

hello



âstam(ik)

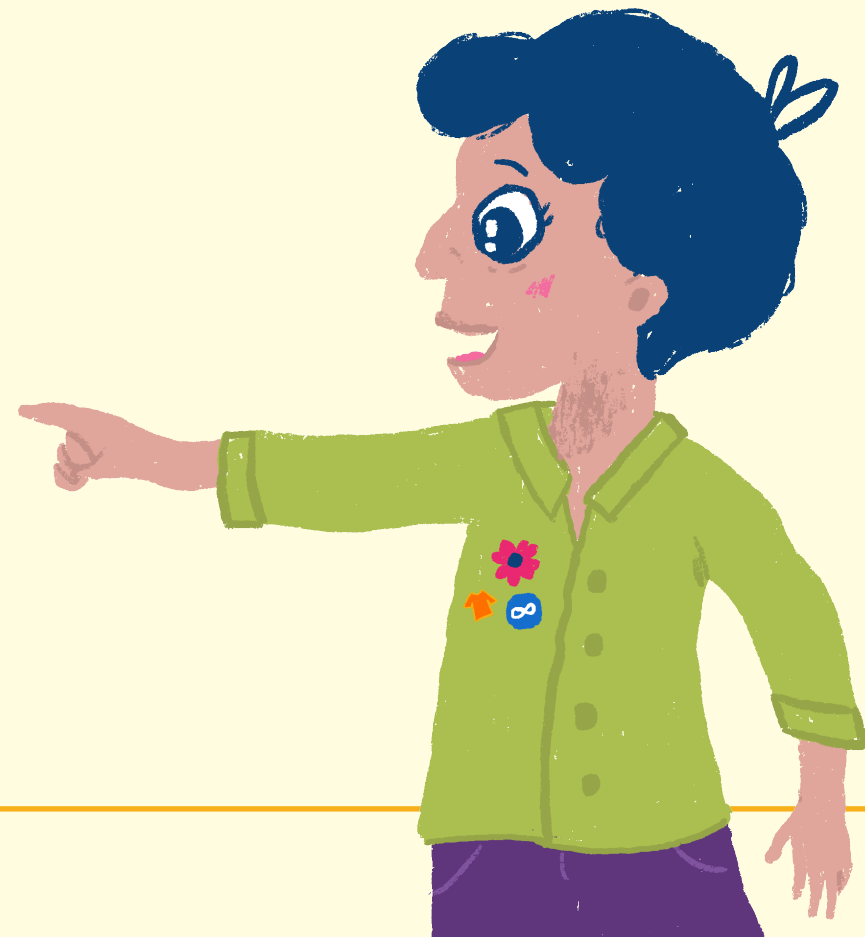
ôtî pîtohtî(k)

come here (all of you)



ôta itâpi

look here _____



nisihkâson

my name is...

my name is...



ayamihcikêwin

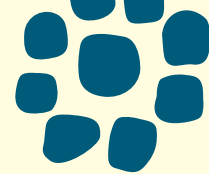
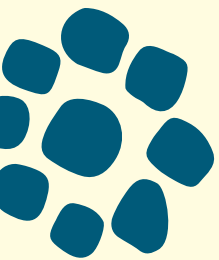
reading



nimiyohîîn

I'm happy





nipîkwihîn

I'm sad

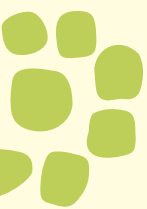




kâ nîkânîsta

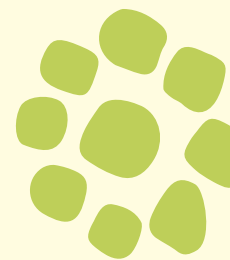
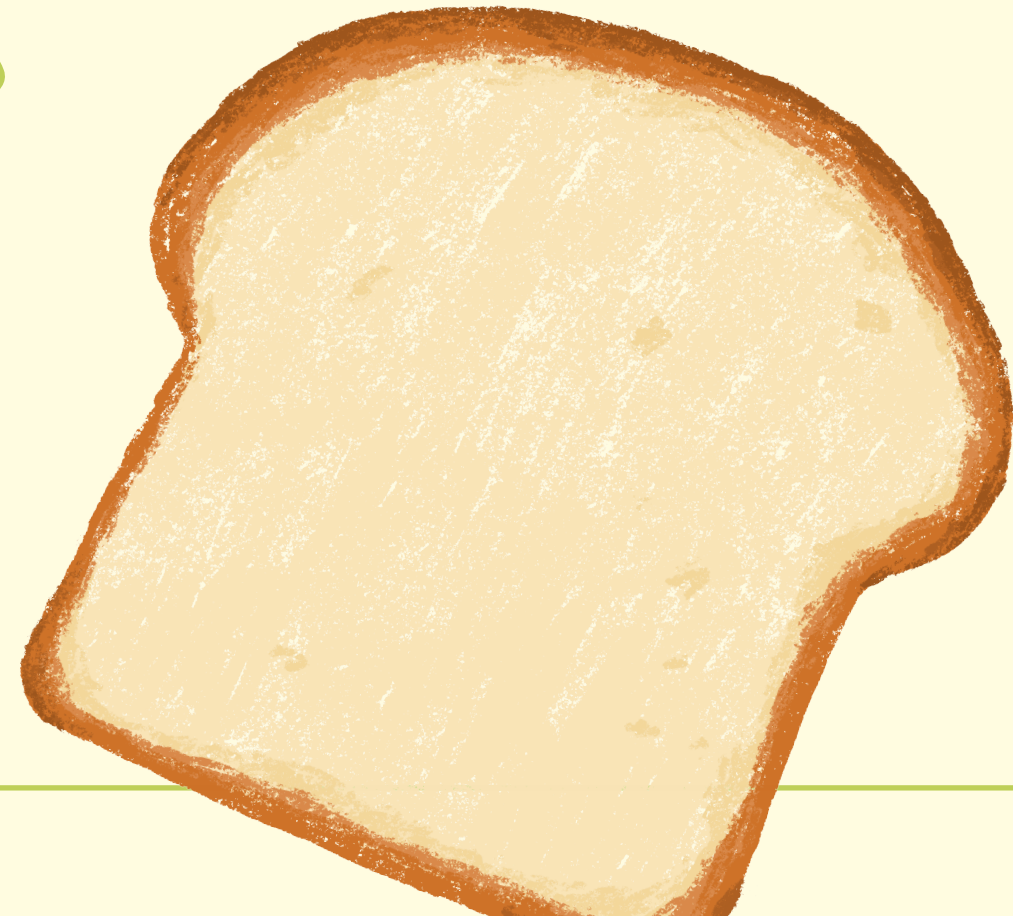
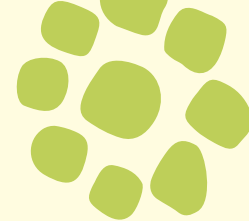
leader





l'pảñ

bread



kiskinohamâkêw

OR I'teacharr

school teacher



la kwîzin

kitchen



nâpêw l'teacharr

school teacher (male)



lasop

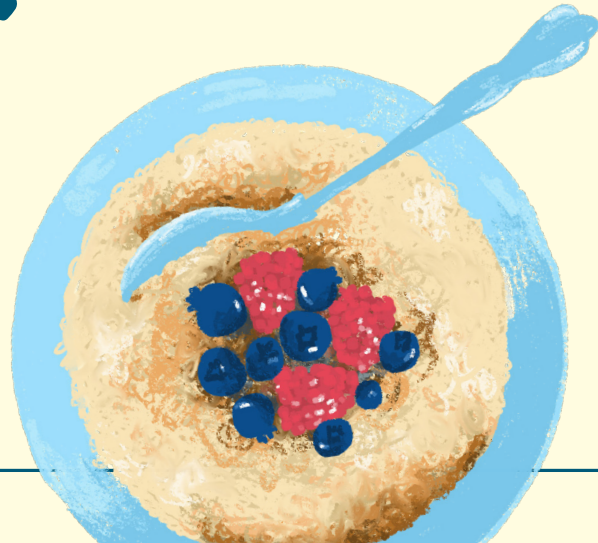
soup





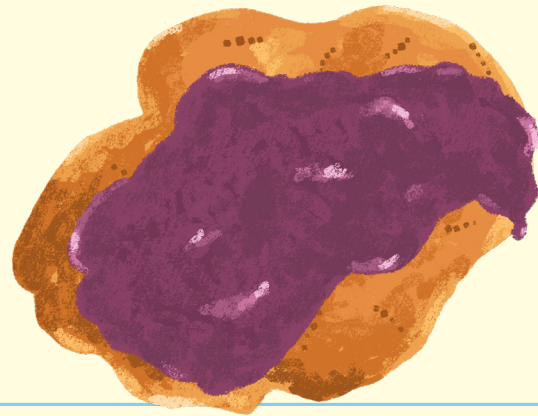
la porrich

oatmeal



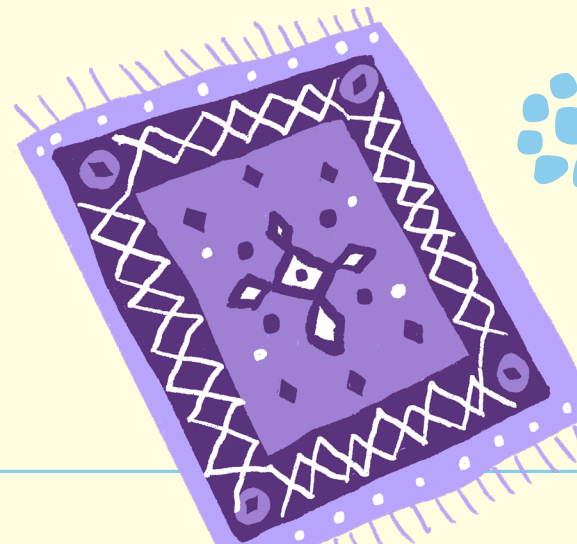
lakkalet

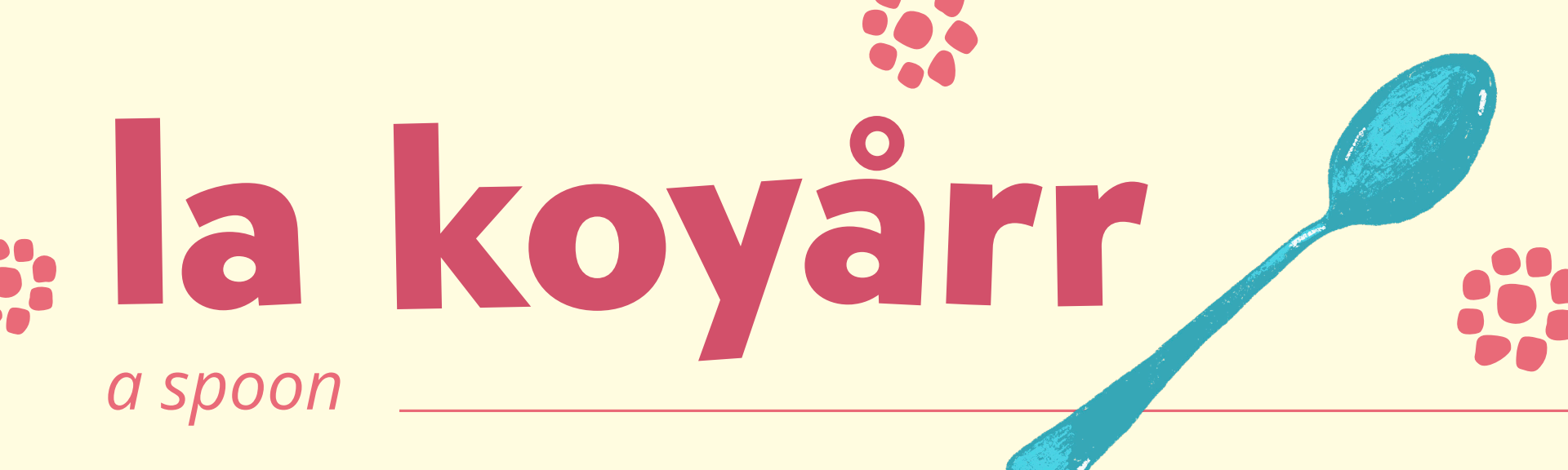
bannock



anâskêwin

a rug





la koyårr

a spoon



la forrshet

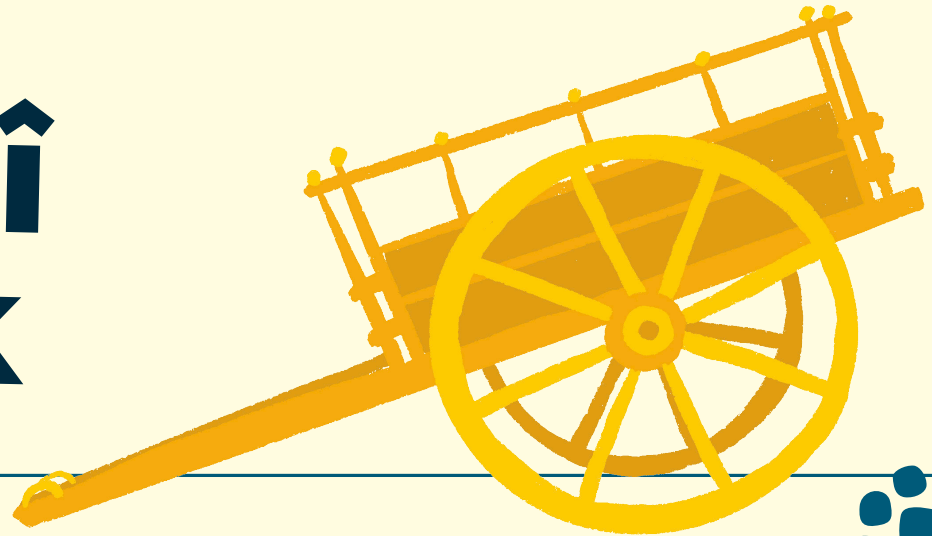
a fork



I'kotoô

a knife

**lirrôsh sîpî
otâpânâsk**
the red river cart



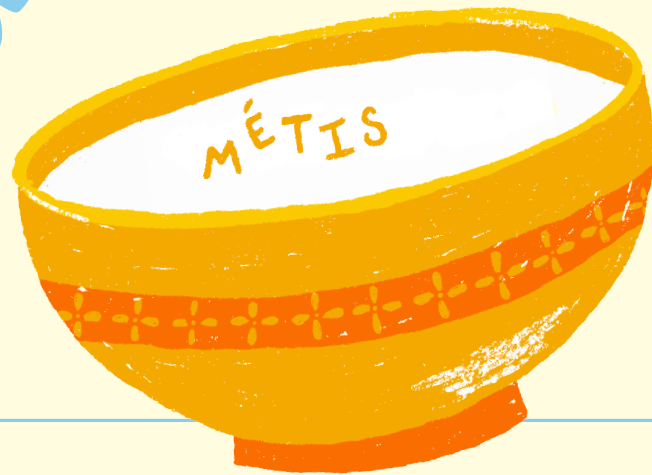
I'paviyöñ

a flag

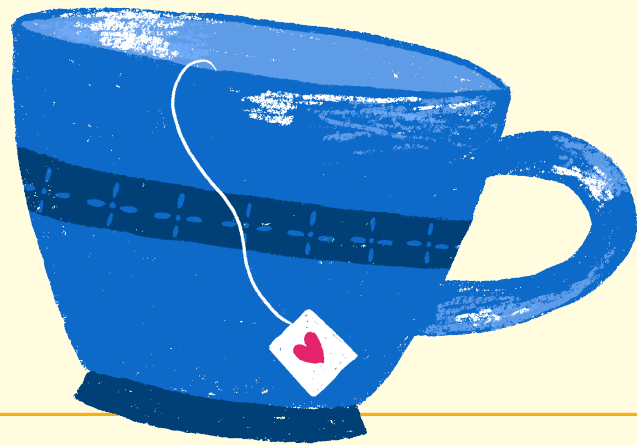


I'plâ

a bowl



**l'pot
OR l'pwat**
a cup



dilet

milk





l'zasiyet

a plate



la sâncîrr OR âpihtawkosân

a sash





laviiyålöñ

a fiddle



Classroom Posters

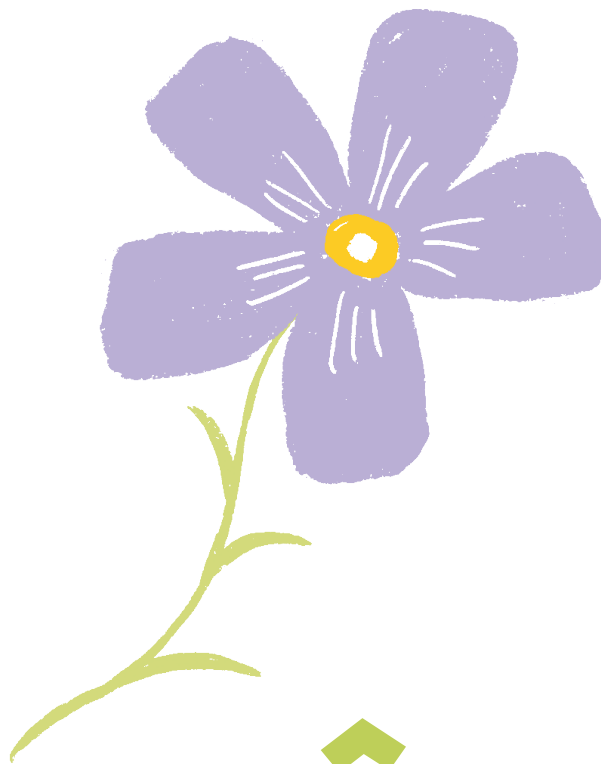
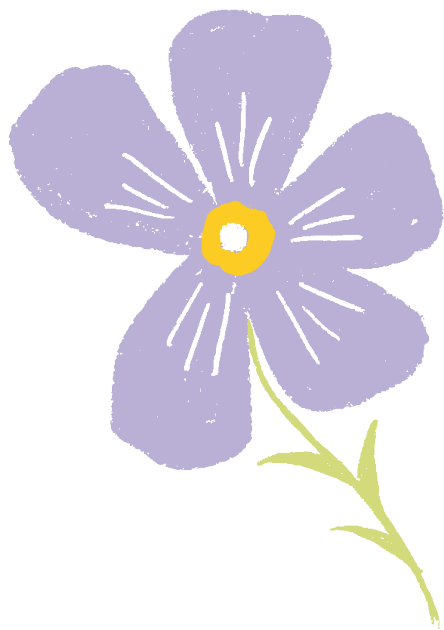


1



piyak

2



nîso

3



nisto

4



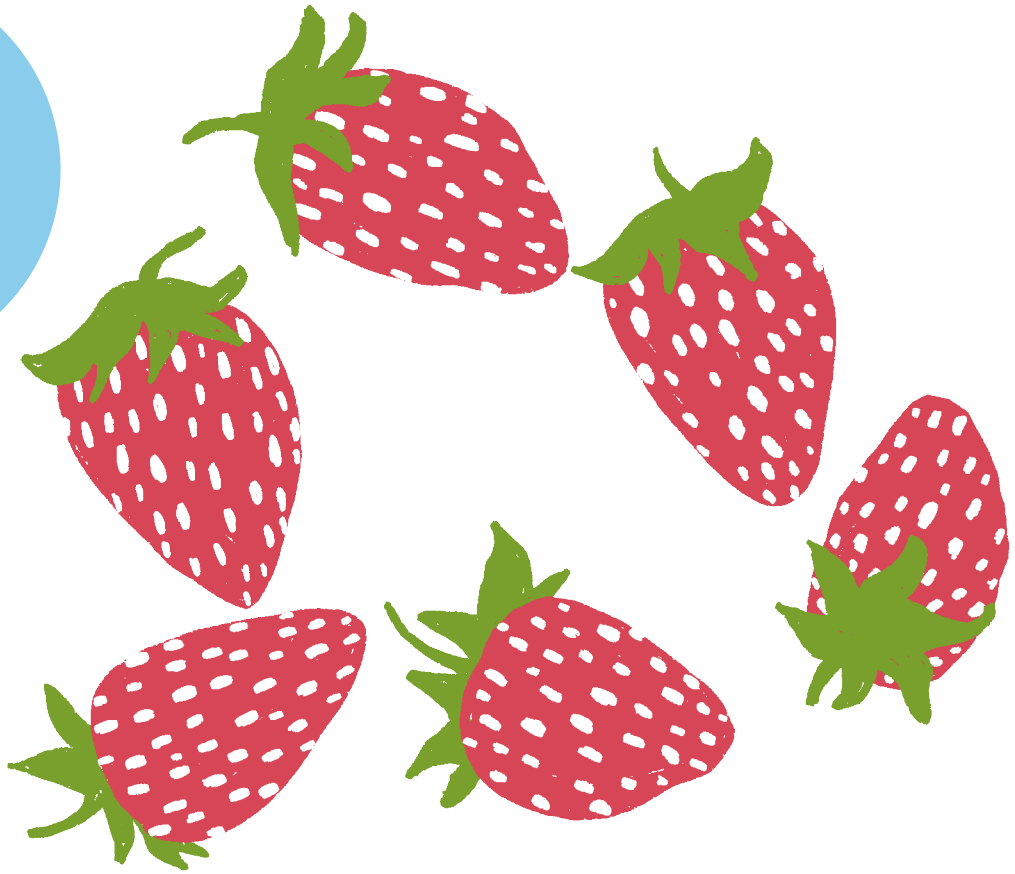
nêwo

5



niyânan

6



niḱotwâsik

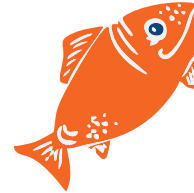
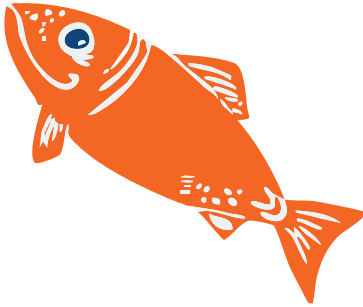
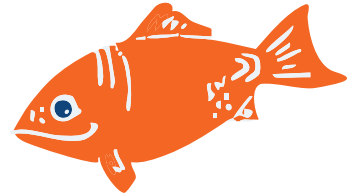
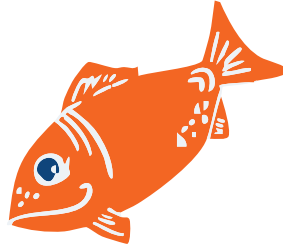
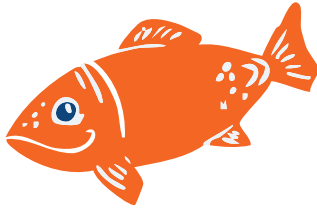
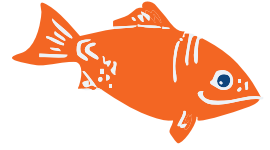


tîpaқohp

8

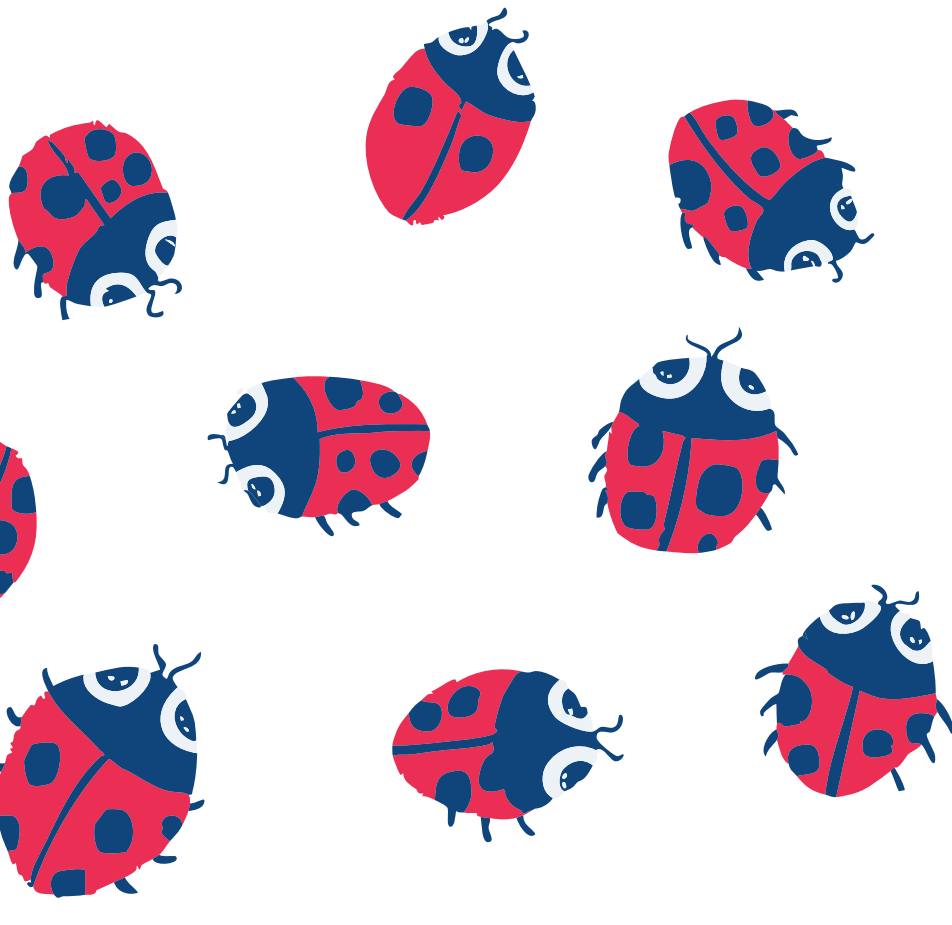


ayênânêw



kîkâ mitâtaht

10



mitâtaht



lirrôsh



l'zarrâñsh

A stylized illustration of yellow flowers and branches. The flowers have five petals and a white center, with small white dots on the petals. The branches are thin and curved, with some buds. The text 'l'jõñ' is written in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font at the bottom center.

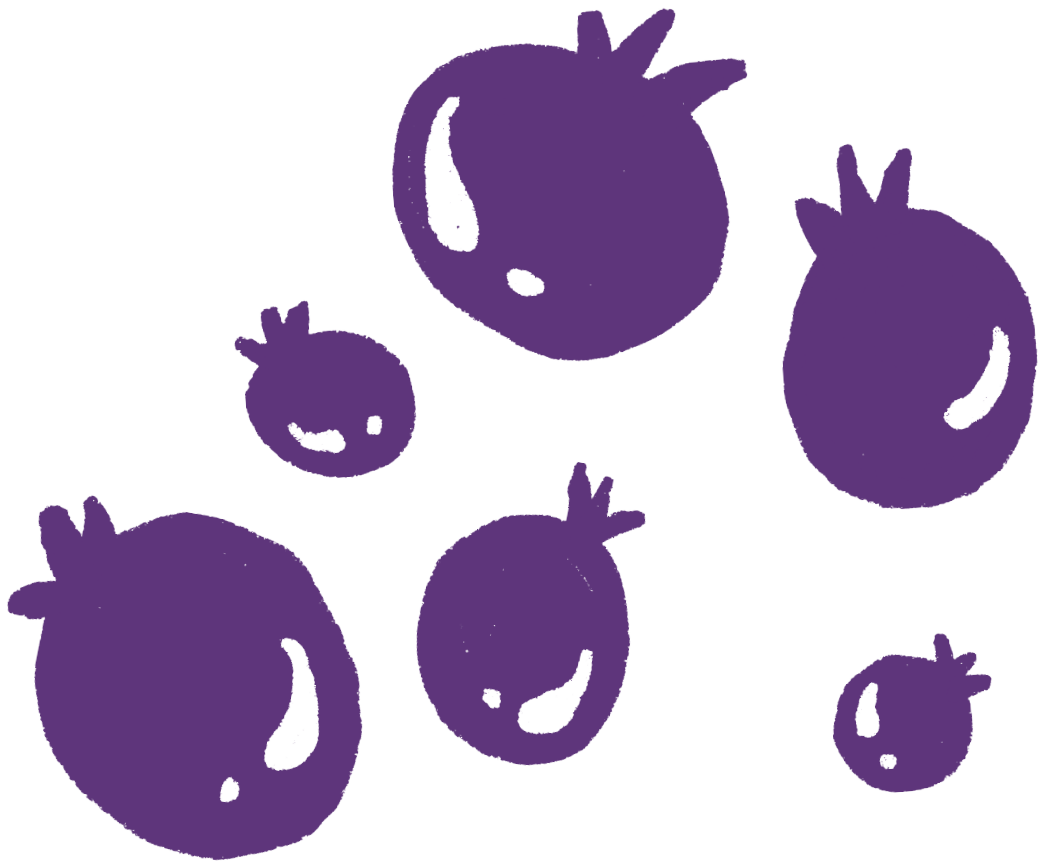
l'jõñ



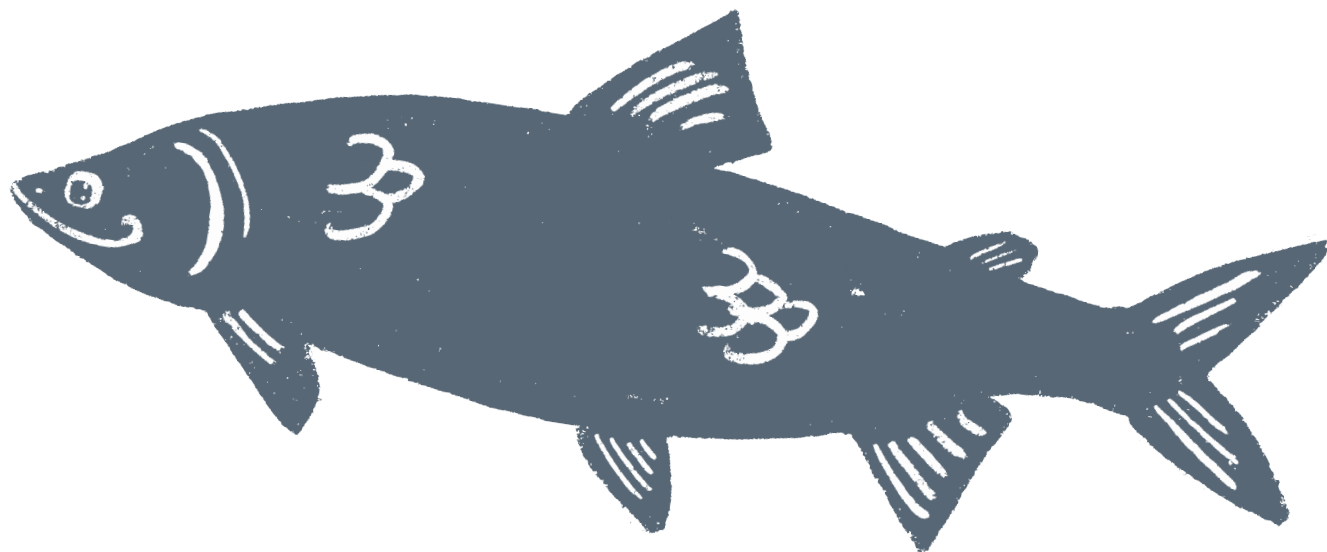
I'vårr



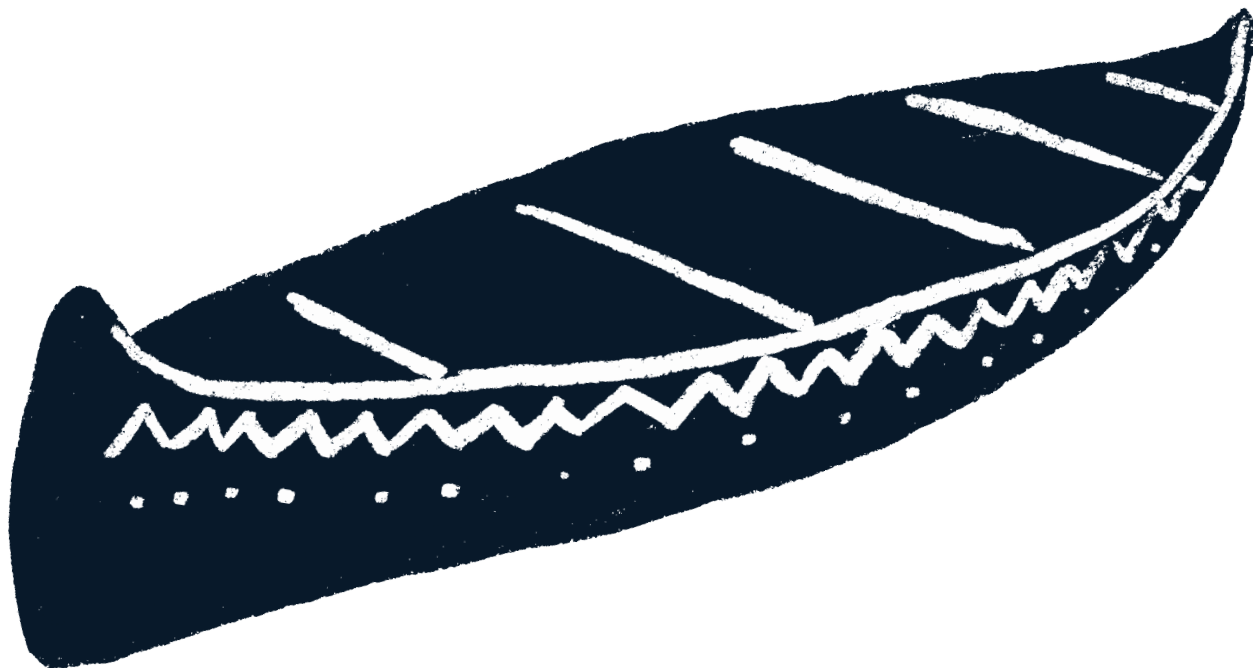
l'blô



l'viyolå



l'krrî



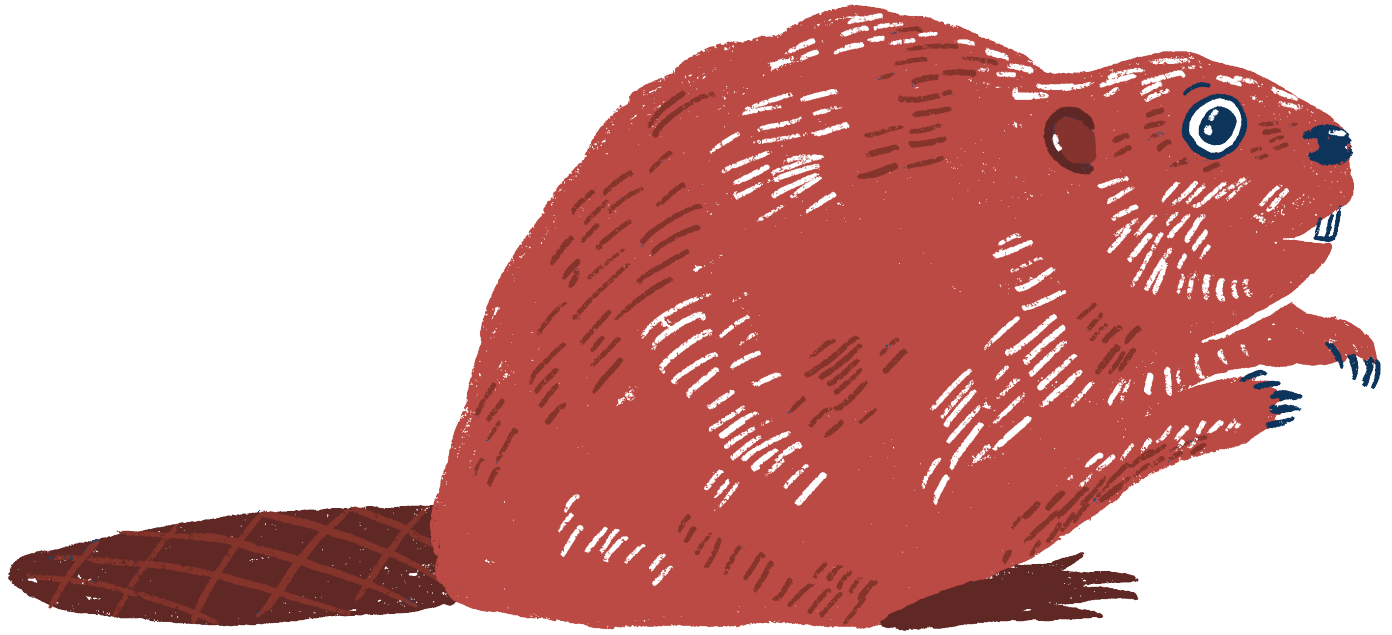
linwårr



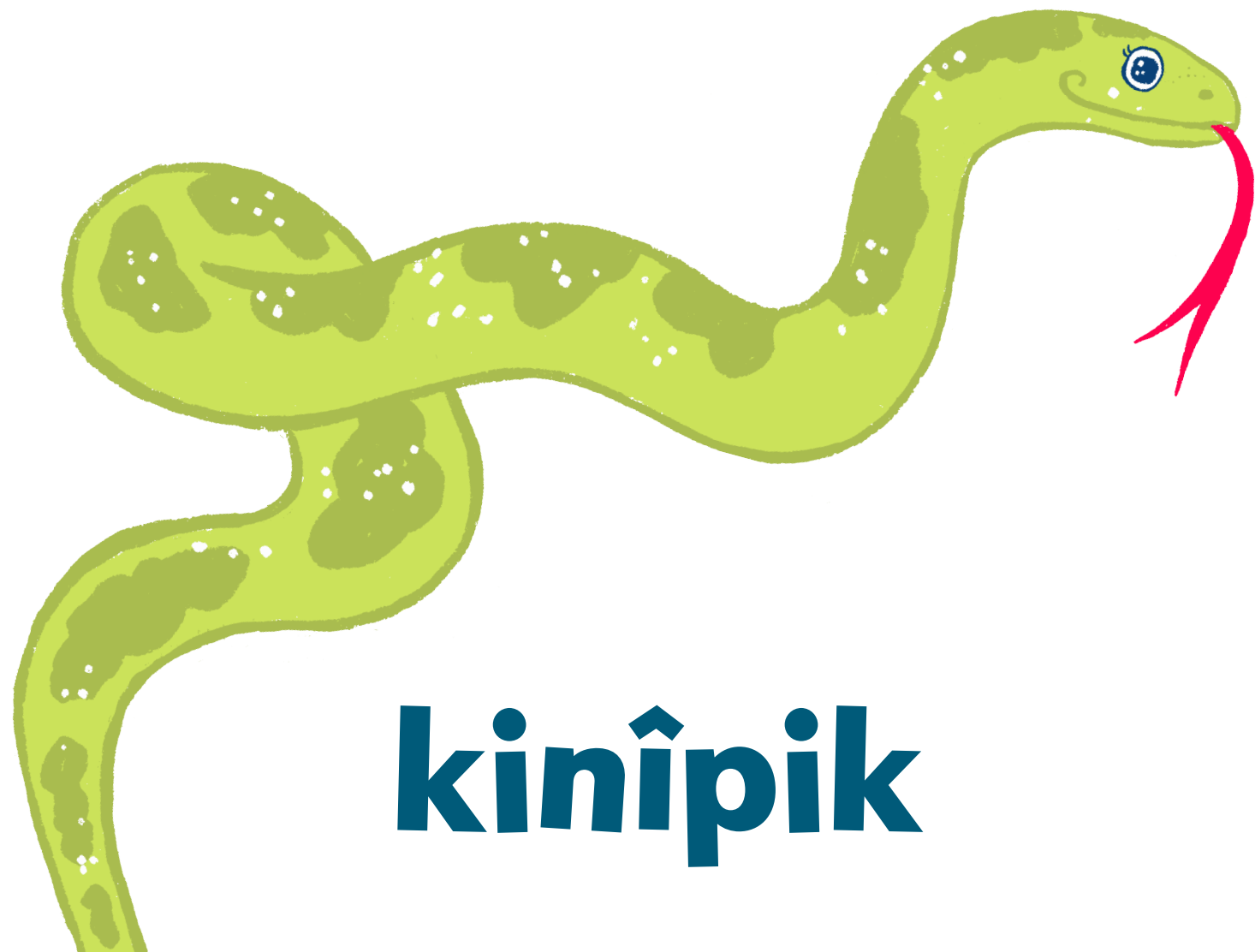
l'blañ



shikâk



amisk



kinîpik



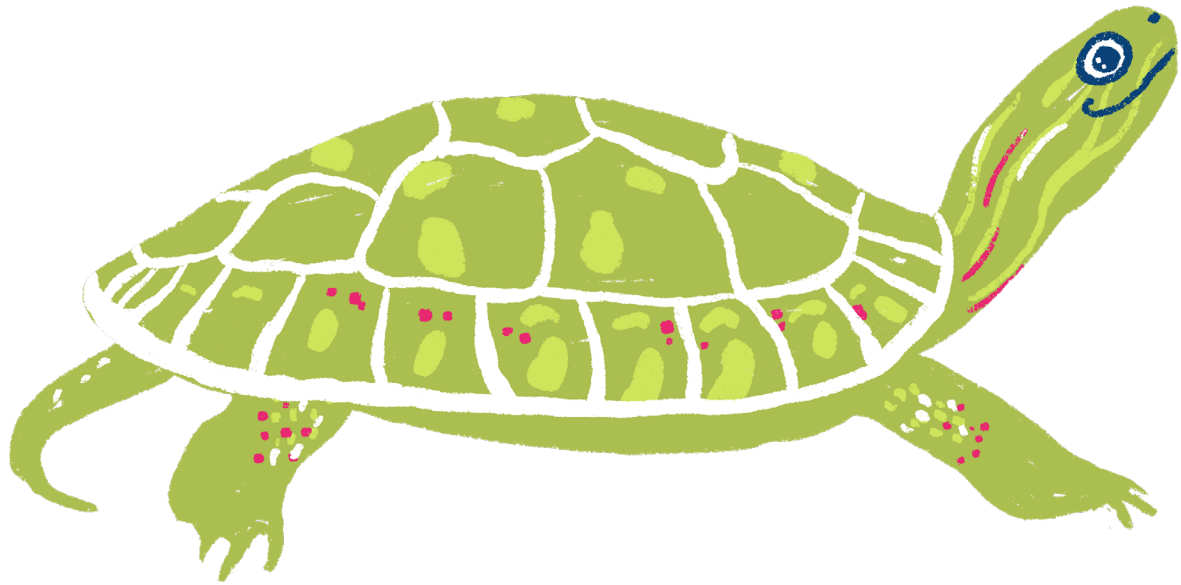
mashkwa



mahkîsîs



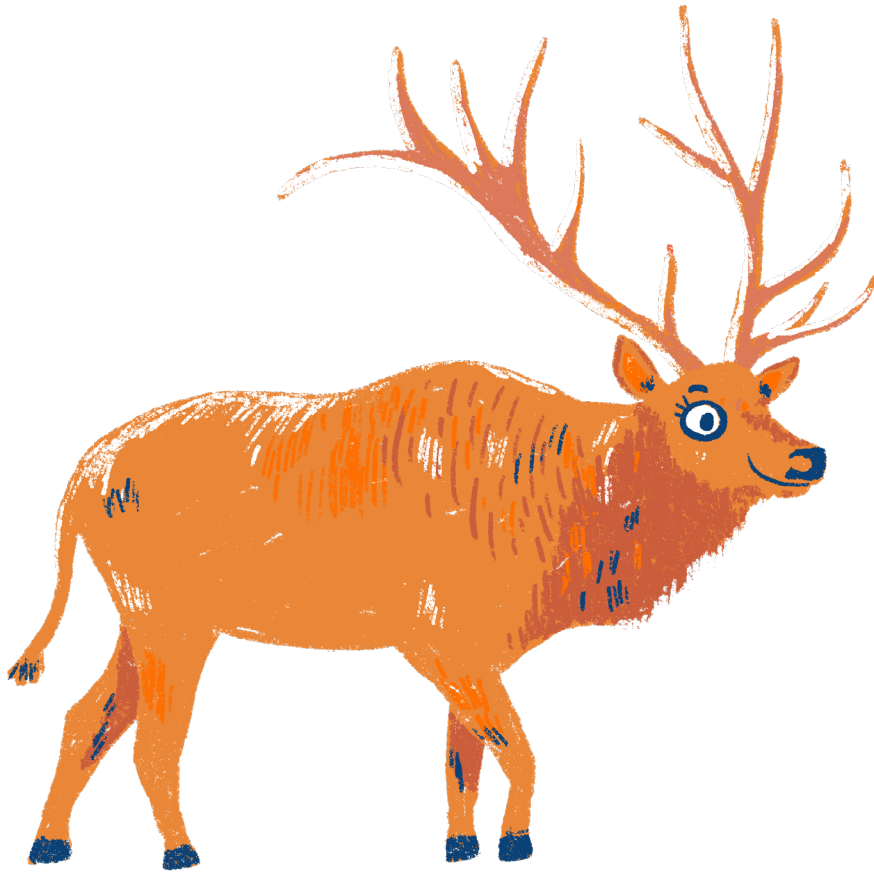
pisiskîs



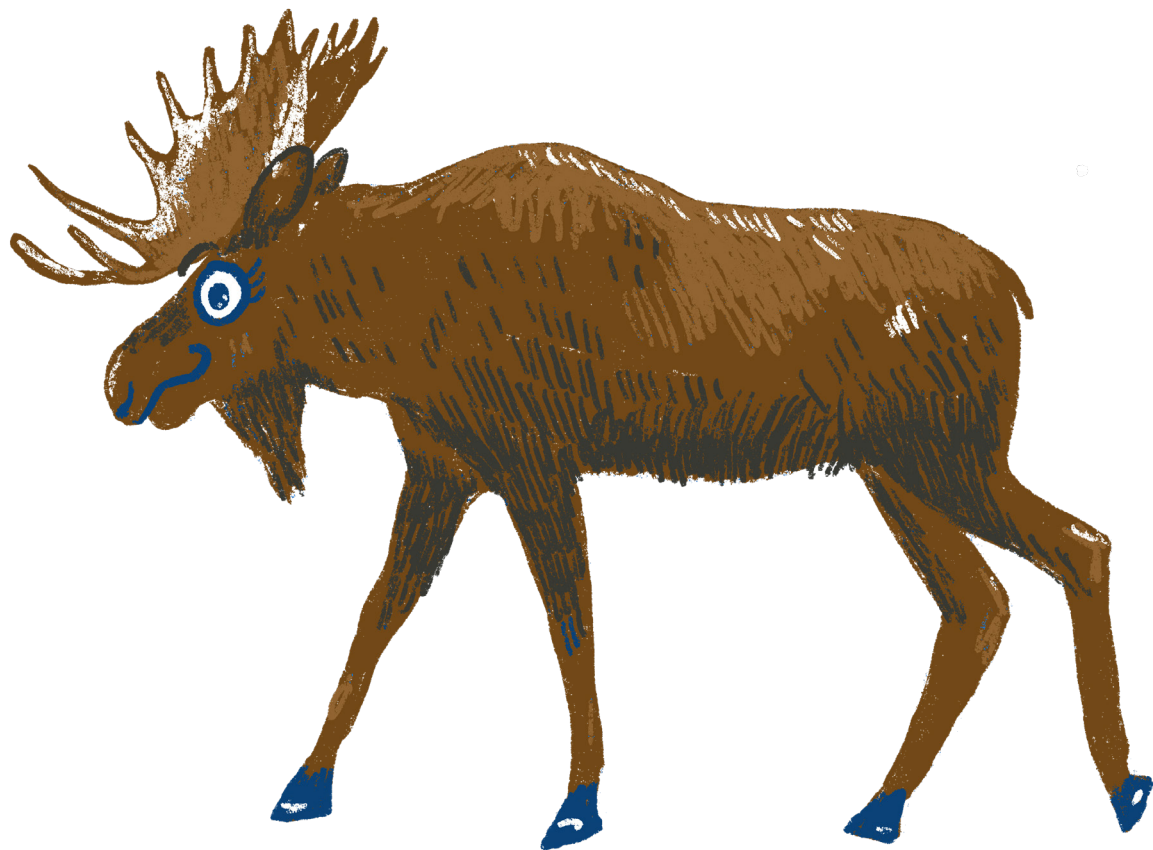
miskinâhk



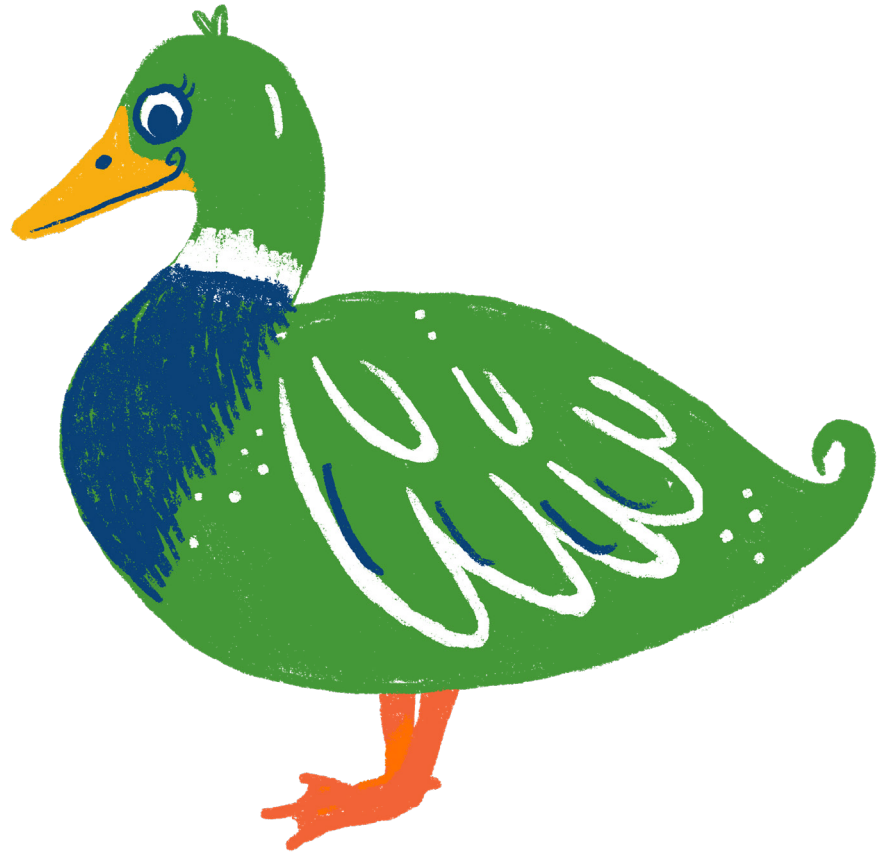
anakwacâs



wâskîsô



môshwa



sîsîp



l'pol



tîtwîsô



mayihkan



pahkwâcîs



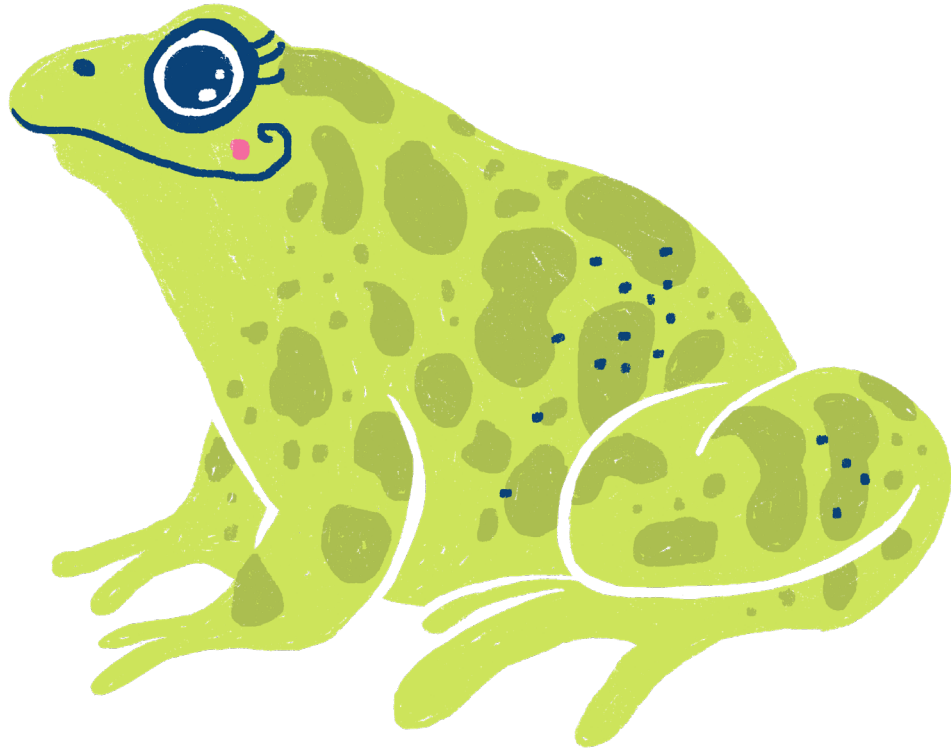
ôhô



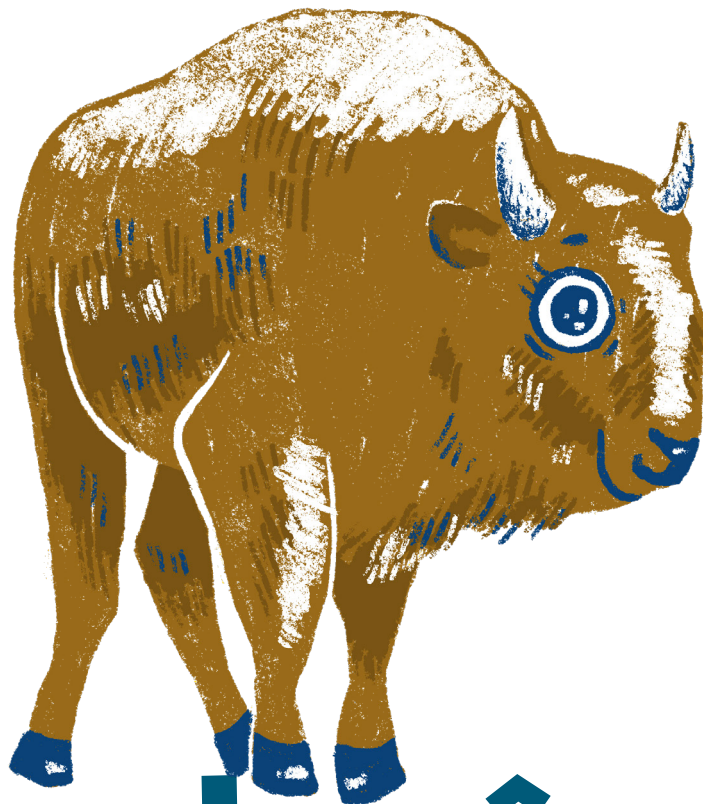
**lipwasöñ OR
l'pwasöñ**



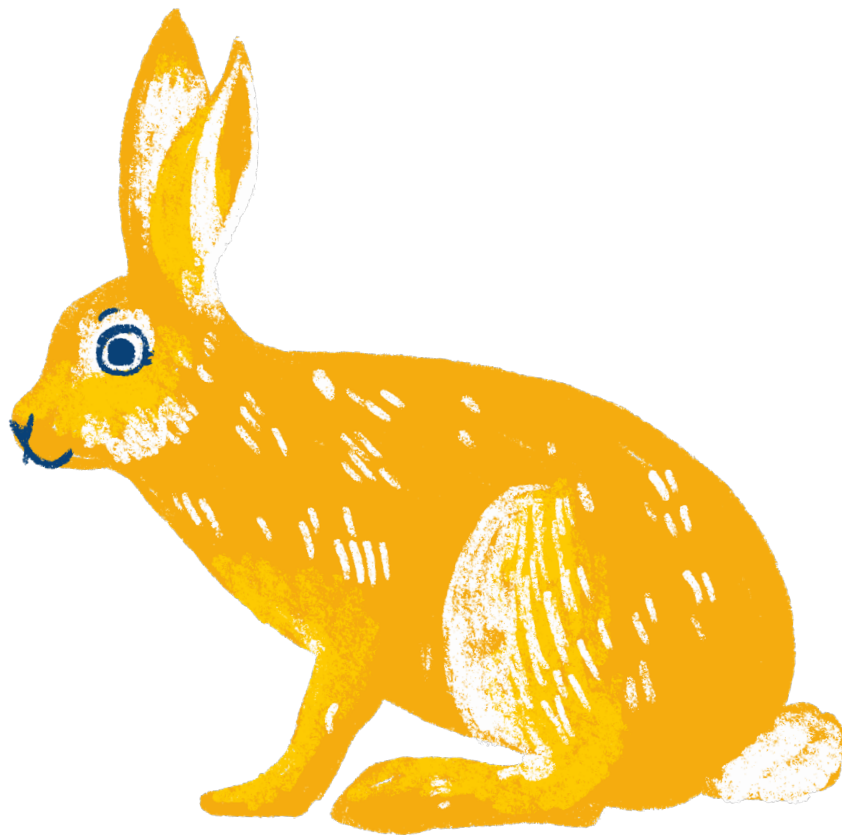
kâkwa



ayîkish



**paskwâw
moshtosh**



mistâposh

Classroom Calendar



1



piyak

2



nîso

3



nisto

4



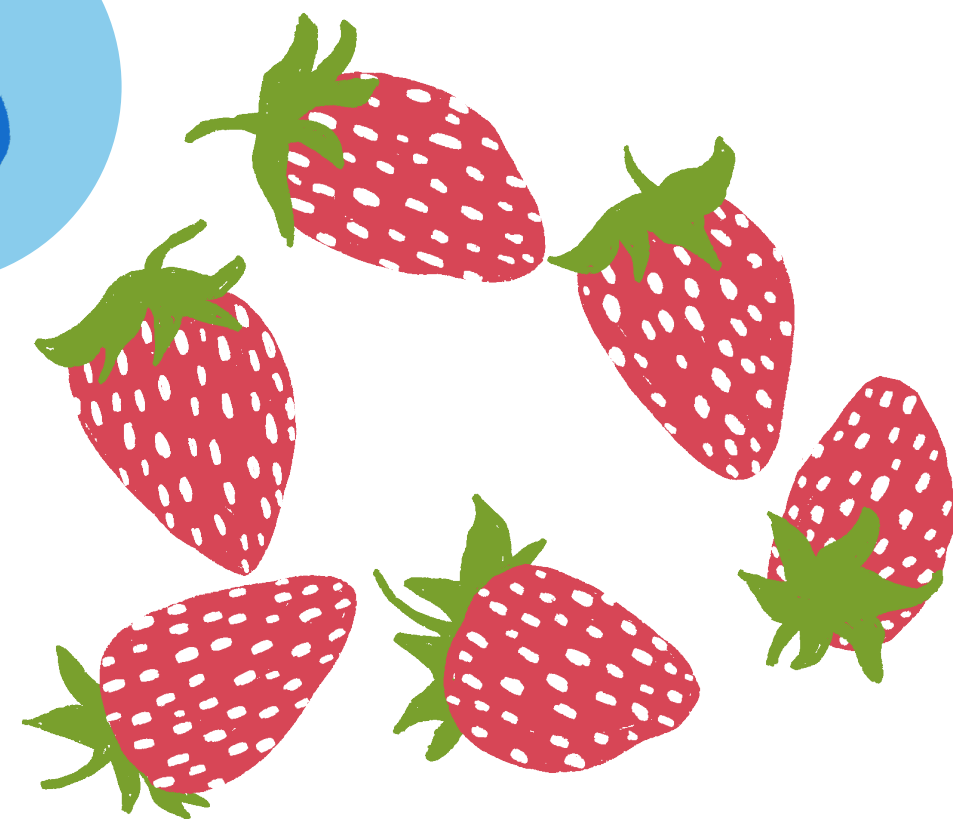
nêwo

5



niyânan

6



niḵotwâsik

7



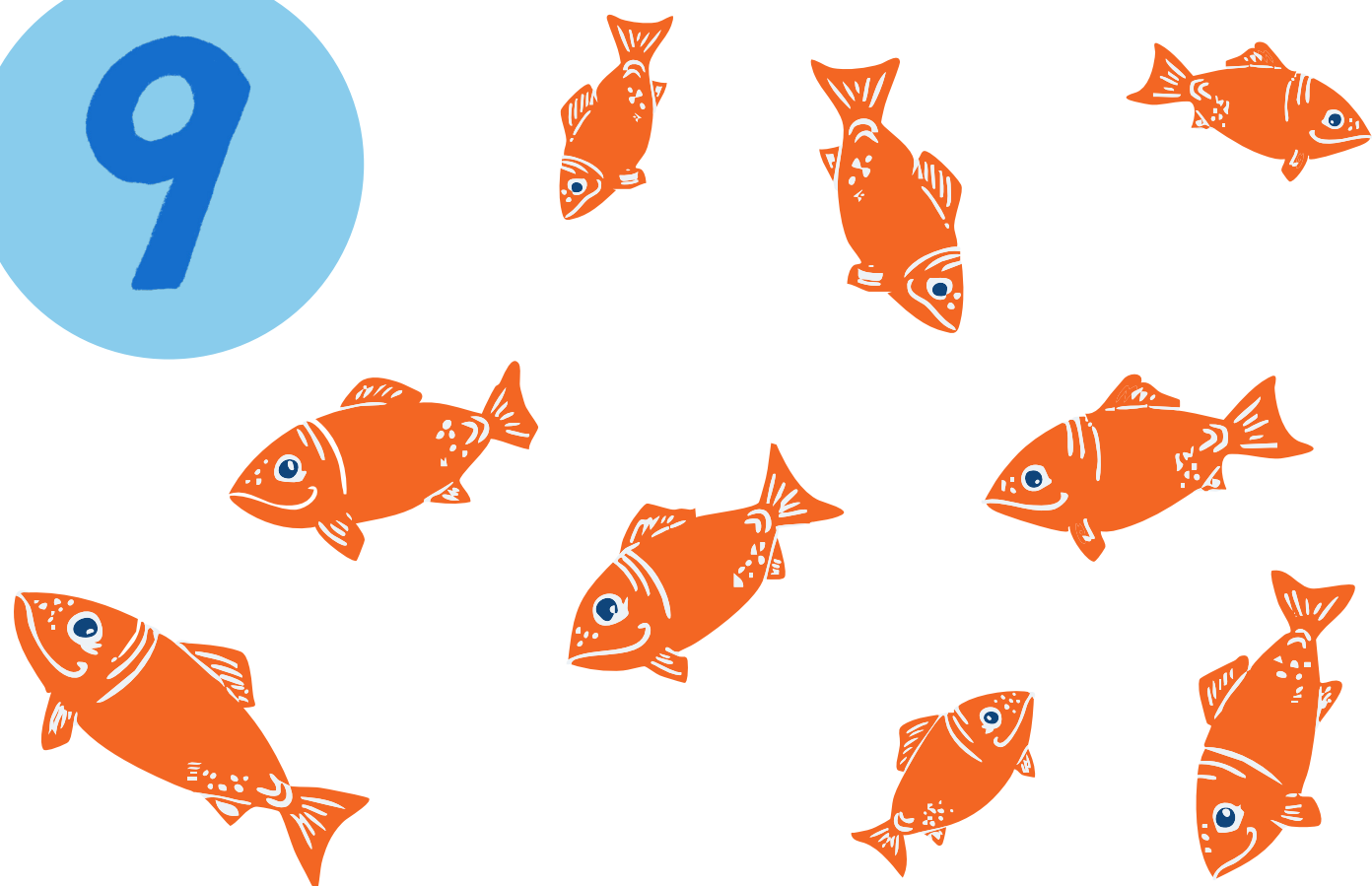
tîpaḱohp

8



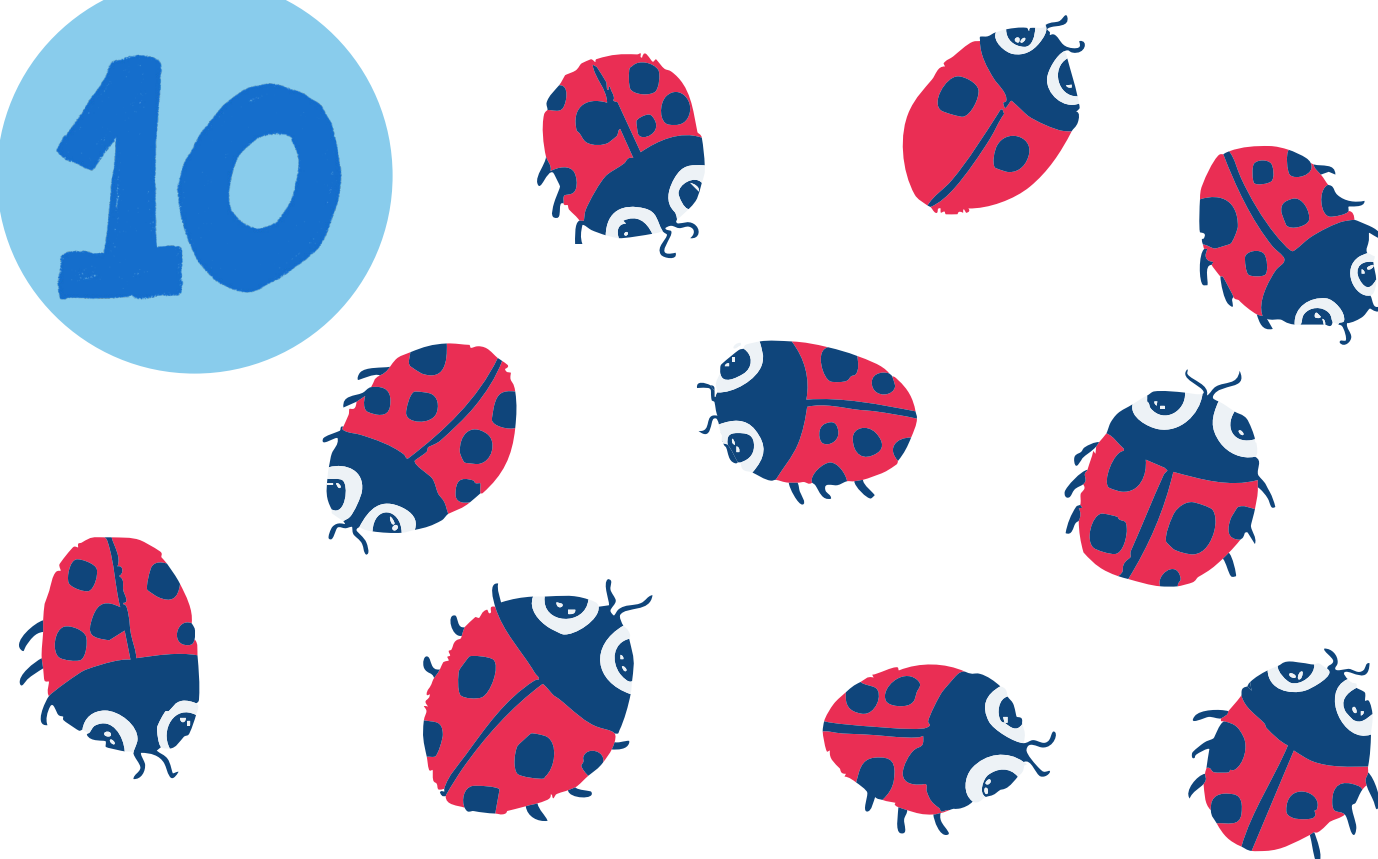
âyênânêw

9



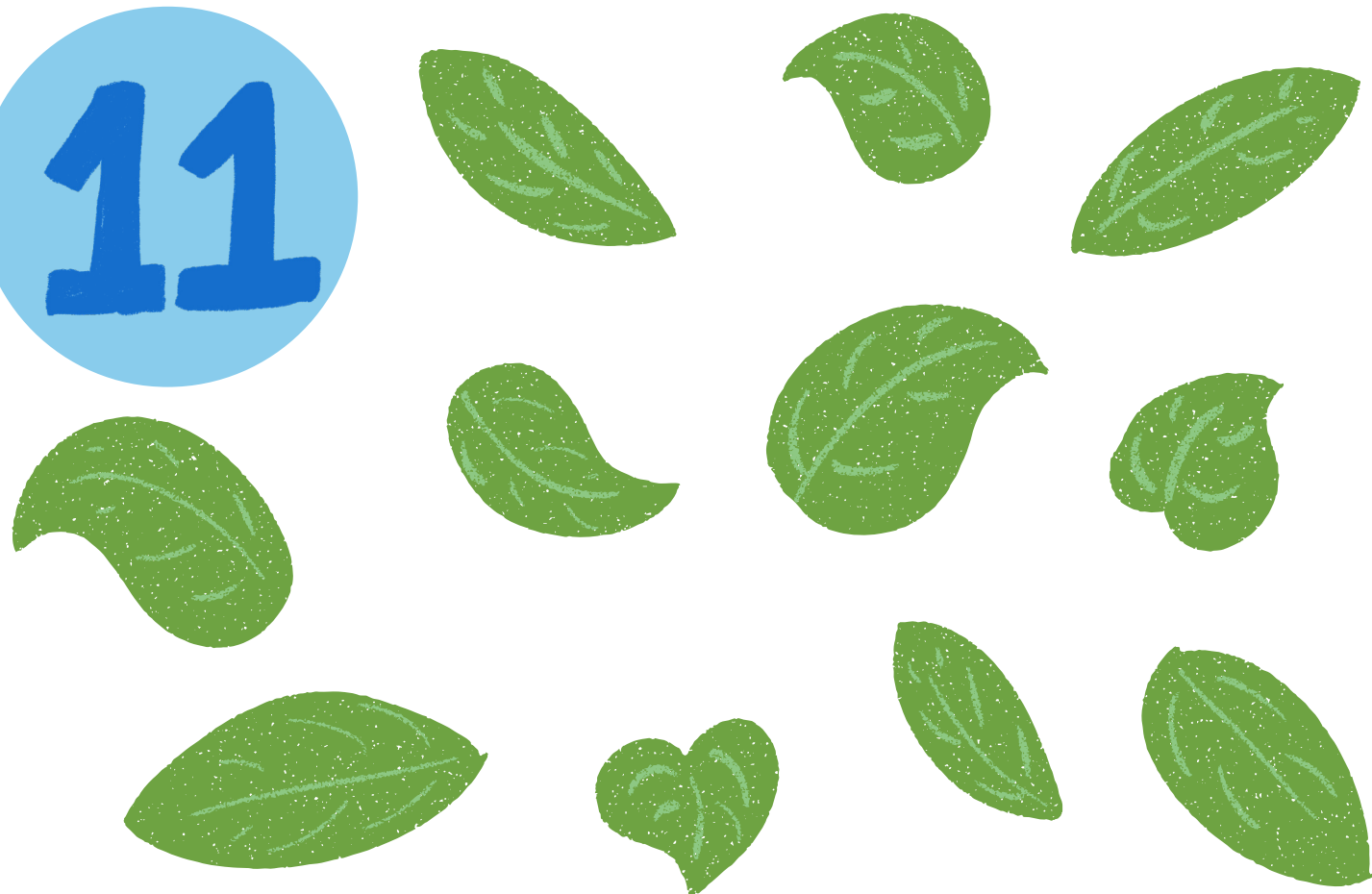
kîḱâ mitâtaht

10



mitâtaht

11



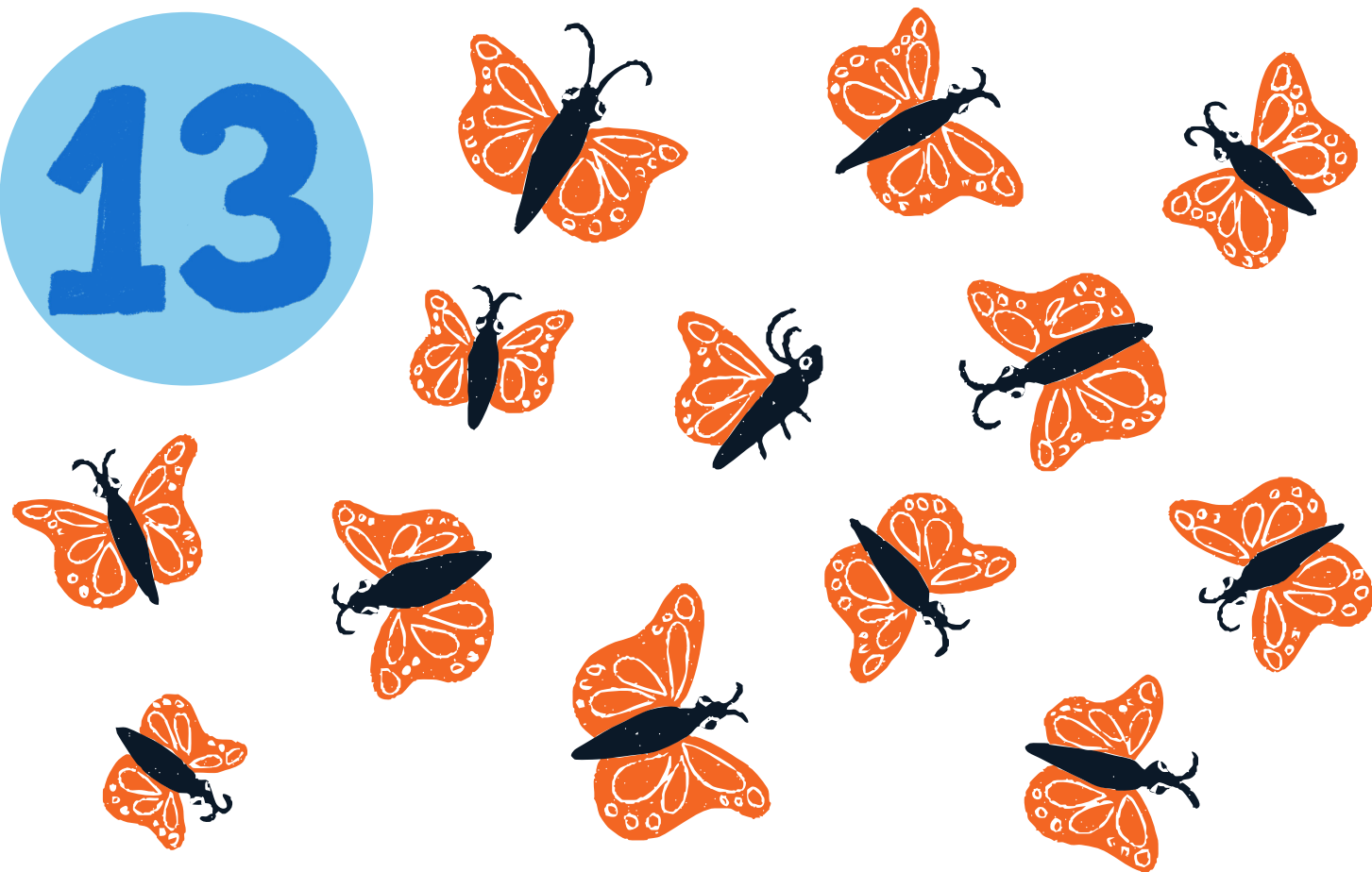
piyakosâp

12



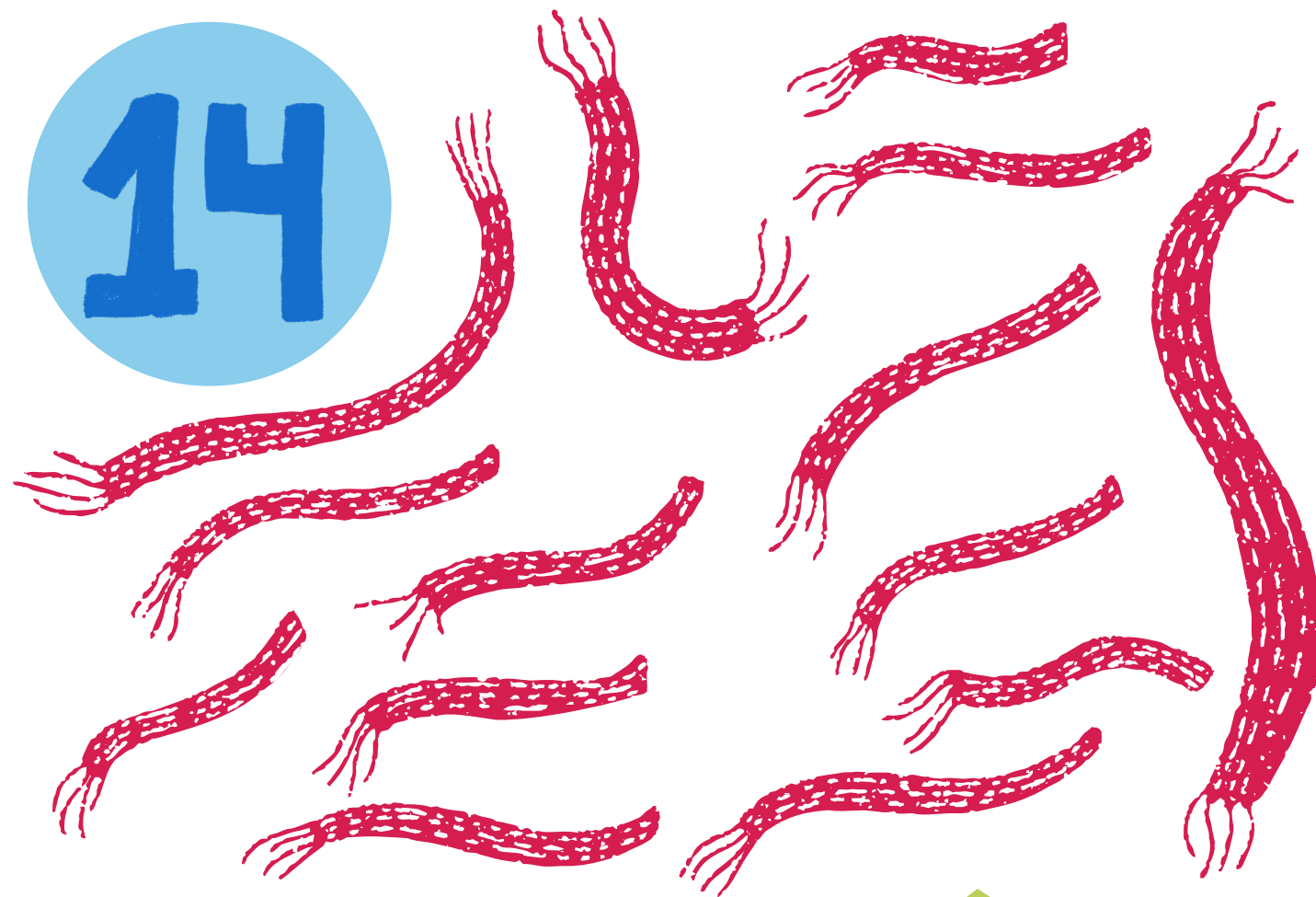
nîsosâp

13



nistosâp

14



newosâp

15



niyânosâp

16



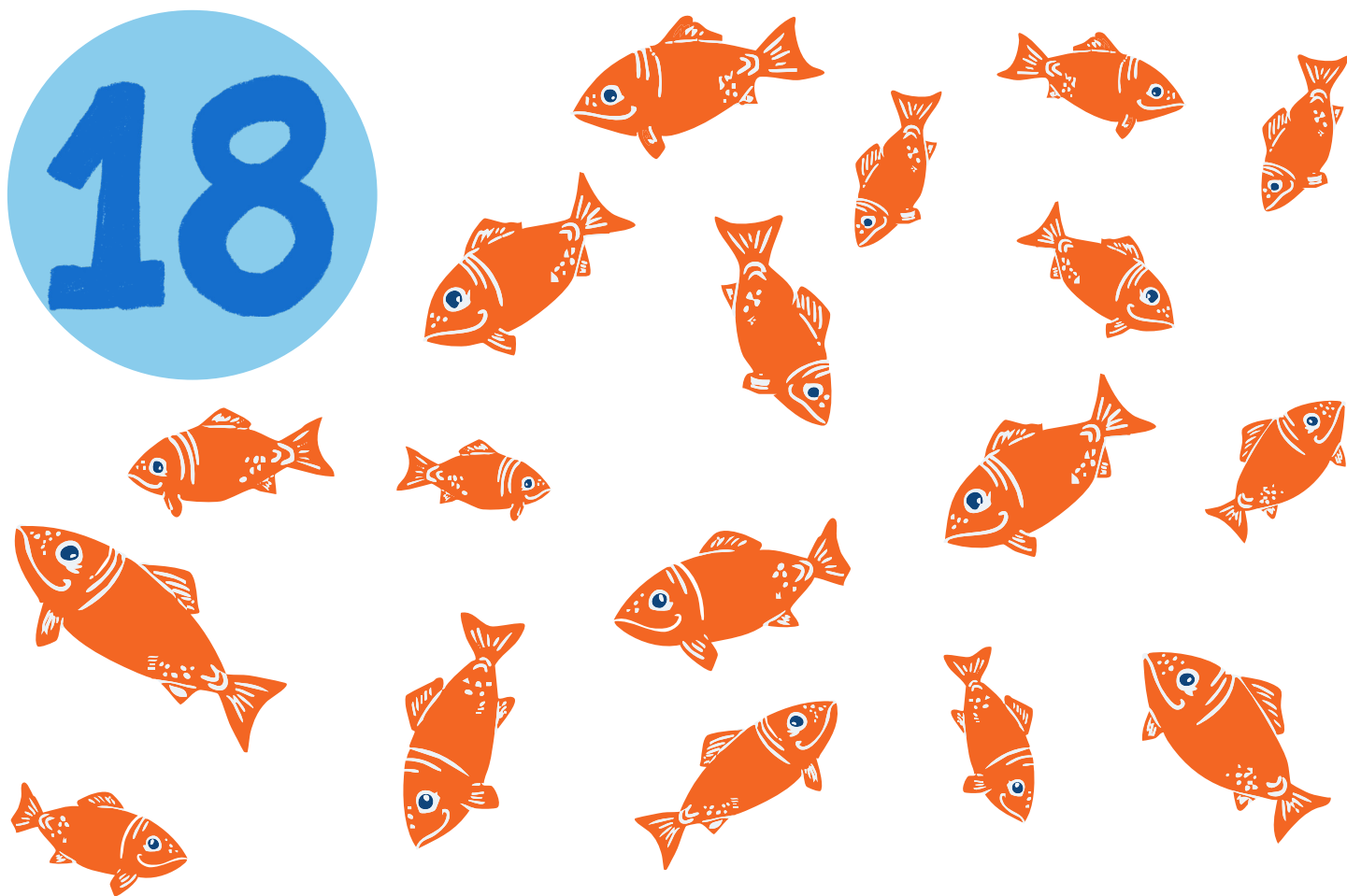
nikotwâsosâp

17



tîpakohposâp

18



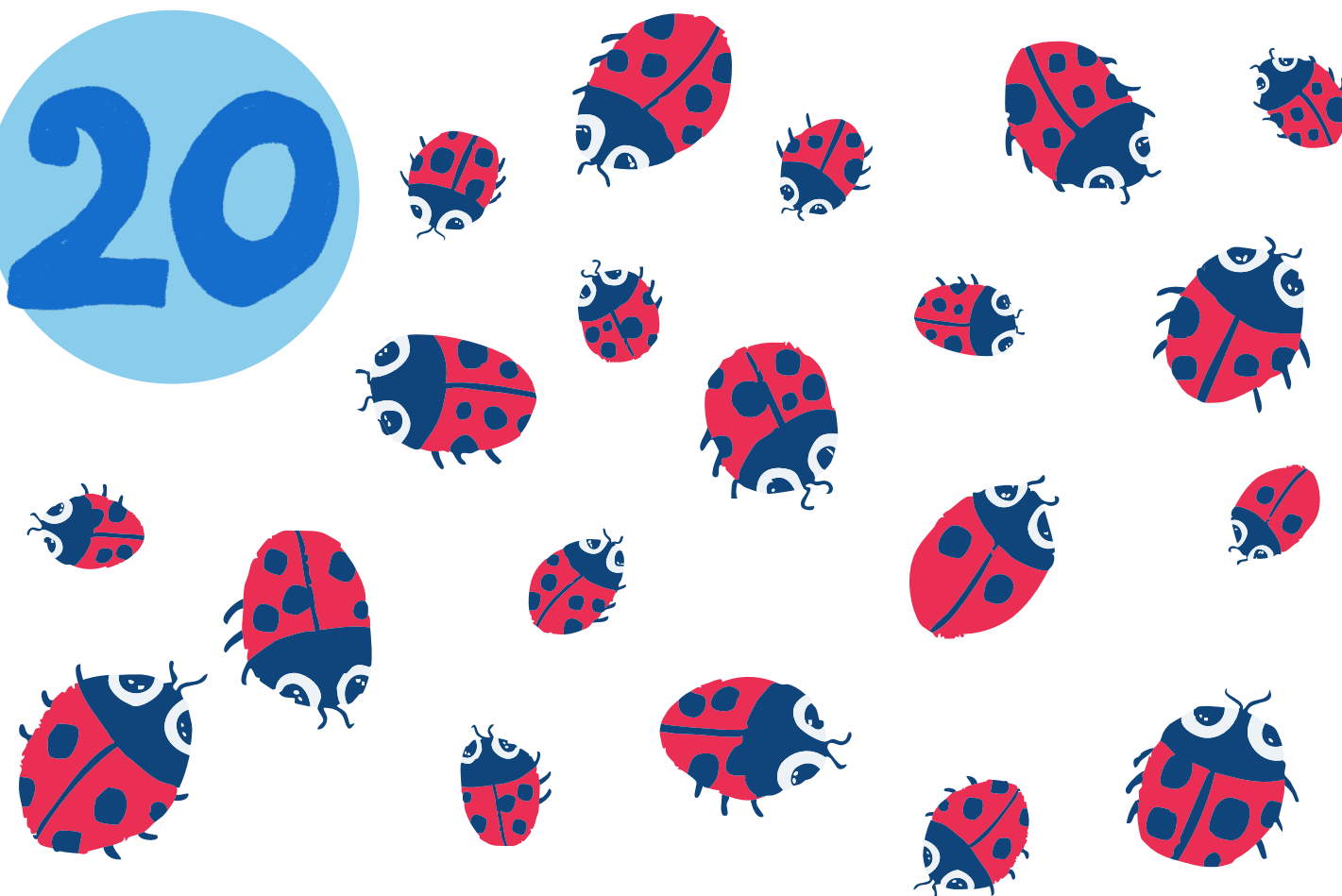
ayênânêwosâp

19



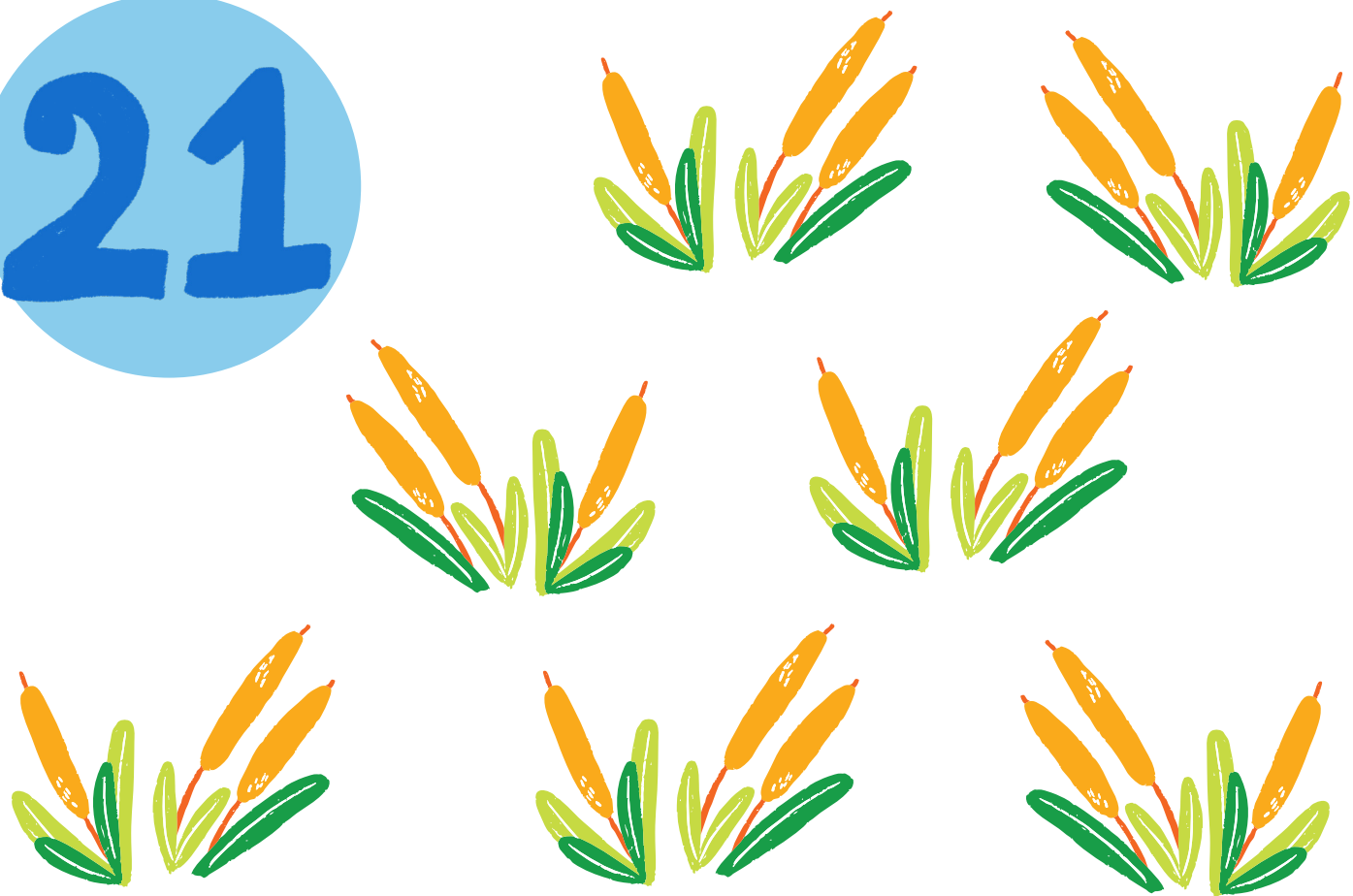
kîķâ mitâtahtosâp

20



nîstanaw

21



nîstanaw piyakosâp

22



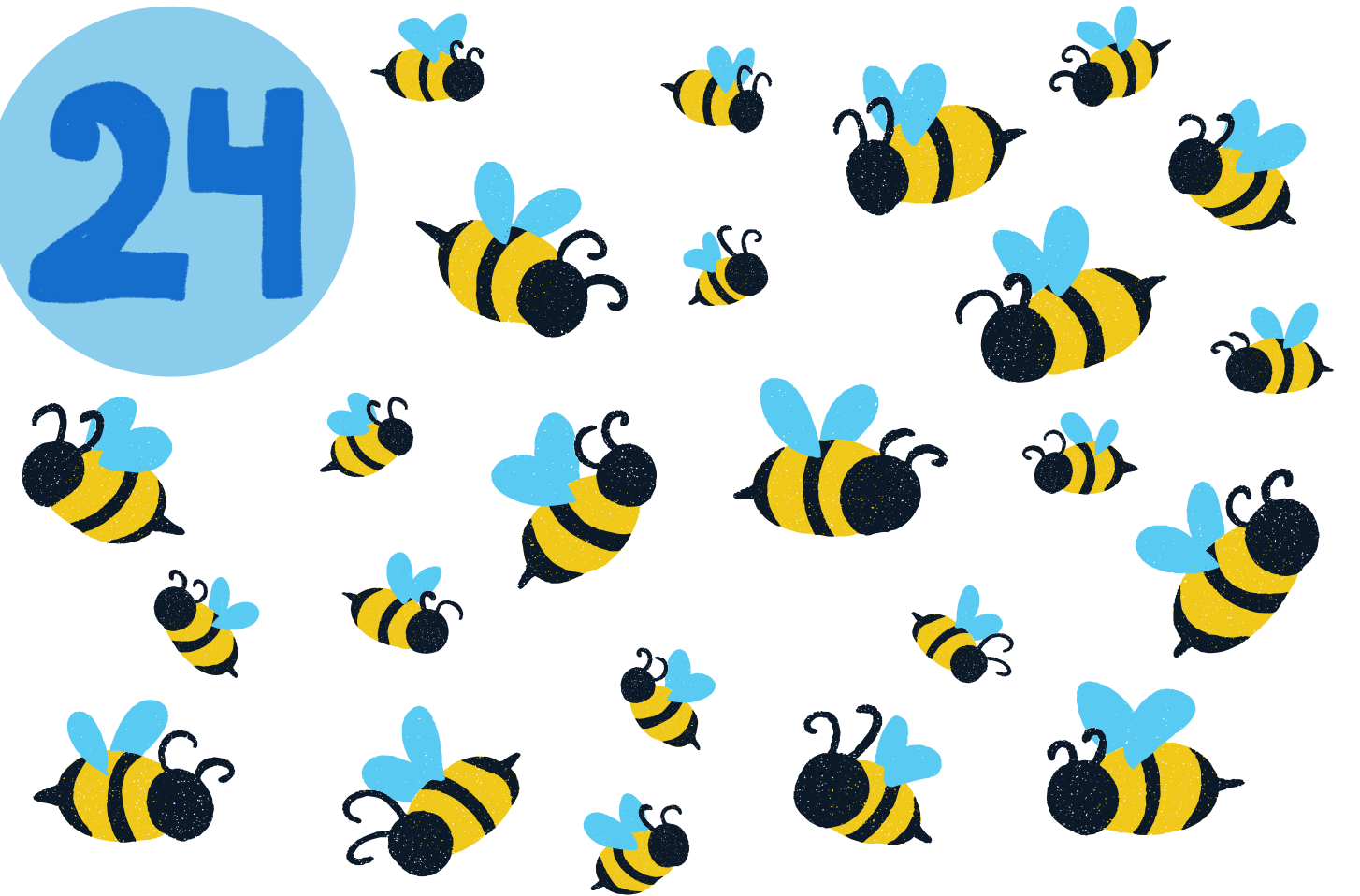
nîstanaw nîsosap

23



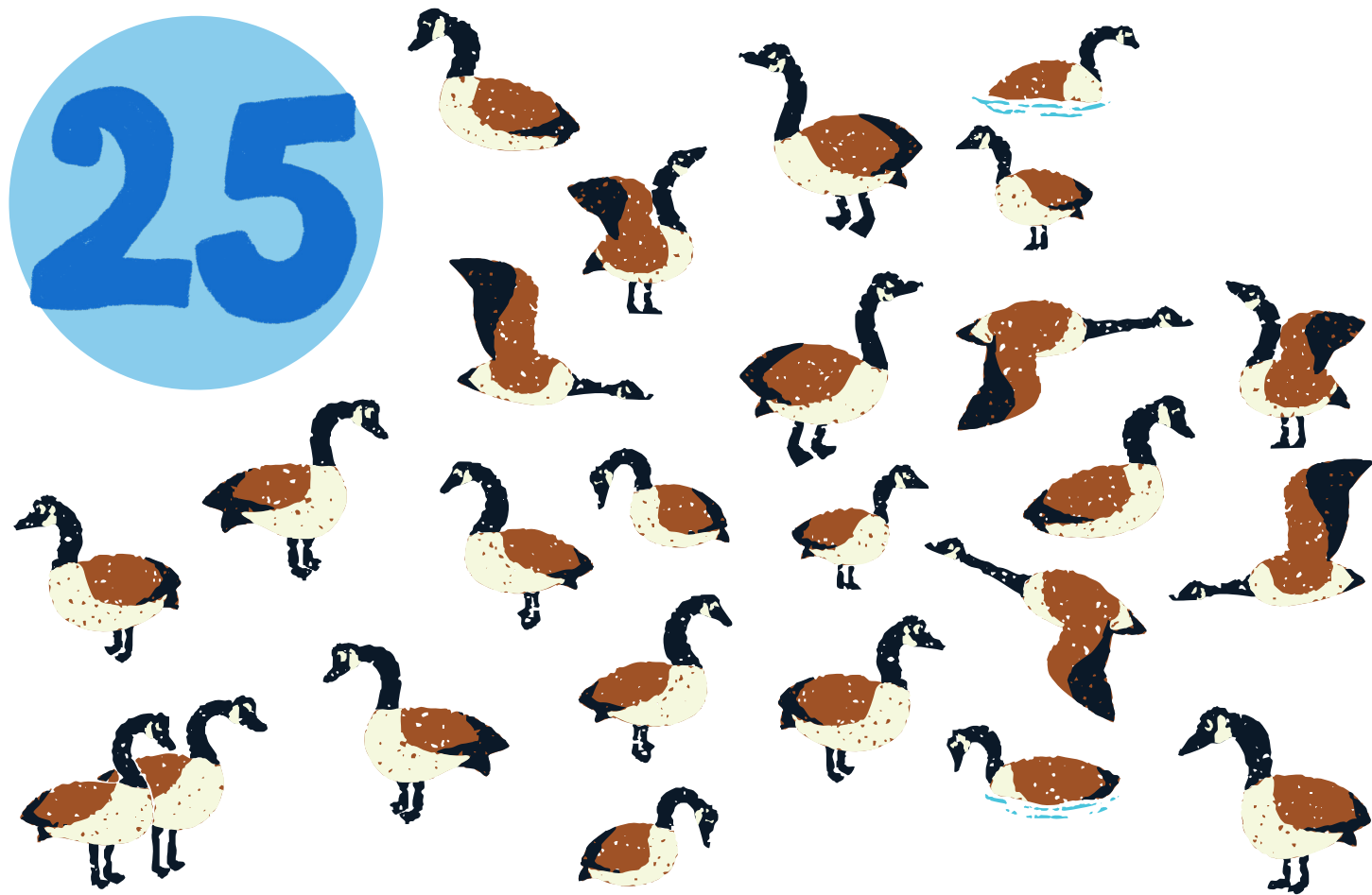
nîstanaw nistosâp

24



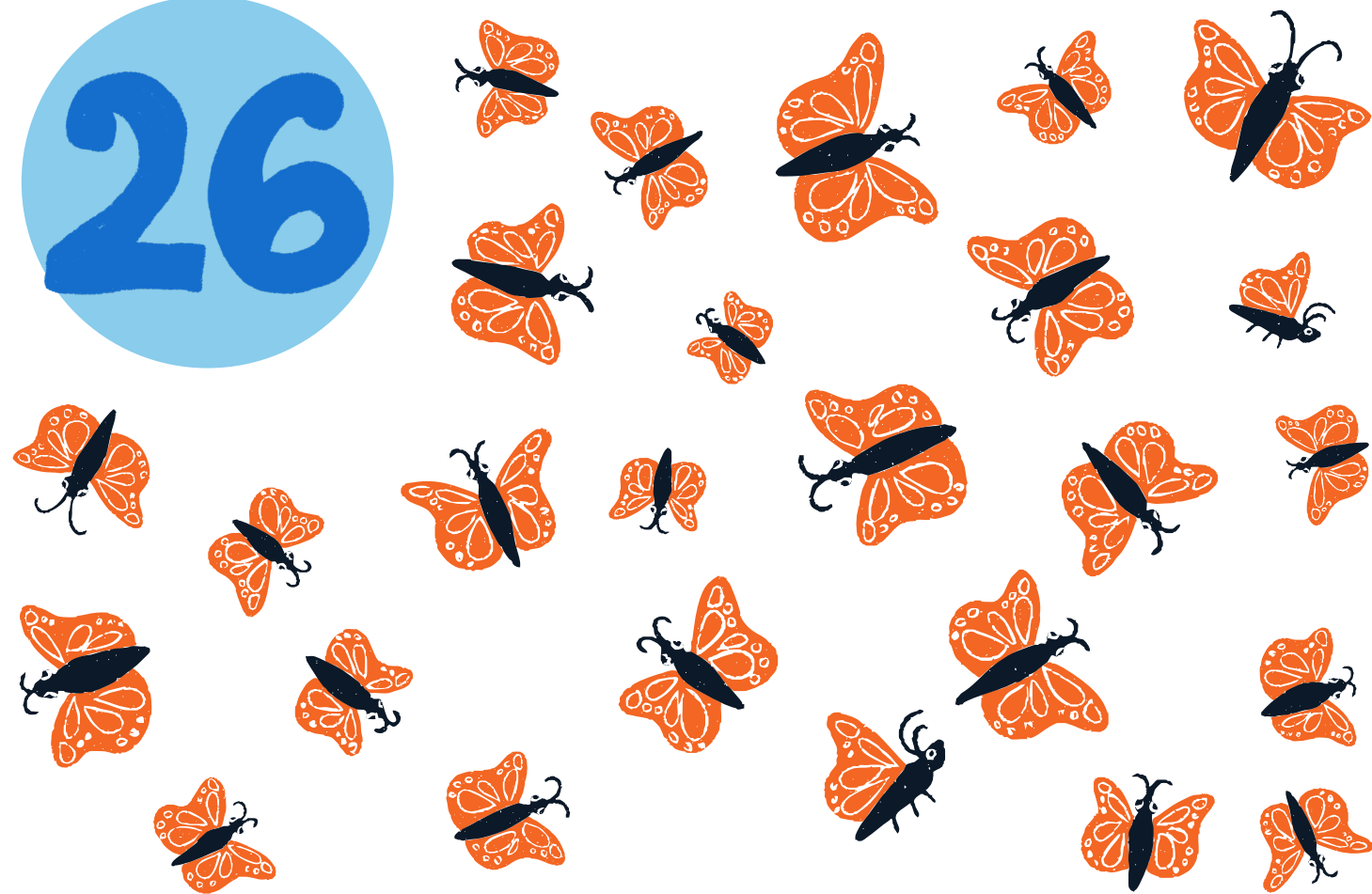
nîstanaw nêwosâp

25



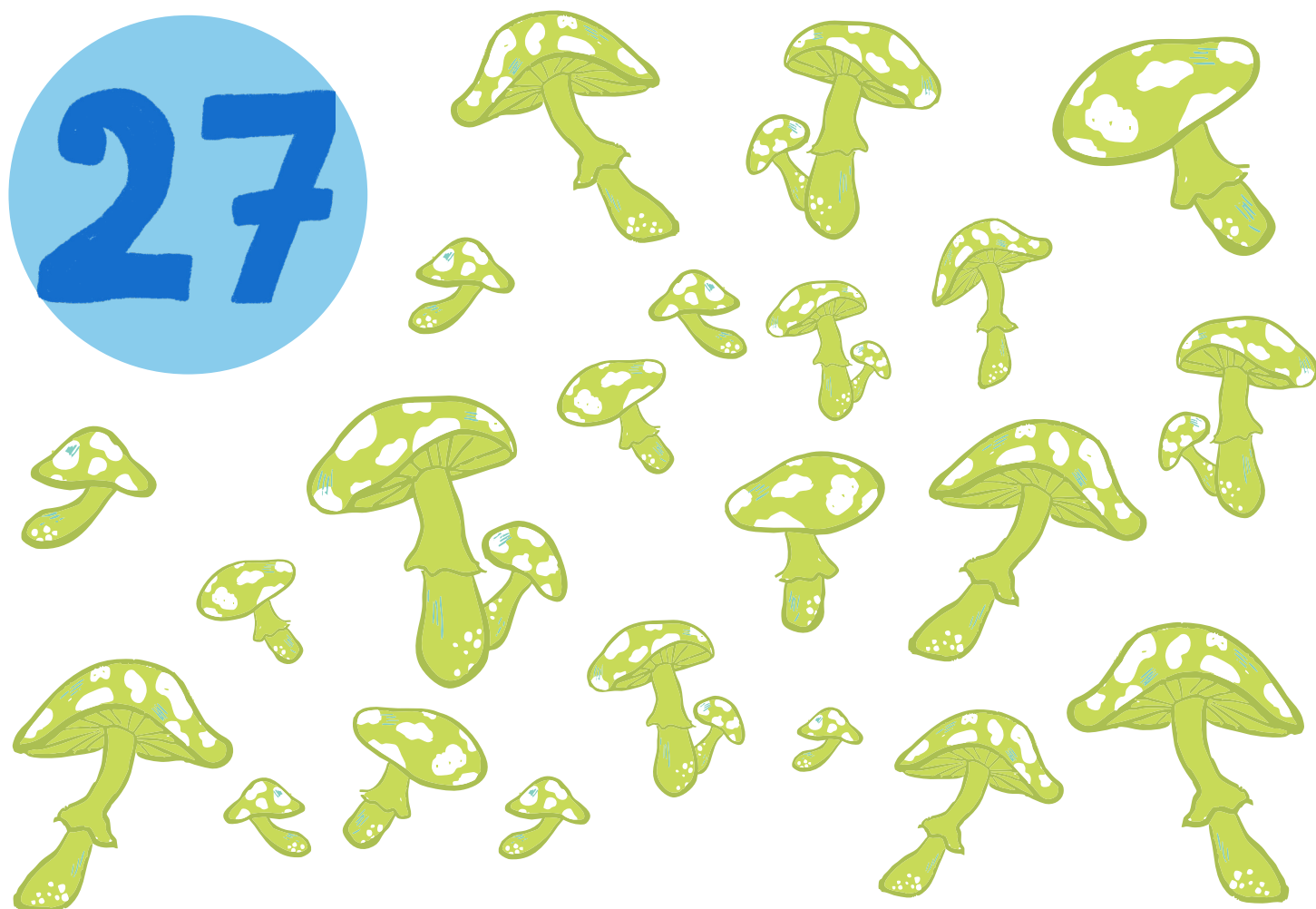
nîstanaw niyânosâp

26



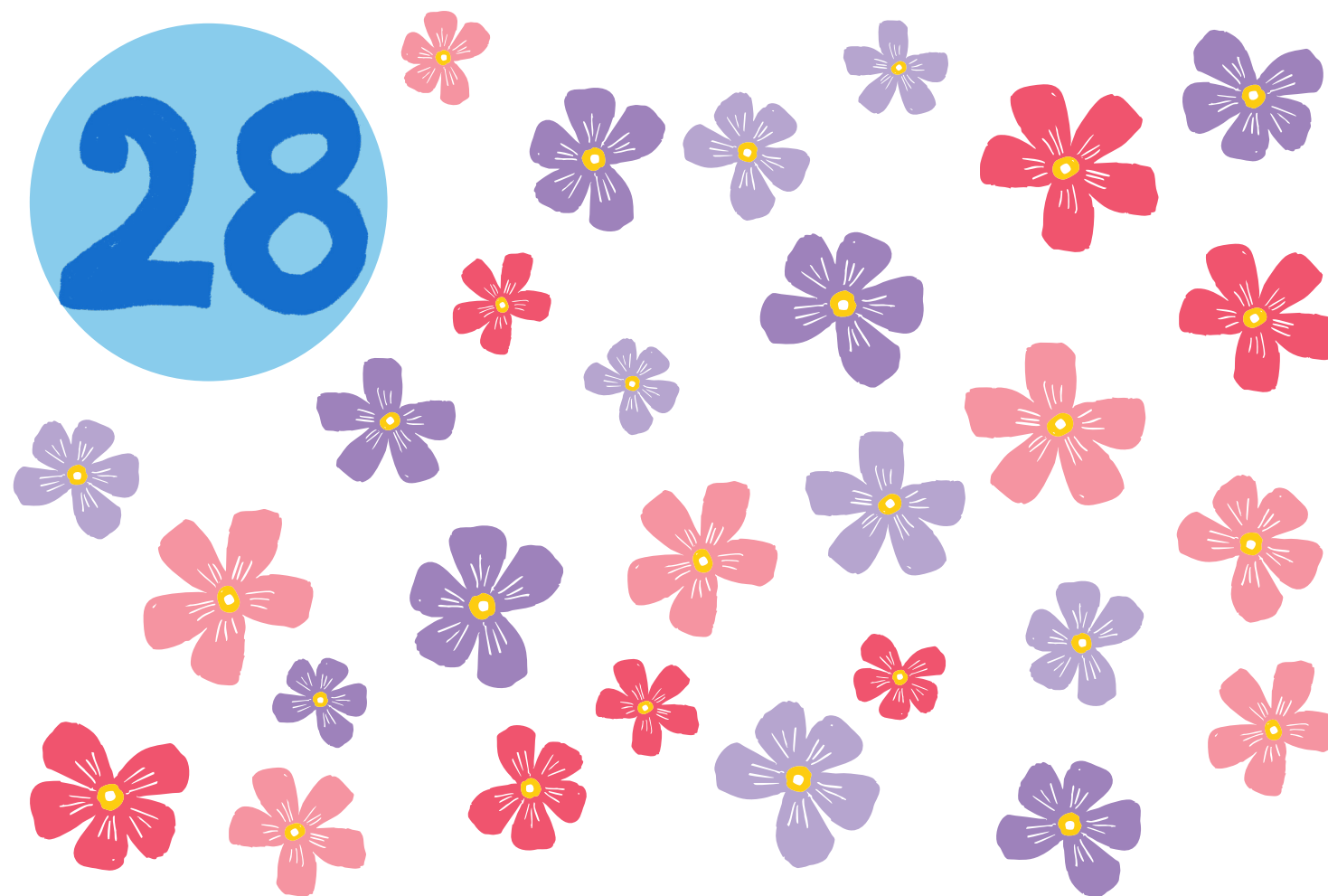
nîstanaw nikotwâsosâp

27



nîstanaw tîpakohposâp

28



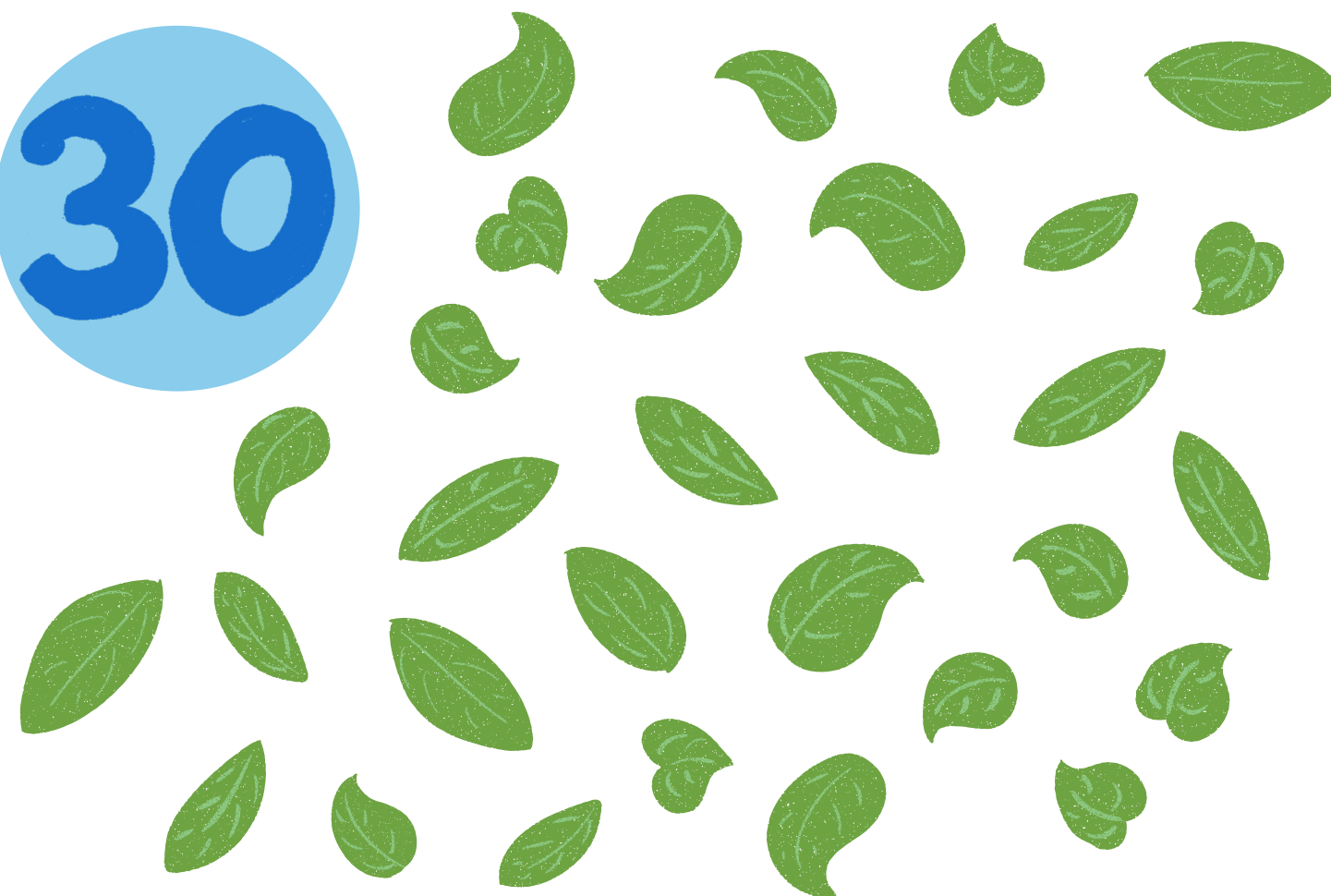
nîstanaw ayênânêwosâp

29



kîkâ mitâtahtosâp

30



nistomitanaw

31



nistomitanaw piyakosâp

1

piyak

2

nîso

3

nisto

4

nêwo

5

niyânan

6

niḡotwâsik

7

tîpaḡohp

8

ayênânêw

9

kîḡâ mitâtaht

10

mitâtaht

11

piyakosâp

12

nîsosâp

13

nistosâp

14

newosâp

15

niyânosâp

16

nikotwâsosâp

17

tîpakohposâp

18

ayênânêwosâp

19

kîkâ mitâtahtosâp

20

nîstanaw

21

*nîstanaw
piyakosâp*

22

*nîstanaw
nîsosâp*

23

*nîstanaw
nistosâp*

24

*nîstanaw
nêwosâp*

25

*nîstanaw
niyânosâp*

26

*nîstanaw
nikotwâsosâp*

27

*nîstanaw
tîpakohposâp*

28

*nîstanaw
ayênânêwosâp*

29

*nîstanaw
kîkâmitâtahkosâp*

30

nistomitanaw

31

*nistomitanaw
piyakosâp*



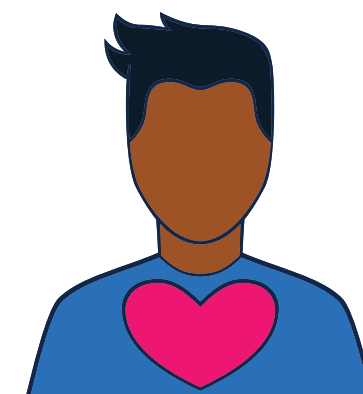
cîpay otipiskâw



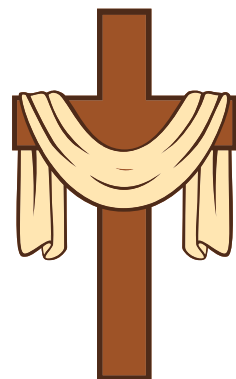
kâ tipiskamin



*l'kwal
iskwayânihk
okîsikâw*



pâpâ okîsikâw



apisîsinâw okîsikâw



*lî rramô
ldzimâsh*



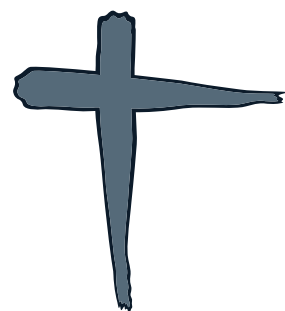
apisîsinâw okîsikâw



okinâtisokîsikâw



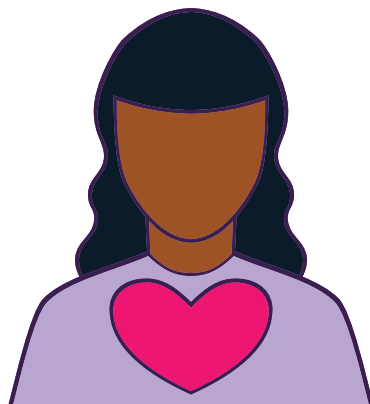
askî okîsikâw



*lasânt
mêrrkrredzî*



*lyintowînô
okîsikâw*



mâmâ okîsikâw



*mitâtahtomitanaw
l'kwal okîsikâw*



ocîm okîsikâw



*sâkîhitôwin
okîsikâw*



*manitô
okîsikâw*



*manitô
okîsikâw*



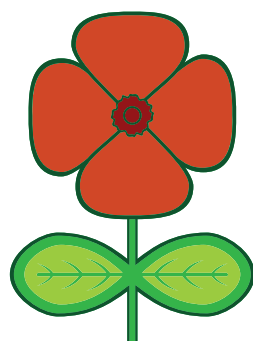
*nistam okîsikâw
l'wal kê mâcipayik*



*wînasakâcihp
okîsikâw*



*Louis Riel
okîsikâw*



*simâkanisihkân
okîsikâw*



*nanâskom
okîsikâw*



*l'zarrâñsh la
shimîsh okîsikâw*



lândzi

monday



nîso kîsikâw

tuesday



nistokîsikâw



wednesday



nêwokîsikâw

thursday

The background is a solid pink color. On the left and right sides, there are decorative floral patterns made of small, rounded, pinkish-red shapes arranged in a circular, sunburst-like pattern.

vândrîdî

friday



sam'dzi



saturday



I'dzimâsh

sunday





takwâkipîsim

september



pimahâmôwipîsim

october



iyîkôpêwipîsim

november



nîpâyamihâwipîsim

december





kisîpîsim
january





mikisôwipîsim



february





niskipîsim

march





ayîkîpîsim

april





manâwânowipîsim

may



pâskâwîhôwipîsim

june





nîpin

summer





takwâkin
fall





pipon

winter

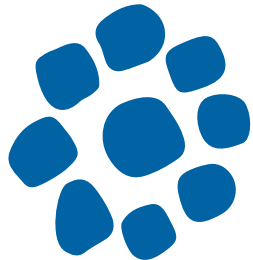
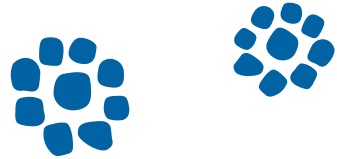




sîkwan

■ *spring*





anohc

today (is)...







otâkosihk

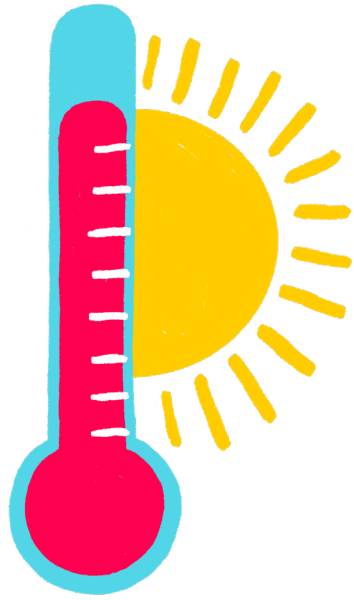


yesterday (was)...



Word of the day

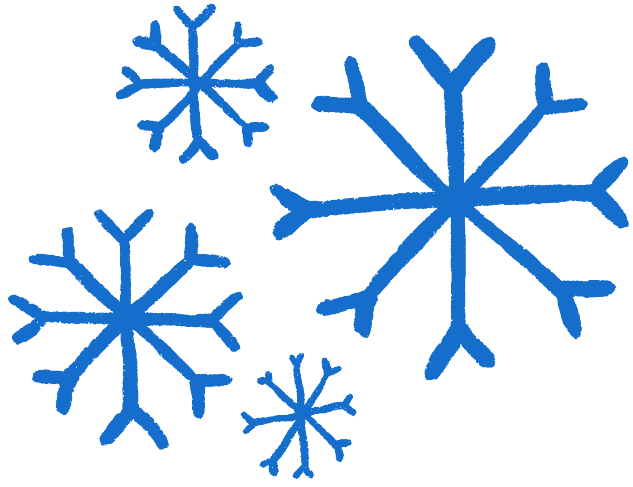




kisâstêw
hot



yôtin
windy



mispon
snowing



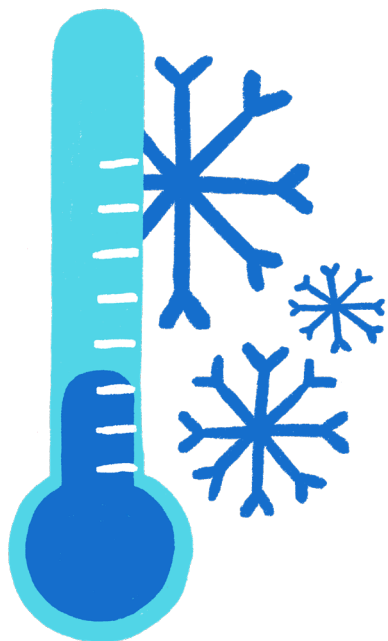
wâsîskwan
sunny



iyîkwashkwun
cloudy



kimôwan
raining



tahkâyâw
cold



kimowaniyâpî
rainbow



lî kazöň



bîbîsis



atim



pôsi



nistîs

older brother

nisîmis

younger brother



nimis

older sister

nisîmis

younger sister



nipâpâ



nimâmâ



nimoshôm



nohkom



pimohî



pimoshinî



nîmihito



kwâskohti



minihkwî



mîciso



iskwahtawî



pakâsimo



cîkaha



pimpahtâ



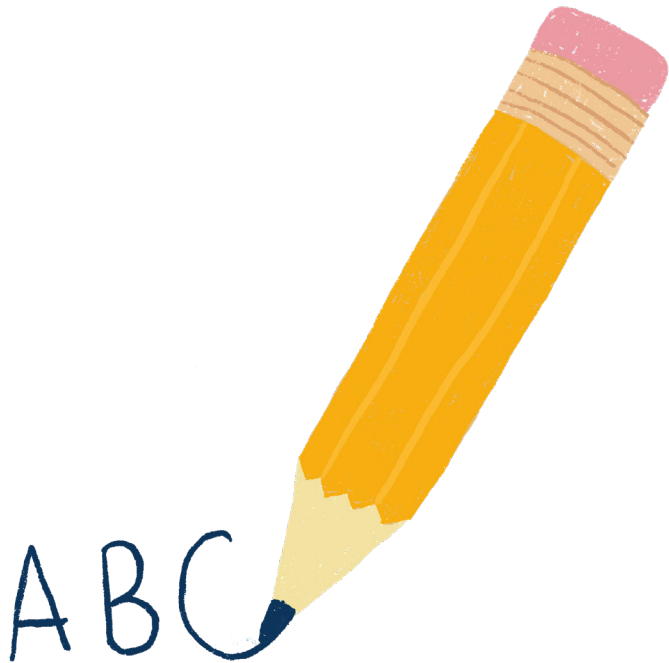
sîpîkinci



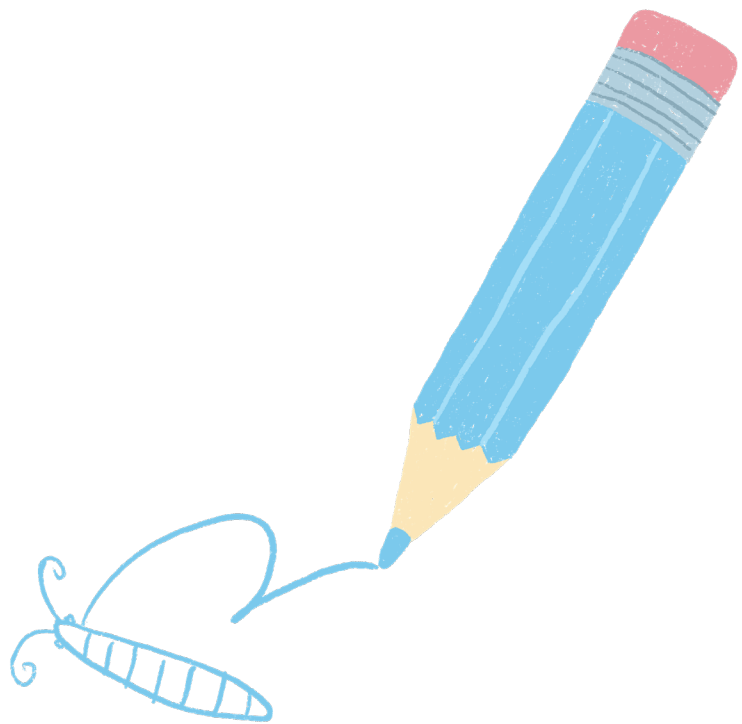
api



mîtawâḵana



masinaha



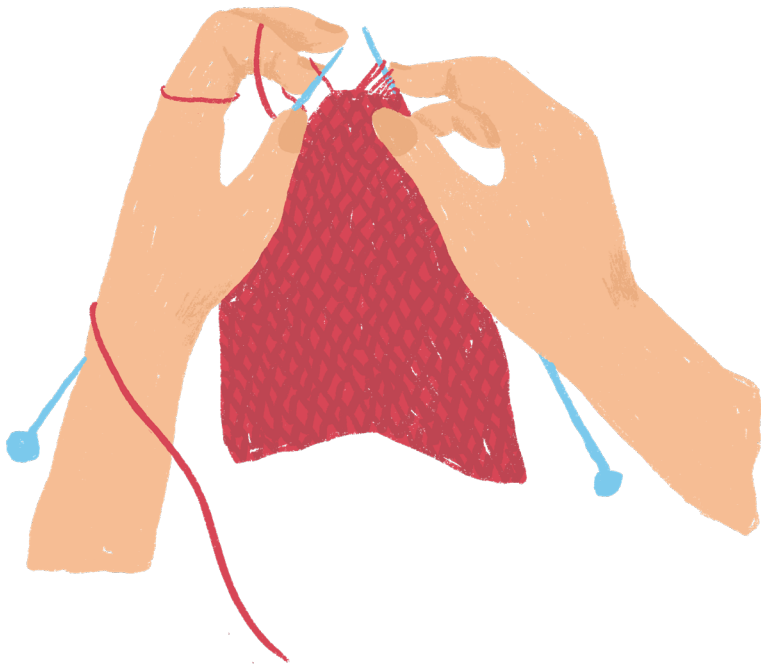
tâpasinaha



aķimik



pinawaso



osîhâ



pohtêyiwinsî



pîta



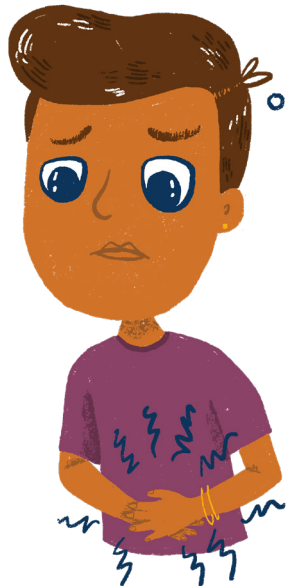
tahkiskâtâ



kahcitinâ



ninohtiyâpâkwân



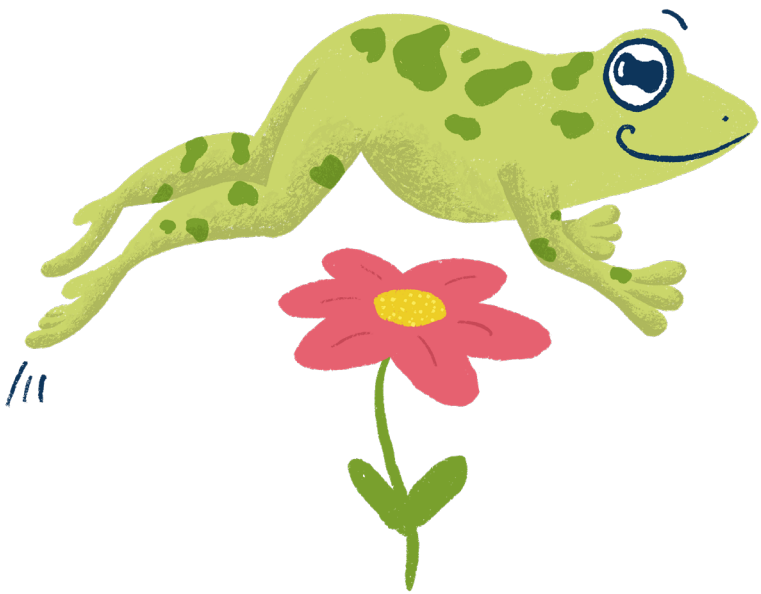
ninohtihkatân



pakamahwâ



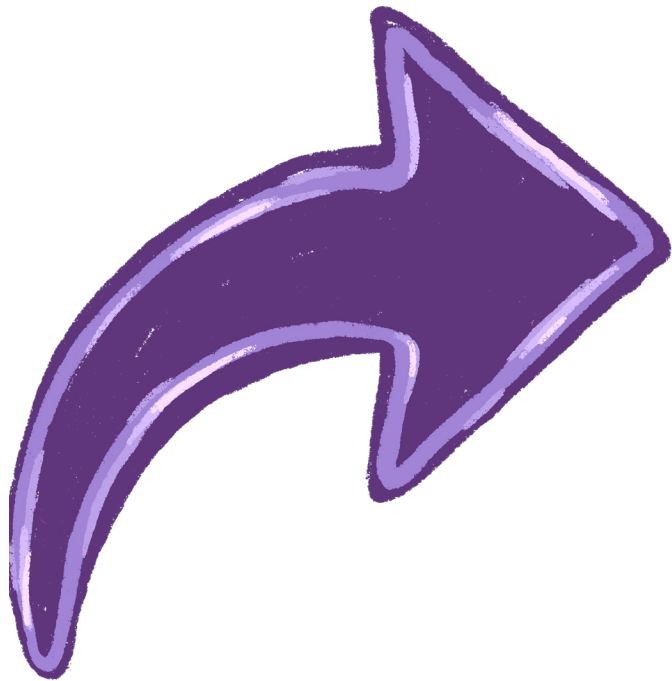
kwâskohti



pâscikwâskohti



namahtinihk



kihciniskihk



kanâtan



miyaw

the body



lî shavî
hair

misticwân
head

mihtawaḡay
ear

miskôwan
nose

mitôn
mouth

mitôskwan
elbow

mihcikwan
knee

miskât
leg

masitisa
toes

misita
feet

matay
stomach

mispiton
arm

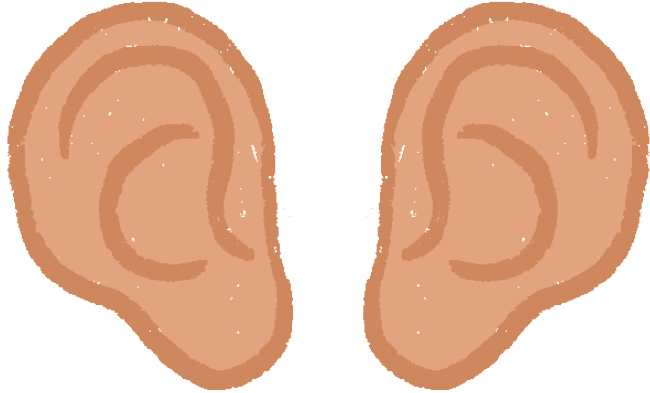
miskîsikwa
eyes

micihcîsa
hands

micihcîs
finger



mihtawaḡay



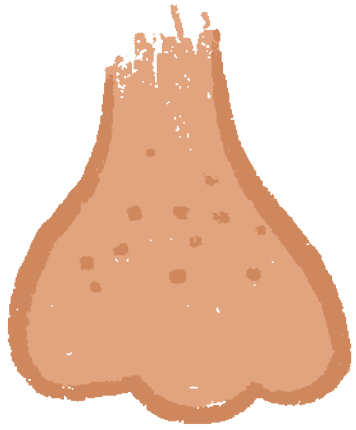
mihtawaḡaya



miskîsik



miskîsikwa



miskôwan



micihcî



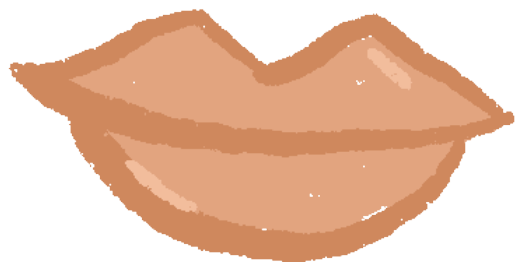
misit



mitôn



mitiyani



miskisay