Early Learning Classroom Package

Northern Michif

Métis Nation Saskatchewan

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 it's 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 shiikawk 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
Koohkum Rita Ducharme

Northern Michif Contributors:
Vince Ahenakew
Sandra Laliberte
Leda Corrigal
Laura Burnouf
Maureen Belanger

Michif French Contributors:
Mataant Ang
Pawpaw Sonny
Maymair Phyllis

Use these apps for pronunciation:

Northern Michif To Go | Heritage Michif To Go | Michif French

Métis Nation Saskatchewan

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métisgathering.ca

Classroom Labels



latâp

the table

la shåsh

a chair

la pohrrt

door

l’balå

broom

tahkas'ciḳan

the fridge

la pwål

a stove

la plâňshî

the floor

lishâsî

window

l'cimilî

the bathroom

wîpin’kêwinêw l’kan

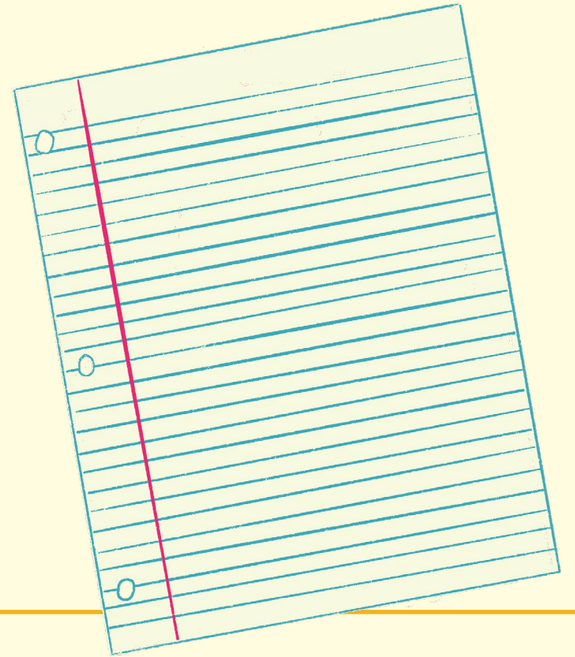
the garbage can

l’savöň

the soap

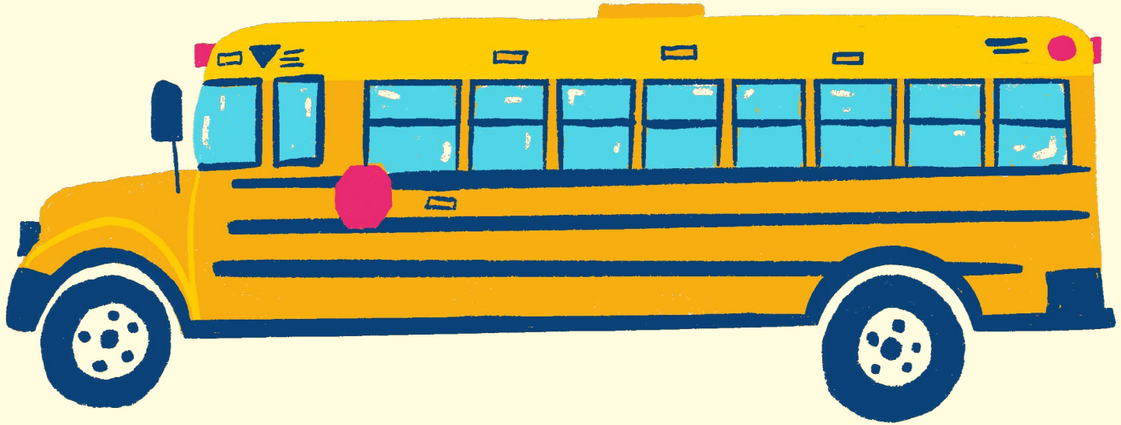
l'papî

the paper



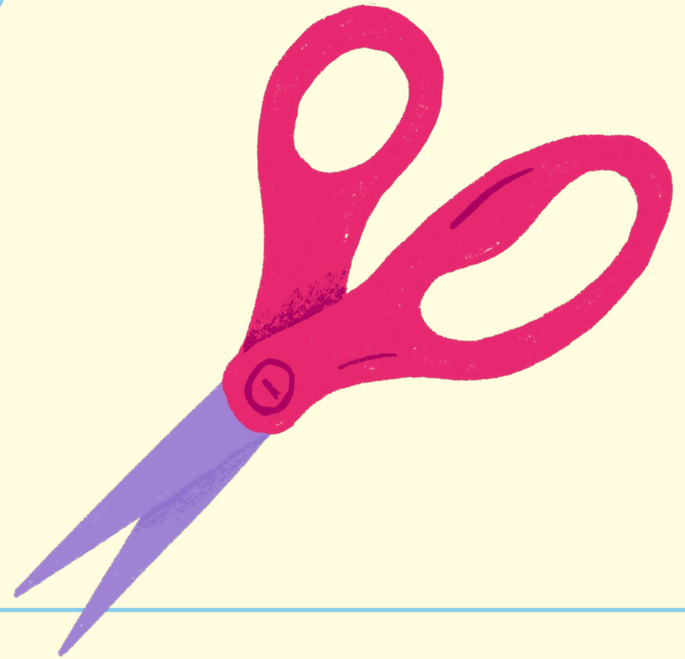
l'bas

the bus



l'sîzô

the scissors



lakwal

the glue



tân’si î isihkâsoyin?

what’s your name?



kasipeyiķanis



eraser

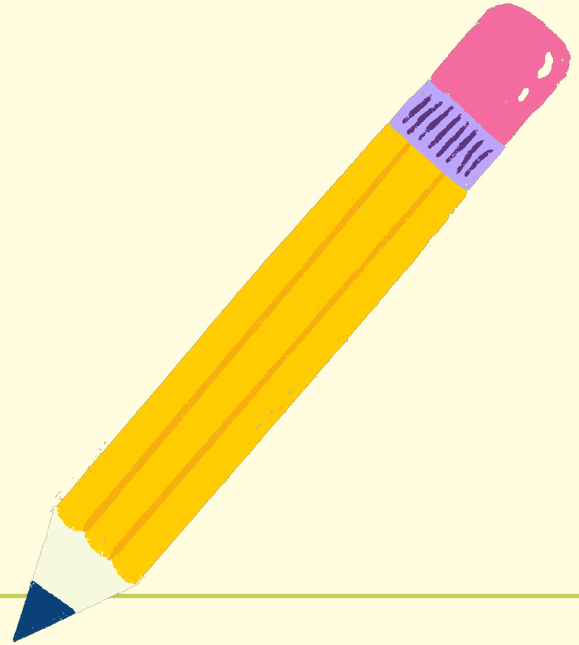
mîtawî

play



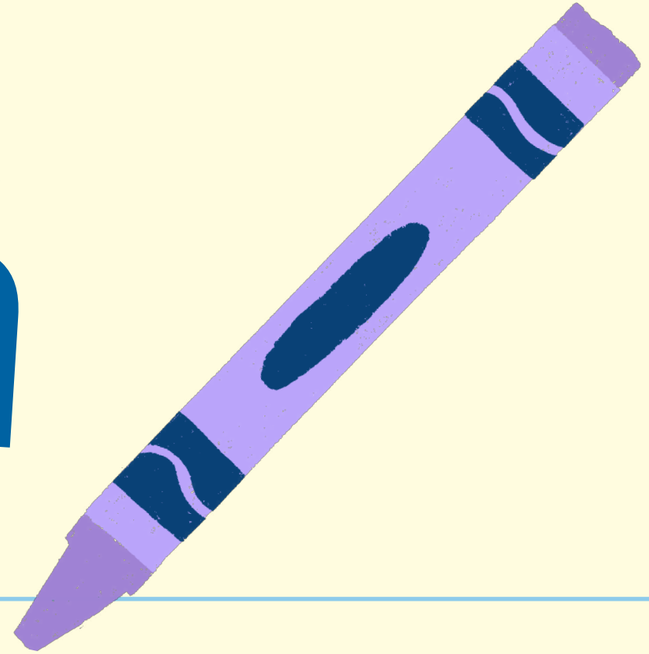
l’krriyŏň

a pencil



l'krriyŏň

a crayon



êkosi

that's it; that's all



m’wîstas kawâpâm’tin

see you later



tân'si

hello



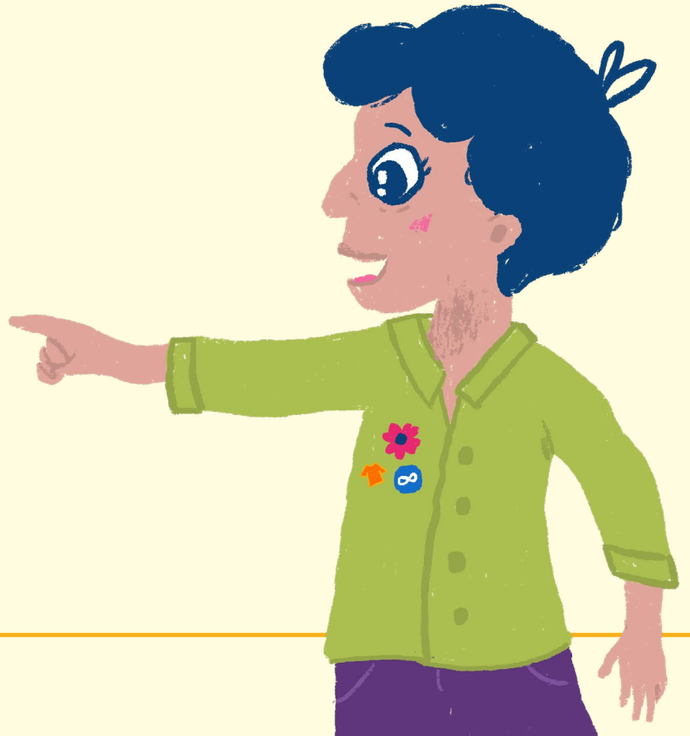
âstam(ik)
ôtî pîtohtî(k)

come here (all of you)



ôta itâpi

look here



nisihkâson

my name is...



ayamihcikêwin

reading



nimiyohtîn

I'm happy



nipîkwihtîn

I'm sad



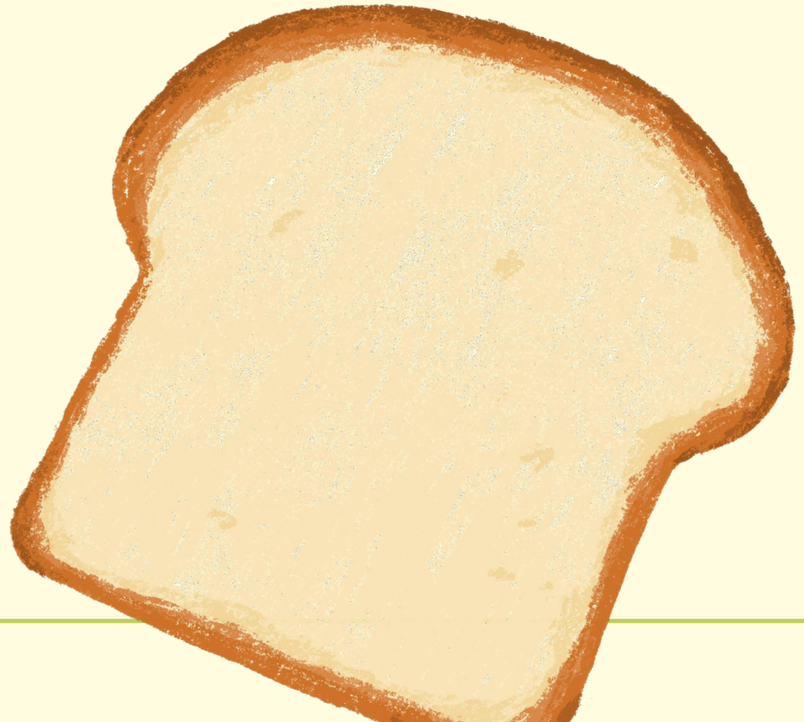
kâ nîkânîsta

leader



l’pǎň

bread



kiskinohamâkêw
OR l'teacharr

school teacher



la kwîzin

kitchen



nâpêw l'teacharr

school teacher (male)



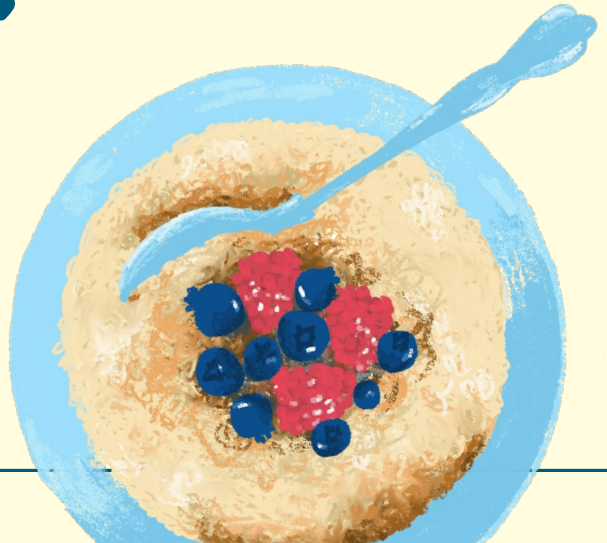
lasop

soup



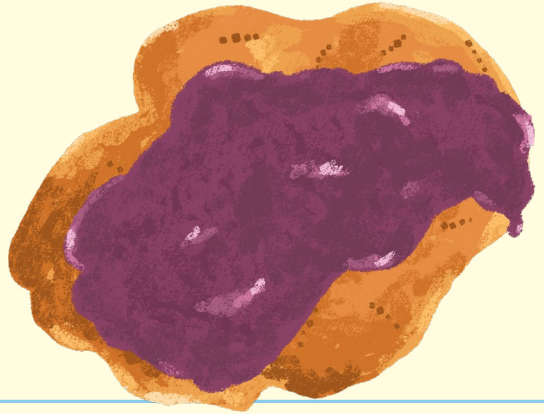
la porrich

oatmeal



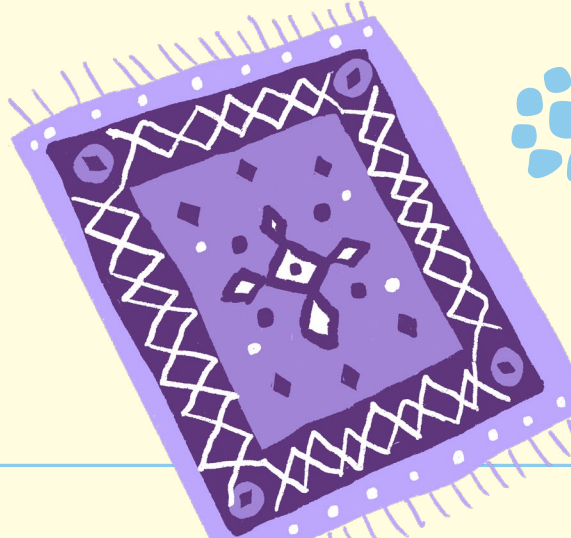
laḳalet

bannock



anâskêwin

a rug



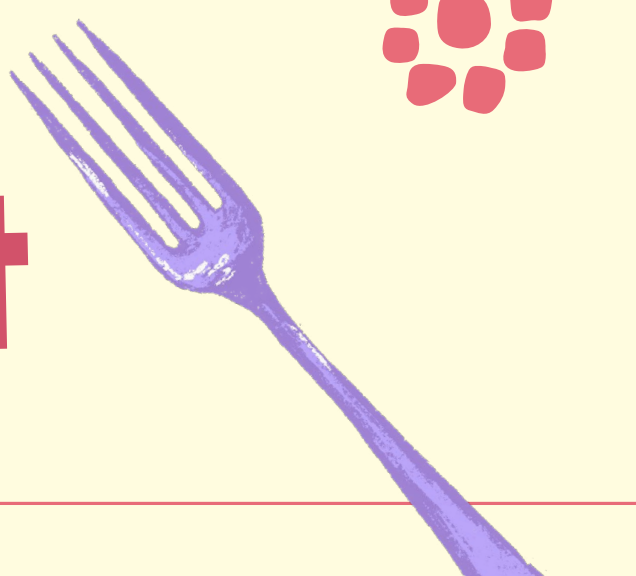
la koyårr

a spoon



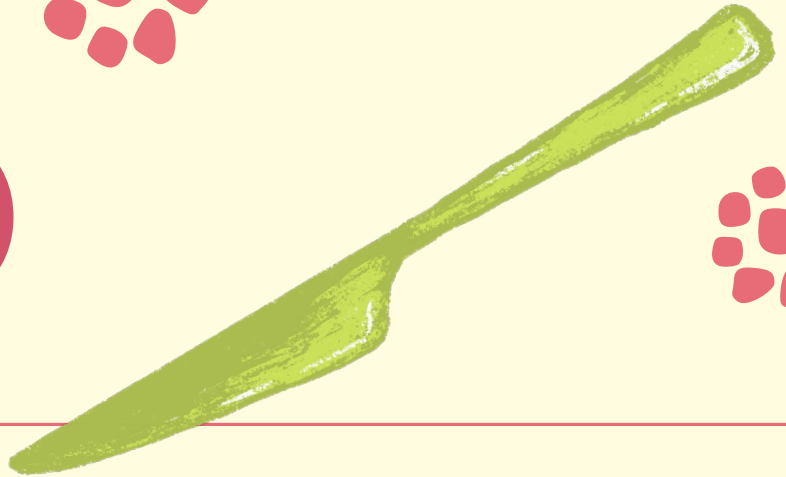
la forrshet

a fork



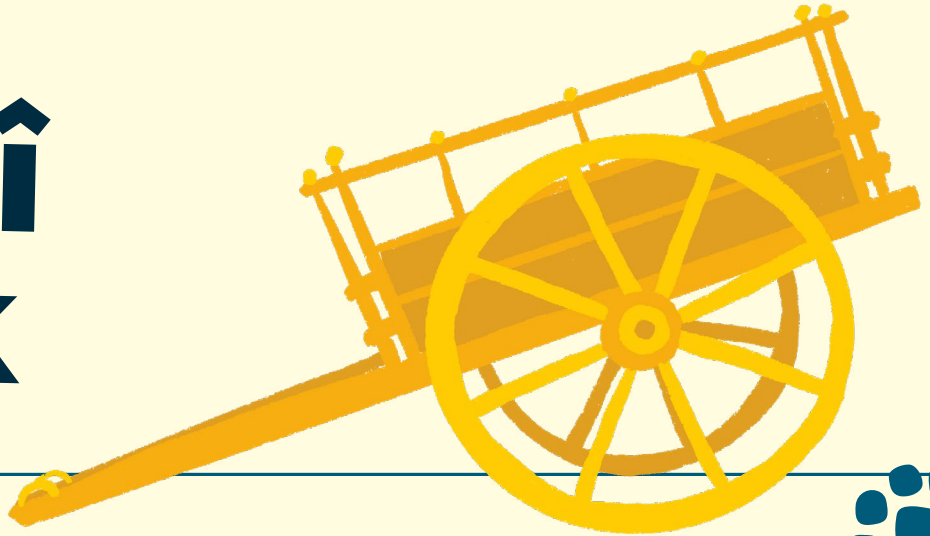
l'kotô

a knife



lirrôsh sîpî otâpânâsk

the red river cart



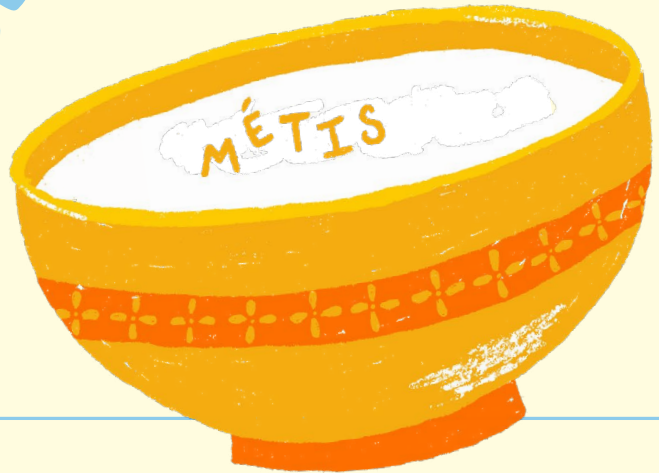
l’paviyőň

a flag



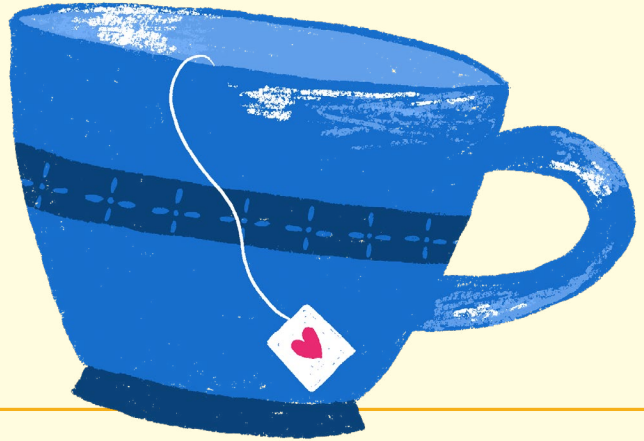
l'plâ

a bowl



l'pot OR l'pwat

a cup



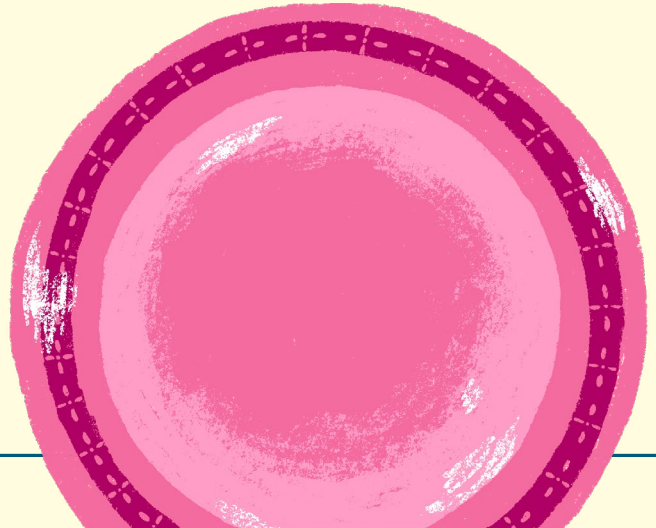
dilet

milk



l'zasiyet

a plate



la sâncîrr OR âpihtawkosân

a sash



laviyålöň

a fiddle



Classroom Posters



1



piyak

2



nîso

3



nisto

4



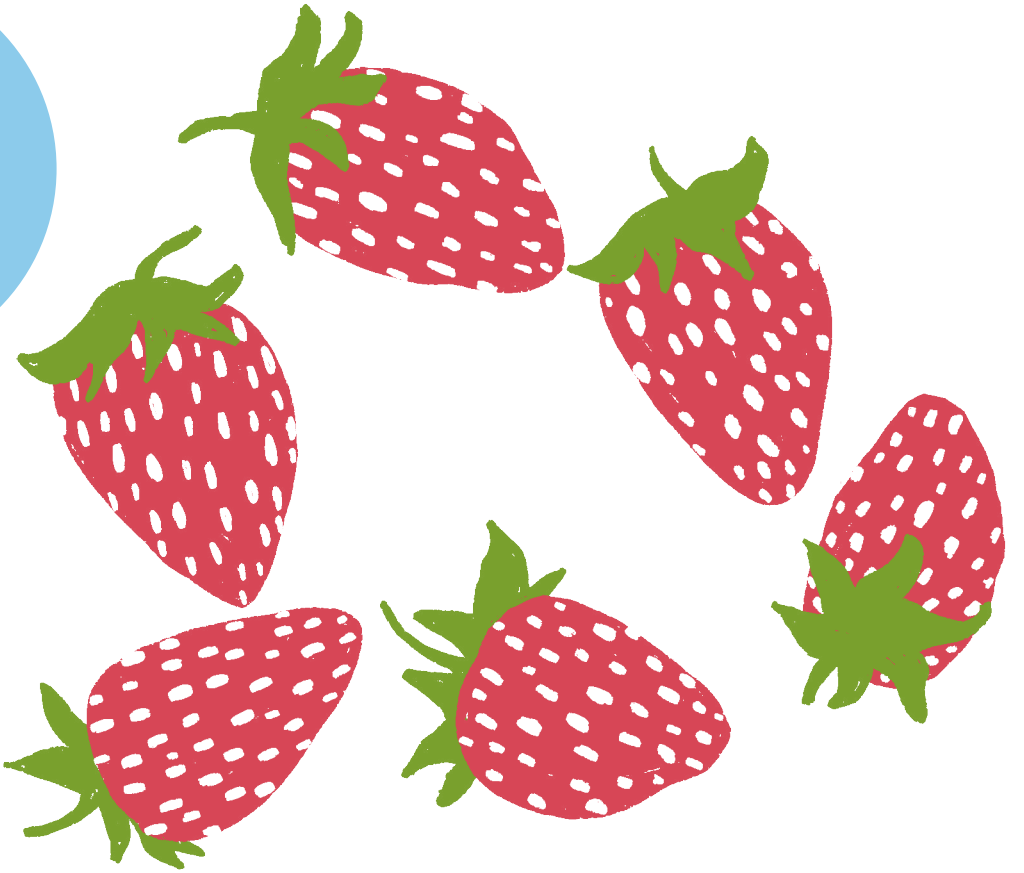
nêwo

5



niyânan

6



niḳotwâsik

7

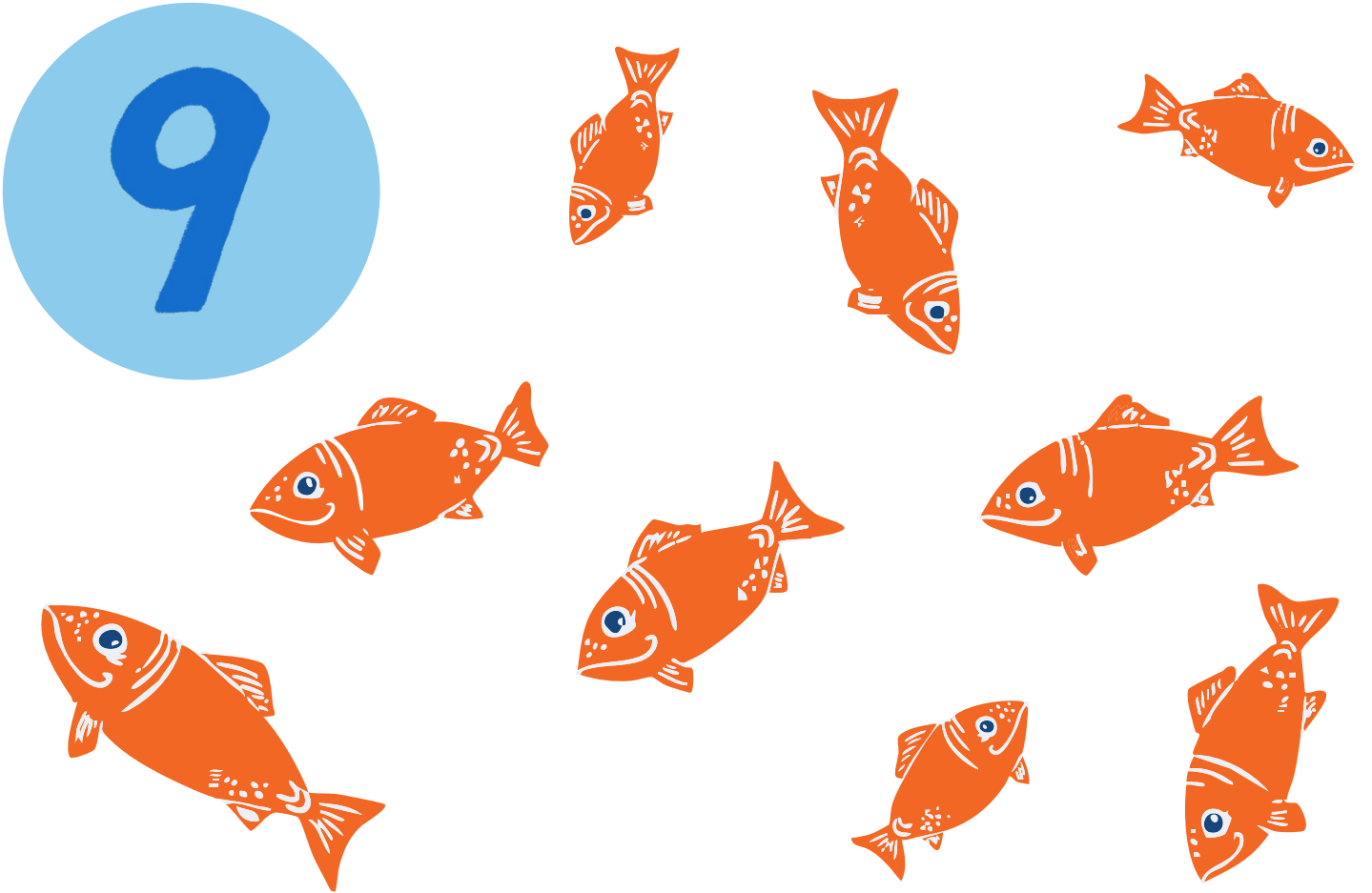


tîpaḳohp

8

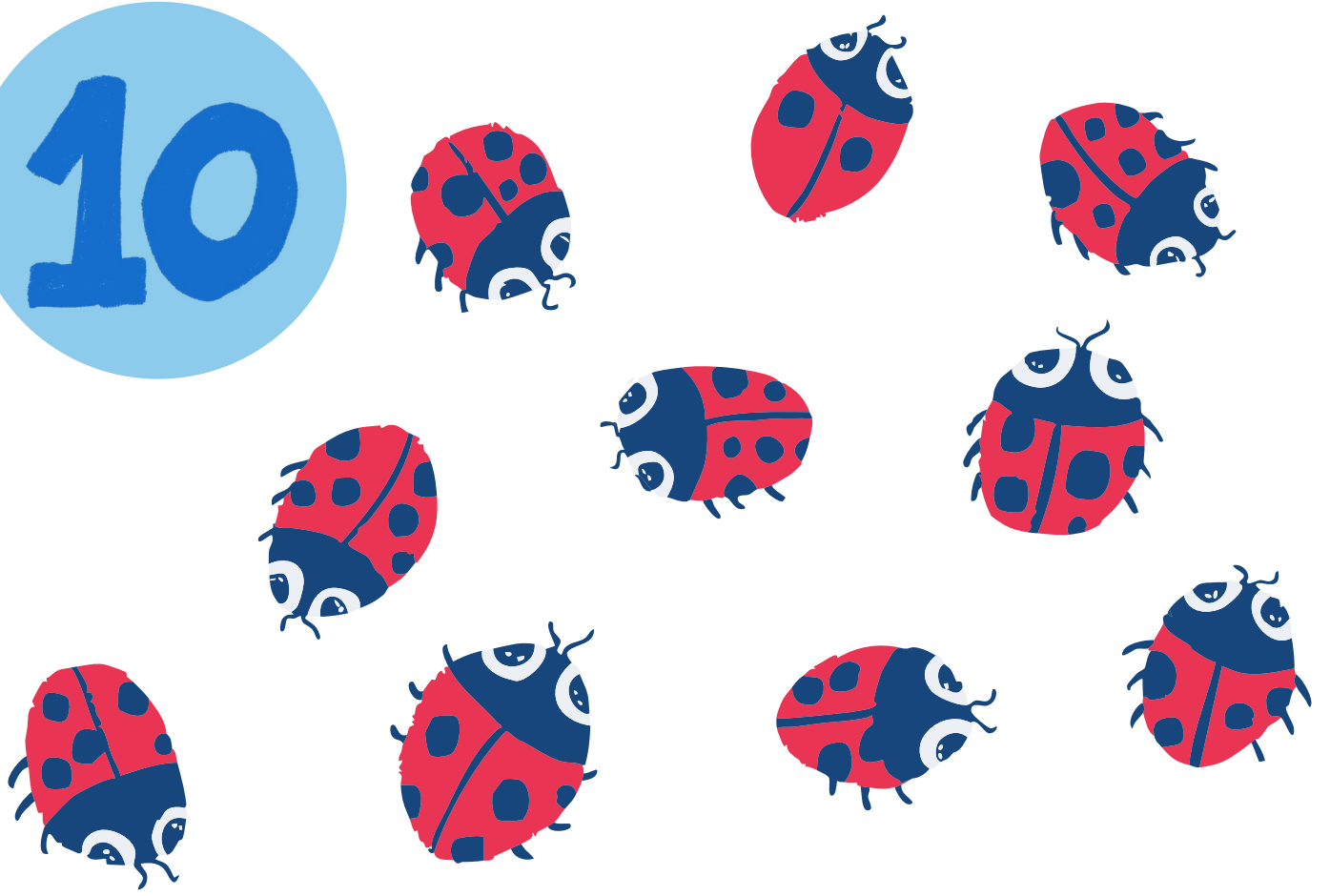


ayênânêw



kîķâ mitâtaht

10



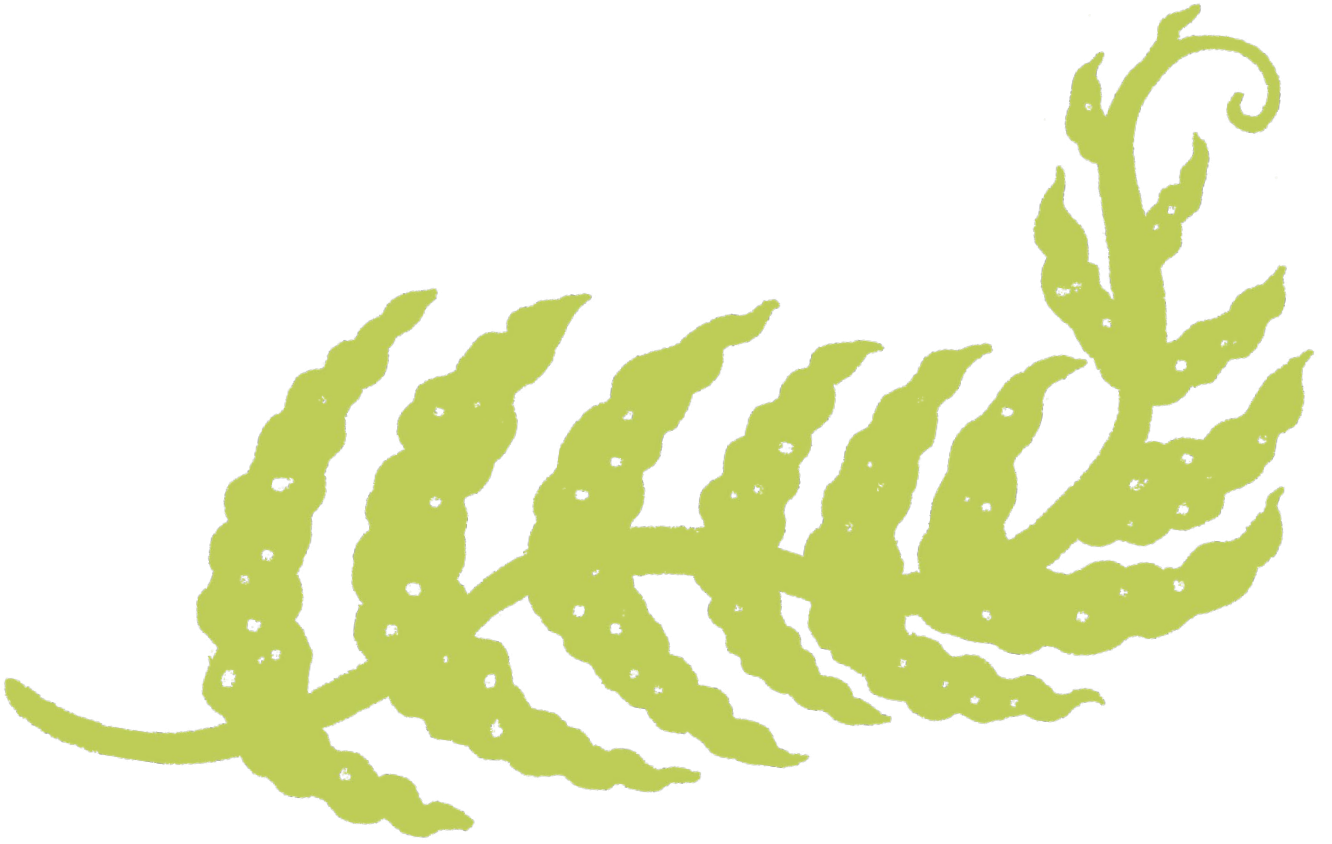
mitâtaht


lirrôsh



l’zarrâňsh

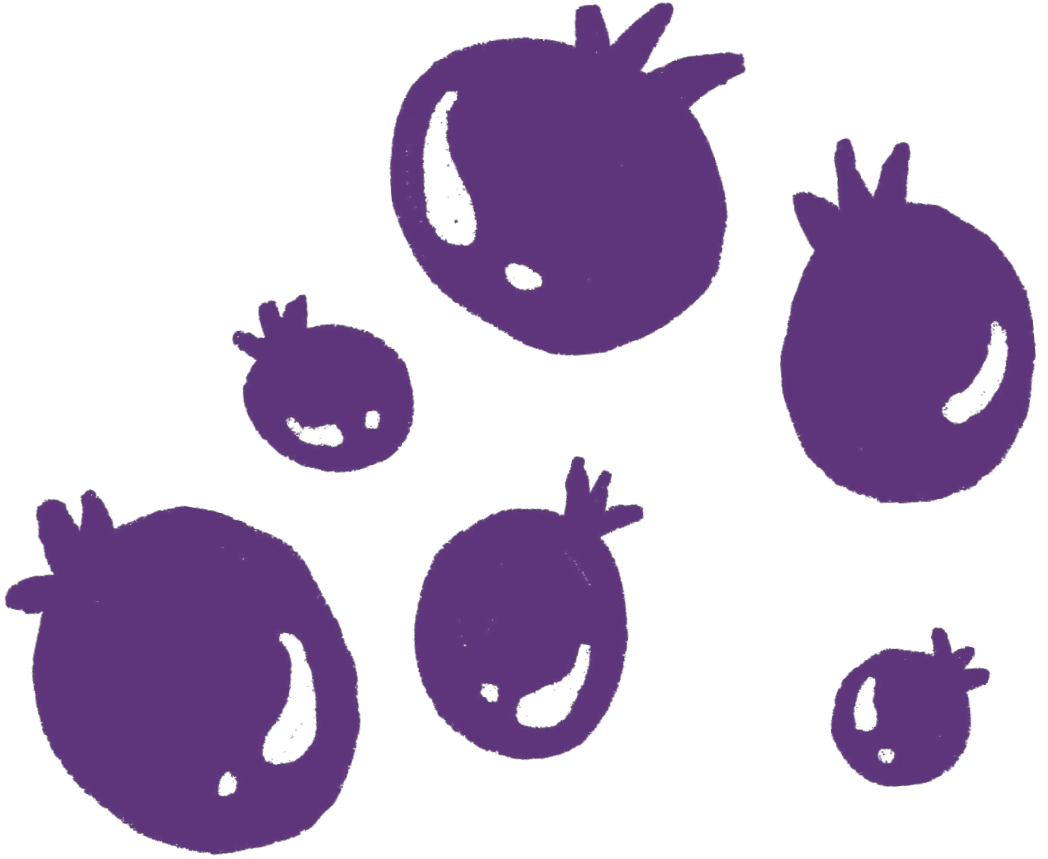
ľ’jőň



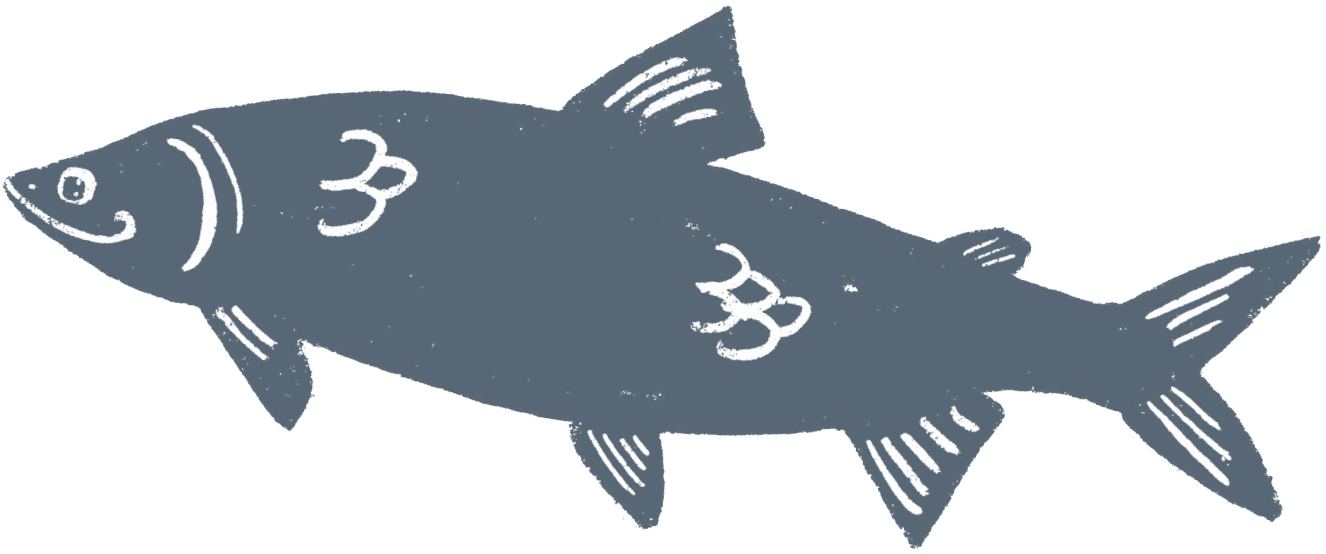
I'vårr



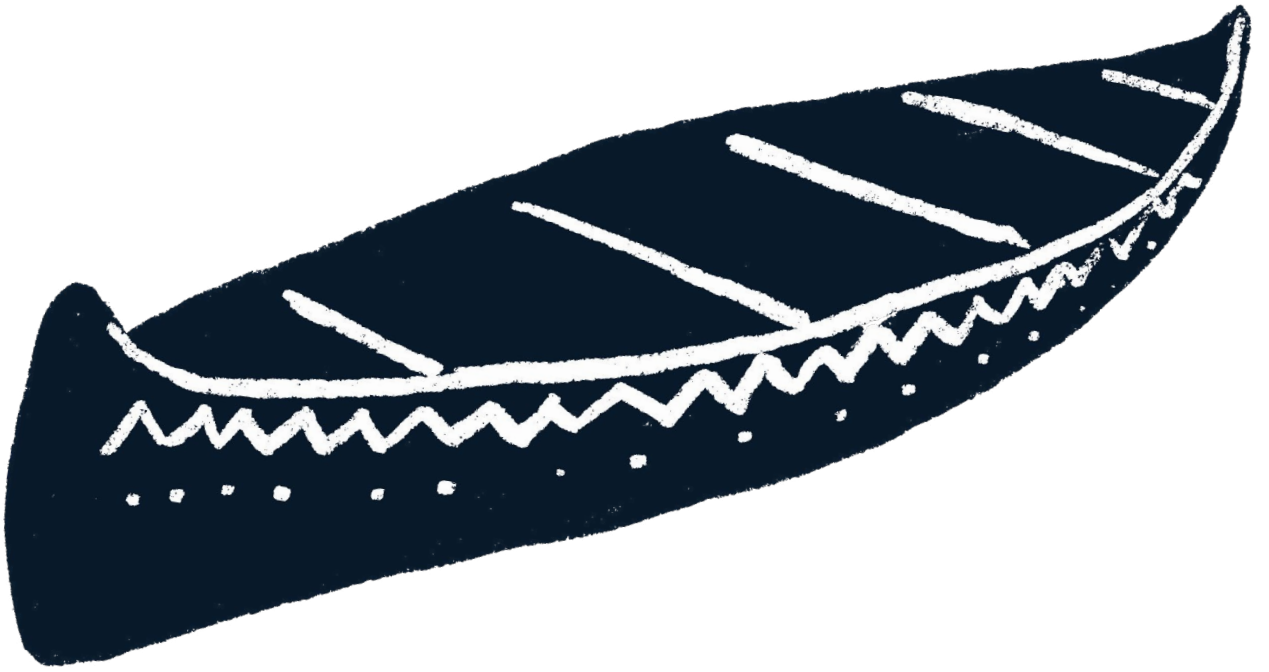
l’blô



l’viyolå



l’ķrrî



linwårr



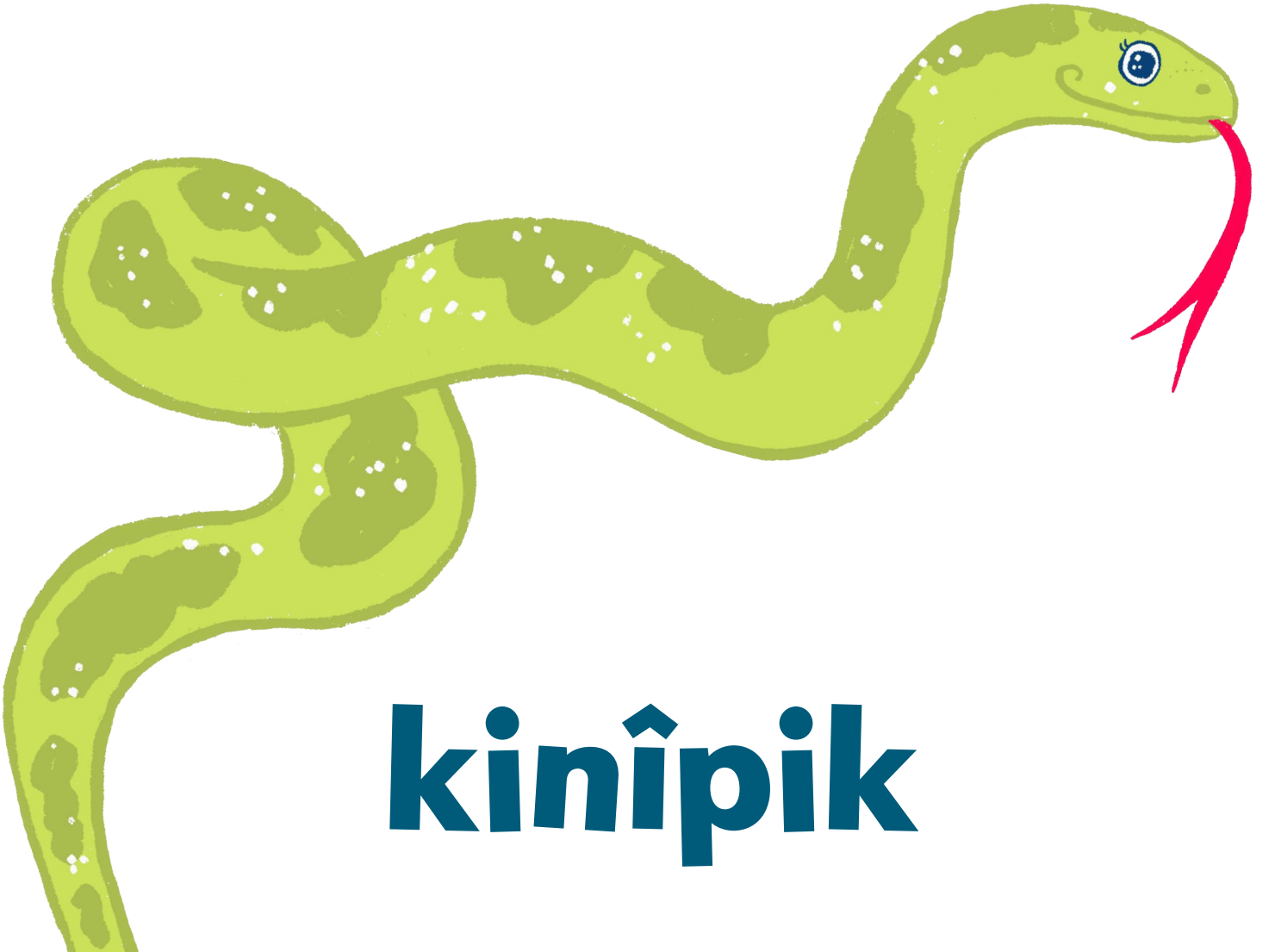
l’blâň



shiḳâk



amisk



kinîpik



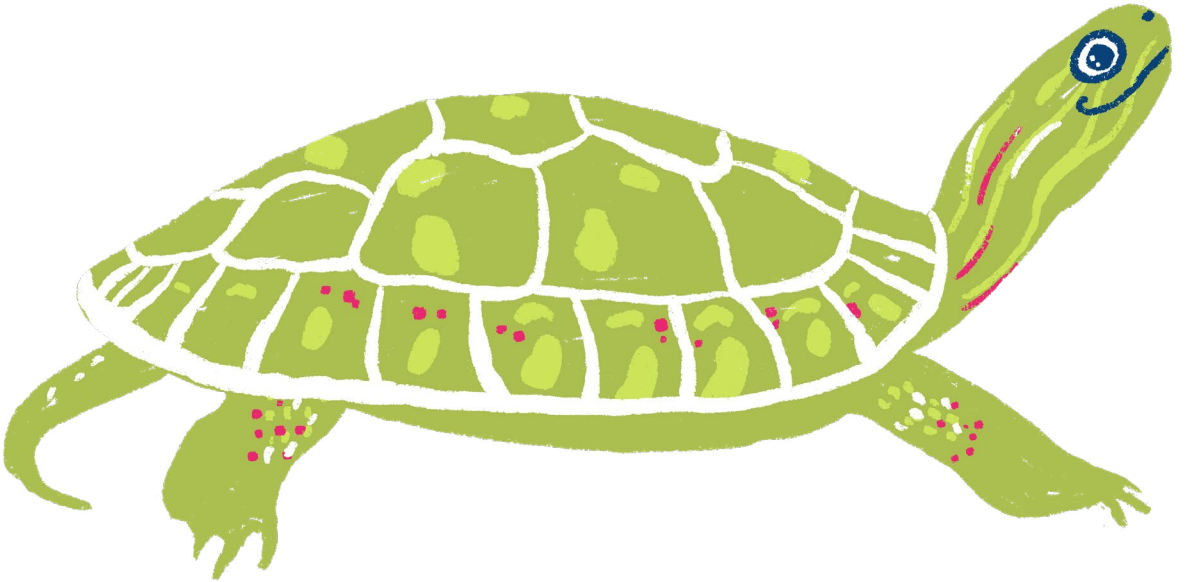
mashkwa



mahkîsîs



pisiskîs



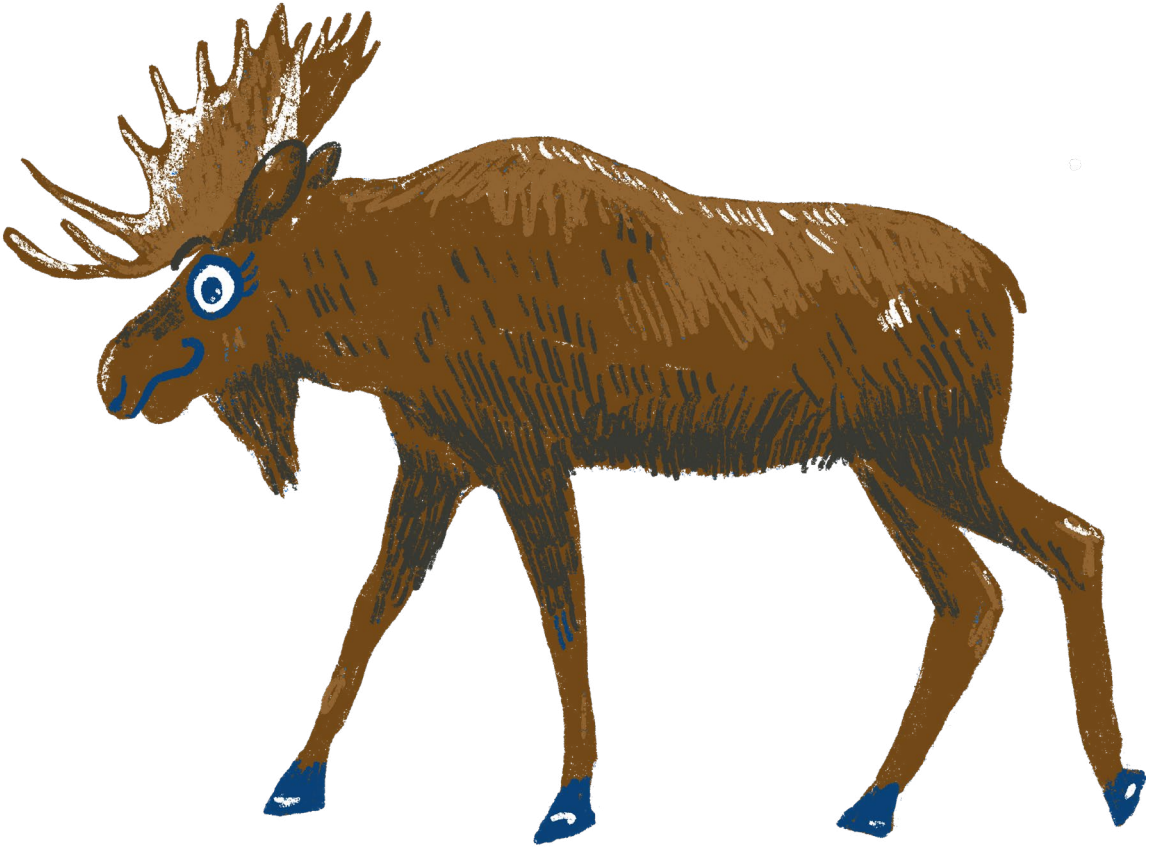
miskinâhk



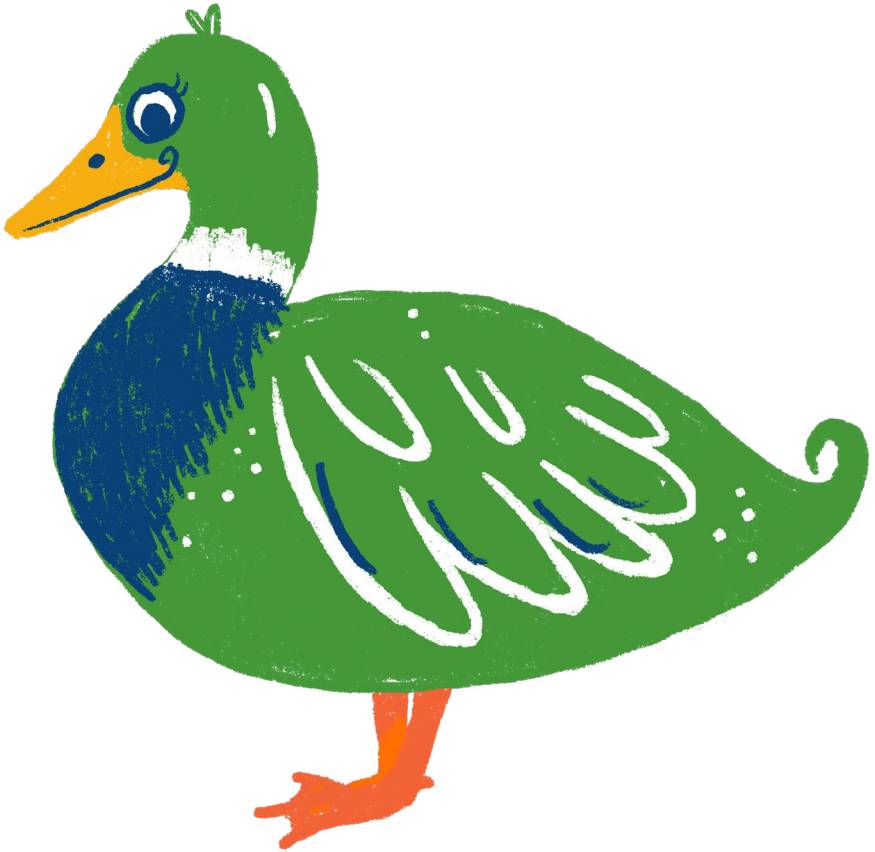
anaḳwacâs



wâskîsô



môshwa



sîsîp



l’pol



tîtwîsô



mayihkan



pahkwâcîs



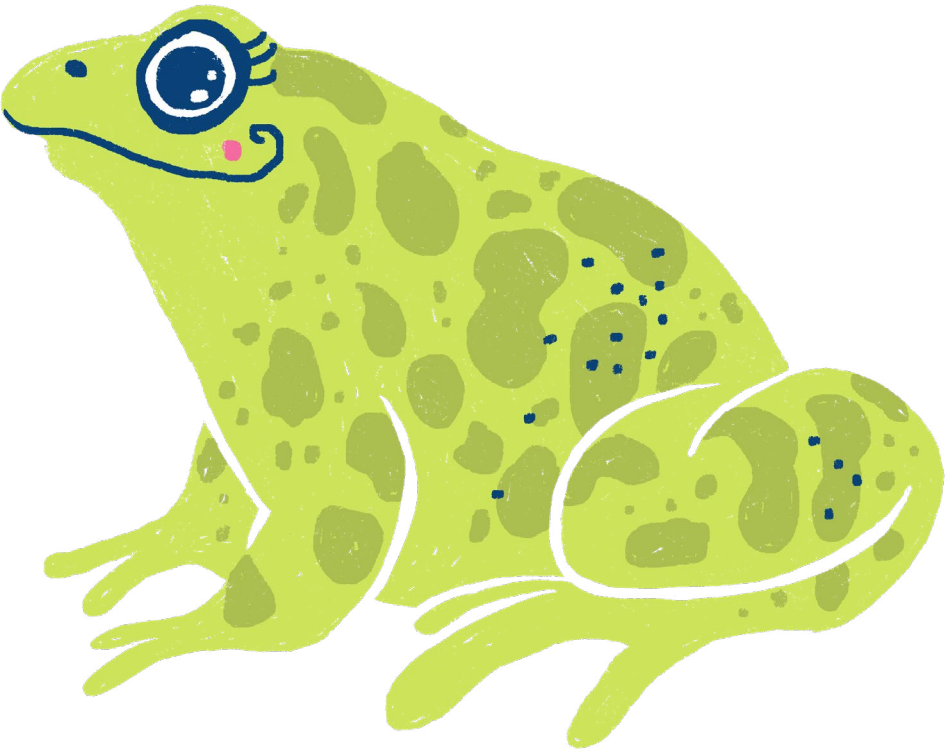
ôhô



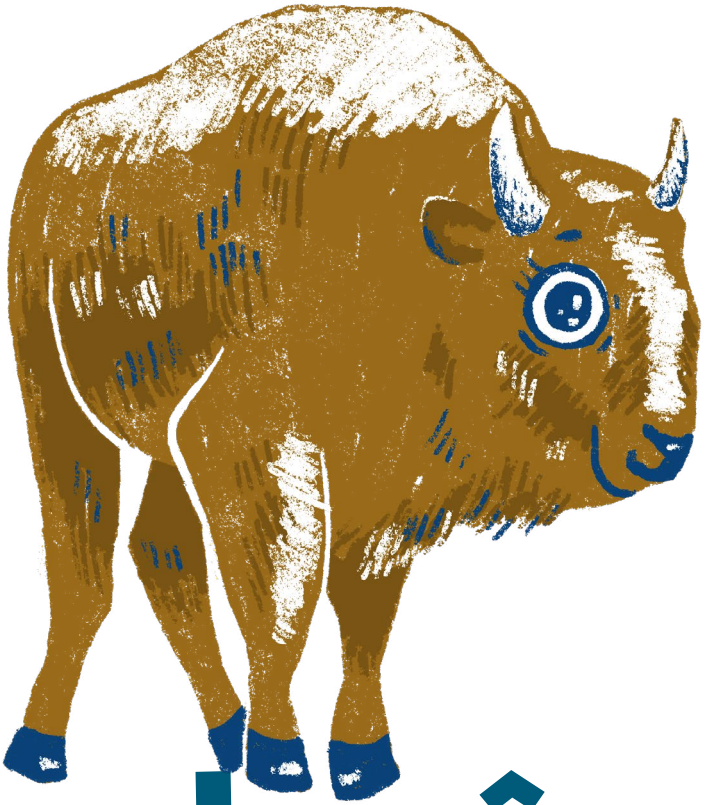
lipwasöň OR l’pwasöň



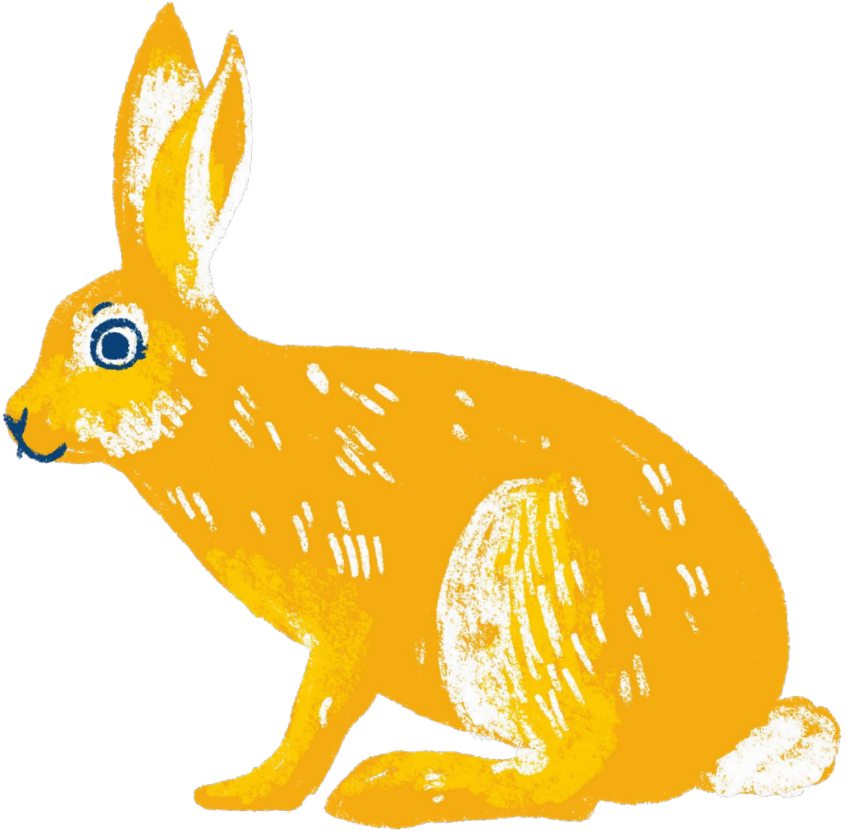
kâķwa



ayîkish



paskwâw moshtosh



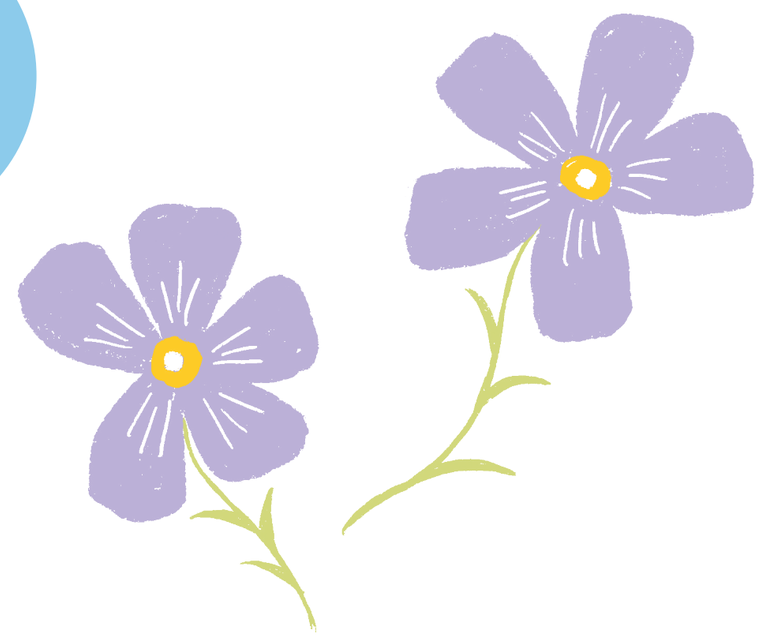
mistâposh

1



piyak

2



nîso

3



nisto

4



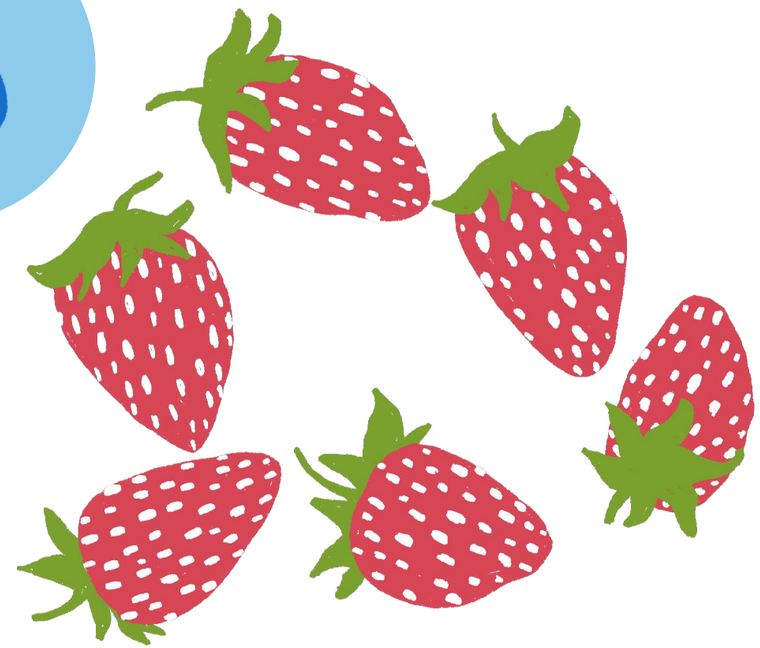
nêwo

5



niyânan

6



nikotwâsik

7

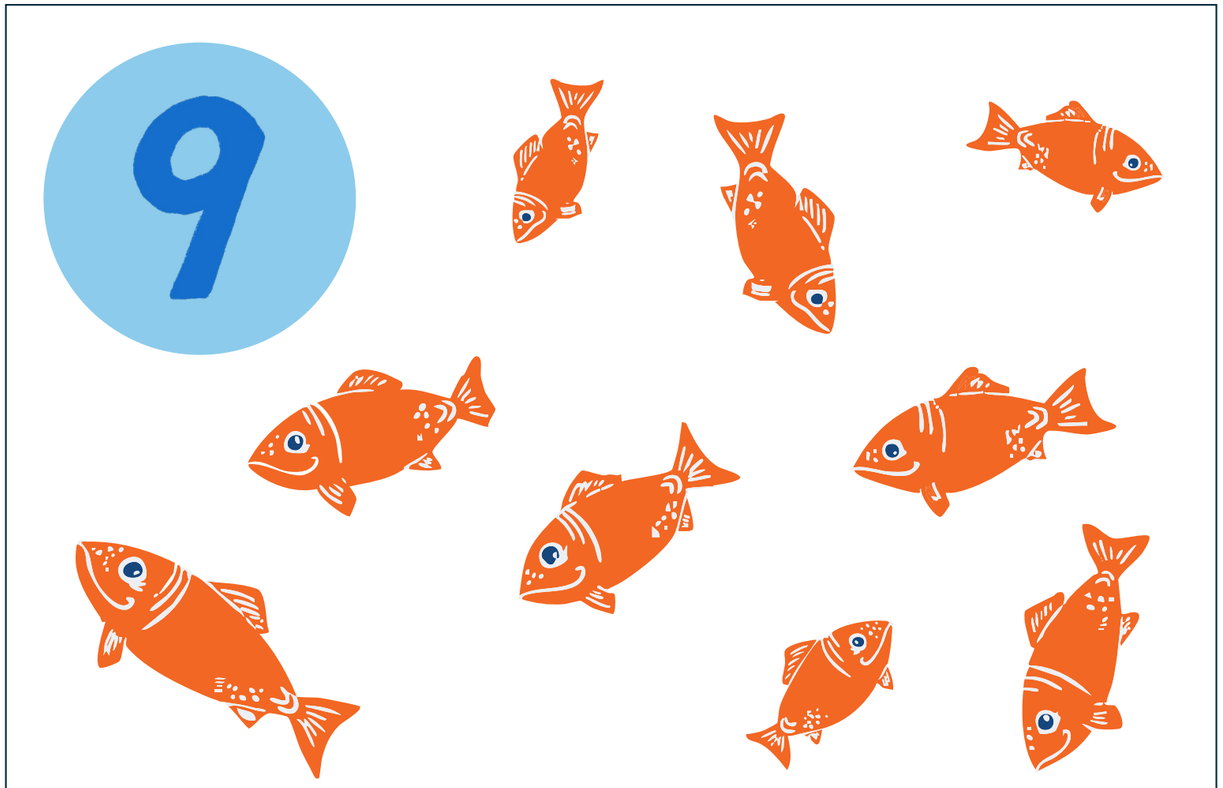


tîpaḳohp

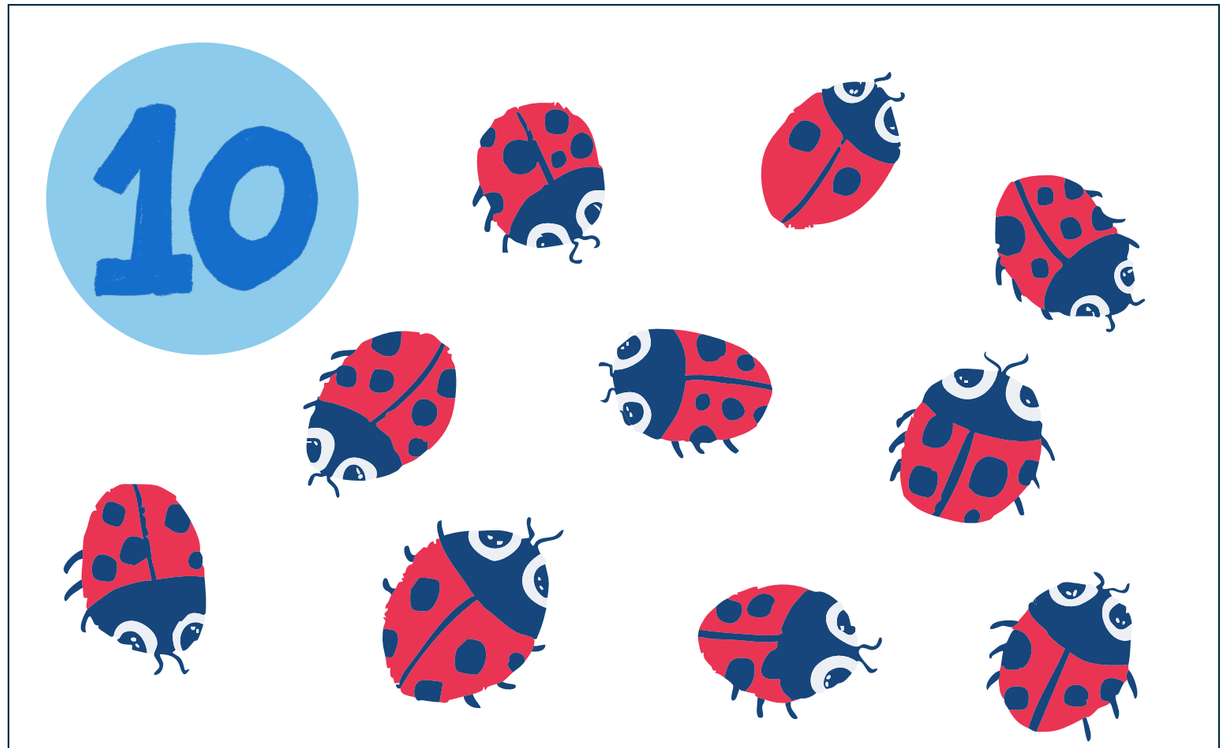
8



ayêânânêw



kîķâ mitâtaht



mitâtaht

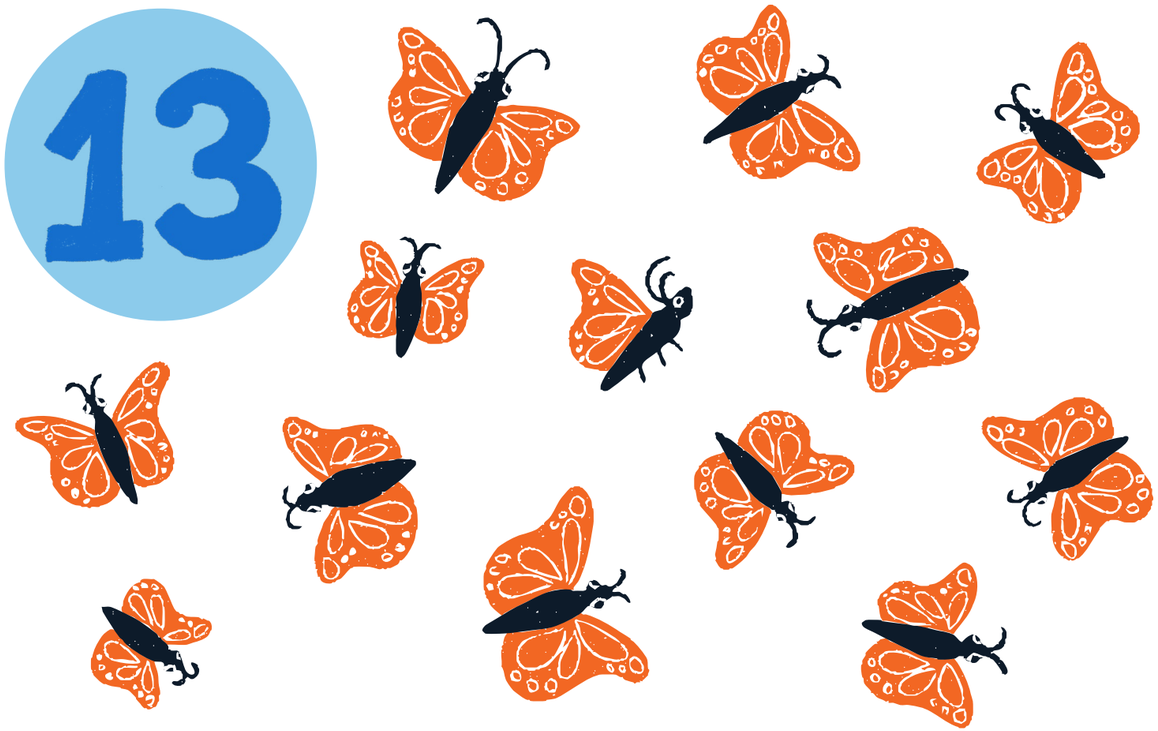


piyakosâp



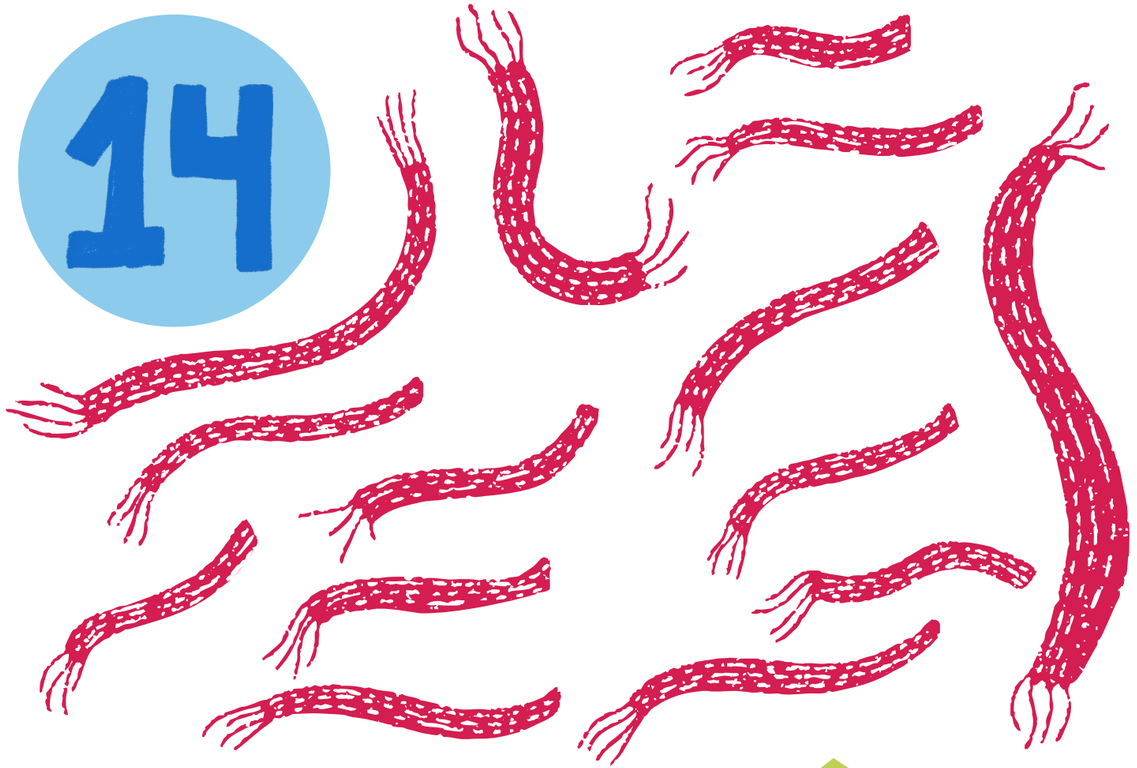
nîsosâp

13



nistosâp

14



newosâp



niyânosâp



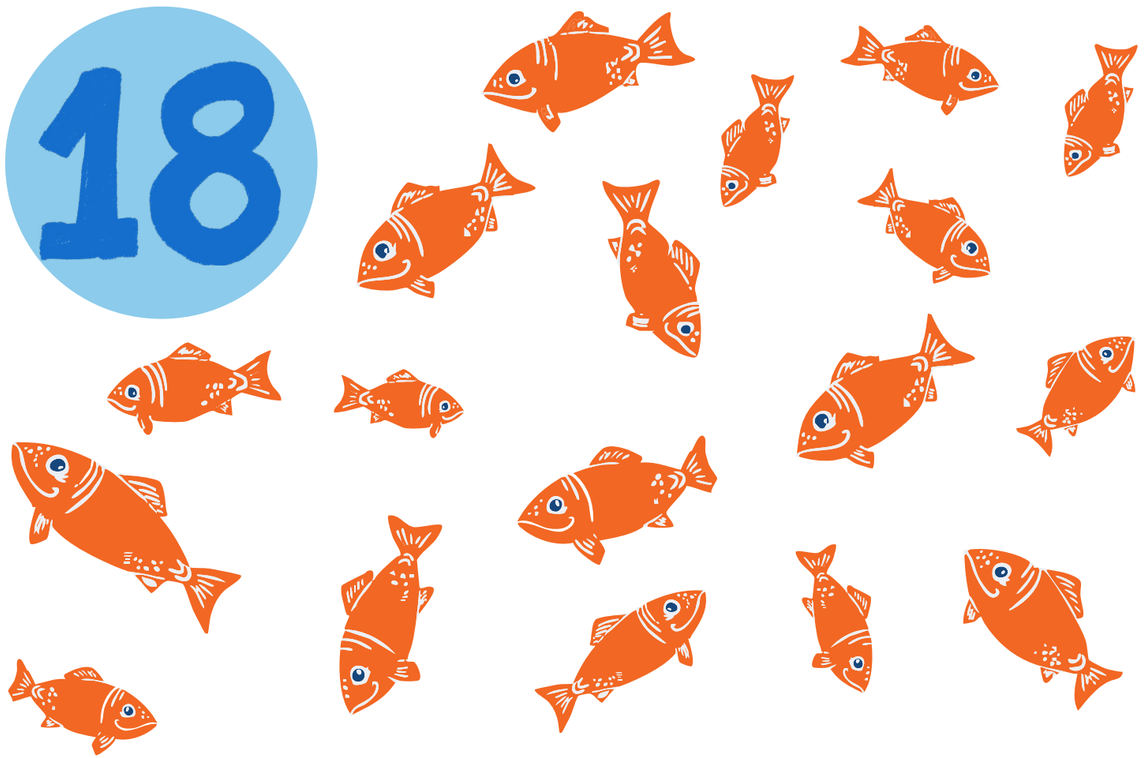
nikotwâsosâp

17



tîpakohposâp

18



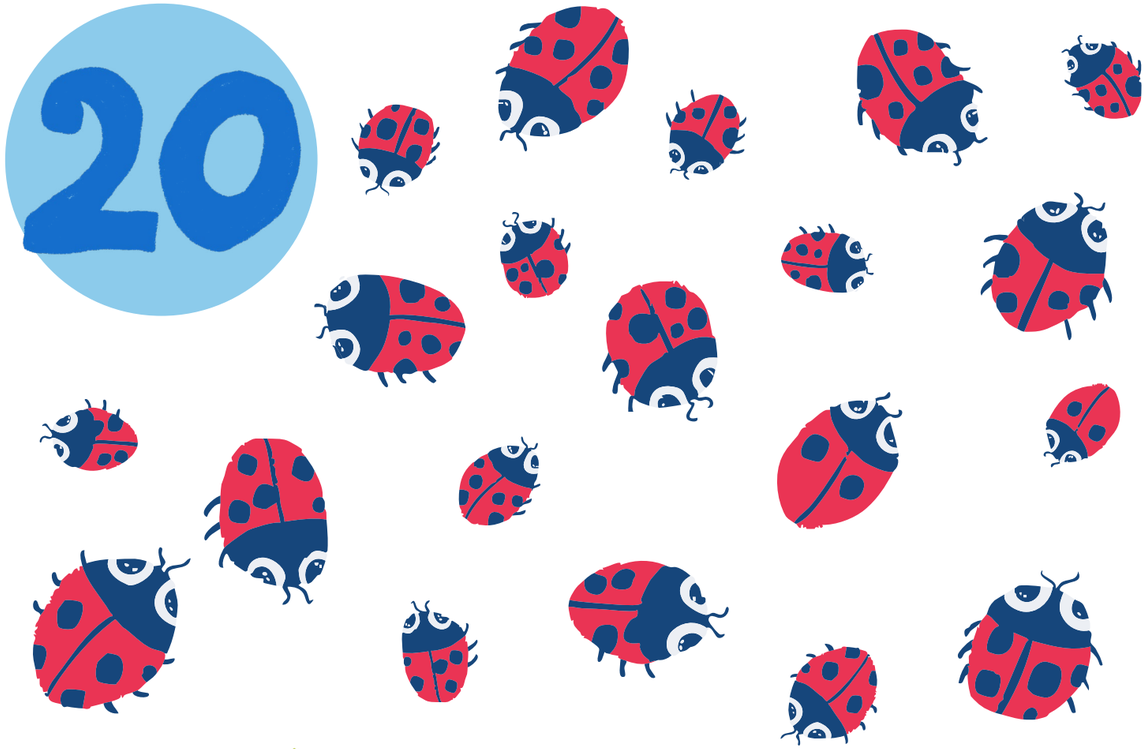
ayênânêwosâp

19



kîḵâ mitâtahtosâp

20



nîstanaw

21



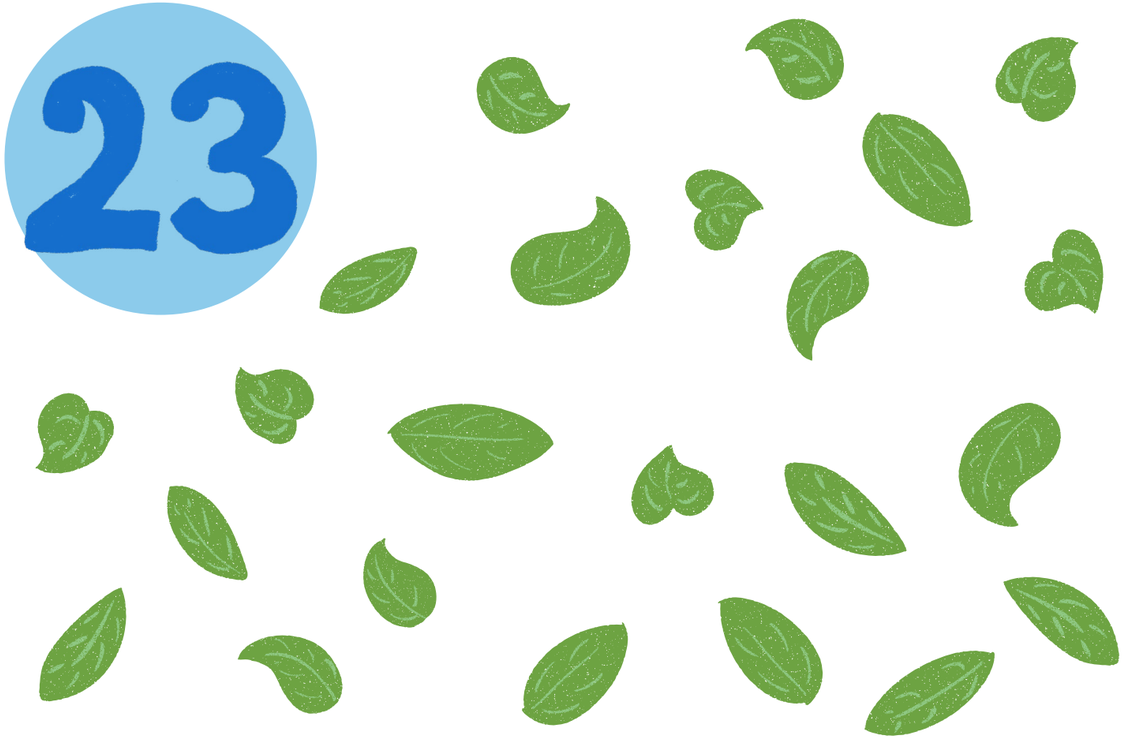
nîstanaw piyakosâp

22



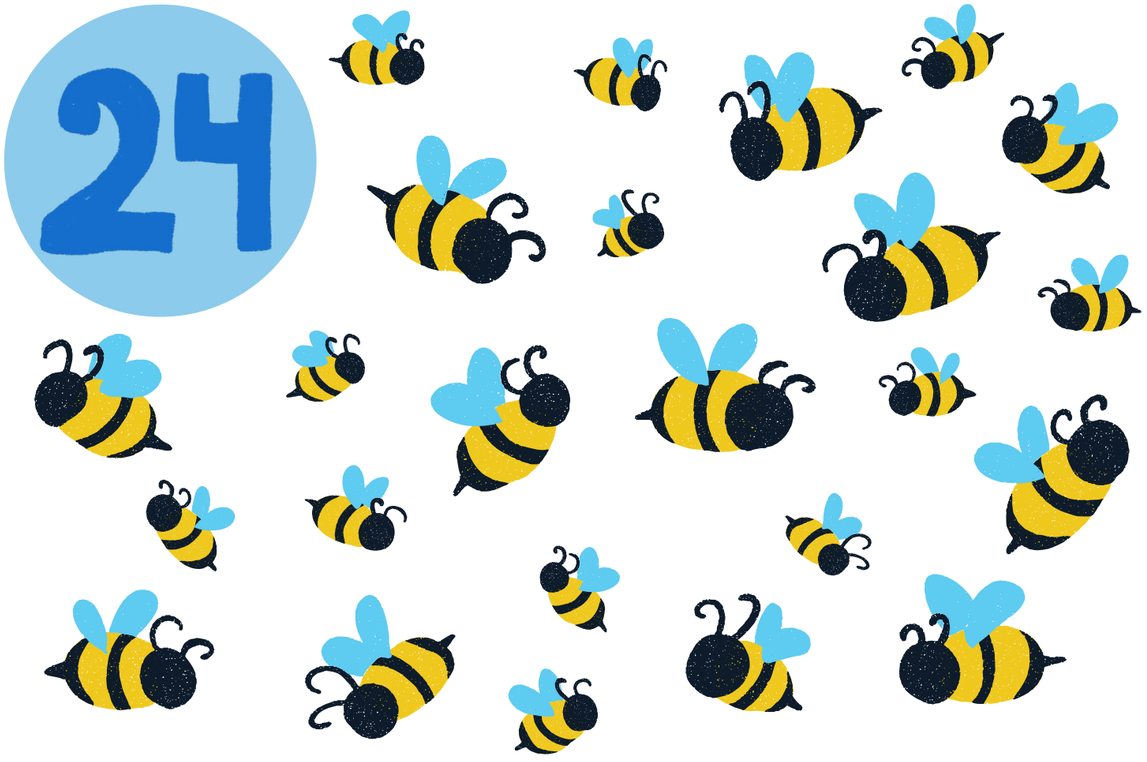
nîstanaw nîsosap

23



nîstanaw nistosâp

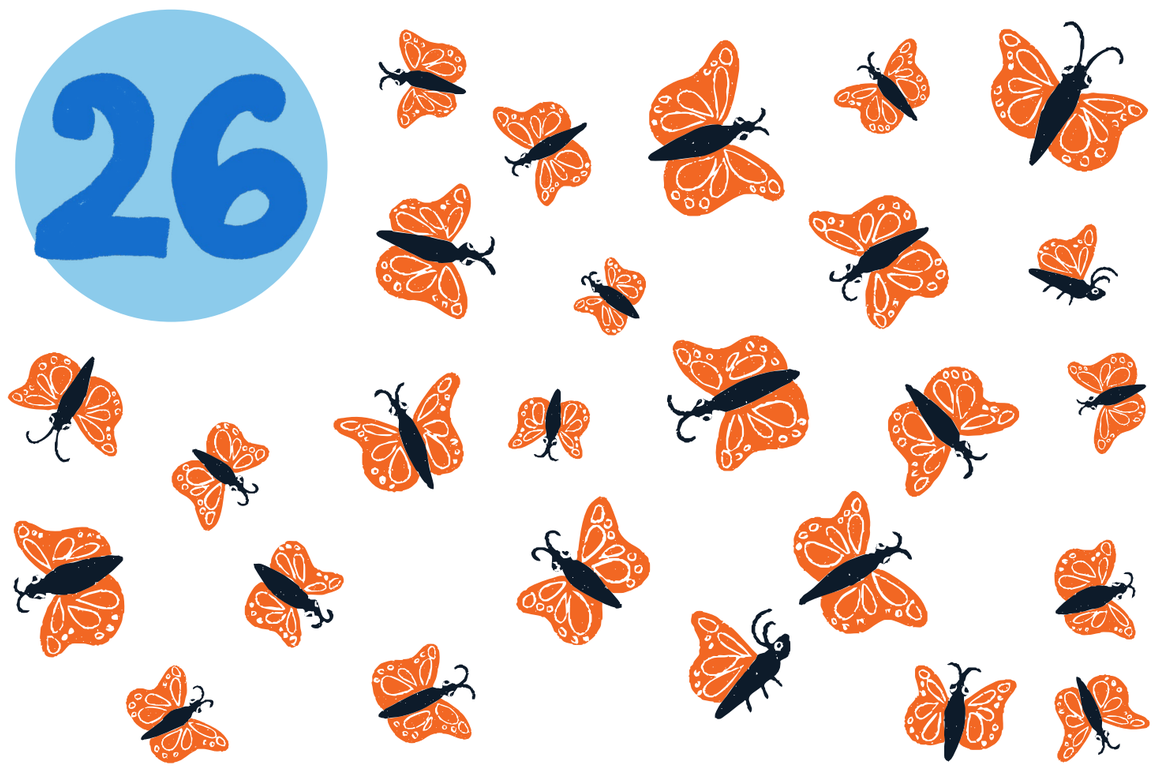
24



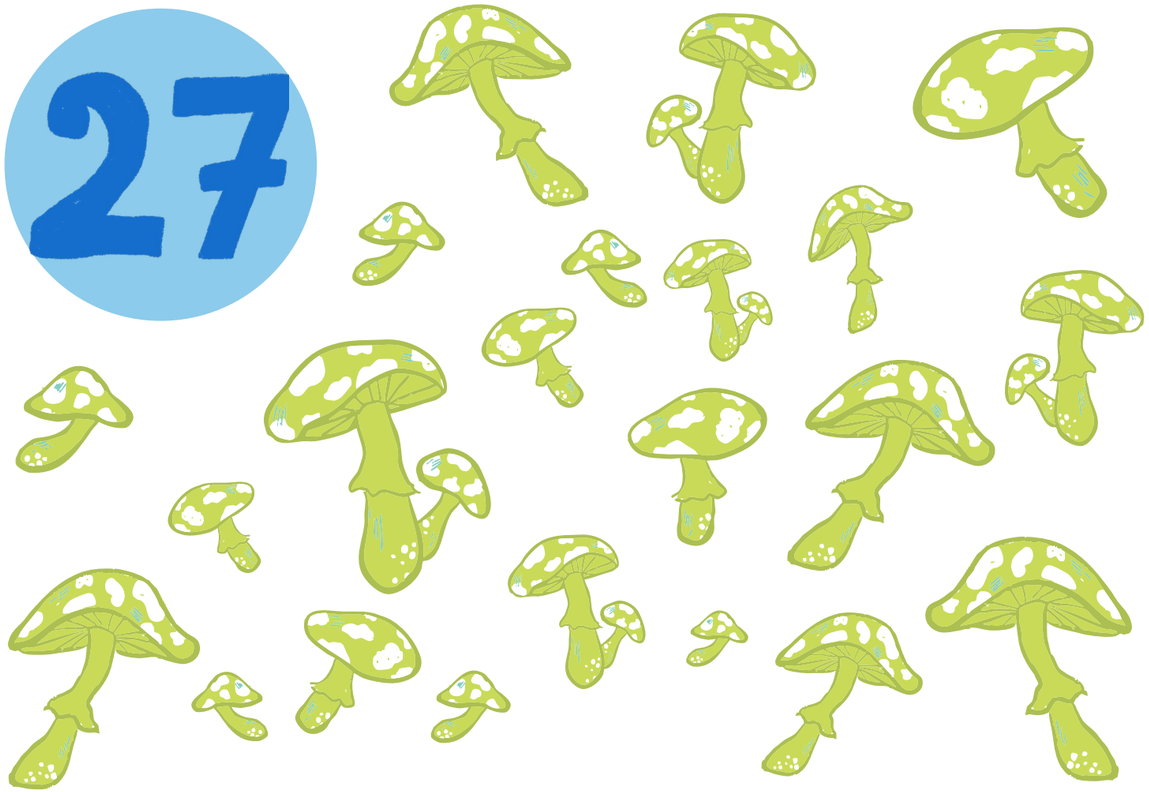
nîstanaw nêwosâp



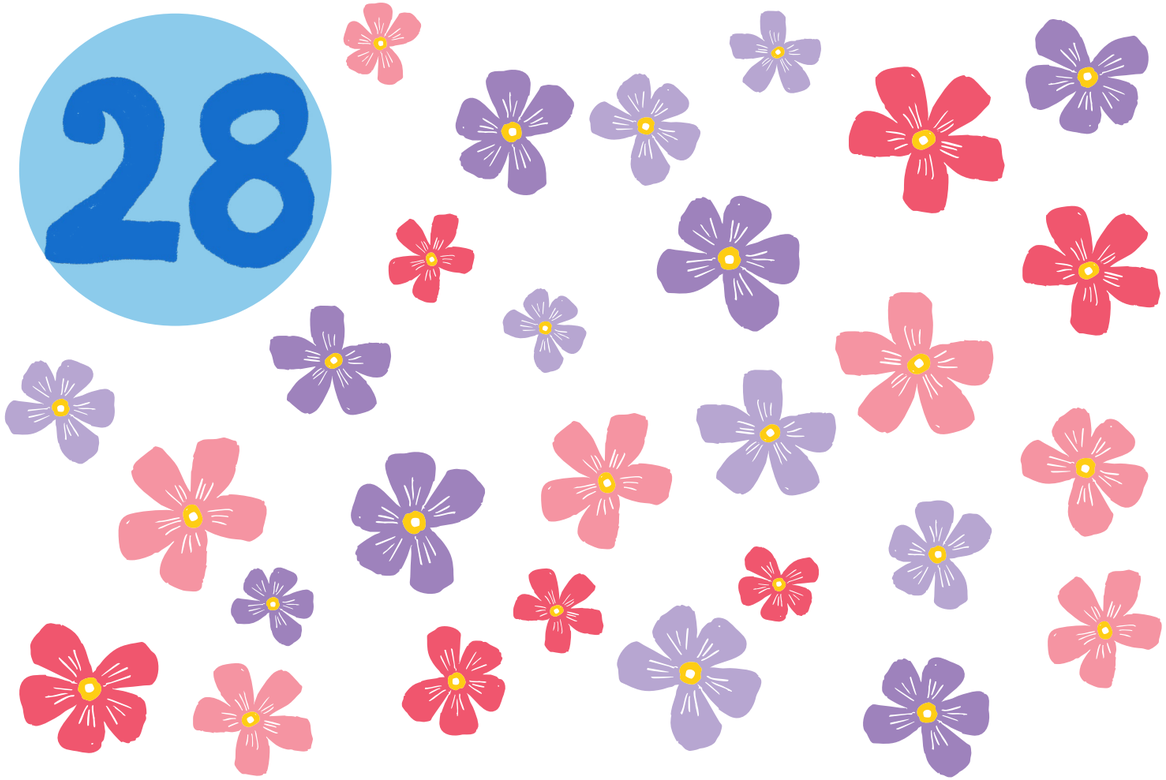
nîstanaw niyânosâp



nîstanaw nikotwâsosâp



nîstanaw tîpakohposâp



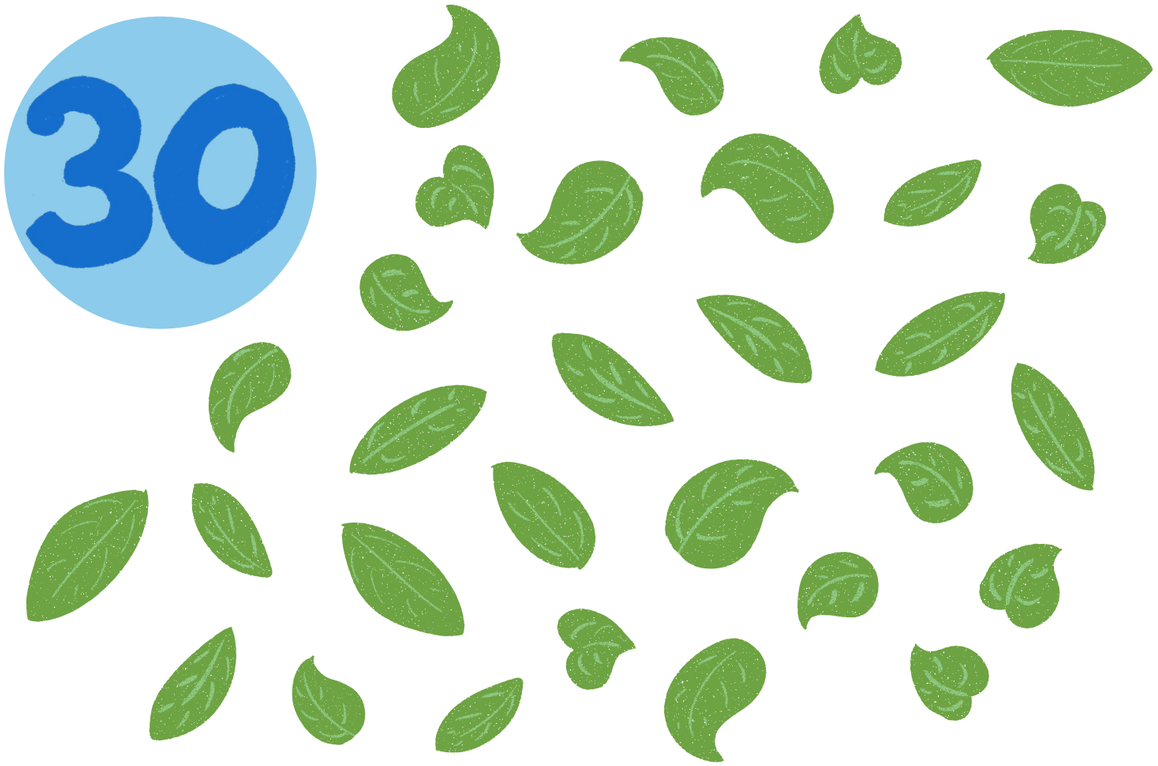
nîstanaw ayênânêwosâp

29



kîḳâ mitâtahtosâp

30



nistomitanaw


31
nistomitanaw piyakosâp

Classroom Calendar



1 *piyak*	2 *nîso*	3 *nisto*	4 *nêwo*	5 *niyânan*
6 *niḵotwâsik*	7 *tîpaḵohp*	8 *ayênânêw*	9 *kîḵâ mitâtaht*	10 *mitâtaht*
11 *piyakosâp*	12 *nîsosâp*	13 *nistosâp*	14 *newosâp*	15 *niyânosâp*

16
nikotwâsosâp

17
tîpaḳohposâp

18
ayênânêwosâp

19
kîḳâ 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



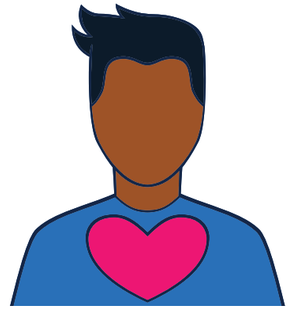
cîpay otipiskâw



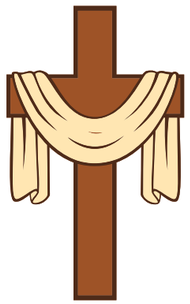
kâ tipiskamin



l'kwal iskwayânihk oḳîsiḳâw



pâpâ oḳîsiḳâw



apisîsinâw oḳîsiḳâw



lî rramô ldzimâsh



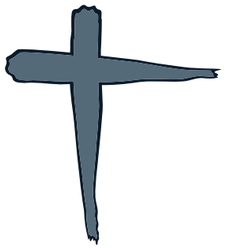
apisîsinâw oḳîsiḳâw



okinâtisokîsikâw



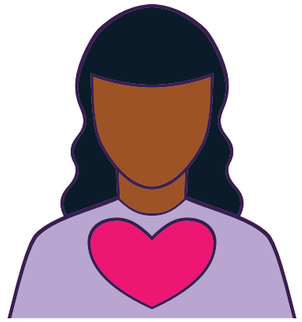
askî oḳîsiḳâw



lasânt mêrrkrredzî



lyintowînô oḳîsiḳâw



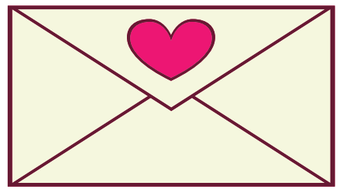
mâmâ oḳîsiḳâw



mitâtahtomitanaw l'kwal oḳîsiḳâw



ocîm oḳîsiḳâw



sâķihitôwin
oķîsiķâw



manitô
oķîsiķâw



manitô
oķîsiķâw



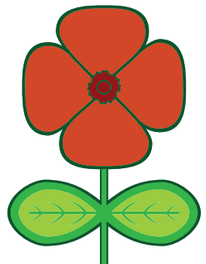
nistam okîsikâw
l'wal kâ mâcipayik



wînasakâcihp
okîsikâw



Louis Riel
okîsikâw



simâķanisihkân
oķîsiķâw



nanâskom
oķîsiķâw



l'zarrâňsh la
shimîsh oķîsiķâw

låndzî

monday

nîsokîsiḵâw

tuesday

nistokîsiḵâw

wednesday

nêwokîsikâw

thursday

vândrridzî

friday

sam’dzî

saturday

l’dzimâsh

sunday

taḵwâḵipîsim

september

pimahâmôwipîsim

october






iyîḵopêwipîsim

november

nîpâyamihâwipîsim

december

kisîpîsim

january

mikisôwipîsim

february




niskipîsim

march







ayîḵipîsim

april




manâwânowipîsim

may

pâskâwîhôwipîsim

june



nîpin

summer





taḳwâḳin

fall





pipon

winter





sîḳwan

spring



anohc

today (is)...

wâpahki

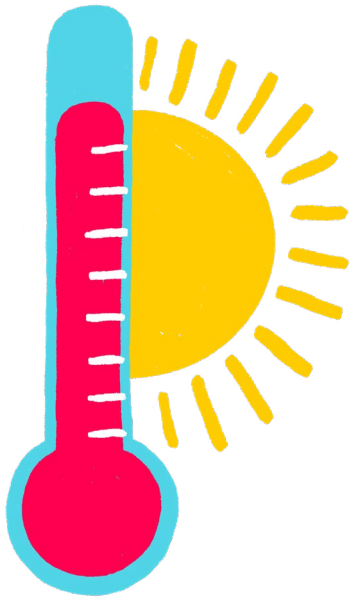
tomorrow (is)...

otâkosihk

yesterday (was)...

Word of the day





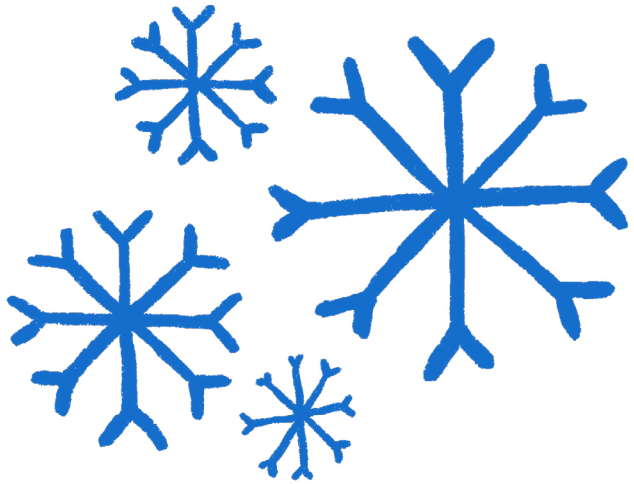
kisâstêw

hot



yôtin

windy



mispon

snowing



wâsîskwan

sunny



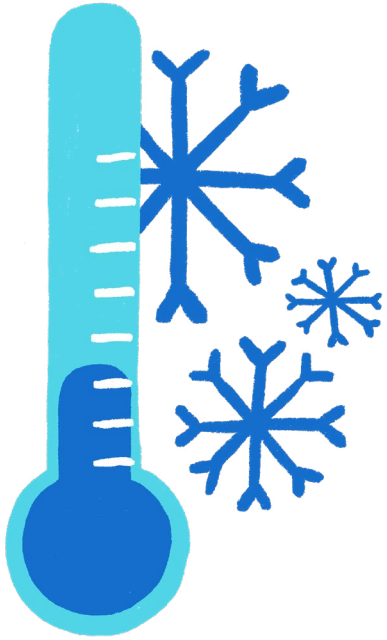
iyîkwashkwun

cloudy



kimôwan

raining



tahkâyâw

cold

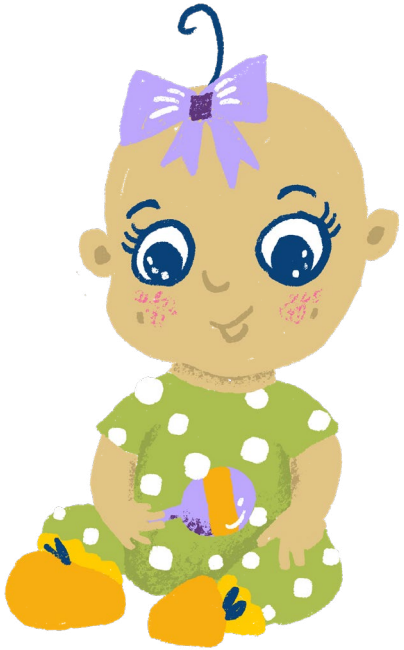


kimowaniyâpî

rainbow



lî kazöň



bîbîsis



atim



pôsî



nistîs

older brother

nisîmis

younger brother



nimis

older sister

nisîmis

younger sister



nipâpâ



nimâmâ



nimoshôm



nohkom



pimohtî



pimoshinî



nîmihito



kwâskohti



minihkwî



mîciso



iskwahtawî



pakâsimo



cîkaha



pimpahtâ



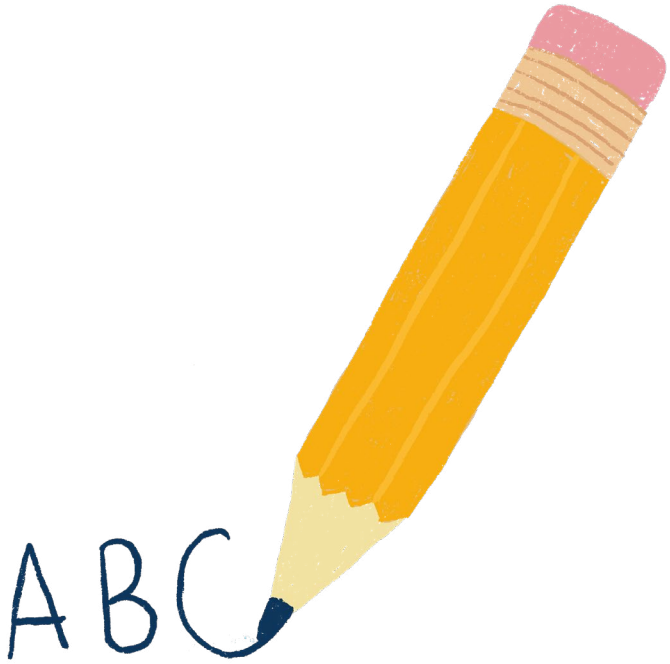
sîpîkincihci



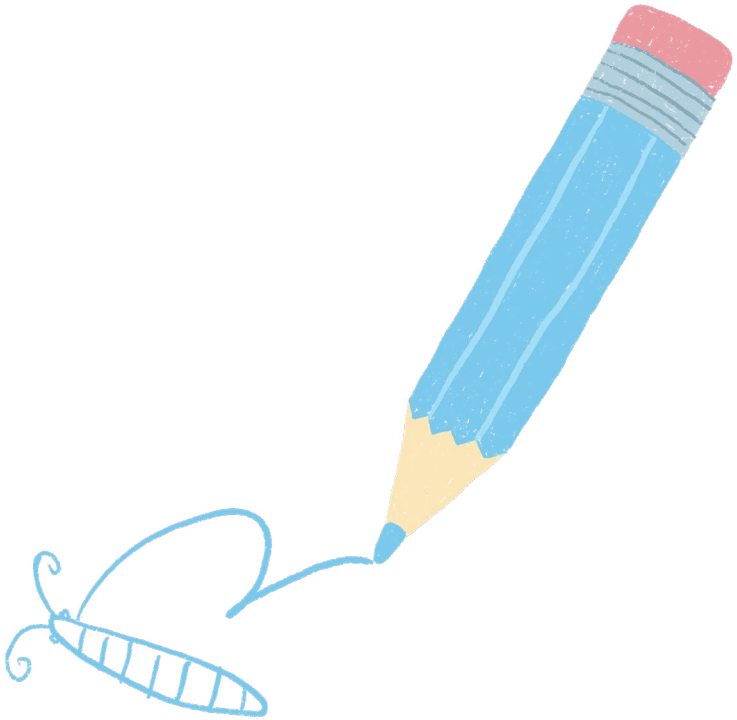
api



mîtawâḳana



masinaha



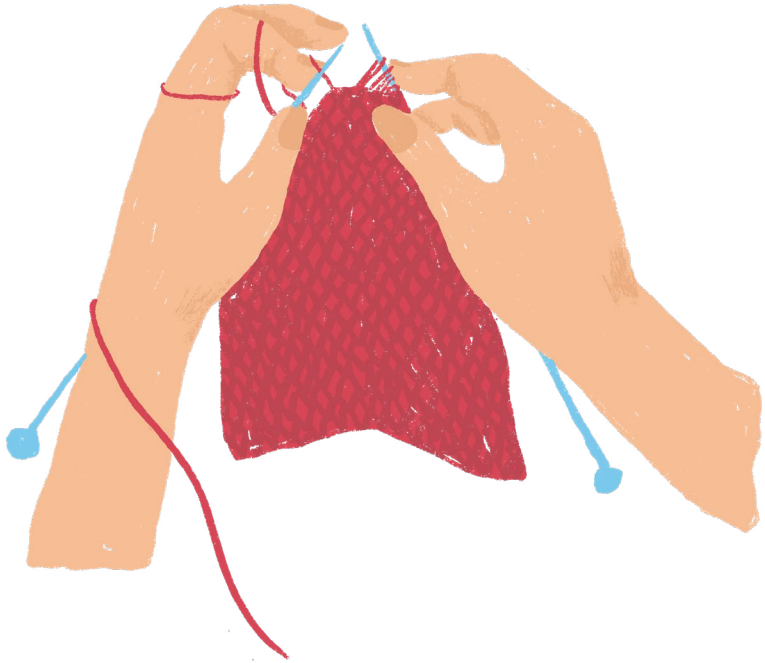
tâpasinaha



aḳimik



pinawaso



osîhâ



pohtêyiwinsî



pîta



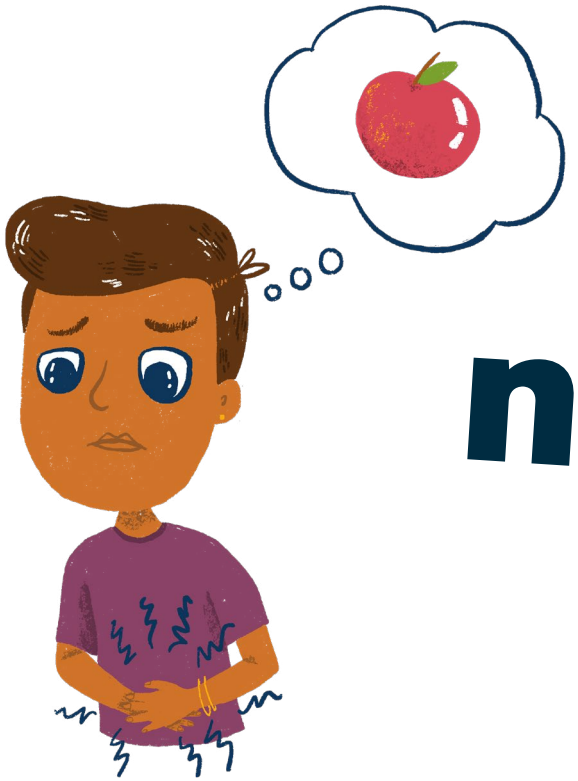
tahkiskâtâ



kahcitinâ



ninohtiyâpâķwân



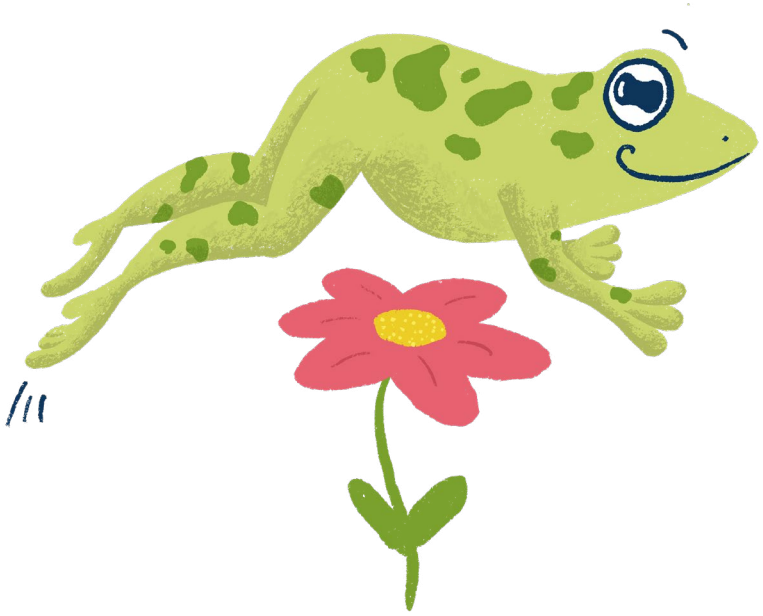
ninohtihkatân



pakamahwâ



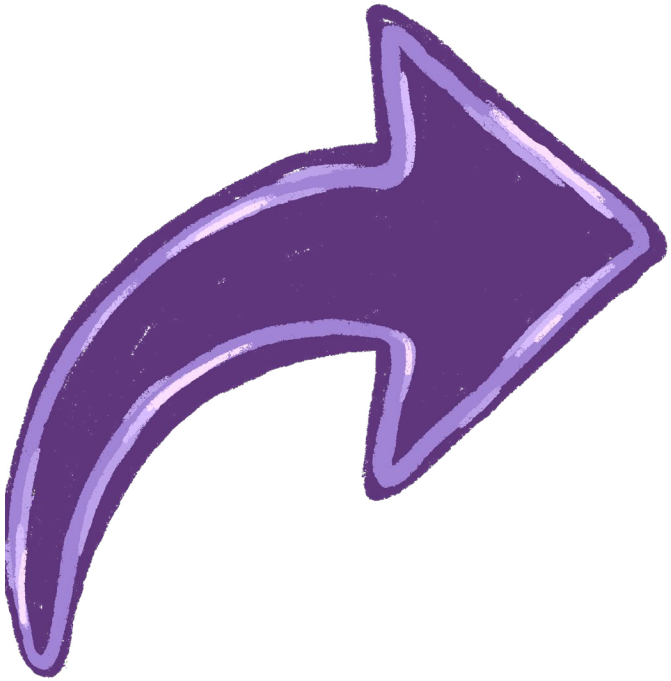
kwâskohti



pâscikwâskohti



namahtinihk



kihciniskihk



kanâtan

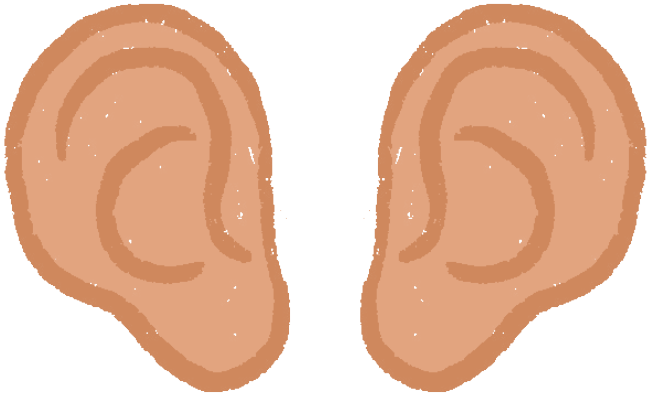
miyaw

the body





mihtawaḳay



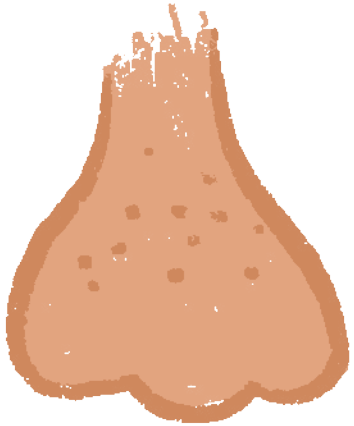
mihtawaḳaya



miskîsik



miskîsiḳwa



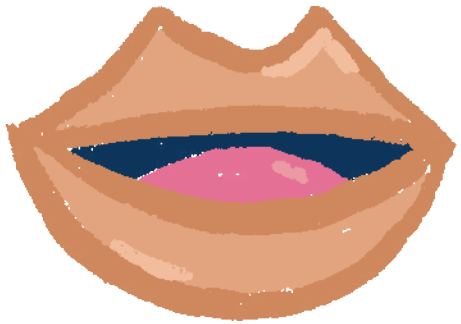
miskôwan



micihcî



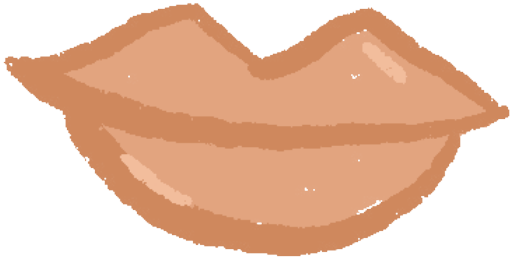
misit



mitôn



mitiyanî



miskisay