

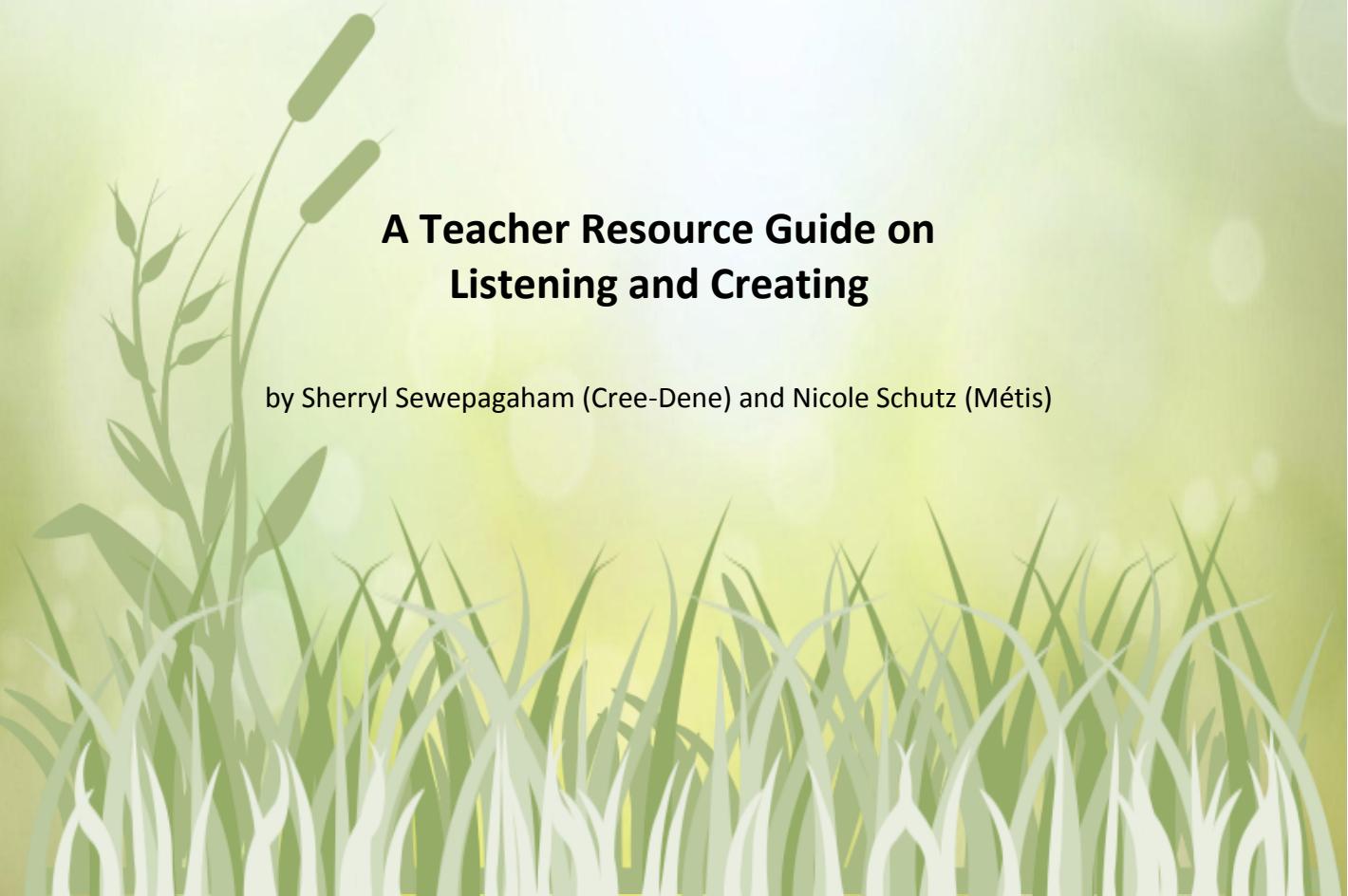


NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE
CENTRE NATIONAL DES ARTS
Canada is our stage. Le Canada en scène.

Nitohta: Listen to Earthsounds

A Teacher Resource Guide on
Listening and Creating

by Sherryl Sewepagaham (Cree-Dene) and Nicole Schutz (Métis)



Nitohta: Listen to Earthsounds

A Teacher Resource Guide on
Listening and Creating

by **Sherryl Sewepagaham** (Cree-Dene) and **Nicole Schutz** (Métis)

Thank you to the following Indigenous language speakers for providing guidance on translations and pronunciation:

Bill and Emily Sewepagaham (Cree)
Janette Flett-Jones (Dene)
Celestine Twigg (Blackfoot)

The earth speaks loudly and has a lot to say if we stop and listen. The earth sings melodies created by the wind, the water, the trees, and all living beings. The earth is rhythmic and vibrational – it beats and pulsates. The winged ones, the four-leggeds, and the two-leggeds are natural composers that create, move and dance, play, and sing within this earth. Nature has a beautiful way of creating its own music and we can participate in its creation if we just listen: *nitohta*.

This resource guide is created from an Indigenous perspective to encourage and inspire students to be creative and to build a relationship with their environment through music.

Nitohta is Cree for “listen” and is pronounced as “ni-toh-ta”



Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| About the Writers | 3 |
| Unplugged | 4 |
| Nature’s Masterpieces through Visual Art and Music | 8 |
| <i>Nikamona Pimatsi Makanwa</i> | 11 |
| Songs are Alive: Speech Pattern | 16 |
| Storytelling in Michif | 19 |
| Michif Song Substitution | 21 |
| The Classroom Composer | 42 |
| The Earth Speaks to Me: Poetry Paintings | 45 |



About the Writers



SHERRYL SEWEPAGAHAM is of Cree-Dene ancestry and is from the Little Red River Cree Nation in northern Alberta. She holds a Bachelor of Education from the University of Alberta and a Level III Orff certification, and has worked as an elementary music teacher and teacher-consultant in Edmonton, AB for 14 years. Sherryl is a 19-year member of the 2006 Juno-nominated trio, Asani, and brings her love of traditional drum songs to the students she works with and to the Indigenous education programs she creates. Currently living in Vancouver, BC with her 13-year-old son and dog, Sherryl is completing the final Internship phase of a Bachelor of Music Therapy degree and will add the therapeutic and healing aspect of music into her practice while continuing to work on various education projects. She provides education workshops as an Artist-In-Residence in BC and Alberta schools and is always creating programs and composing new songs to share with teachers and students.

NICOLE SCHUTZ has called Edmonton, Alberta home for 20 years and lives there with her husband and 10-year-old son. She has been a music specialist with Edmonton Public Schools for 15 years and has led several children's choirs and Orff instrument ensemble groups. She received a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Education After Degree from Concordia University of Edmonton and is currently studying a Masters of Education in Music Education at the University of Alberta. Nicole also holds a Level III Orff certification from Carl Orff Canada and a certificate in World Music Pedagogy from the Smithsonian Institute. She has presented on topics of World music and Indigenous music within her school district and city. Nicole was born and raised in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan and is Métis. Her family came from Batoche, Saskatchewan before, during, and long after the Resistance of 1885. Nicole enjoys learning about her Métis heritage by learning to play the fiddle and creating flower beadwork.



Unplugged

Introduction:

Living in a digital world has changed how we interact with each other, our activities, and how we play and engage with the world around us. When we take the time to unplug and connect with nature, we slow down and develop stronger connections with each other and with the land we walk on. Through this creative movement lesson, students will explore and identify feelings of being plugged into the digital world (positive and negative) and how connecting with nature may enrich their lives.

Concepts:

Creative movement, identify and compare sounds (digital vs. natural), expression

Objectives:

The students will create a movement phrase alone and in partners to identify the difference between digital music and natural sounds

Target grades: 2-6

Materials:

- White board/ chart paper
- Song for “Plugged in” section of activity: “Sila” by A Tribe Called Red featuring Tanya Tagaq from the album “ We are Halluci Nation”: [youtube.com/watch?v=w3TpDQ0vsB4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w3TpDQ0vsB4)
- Song for “Unplugged” section of activity: Jason Chamakese and Robert Gladue’s “Midnight at Clear Water”: reverbnation.com/chamakeseandgladue/songs

Definition of “tableaux” for this activity:

A group of models or motionless figures representing a scene from a story. In this lesson, the students will be the models creating a scene in a story.

Questions for discussion:

1. How many people here have a personal device?
2. How many people here play video games?
3. What types of games do you play?
4. Do you play alone? With a friend?
5. Do you play a little bit or a lot?
6. What do you like to do outside? In Nature?
7. Who do you spend time outside with?

Activity:

Part 1: “Plugged in” Movement

1. Using ideas from the discussion, students will identify how different characters in video games move (e.g., run, crawl, climb, leap, jump, fly, etc.). Brainstorm these ideas and write the action words on a whiteboard, chart paper, etc.
2. Have them find a “home” space on the floor. The home space is their own personal space away from other students so they are not touching any students.

3. Decide on a signal that will allow students to know when to start and stop. This could be an instrument sound of some kind, or simply saying “go” and “stop”. You will use this signal throughout the movement. Tell the students that they will need to listen very carefully for the signal for when to go and when to stop.
4. Ask students to imagine that they have been sucked into a video game.
5. Have students explore some of the brainstormed words. Give the starting signal and call out some of the brainstormed words for the students to explore. After some time has been given to experience four of the movements, give the stop signal and students will go back to “home” space.
6. Since the students are experiencing the digital world ask: Do the characters move the same as we do in video games or different (ex. robotic). How could you change your movements to reflect a video game character? Ask for a brave volunteer who may be willing to show robotic movements. When ready to start have students explore the same movement patterns as before in “Digital” movements. When time has been given to several different movements, give the stop signal and students go back to home.
7. Have students take their four movements and string them together to create a movement phrase. Ex. Run, crawl, leap, fly. Have students explore this movement phrase several times. Once they have practiced their phrase several times, have them go to “home”.
8. Once everyone is ready, add the music **“Sila” by A Tribe Called Red Ft. Tanya Tagaq** to the movements. Have students practice their movements three times. This time, instead of going to home, students will make an interesting shape right where they finished their movement. They will hold this position, or “freeze” until everyone is finished and it is time to end the whole group movement.
9. Once the phrase is comfortable have students find a partner. Decide who is partner one and who is partner two.
10. All partner 1s will create an interesting shape with their bodies. This creates a living video game obstacle “tableaux” course for all partners 2s to move through using their movement phrase. Partner 2s should be encouraged to move under, over, through, around the different created shapes. Partner 2s will complete their movement phrase three times. When they have completed their phrase, they will move to their partner 1, create a shape, and then switch places with partner 1. Partner 1 then will move throughout the obstacle course moving over, under, through, and around completing their movement phrase three times. When they have completed the phrase they will freeze where they are in an interesting shape.

Part 2: “Unplugged” in Nature Movement

1. To set the tone for this discussion, choose a song by **Jason Chamakese and Robert Gladue**.
2. Discuss activities students might do when they are out in nature (hiking, swimming, boating, fishing, etc.). What might you see? Hear? Feel? Who do you spend time out in nature with? Are you alone? With friends? Family?

3. Ask the students if the music they are hearing can take their imagination to some place in nature. Brainstorm action words such as climb, swim, float, crawl, sway, fly, etc., of things they might do or see in nature.
4. Have them find a “home” space on the floor. The home space is their own personal space away from other students so they are not touching any students.
5. Decide on a signal that will allow students to know when to start and stop. This could be an instrument sound of some kind, or simply saying “go” and “stop”. You will use this signal throughout the movement. Tell the students that they will need to listen very carefully for the signal for when to go and when to stop.
6. Have students explore some of the brainstormed words. Give the starting signal and call out some of the brainstormed words for the students to explore. After some time has been given to experience four of the movements, give the stop signal and students will go back to “home” space.
7. Have them take their four movements and string them together to create a movement phrase. Play the song **“Midnight at Clearwater”** by Jason Chamakese as students are experiencing their movement.
8. This time, instead of going to home, students will make an interesting shape right where they finished their movement. They will hold this position, or “freeze” until everyone is finished and it is time to end the whole group movement.
9. After movement is comfortable, have students find a partner. Decide who is partner one and who is partner 2. Students will shadow (follow the leader) the movement of partner 1. Partner 1s will complete their movement phrases 3 times. When they are finished, they will turn and follow partner 2 shadowing their movement phrases 3 times. When they have completed their phrases they will freeze creating a connected shape.

Final Performance Form:

1. Start with “Plugged In” partner movement. Only the number 2s will do the movement. The 1s will stay in their frozen shape. Everyone remains frozen in their tableaux until the last number 2 person freezes.
2. Transition: Choose a movement through water (e.g., swimming, boating, floating, etc. Move towards your partner as “Midnight at Clearwater” is playing. This transition should happen quickly before the flute plays. Partners will make an interesting shape.
3. Once the flute starts in *“Midnight in Clearwater,”* the movement starts for “unplugged” activity with follow the leader. Once each partner has completed their movement phrase three times, they freeze in a connected shape.

Adaptation for younger grade performance:

- Divide the class into two groups.
- Each group finds a partner
- Students in each group will only perform one movement, either “Plugged In” or “Unplugged”

Closing Questions:

Ask students how the two movement ideas felt different? How can you come “unplugged” a little more often and connect with nature and those who are important in your life? What do students love about being “plugged in”? What do they dislike about it?

For more information about A Tribe Called Red:

atribecalledred.com/

For more information on Jason Chamakese and Robert Gladue:

reverbnation.com/chamakeseandgladue

For more information on Tanya Tagaq:

tanyatagaq.com

Nature's Masterpieces

Through Visual Art and Music

Introduction:

What if a painting could make sound? What would that sound be? Would it sing, speak, make musical sounds? Using the artwork of First Nations artist Alex Janvier, students will interpret images they see in his paintings with a variety of musical sounds. Just as dancers communicate with their bodies and musicians communicate with their music, artists use their art to communicate and express their thoughts and emotions without words. The viewer responds and interprets the art and imagines what the artist is trying to say in the art. There is no right or wrong answer because each person's interpretation is unique in how they see and feel about the art.

Skills and Concepts:

Expression, moving, creating experimental sounds, playing instruments

Objective(s):

Students will create a musical interpretation of paintings by Alex Janvier by using vocal sounds, instruments, and movement.

Target Grades: 4-6

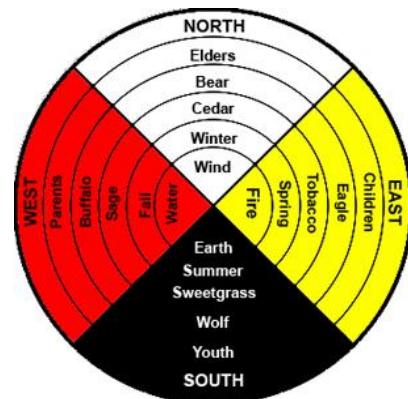
Materials:

- Paintings by Alex Janvier:
 - *Beautiful Culture*: <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/564x/ce/e3/a5/cee3a52a47b8610f70440e3a1d60c685.jpg>
 - *Earth Movement*: <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/236x/0c/51/41/0c51416aa0c312bcc242cf8cf00291b.jpg>
- Instruments: pitched and non-pitched (if available)
- Projector
- Four copies of Janvier's "Earth Movement" artwork (printed on card stock in colour and laminated). Add a directional arrow to the back of each copy, pointing outward. Each copy should have its arrow in a different quadrant, representing north, south, east, and west.

Information about The Four Directions to share with students:

The Four Directions circle is an important symbol for First Nations people as it represents many things, such as the four seasons (spring, summer, fall, winter), the four natural elements (earth, fire, water, air), cycles of life (birth, adolescence, adulthood, elder), and the four directions (north, east, south, west). For more information about The Four Directions:

fourdirectionsteachings.com/main.html



Alex Janvier's Biography:

Born of Dene Suline and Saulteaux descent in 1935, Alex Janvier was raised in the nurturing care of his family until the age of eight. At this age, the young Janvier was uprooted from his home and sent to the Blue Quills Indian Residential School near St. Paul, Alberta. Although Janvier speaks of having a creative instinct from as far back as he can remember, it was at the residential school that he was given the tools to create his first paintings. Unlike many aboriginal artists of his time, Janvier received formal art training from the Alberta College of Art in Calgary and graduated with honours in 1960. Immediately after graduation, Janvier took up an opportunity to instruct art at the University of Alberta.

While Alex recognizes the artists Wassily Kandinsky (Russian) and Paul Klee (Swiss) as influences, his style is unique. Many of his masterpieces involve an eloquent blend of both abstract and representational images with bright, often symbolic colours. As a First Nations person emerging from a history of oppression and many struggles for cultural empowerment, Janvier paints both the challenges and celebrations that he has encountered in his lifetime. Alex proudly credits the beadwork and birch bark basketry of his mother and other relatives as influencing his art.



Alex Janvier

Photo by Martin Lipman

In 2016, Alex Janvier won a commission to have one of his paintings turned into a mosaic tile installation on the floor of the entrance to Roger's Place arena, the new home of the Edmonton Oilers. The piece is called *tsa ke k'e*, which means "iron-footed place".

Source: www.alexjanvier.com

In addition to his official website, here are some other interesting news articles about Alex Janvier:

- cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/alex-janvier-s-tile-mosaic-wins-downtown-arena-art-commission-1.3005340
- artandartdeadlines.com/2016/01/artist-of-the-day-alex-janvier/
- <http://ottawacitizen.com/entertainment/local-arts/indigenous-artist-alex-janviers-work-on-display-at-the-national-gallery>

Activity No.1:

1. Ask students if they have ever imagined:
 - a. What if a painting could speak? What would it say?
 - b. What if a painting could make music? What would it be?
2. Project the artwork *Beautiful Culture*. Share with students Alex Janvier's Biography (provided above). After reviewing the biography, share with students the title *Beautiful Culture*.

3. Ask: What do you see in this painting? (Allow for several answers.) What colours do you see in the painting? How does the painting make you feel? Happy? Sad? Etc.? Students will add sound to the colours in the picture!
4. Have students pick one colour in the picture. Ask: What emotion does that colour make you feel in this painting? (Examples of the students' colour words could include happy, sad, excited, joyful, angry, etc.)
5. Decide who will be the conductor: the teacher or a student. When the conductor points to your colour in the painting, say your word using your chosen expression. Try "conducting" the painting three times in different ways or with different conductors.
6. Have students decide on a vocal sound other than their colour word. What sound would it make in the painting? (e.g., sad = sigh, happy = a high pitched "ah", angry = low pitched "umph" or whatever the students come up with on their own!)

Activity No. 2:

1. Divide students into four groups. Pass out the four pictures of *Earth Movement* by Alex Janvier. Tell the students the title.
2. Discussion: Indigenous people are deeply connected and rooted to nature and believe that all things are connected. The earth beneath our feet, the air we breathe, the plants, trees, and animals and all things in nature, are connected to us and each other. How does the painting depict this? What colours do you see in this painting that represents nature?
3. Have students turn their painting over and notice the arrow. This arrow is in a different spot for each group. Your arrow will show a rotation within the four directions. Briefly discuss the significance of the four directions with the students. Have students point the arrow to the top. It will mark the starting point for each group's rotation.
4. Each group will have a different task to interpret their painting. Choose from the following options:
 - a) Brainstorm words in nature or from the elements that you see in the painting (you may not see these things represented literally, but colours and shapes can remind students of various natural elements). Choose an emotion that fits each word, as in the First Activity. Decide who will be the conductor of the painting. Perform the painting, as in the First Activity.
 - b) Create a group movement that best interprets your rotation of the painting. Use Janvier's beautiful flowing and connected shapes and lines as a springboard.
 - c) With pitched instruments, recorders, barred instruments etc. discover a way to interpret your rotation of the painting. Consider the lines or colours that go from large to small (loud to soft, high to low, big to small, dark colour to light colour, etc) as you decide on your instruments. Is there a colour that is more dominant? Perhaps that can serve as repeated pattern on a bass instrument? Use your imagination.
 - d) Use non-pitched percussion instruments such as drums, shakers, woods, metals, or found instruments to create a soundscape to interpret your rotation of the painting.

- e) Inspired by The Four Directions of Earth, Water, Fire, Air, create nature sounds using your voice, or body percussion that interprets the painting (e.g., green is earth, dark blue is water, red is fire, light blue is air, etc.)

Closing Activity:

Have students share their interpretations with each other, and try this variation:

- Have students rotate their painting by 45 degrees (a quarter-turn, which is one rotation within the Medicine Wheel), so that the arrow points in a different direction. They'll then perform their piece again, still starting from the "top" of the painting (the top will now be in a different place). Does it sound different? Do the 45 degree rotation two more times, performing the piece from the new "top" of the painting each time. How does the performance change based on how the lines and colours are in different places as you rotate the painting?

Adaptations for younger grades:

Instead of splitting into four groups, choose four activities to try as an entire class.

Nikamona Pimatsi Makanwa

(Cree for “Songs are Alive”)

Partner Song to “Music Alive”

Introduction:

For First Nations peoples, singing songs together is an important way to unite families and communities to preserve songs and song characteristics. Music, dancing, socializing, and feasting are all important elements of celebrations and ceremonies. Playing instruments creates vibration and energy which often go hand in hand. Sometimes words are not necessary if a song has a deep meaning attached to it, so wordless and chant-based songs are characteristic of First Nations music. On the other hand, partner song singing is a characteristic of Western music and was not particularly common in traditional First Nations music. Today, we live in a society where tradition can thrive in a contemporary world, where English songs can blend with drum songs, and where people of different cultures can sing together.

Traditional songs were learned through the oral tradition. They were not written or recorded. They had to be learned by listening intently and noticing patterns in the vocable¹/chant. Chant songs are still taught in this way.

Skills and Concepts:

Singing, rhythm, partner songs, playing instruments

Objective(s):

Students will be able to sing partner songs of contrasting genres; students will learn a First Nations chant song.

Target Grades: 4-12

Materials:

- Percussion instruments: hand drums, rattles, sticks
- Audio recording of “Nikamona Pimatsi Makanwa”:
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7drtbeh5of31fyg/AADsulvQXbOrWIgEfs51hzZBa?dl=0>
- Sheet music for “Nikamona Pimatsi Makanwa,” for teacher reference (see pages 14 and 15 of this guide)

Indigenous Language:

- **Cree:** “Nikamona pimatsi makanwa” (meaning “songs are alive”) is pronounced “ni-gah-mo-nah pi-mat-see mah-gan-wah” softening the “k” consonant and slightly emphasizing where italicized.

Activity:

1. Introduce or review the National Arts Centre Music Alive Program’s (MAP) song, “Music Alive.”
artsalive.ca/en/mus/musicresources/resources.asp#map
2. Once the students are very comfortable with the song and are able to sing independently and unassisted, introduce “Nikamona Pimatsi Makanwa.”

3. When learning the chant song, listen for patterns in the vocal chant, such as “wey ah, wey ah ha”, “hey yo, hey yo,” and “wey ah ha, wey ah ha.” They are everywhere. Tune into learning aurally (with the ears) and not visually.
4. When incorporating the Cree language, write out the language parts on the board as “ni-gah-mo-nah pi-mat-see mah-gan-wah” , indicating which syllables are emphasized, to help the students work on the pronunciation together. Learning any new language requires practice!
5. Once both partner songs are learned, divide the class into two groups. Sing through “Music Alive.” Sing through “Nikamona Pimatsi Makanwa.” Then sing both parts simultaneously. Assist where needed.

Closing Questions:

What challenges did you face learning a song through the oral tradition? What other things were taught orally? Do you feel that you would remember a song learned by ear and not by sight?

NIKAMONA PIMATSI MAKANWA

PARTNER SONG WITH MUSIC ALIVE

SHERRYL SEWEPAGAHAM
CREE-DENE

LIVELY $\text{♩} = 118$

VOCAL CHANT

$\text{♩} = 118$

WEY AH WEY AH HA

DRUM/CLAP/PAT

$\text{♩} = 118$

MF Bring ING VOI- CES TO- GE- THER 'CROSS THE NA- TION.'

5

V. C.

HEY YO HEY - YO WHEY AH HA WHEY AH HA

D/C/P

9

V. C.

WEY HEY HEY HEY YO WHEY HEY HEY! WHEY AH WEY AH HA

D/C/P

2

13

V. C.

WEY AH HA WHEY HEY HEY! WHEY AH WHEY AH HA

NA- PE- SIS- AK, IS- KWE- SIS- AK. HEY NA NA HEY- AH HEY NA NA HEY- AH

D/C/P

17

V. C.

WEY HEY HEY HEY! Yo WHEY HEY HEY!

SOH- RIH MA- MA- WI NIR- A- MOR,

D/C/P

19

V. C.

WEY HEY HEY HEY! Yo WHEY HEY HEY!

SOH- RIH MA- MA- WI NIR- A- MOR.

D/C/P

Songs are Alive: Speech Pattern

Alternative or extension to Nikamona Pimatsi Makanwa activity

Introduction:

For First Nations peoples, singing songs together is an important way to unite families and communities. Singing, playing instruments, dancing, socializing, and feasting are all part of celebrations and ceremonies. Rhythm and beat are also important as they represent the heartbeat of the earth and the vibration that we feel while responding to its rhythm. Exploring languages from various cultures is an important way to learn about other cultures (or even one's own culture), and language-learning opens up our ears to the beauty and variety of Canada's multiculturalism.

Skills and Concepts:

Rhythm, speech ostinato, language learning

Objective(s):

Students will learn a speech ostinato pattern in three First Nations languages; students will appreciate other Canadian First Nations language dialects.

Target Grades: 4-12

Materials:

- Percussion instruments: hand drums, rattles, sticks
- Pronunciation Key for the Cree, Dene, and Blackfoot phrases (see page 18 of this guide)
- Audio aids: “Cree, Dene, and Blackfoot pronunciations,” and “Songs are Alive – Speech Patterns”: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7drtbeh5of31fyg/AADsulvQXbOrWIgEfs51hzZBa?dl=0>

First Nations Languages:

Translating English words into First Nations languages and vice versa can be very challenging, as the words often do not match up word-for-word. In this example, a Cree speaker, a Dene speaker, and a Blackfoot speaker were asked to translate the English words “music alive.” What came back were three very different translations. In some languages, the word “music” does not exist but is known as “song.”

- **Cree:** “Nikamona pimatsi makanwa” (means “songs are alive”) is pronounced “ni-gah-mo-nah pi-mat-see mah-gan-wah” softening the “k” consonant.
- **Dene:** “Shen-ha daghida” (means “we live for music”) is pronounced “shen-ha-daw-he-daw”.
- **Blackfoot:** “Aakomaanistapohtopa ninikhssistsi” (means “keep them alive songs”) is pronounced as “ah-kooma nees-tah poh tooph neents chsees-chih (glottal in “poh”).

Note: Where possible, enlist the help of local Indigenous language speakers to aid pronunciation or to provide a variation on these translations, as there are other ways to translate the “music alive” concept.

Activity:

1. Introduce or review the Music Alive Program's (MAP) song, "Music Alive":
artsalive.ca/en/mus/musicresources/resources.asp#map
2. Introduce "Songs Are Alive" speech pattern in the three languages.
3. When incorporating the Cree, Dene, and Blackfoot languages, write out the language parts on the board (e.g. "ni-gah-monah pi-mat-see mah-gan-wah") to help the students work on the pronunciation together and to identify which syllables are emphasized. Learning any new language requires much practice and focus – keep at it!
4. Divide students into three groups: Cree, Dene, and Blackfoot speech groups.
5. After the speech patterns are learned in each language, try these form options:

A = Music Alive

B = Songs Are Alive

A = Music Alive

or

A = Songs Are Alive

B = Music Alive

A = Songs Are Alive

Closing Questions:

What differences did you notice in the three languages? Which language was the most challenging to learn?

What other languages do you speak?

Songs are Alive: Pronunciation Key

Cree

Nikamona pimatsi makanwa
(means “songs are alive”)

Pronounced as
“ni-gah-mo-nah pi-mat-see mah-gan-wah”

Dene

Shen-ha daghida
(means “we live for music”)

Pronounced as
“shen-ha-daw-he-daw”

Blackfoot

Aakomaanistapohtopa ninihkssistsi
(means “keep them alive songs”)

Pronounced as
“ah-kooma nees-tah poh tooph
neents chsees-chih”
(slight glottal in “poh”)

Storytelling in Michif

Introduction:

The Michif language is an Indigenous language of the Métis people of Canada. Michif is a blend of many languages such as French, Cree, and Saulteaux and was created in the 1700s when French-Canadian fur trader men married First Nations women. Their children and grandchildren spoke this blended language and Michif became an important part of the Métis culture. The Michif language almost died out as French and English became the prominent language in Canada, but, today, there are around 1000 Métis people who still know how to speak the language, and Michif is being taught to children to help preserve it. Métis Michif speakers tell stories and sing songs to the Métis children so they can listen to and speak in the language of their ancestors.

Skills and Concepts:

Listening, language learning, storytelling, art

Objective(s):

Students will listen for and identify the Métis Michif language in a recording; students will create and describe their art adventure story using Michif words; students will become teachers of the Michif language by teaching to a listening partner.

Target Grades: 4-6

Materials:

- Poster paper
- Pencil crayons
- Index cards

Métis and Michif Links:

- Gabriel Dumont Institute (Michif dictionary and pronunciation):
metismuseum.ca/michif_dictionary.php
- Louis Riel Institute: louisrielinstitute.com/michif-language.php
- My Girl is an Irish Girl (recording): metismuseum.ca/resource.php/07073
- Métis Songs: Visiting Was the Métis Way:
metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/03146.MetisSongsVisitingWasTheMetisWay.pdf (see page 14 of this resource)

Activity:

Part A:

1. Ask: Does anyone know how to speak another language? If so, who taught you how to speak the language? Do you know any stories or songs in your language?
2. Teach about the Michif language of the Métis people.
3. Play the recording of “My Girl is an Irish Girl.” Ask the students who are listening to put up their index finger when they hear the Michif language enter in the English-Michif song.

4. Ask: Did you hear any words that sound similar to Cree or French?
5. Listen to the recording again and follow along looking at the lyrics.
6. Teach a simple greeting the students can say to each other (refer to online Michif dictionary link for pronunciation under “View Michif Phrases.”)
 - i. Hello “Taanishi”
 - ii. How are you? “Taanishi kiiya?”
 - iii. Fine. How are you? “Ji bayn. Kiiya maaka?”
 - iv. Fine. Thank you. “Ji bayn. Maarisi.”
7. Write the Michif phrases on sentence strips or on chart paper to practice regularly. Refer to the website link to add more phrases to learn and practice.

Part B:

1. Ask the students to think about a trip, vacation, or event that they recently travelled to or attended. Imagine a zoomed out snapshot of you that includes your environment and other people such as family members or friends.
2. Once decided, hand out poster paper and pencil crayons, so students can create a picture of their memory (if they haven’t travelled or attended an event recently, they can imagine somewhere they’d like to go). Encourage students to be detailed and to include lots of objects that can be identified with nouns in their artwork. Instruct the students that they will share their work with a partner and describe the objects or nouns drawn in their art using Michif words instead of English words, such as sun as “li salay” sister as “ma seur”, or car as “aen natomoobil.”
3. Each student will select a maximum of 10 words related to their art and spend some time looking through the online Michif dictionary to find their words and learn how to pronounce them. Write them out on an index card. Notice that some Michif words can be said more than one way. Choose which one you like best.
4. When both partners are ready, they will take turns each telling their story using the Michif words in their description referring to their index cards (E.g., “I went with ma seur [sister] to visit my noohkoom [grandmother].”).
5. Once both partners have told their story, review the Michif words together. Did the partners use some of the same words? Were some words more difficult to pronounce than others? Were they unable to find some words? What parts of the words were silent?

Closing Question:

Why is it important for Métis parents to teach their children the Michif language?

Michif Song Substitution

Introduction:

The Michif language is an Indigenous language of the Métis people of Canada. Michif is a blend of many languages such as French, Cree, and Saulteaux and was created in the 1700s when French-Canadian fur trader men married First Nations women. Their children and grandchildren spoke this blended language and Michif became an important part of the Métis culture. The Michif language almost died out as French and English became the prominent language in Canada, but, today, there are around 1000 Métis people who still know how to speak the language, and Michif is being taught to children to help preserve it. Métis Michif speakers tell stories and sing songs to the Métis children so they can listen to and speak in the language of their ancestors.

Skills and Concepts:

Singing, listening, language learning, movement

Objective(s):

Students will listen for and identify the Michif language in a recording; students will learn simple greetings and to count to ten in the Michif language; students will sing familiar children's songs substituting English words with Michif words.

Target Grades: Kindergarten to grade 3

Materials:

- Pictures of animals: cat, dog, cow, duck, horse, pig, chicken. (Write Michif words on the back of cards matching each word with the animal) (see pages 23-40 of this guide)
- Pictures of body parts: head, shoulders, knees, toes, eyes, ears, mouth, nose. (Write Michif words on the back matching each word with the specific body part.)
- Michif Song Substitution Vocabulary Guide (see page 41 of this guide)
- Audio links for "Old MacDonald Had a Farm – Michif Animal Words," "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes – Michif Words," "One, Two, Buckle My Shoe – Michif Words," and "Michif Counting to 10" can be found at: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7drtbeh5of31fyg/AADsulvQXbOrWIgEfs51hzZBa?dl=0>

Michif Links:

- Gabriel Dumont Institute (Michif dictionary and pronunciation): metismuseum.ca/michif_dictionary.php
- My Girl is an Irish Girl (recording): metismuseum.ca/resource.php/07073
- Métis Songs: Visiting Was the Métis Way: [\(see page 14 of this resource\)](http://metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/03146.MetisSongsVisitingWasTheMetisWay.pdf)

Activity:

Part A:

1. Ask: Does anyone know how to speak another language? Who taught you how to speak the language? Do you know any words or songs in your language?
2. Teach about the Michif language of the Métis people.

3. Play the recording of “My Girl is an Irish Girl”. Ask the listening students to put up their index finger when they hear the Michif language enter in the English-Michif song.
4. Ask: Did you hear any words that sound similar to Cree or French?
5. Teach a simple greeting the students can say to each other (refer to online Michif dictionary link for pronunciation under “View Michif Phrases”).
 - i. Hello “Taanishi”
 - ii. How are you? “Taanishi kiiya?”
 - iii. Fine. How are you? “Ji bayn. Kiiya maaka?”
 - iv. Fine. Thank you. “Ji bayn. Maarisi.”
6. Write the Michif phrases on sentence strips or on chart paper to practice regularly. Refer to the website link to add more phrases to learn and practice.

Part B:

1. Review “Old MacDonald.”
2. Show pictures of farm animals. Teach the students how to say each animal name in Michif.
3. Select student volunteers to hold up each animal picture and help instruct the class to say each word before the start of every song repeat.
4. Once reviewed, sing song with the Michif animal words.

Part C:

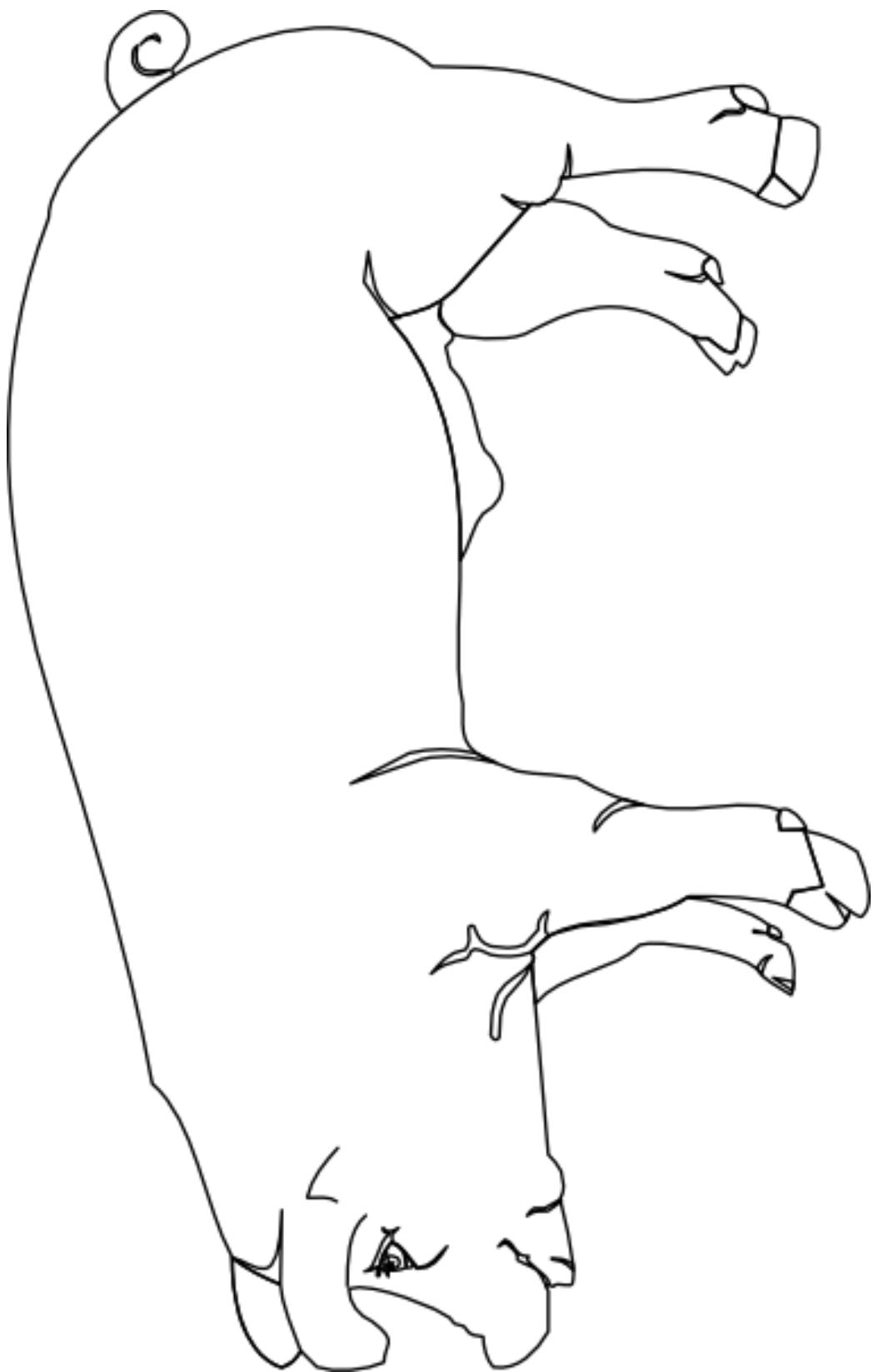
1. Review “Head and Shoulders” while performing the actions.
2. Display body part pictures on the board in the order they are sung in the song. Write the Michif word below each picture. Point to the body parts as you say the new words.
3. Once all the Michif words are learned, sing “Head and Shoulders” with the new words while performing the actions.

Part D:

1. Review “One, Two, Buckle My Shoe.”
2. Write out Michif number words on the board beside the numbers.
3. Have students echo each number word as you say the words aloud while showing their fingers as they count to ten in Michif.
4. Once comfortable, sing “One, Two, Buckle My Shoe” using the Michif number words.

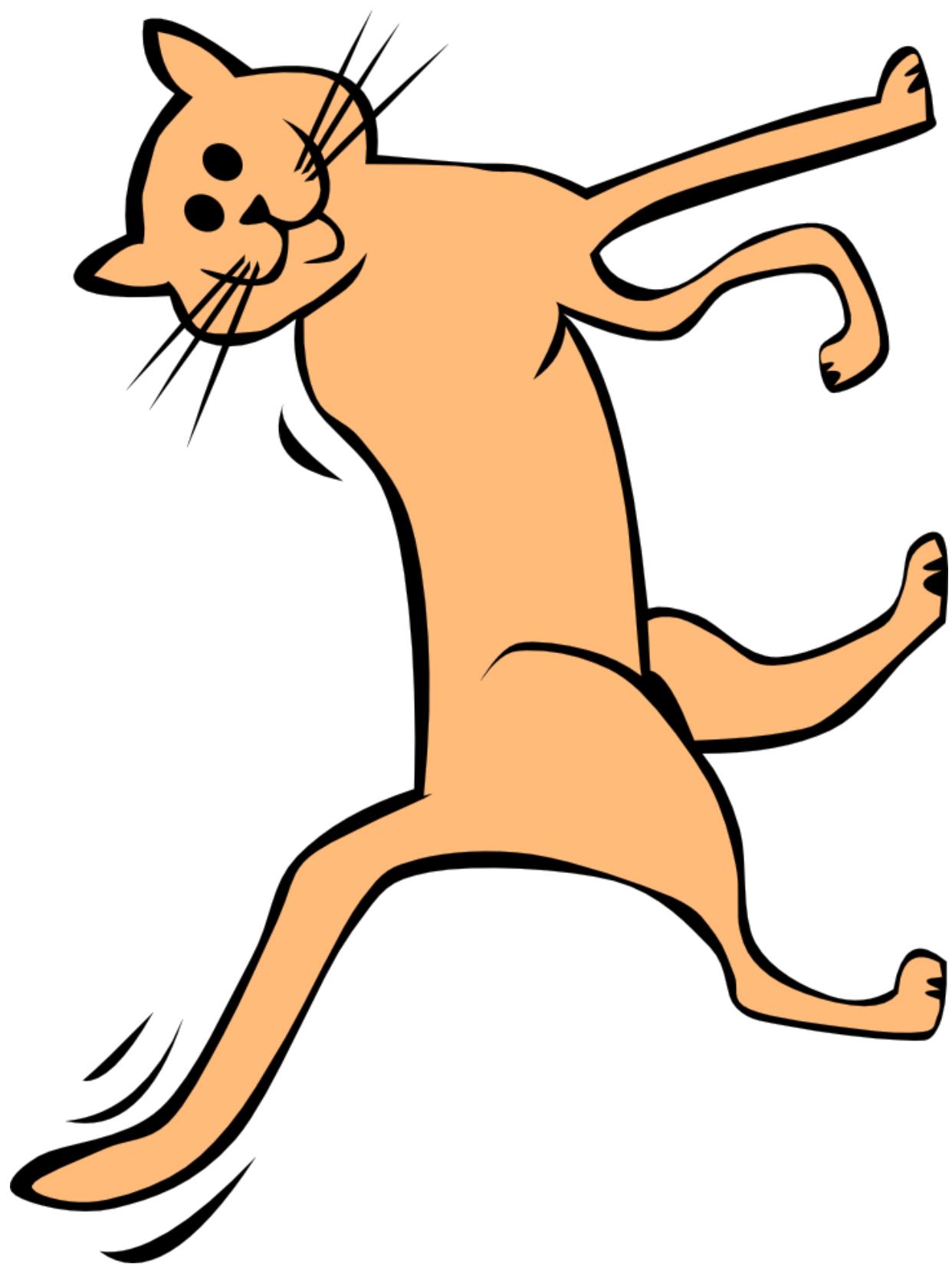
Closing Questions:

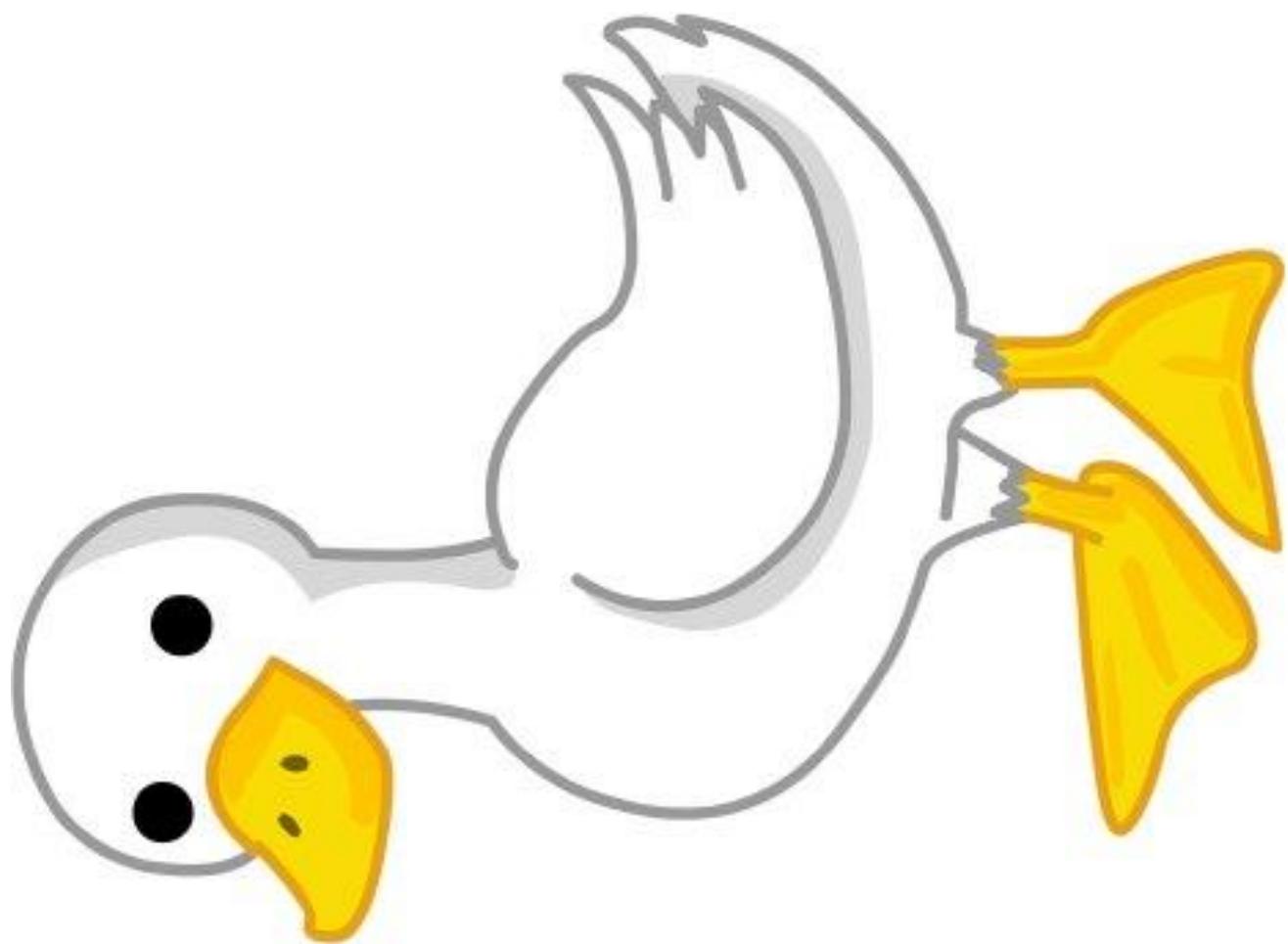
- Why is it important for Métis parents to teach their children the Michif language?
- Does anyone know other ways to say the animal names in other languages?
- Does anyone know the names of these same body parts in other languages?
- Can anyone count to 10 in another language?

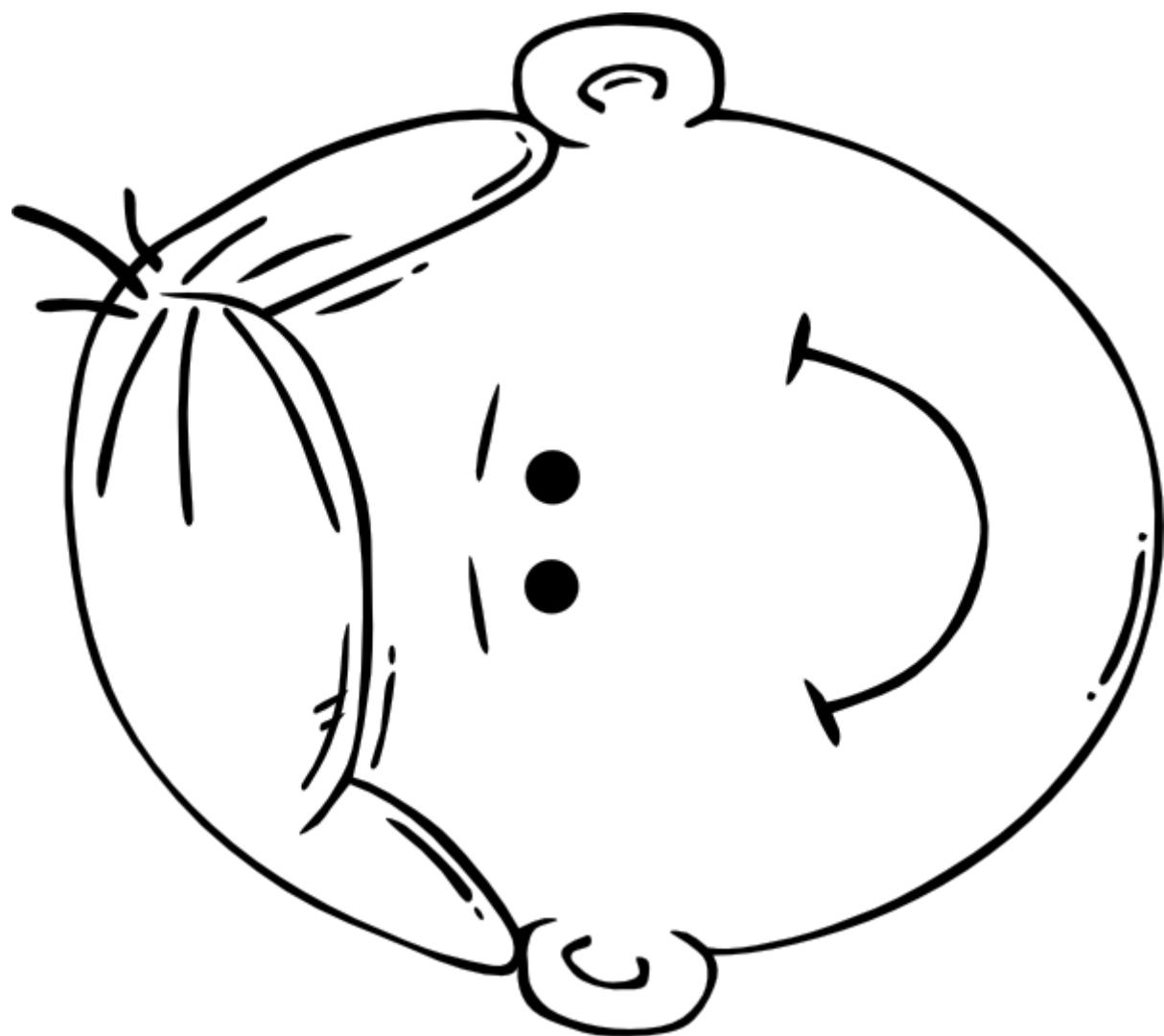


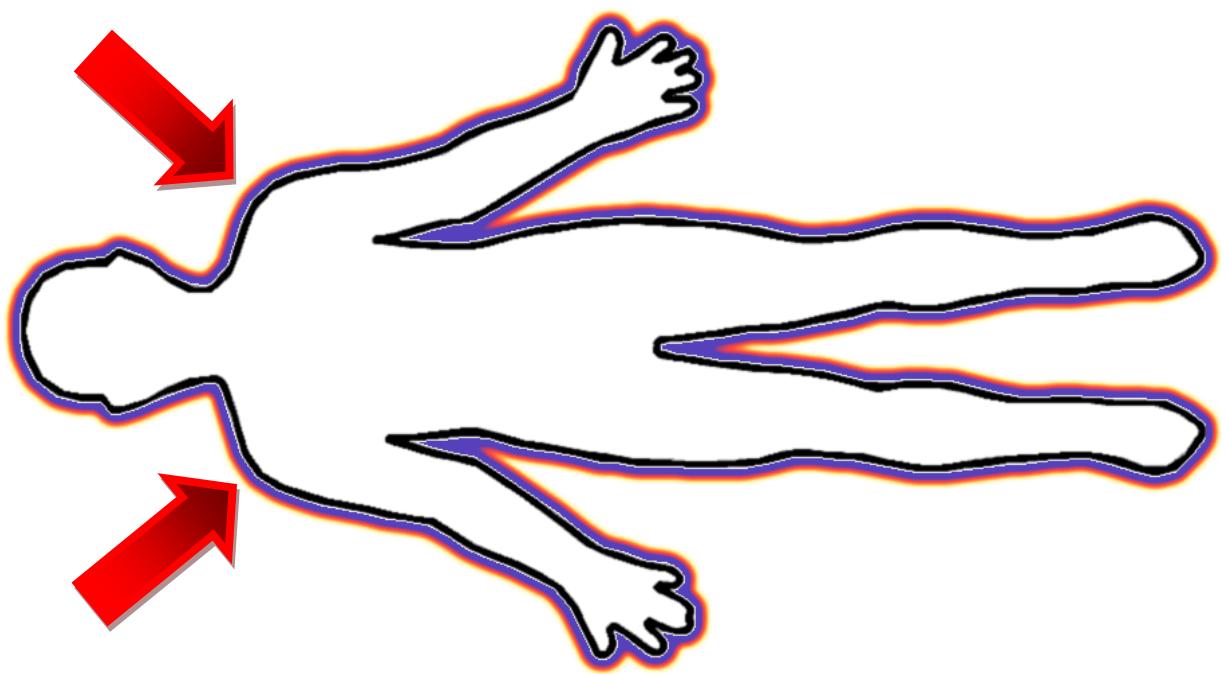


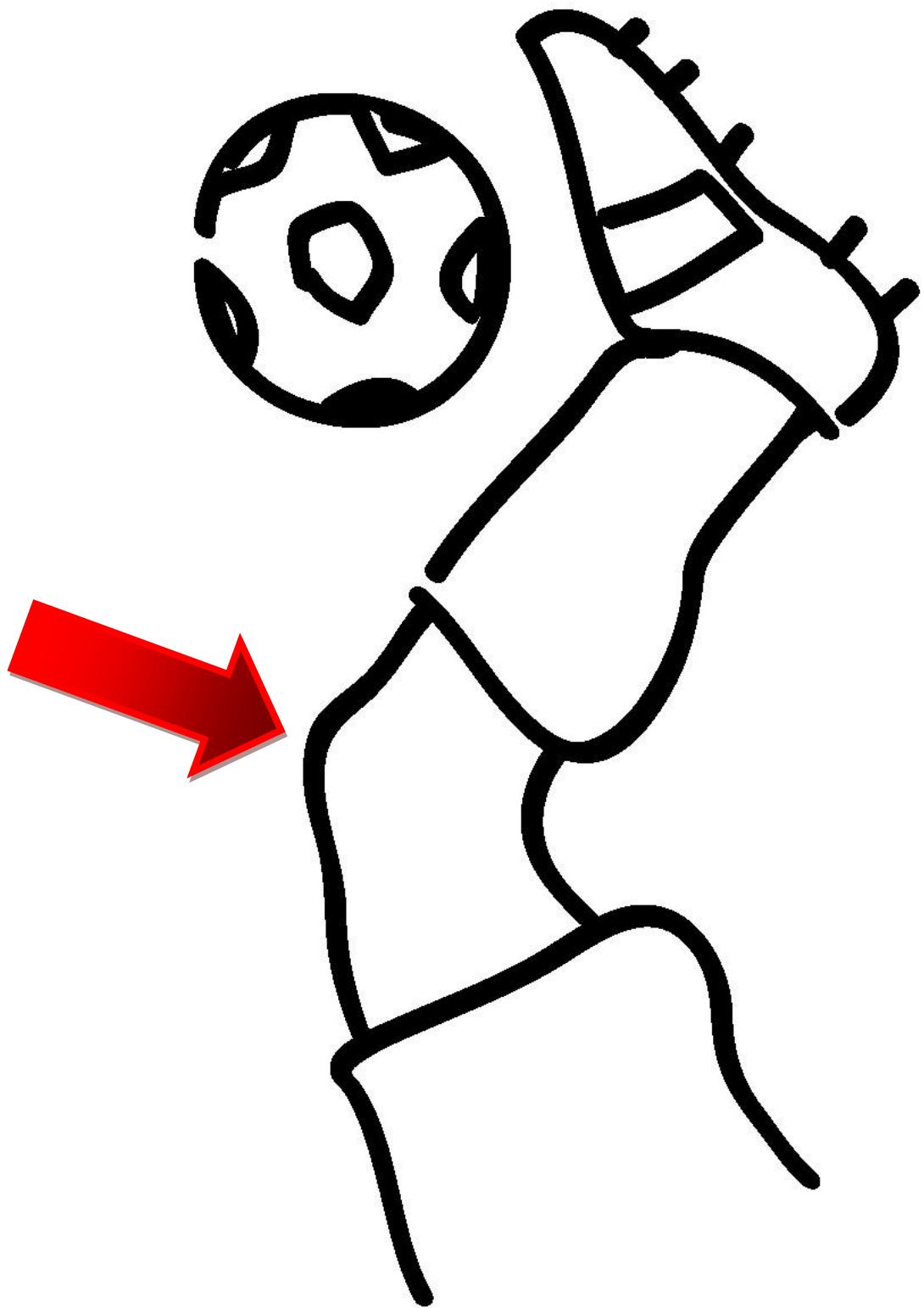


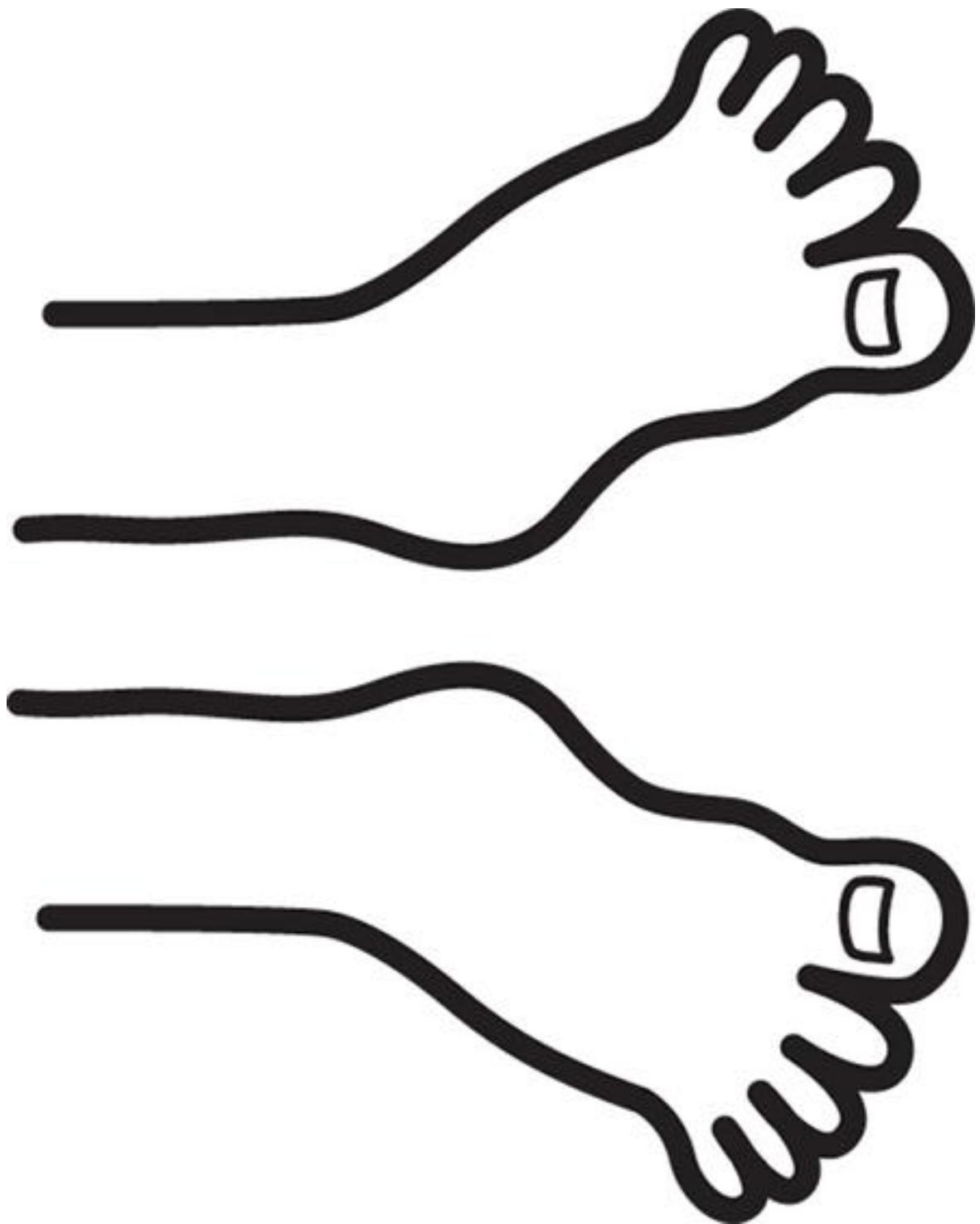


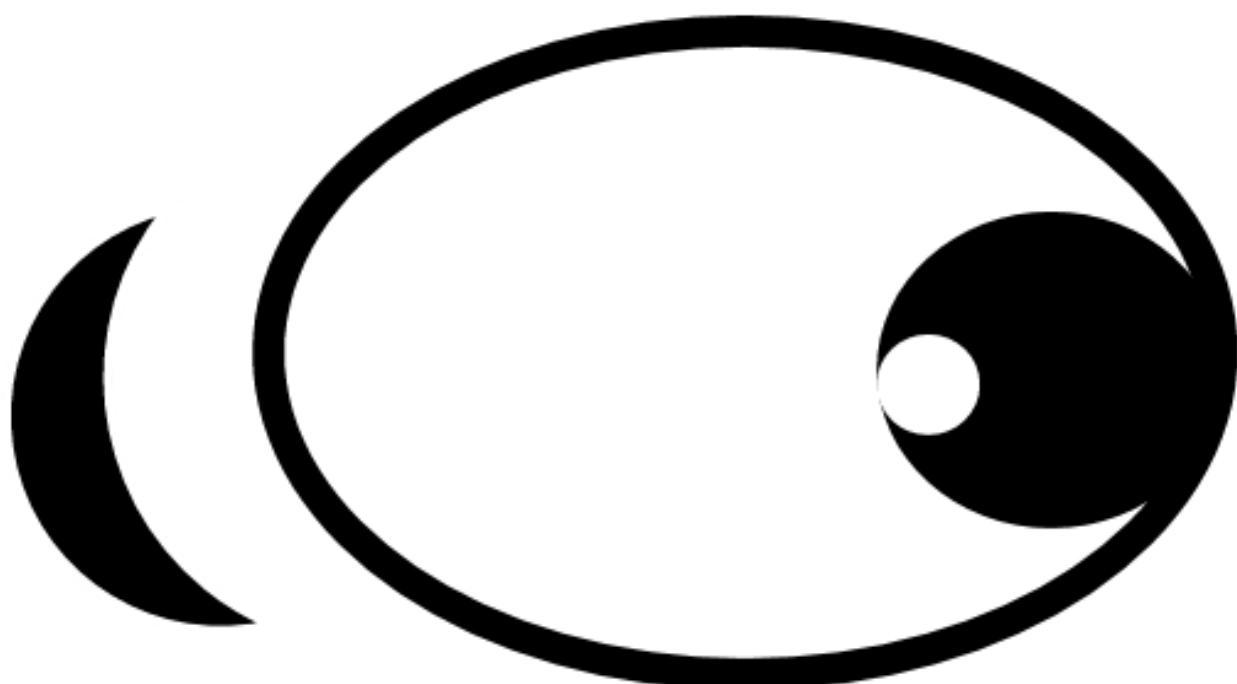
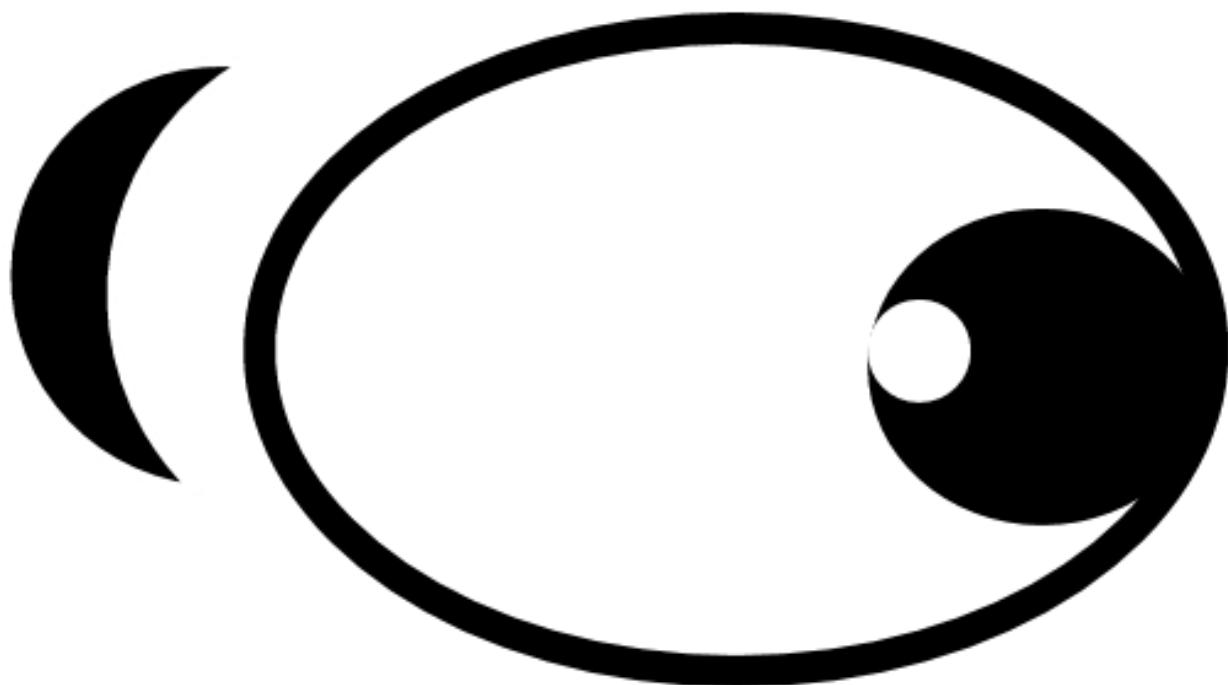




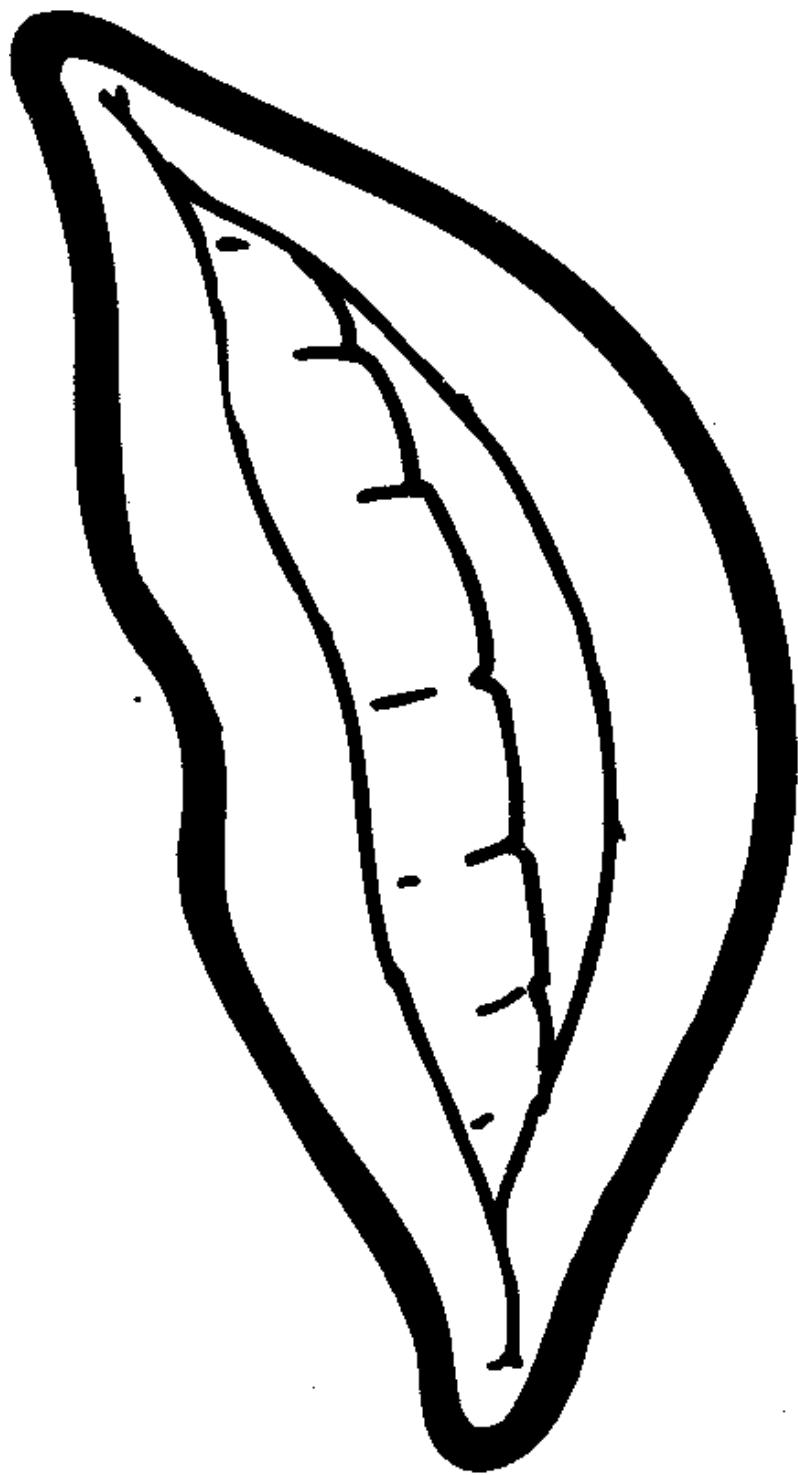


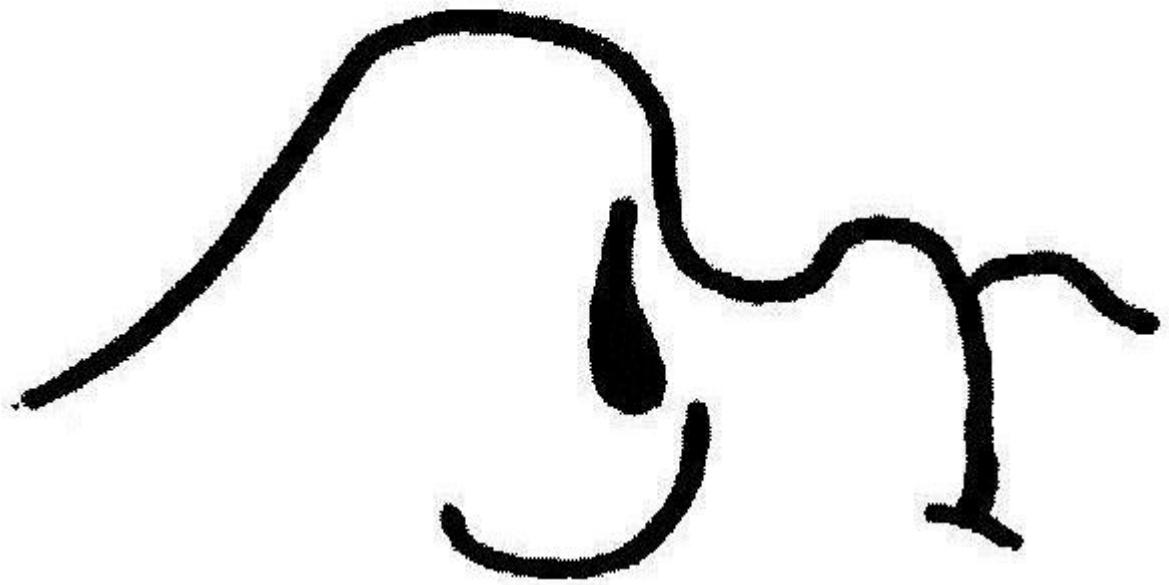












payek
deu

2
1

käat̪

trwāa

4

3

sis

Saenk

6

5

wit

Set

8

7

9

10

neuf

this

Michif Song Substitution Vocabulary Guide

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|-------------|-----------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-----|--------------|---------|----------|------|--------|
| <p>Song #1</p> <p>Old MacDonald</p> <p>Old MacDonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O And on his farm he had (a)* _____, E-I-E-I-O With a _____ here, and a _____ there, Here a _____, there a _____. Everywhere a _____. Old MacDonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O</p> | <table> <tbody> <tr> <td>Cat</td> <td>aen shaa</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dog</td> <td>aen shyaen</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cow</td> <td>enn vaash</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Duck</td> <td>li kanaar</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Horse</td> <td>zhwaal</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pig</td> <td>aen kwashoon</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chicken</td> <td>la poul</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>* Omit "a" when singing some of the Michif words to smooth out the phrase.</p> | Cat | aen shaa | Dog | aen shyaen | Cow | enn vaash | Duck | li kanaar | Horse | zhwaal | Pig | aen kwashoon | Chicken | la poul | | |
| Cat | aen shaa | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Dog | aen shyaen | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cow | enn vaash | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Duck | li kanaar | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Horse | zhwaal | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pig | aen kwashoon | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Chicken | la poul | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Song #2</p> <p>Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes</p> <p>Head and shoulders, knees and toes, Knees and toes, Knees and toes. Head and shoulders, knees and toes, Eyes, ears, mouth and nose.</p> | <table> <tbody> <tr> <td>Head</td> <td>tet</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Shoulder</td> <td>l'ipool</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Knee</td> <td>aen zhnoo</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Toes</td> <td>lii zaartay</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Eye</td> <td>zyeu</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ear</td> <td>zaray</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mouth</td> <td>la boosh</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nose</td> <td>li nii</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Head | tet | Shoulder | l'ipool | Knee | aen zhnoo | Toes | lii zaartay | Eye | zyeu | Ear | zaray | Mouth | la boosh | Nose | li nii |
| Head | tet | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Shoulder | l'ipool | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Knee | aen zhnoo | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Toes | lii zaartay | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Eye | zyeu | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ear | zaray | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mouth | la boosh | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Nose | li nii | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Song #3</p> <p>One, Two, Buckle My Shoe</p> <p>One, two, buckle my shoe Three, four, shut the door Five, six, pick up sticks Seven, eight, lay them straight Nine, ten, a big fat hen.</p> | <table> <tbody> <tr> <td>One – payek</td> <td>Two – deu</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Three – trwaa</td> <td>Four – kaatr</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Five – saenk</td> <td>Six – sis</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Seven – set</td> <td>Eight – wit</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nine – neuf</td> <td>Ten – jhis</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | One – payek | Two – deu | Three – trwaa | Four – kaatr | Five – saenk | Six – sis | Seven – set | Eight – wit | Nine – neuf | Ten – jhis | | | | | | |
| One – payek | Two – deu | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Three – trwaa | Four – kaatr | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Five – saenk | Six – sis | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Seven – set | Eight – wit | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Nine – neuf | Ten – jhis | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

The Classroom Composer

Introduction:

What is music? This is a very open-ended question because music can be defined in many ways for many different people. Some people say that music to them is cultural, experiential, meaningful, emotional, and expressive. Although people may not agree on the same definition of music, they can agree that music can inspire, affect, move, and unite people.

What elements or “building blocks” are needed to make music? (Examples could include instruments, musicians, singers, rhythm, melody, form, harmony, digital sounds, etc.) Is music still “music” without using any instruments? Can you be a composer without knowing how to play an instrument or how to write a song? Can you create and perform music without using any instruments? Can you make music with just the voice alone? A paper bag? A hammer?

Skills and Concepts:

Composing, ABA (ternary) form, creative musical notation

Objective(s):

Students will create a class composition using non-instruments; students will understand and recognize ABA (or ternary) form in music.

Target Grades: 4-6

Materials:

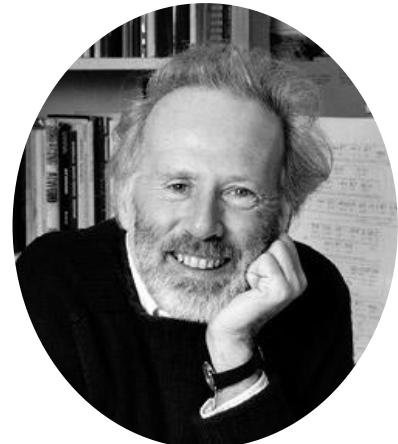
- Whiteboard;
- Markers;
- Sound maker items: paper bags, newspaper, scissors, garbage cans, rulers, elastic bands, hardcover books, clunky shoes, pennies, craft beads, jars, pails, tin cans, etc. (any class item that can make a noise when dropped, pushed, rolled, scrunched up, torn, shaken, spun);
- Scroll of paper (use white or light coloured bulletin board paper approximately 1 meter across, cut paper in half horizontally, and tape (back of paper, not front) ends together to make 2 meters in total width length);
- Three 5 x 7 cards with large written letters A B A using construction paper or manila tag
- YouTube video: “Miniwanka” by R. Murray Schafer: youtu.be/ViBbRM3gFnI

Indigenous Music:

Canada’s Indigenous people are deeply connected to and inspired by the natural world and the interconnectedness of people, animals, and natural elements such as seasons and weather. Traditional stories and songs reflect that connection, and you can hear those elements in the music when chants reflect the mood and emotion that nature brings. Songs can be sung with words or without words (chant) to connect people to the spiritual world, for prayer and in ceremonies, to connect each other, and to honour the land. Instruments accompanying the songs reflect the rhythm of the earth. They are made from natural materials such as animal skins, sinew, and wood for frame drums, small pebbles and sand inside rattles, and vegetable and berry dyes for colour. Traditional Indigenous music does not use form such as ABA (ternary form) like Western classical music does. Instead, many traditional indigenous songs are organized in cycles where the song sections are repeated over lengthy chant phrases.

About R. Murray Schafer:

R. Murray Schafer is a Canadian composer who lives in Ontario. He also has a deep respect for and connection to nature. He has often stepped outside the lines of what a typical composer is expected to compose. He's redefined and stretched the definition of a composition, showing that compositions can consist of natural and unusual sounds. He is an environmentalist who loves nature and has often found his inspiration from the natural sounds heard outside. The natural environment is his canvas and the trees, the wind, the birds, and the animals, are the instruments and even the composers.



R. Murray Schafer

Music History and Culture:

In this lesson, students will learn about some elements of traditional Indigenous music and how the (non-Indigenous) Canadian composer R. Murray Schafer was inspired by Indigenous languages and by the natural world. His choral composition “Miniwanka” comes from the word “minnewanka,” a Nakota word meaning “water of the spirits.” Lake Minnewanka is a lake in Banff National Park.

To hear “Miwanka,” you can find many recordings on YouTube, including this one:

- [youtube.com/watch?v=ViBbRM3gFnI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViBbRM3gFnI) (*Vancouver Chamber Choir recording: “Miwanka” by R. Murray Schafer from A Garden of Bells. © Vancouver Chamber Choir, Grouse 101*)

Additional Online Resources:

This lesson was partly inspired by the pedagogical writings of R. Murray Schafer. For further reference, here are some suggested sources:

- artsalive.ca/en/mus/greatcomposers/schafer/
- thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/r-murray-schafer-emc/

Activity:

1. Begin discussion of “What is music? What building blocks are needed to make music? (Write down student answers for this question). Is music still “music” without using any instruments? Can you be a composer without knowing how to play an instrument or how to write a song? Can you create and perform music without using any instruments?”
2. Once ideas are displayed, share R. Murray Shafer’s “Miwanka.” Students may giggle or disagree that this example fits their description or idea of music. Discuss if any of the elements they listed are heard in the example.
3. Inform the class that they will be creating a class composition using the collected “sound maker” items collected. Hand out the items or have students choose from the collection.
4. Have all students individually test out their item for its sound. Discuss other possible ways their sound maker item can make a different sound by playing it in a different way.
5. Grouping: Are there sound maker items that can be grouped together because of their similar sounds or qualities?
6. What is musical form? It is the organization of music into sections; a simple example of ABA, or ternary, form is “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star”? Using ABA form and pre-made letter cards, have the students

assist in deciding how to organize their composition. What will happen in section A? How will section B contrast section A? Ideas can include different sound maker groups, mood, tempo (speed), or dynamics (volume). Have the students decide which “instruments” or sound makers will be in each section. Tape A B A cards on bottom of scroll to indicate where the sections are.

7. Once decided, write out on the board how they want their sound or sound group to look in its written form. What symbols best represent their sound (swirls, squiggly lines, jagged edges, wavy lines, dots, etc.)? Transcribe the chosen symbols onto the scroll.
8. After all sound makers and groups have been notated onto the scroll, begin rehearsing their piece. Each musical composition begins and ends with silence. Will the teacher conduct? Will a student conduct? Is the tempo too fast or too slow? Encourage students to listen to each other and to watch when it is their turn to play and not play. When not playing, encourage students to listen.
9. Perform final piece. Discuss their composition.

Closing Questions:

Based on the brainstormed elements of music at the start of this activity, were we able to achieve some of those elements in the sound maker composition? How were form sections A and B different? As an instrument player or sound maker, did the form help to organize the whole group while playing?

The Earth Speaks to Me: Poetry Paintings

Introduction:

What speaks to you in nature? If nature could speak to you in words, what would it say? What sounds can you hear in a natural, outdoor environment that are different from what you hear in an urban environment? Think about nature being animate (alive or having life) and moving through us, around us, swirling about as we experience it with our senses. Use all your senses when you reflect on these environments: a park, a forest, the grasslands, the mountains, a river, lake, or ocean. Think about what that environment smells like, feels like, tastes like, looks like, and sounds like when you interact with it.

Skills and Concepts:

Poetry, creative writing, word painting, personal reflection, appreciating nature

Objective(s):

Students will compose a word painting poem using descriptive writing and imagery; students will integrate the five senses into the poem as part of their reflection on a natural environment; students will learn a phrase in an Indigenous language.

Target grades: 7-9

Materials:

- The poem “My Heart Soars”: acip.sd79.bc.ca/references/burnaby_poetry/my_heart_soars.pdf (*To be read aloud following the activity*)
- Audio: R. Carlos Nakai – Selections from *Earth Spirit*: youtu.be/19nm5_nAwQg
- Optional audio: Walter MacDonald White Bear – “Spotted Eagle”: <http://waltermacdonaldwhitebear.com/listen/>

Optional

- Information about Chief Dan George: thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/dan-george/
- Information about Native America flutist R. Carlos Nakai: rcarlosnakai.com/
- Information about Canadian native flutist and Music Alive Program teaching artist Walter MacDonald White Bear: <http://waltermacdonaldwhitebear.com/bio/>

Indigenous perspectives of the earth:

Like an expectant mother nourishes the fetus in the womb, Mother Earth takes care of us and provides all that we need to survive, such as water, air, fire, plant medicines, fruits, vegetables, animals, seeds, nuts, etc. as we live and grow in the earth’s “womb.” We need to take care of *our* Mother Earth in return, and respect and preserve the gifts of natural resources and sustenance because, ultimately, the Earth is alive. It is animate and it responds to us. It speaks to us and the natural elements speak to us. In the Cree language, “ni pîkis kwa tiktawak” means “they speak to me.” (Pronounced as “nee-peek-skwaah-tee-kwuk”). Say this slowly and with meaning.

Activity:

Part One: Poetry Study

1. Listen to Chief Dan George’s poem “My Heart Soars” (see link provided).

2. Consider these questions with your students: How does Chief Dan George create a visual image of nature? What did you see, smell, feel, taste, or hear? What words or lines stand out?

Part Two: Poetry Writing

3. Choose your environment. Close your eyes and imagine you are standing alone right in the middle of that environment. What season is it? Visualize this as clearly as you can and use your imagination. What do you see, smell, hear, feel, and taste? (e.g., the softness of the air, the twinkling stars, the whispery wind, etc.). Brainstorm and write down everything you remember or imagine about your experience in that environment. (Feel free to use internet visual prompts of nature scenes if needed).
4. Take a moment to think of how you could write a description for your reading or listening audience. Be very descriptive in how you want to create your words. Think of how the environment you're imagining affects your five senses. Paint a visual picture in your writing. Be a "word painter." Use colours, motion, emotions, etc. What sounds do you hear? What sensations do you feel? What smells are in the air? Can you incorporate taste into your description in any way?
5. Create a bubble map with the chosen environment in the centre and line extensions containing the descriptive sense memories. Write many images of everything you experience standing there. What does the wind do when it picks up leaves and swirls up into your hair playfully? How does it feel to have the warmth of the sun on your skin or the crunch of the snow beneath your feet? What does the air smell like as you breathe it into your nose after it rains?
6. As you prepare to write, listen to the native flute music by Carlos Nakai and/or Walter MacDonald White Bear. (Optional: Teachers may want to keep the music playing softly in the background as the students write.)
7. Write a 12-line poem incorporating some of these descriptive images of your nature experience. End each of the four lines with "Ni pîkis kwa tikwak." Below is a writing template example:

Ni pîkis kwa tikwak.

8. When completed, read your poem to yourself one final time.
9. Reflect on your words through these questions when looking at your poem:
 - a. Do you feel you were able to capture the experience of nature?
 - b. Do you feel nature has spoken through you in your words?
 - c. Did listening to the music add to your thoughts and feelings about nature?
 - d. Would you feel comfortable sharing your poem to another person or to the class?

(Note: there are no wrong answers to these questions. Everyone's experience and creative process is unique.)

Extension Activity:

What is a native flute (sometimes called a native American flute)? Have students do some research on this beautiful traditional instrument and share their findings with the class. Students may wish to make posters that include pictures, share some recordings (YouTube is a great source), describe how the native flute's sound is made, or share some of the indigenous legends about this instrument.