

Directions: How to Use the Blackfeet - English Translation Table to Write a Sentence in English

Read/Look at the Blackfeet sentence carefully.

Example: *nittō'ksskāas*

Break the sentence into individual words by referring to the color coding.

nitt~ *~ō'ksskāas*

Look up each Blackfeet word on the table.

Find the Blackfeet word(s) on the color-coded table.

Example: *nitt~* → I

~ō'ksskāas → running

Write down the English word(s) on the corresponding color-coded line.

I () running

Now write the grammatically correct sentence after the = sign.

Do you notice the ()?

The () stand for an implied helping verb - (am)

Write the implied helping verb between the parentheses.

Now we can write the grammatically correct sentence.

= I am running

Let's look at number 2, 3 and, 4 together.

Using the color-coded chart, what does *kitt* mean? (you)

Yes, you. Write 'you' on the blue line.

What does *ō'ksskāas* mean? (running)

Yes, running. Write 'running' on the red line.

What does the () imply? (a helping verb, in this case 'are')

Very good. Now we can write the phrase/sentence after the = sign.

What is the sentence? (you are running)

Now look at number three.

3) What do you notice? (The red word means running.) Yes.

Let's look at the **t**. The **t** at the end of this word signifies that this is a command, a singular command. So **oksskaasit** → run (singular command (!)). Write - *run!* after the = sign.

Tell me what you know. (I see **oksskaasi** which means running, but this time there is a **k** at the end not a **t**.)

You are right. The **k** at the end means a plural command. So when I write the word in English, I would add two exclamation points after the word.

= run!!

Try number five and six with a partner. When you are done, let the teacher

know before moving on. Once your work has been checked, move on to

the next ones. (**Note:** Teachers, you can have them work with a partner or

individually.)

Once most students have had a chance to complete most of the words,

go over them with the whole class. Students can check their own

work and make corrections as needed.

ō'ksskāasii	Running
aiksikkīyii	Walking
īyō'•kāa	Sleeping
ai•pō'yii	Speaking

nitt~	I (am)
kitt~	You (are)

~t'	Singular command (!)
~k'	Plural command (!!)

Lost in Translation:

When translating words and phrases from Blackfoot to English there are things that will get lost in translation. This curriculum attempts to mitigate such losses by having an ‘order of procedure’. Rather than going directly from the proper Blackfoot to proper English we will add a step in the process of translation.

English does not have an affix that signifies a command; it is all implied. For example, if you want to direct someone to run in English you simply say, ‘run.’ In Blackfoot you attach an affix to the verb, which signifies to the listener that they are hearing a command. The root for ‘run’ is $\bar{o}'kssk\ddot{a}asii$. You add the [$\sim i'$] morpheme to the verb to make it into a singular command, $\bar{o}'kssk\ddot{a}asi\sim + \sim i' \rightarrow \bar{o}'kssk\ddot{a}asi i'$. If you want multiple listeners to run you use the plural command [$\sim k'$], $\bar{o}'kssk\ddot{a}asi\sim + \sim k' \rightarrow \bar{o}'kssk\ddot{a}asi k'$.

In the work sheet we will follow this order:

$\bar{o}'kssk\ddot{a}asi i'$

Run singular command (!)

Run!

$\bar{o}'kssk\ddot{a}asi k'$

Run plural command (!!)

Run!!

In this order of procedure we see how the Blackfoot morpheme is lost when translating to English but by using the (!) and (!!) we keep the integrity of the original Blackfoot word.

In this system, when ever English uses the (!) and (!!) it denotes a command, [$\sim i'$] and [$\sim k'$] respectively.

Sound Rule: Vowel Deletion:

when first [nitt~] or second person [kitt~] is used the last vowel of the verb is usually deleted.

I am running is nitt~ + $\sim \bar{o}'kssk\ddot{a}asii$ = nitt $\bar{o}'kssk\ddot{a}as$,

1) nittō'ksskääs

I (am) running
= I am running

2) kittō'ksskääs

you (are) running
= you are running

3) ō'ksskääsit'

run singular command (!)
= run!

4) ō'ksskääsik'

run plural command (!!)
= run!!

5) nittīyō'•k'

 ()
=

6) kittīyō'•k'

= ()
=

7) *yō'•kăat'*

=
=

8) *yō'•kăak'*

=
=

9) *kittai•ksikkīy*

= ()
=

10) *nittai•ksikkīy*

= ()
=

11) *ksikkīyit'*

=
=

12) *ksikkīyik'*

=

13) *nittai•po'yii*

= ()
=

14) *kittai•po'yii*

= ()
=

15) *ii•po'yit'*

16) *ii•po'yik'*

=