Daḳota Iapi Ṭeuŋhiŋdapi

WE CHERISH THE DAKOTA LANGUAGE

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Dakȩota Wiçoȟiaŋ

Dakota Wicohan

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YAHIPI KIŊ WAŠTE!

Welcome! It is good you are all here! **Yahipi Kiŋ Waśte!**

Dakota Iapi Ţeuŋȟiŋdapi/We Cherish the Dakota Language is a companion booklet to the documentary. Both provide an introduction to the story of the Dakota language in Minnesota.

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HAŋ MITAKUYAPI!

Haŋ mitakuyapi! Dakota ia Utuhu Cistigna Wiŋ emakiyapi ye. Pezutazizi K'api hemataŋhaŋ. *Greetings my relatives. In Dakota they call me Little Oak. I'm from the place where they dig the yellow medicine. I greet you as relatives because that is what we are to each other. We are a human family, sharing mother earth together. Not only that, we are sharing the land, air and water with the trees, plants, animals, insects, rocks and all living things together. While we are all related and share many things in common, we also appreciate the beautiful diversity all around us.*

A part of appreciating each other is respecting each other, including opinions, ways of being, ways of seeing the world and ways of knowing. The way that we relate to one another includes our actions, beliefs, values and the way we communicate with each other. While we all share the need to communicate through language, not all languages are the same. Each language has its unique way of expressing culture, values and beliefs. Without our language, we lose our unique identity.

I want to share with you a story about the Dakota language, the language of ***Mni Sota Makoçe*** *– the land of cloudy waters. While our language is rooted here in our original homelands, the past 150 years has brought great challenges to our language. This story describes the beauty, the challenges and the renewal of the Dakota language. It is told through many voices of the Indigenous (original) people of* ***Mni Sota Makoçe*** *– the Dakota people. It includes personal stories, collective historical stories and current information on the Dakota language.*

Here is a little part of my story. ***Dakota iapi ţewaƞiŋde*** *(I cherish the Dakota language). My* ***ƙúŋši*** *(grandma) and* ***uŋkaŋna*** *(grandpa) spoke the Dakota language. My* ***ƙúŋši*** *told me that the language is spiritual. I feel good when I hear and speak the Dakota language. It is so beautiful when we hear it spoken.*

I didn't grow up speaking the language. Today I am a Dakota language learner. My **ƙúŋši** *and* **uŋkaŋŋa** *went to boarding school and because of that experience, they decided not teach my mother the Dakota language. As an adult, I decided to study the language from two fluent speakers in my family, my* **ƙúŋši** *and* **ţuŋkaŋ** *(father in law). I also studied through school, or Dakota* **iapi wóuŋspeƙuwa hemaça**. *(I am a Dakota language learner.)*

The language is healing to me and my relationships with my **ţiwahe** *(family),* **ţioŝpaye** *(extended family),* **Dakota oyate** *(community) and* **de maƙoçe** *(this land). By reclaiming the Dakota language, I feel like I'm returning home.*

The story of the Dakota language is also an important story for every Minnesotan. All of us today who share **Mni Sota Maƙoçe**, *must learn to live together in harmony – that's what* **mituŋwiŋ** *(my aunt) Yvonne shared. If we don't understand what happened to the Dakota and the original language of this land, we can't fully appreciate what it means to be home, here in Minnesota. By cherishing the Dakota language, we can all honor our homeland.*

Teaching and sharing the Dakota language is the focus of **Dakota Wiçoŋaŋ**, *an organization we started in 2002. We want to hear what you think about this story. Most importantly, we hope you will listen and share this story with others.*

Ţidamayaye. Dakota iapi ţeuŋkiŋdapi! Haŋ, héçetu!
Thank you. We all cherish the Dakota language! Yes, this is true.

Teresa Peterson, Utuhu Cistiŋna Wiŋ de miye.
Dakota Wiçoŋaŋ

PS: As you learn more about the Dakota language in this booklet, please look for questions by the moccasins so you can reflect on the story and discover how can you cherish the Dakota language.

MINNESOTA

The Dakota are Minnesota's oldest indigenous nation. Our nation consists of seven council fires known collectively as **Oçeti Šakowiŋ.** Each council fire has its unique role and duty.

- **Bdewakaŋtuŋwaŋ/Mdewakanton** – Dwellers of the Spirit Lake
- **Sisiṭuŋwaŋ/Sisseton** – Dwellers of the Fishing Ground
- **Waȟpeḳute/Wahpeton** – Shooters Among The Leaves
- **Waȟpeṭuŋwaŋ/Wahpeton** – Dwellers Among The Leaves
- **Ihaŋkṭuŋwaŋ/Yankton** – Dwellers At The End
- **Ihankṭuŋwaŋna/Yanktonai** – Little Dwellers On The End
- **Ṭiŋṭuŋwaŋ/Teton** – Dwellers of the Prairie

At one time all seven council fires lived in Minnesota. Today, the Yanktonai and Teton live further west, but the eastern Dakota council fires live primarily throughout Minnesota, in six Dakota communities:

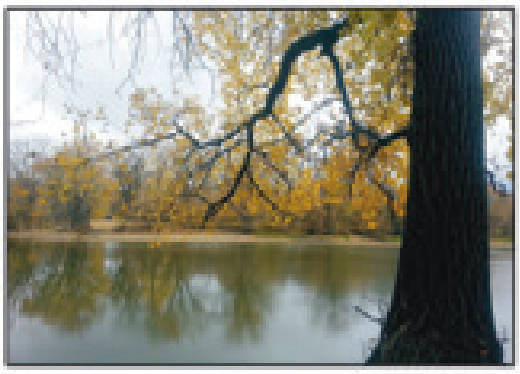
Four federally-recognized Daḳota communities:

- **Caŋšayapi,** Lower Sioux Community
- **Ṭiŋta Wita,** Prairie Island Community
- **Bdemayaṭo,** Shakopee Mdewakanton Community
- **Ṗeźuhutazizi K'api,** Upper Sioux Community

Other Dakota communities:

- **Bdote,** M'endota Mdewakanton
- **Pipestone,** A significant Dakota population remain near the sacred Pipestone quarries, the place where the red stone is quarried and carved for our **cunduhupa,** or **canupa,** the sacred pipe.

MNI SOTA MAḲOÇE



Mni Sota Maḳoçe, or Minnesota, is the ancient homeland of the Dakota. **Mni Sota** means cloud tinted waters. **Maḳoçe** means homeland. Minnesota means the land of cloud tinted waters.

The Dakota language reflects the importance of home here in **Mni Sota Maḳoçe.**

"Sixteen different verbs in the Dakota language describe returning home, coming home, or bringing something home. This is how important our homeland is in Dakota regardless of where our history has taken us. No matter how far we go, we journey back home through language and songs and in stories our grandparents told us to share with our children" (Westerman and White).

The Dakota language varies slightly depending on the council fire or community where it is spoken. In Minnesota, we speak the eastern D-dialect of Dakota. Elder Yvonne Leith explains, *"There are three dialects – Dakota, Nakota, and Lakota. Variations by region and communities are all okay. Our focus was and still is on the Minnesota 'D' dialect. The language is very descriptive. It is a sacred language and it carries with it the essence of who we are as Dakota people today."*

Even the spellings and translations of the seven council fires, at left, can vary depending on where we were raised. While the Dakota language is at risk of extinction here in **Mni Sota Maḳoçe,** efforts by diverse groups – from elders to foundations, from nonprofits to families – are reclaiming the Dakota language and bringing it back.

Where is your family from in Mni Sota Maḳoçe?

REMEMBER

Little Crow's village on the Mississippi River in the mid-1800s. (Minnesota Historical Society).

Mitakuye owasiŋ means "we are all related." This is a core Dakota value. Being a good relative is, too.

As the famous Dakota anthropologist Ella Deloria wrote, *"The ultimate aim of Dakota life, stripped of accessories, was quite simple: One must obey kinship rules; one must be a good relative."*

To be a good relative, we have important roles and responsibilities to our relatives in our:

- **Ţiwahe,** or family,
- **Ţioŝpaye,** or extended family, and
- **Oyate,** or nation.

Dakota youth learning horseback riding in the 2013 Dakota Wicohan Sunktanka program.

That was true a thousand years ago and it is true today, even for our youth of today, like the young Dakota language students at left.

KIKSUYE

To communicate, we use language. But language isn't just about words. Language expresses our values and our way of understanding the world. As elder Genevieve LaBatte explained, *"The language here is spiritual."*

Remembering our language is the first step in this journey to revitalize the Dakota language in Minnesota. **Dakota Wiçohaŋ** asked our elders to remember how the language was spoken when they were young. We learned that the language is spoken softly and slowly. It is filled with love.

Elder Lillian Wilson remembers, *"We learned without them raising their voice, without them hollering at us... Part of that is the Indian language. When they say your name you can feel the love, feel the kindness that goes behind it."*

We learned that our kinship names were very important. Elder Yvonne Leith, at right, explains, *"When we establish that kinship and relative way, we use the relative terms that embody that respect and responsibility of being a good relative. We use* ***Ina*** *and* ***Ate*** *for mother and father;* ***ƙúŋši*** *and* ***uŋkaŋna*** *for grandma and grandpa;* ***ƭuŋwiŋ*** *and* ***dekši*** *for aunt and uncle;* ***icepaŋši*** *and* ***ƭahaŋši*** *for female and male cousin;* ***tiƀdo*** *and* ***cuŋwe*** *for older brother and sister;* ***çuŋkši*** *and* ***çiŋkši*** *for daughter and son. There are many other terms to describe kinship. Last but not least,* ***wakaŋheża,*** *children, they too are sacred. Just saying the names to one another brings you the feeling of family, that closeness and love."*

What does being a good relative mean to you?

ORIGINS AND VALUES

We can trace our origin to the stars. Elder Gary Cavendar explains, *"We Dakota are sometimes also known as the star people. That's because we trace our origins to the stars. In our Creation myth we the Dakota, the Seven Fires of the Dakota, came from the belt of Orion–the seven planets of the belt of Orion, the seven stars–and arrived at the [confluence] of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers, and so in some respects it is our Eden, and the land around there is sacred as well"* (Westerman and White).

Many sites around Minnesota are sacred for the Dakota—not just the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers. Like our seven fires and the seven stars, seven is also the number of the values of the Dakota people. Values emphasized vary by community. They are:

- **Waçaŋtohnaka** – Generosity
- **Wóksape** – Wisdom
- **Wóohitika** – Courage
- **Wówaçiŋtaŋka** – Patience
- **Wóuŋšida** – Compassion
- **Wóohoda** – Respect
- **Wiçowaȟibadaŋ** – Gentleness/Humility

Living the Dakota way, or **wódaȟota,** means practicing these values in our daily lives with all our relatives. For elder Yvonne Leith, compassion was at the heart of practicing our seven values. She wrote, *"The elders taught that the foundation of our Dakota spiritual lifeways was the concept of* ***Wóonsida****, compassion. They taught us to treat everyone as a* ***wotakuye****, relative, and as such we were to be compassionate with one another, to be a good relative. Everything you do is done in a good way –from using the language in a respectful, kind way, to your actions – to not make anyone feel bad."*

It takes a whole family and our whole community to protect our beautiful culture, its values, its kinship, and our language.

At times we encounter threats like that of the bull snake in the story that elder Trulo Columbus shares, *"This is a story I heard from my aunt. They had me in a cradle board while they were making blankets. The blue jays kept diving down on me when I was up there. My grandparents didn't know what was going on. My grandma told my grandpa, 'You better go see what's going on there.' When he walked over there, there was a bullsnake trying to get into my cradle. The blue jays were knocking the snake out of the tree."*

Trulo's family and the **zitkaŋdaŋto ṫáŋka** (blue jay) worked together to protect the baby. When we walk together with our relatives, we can protect our culture no matter what challenges come our way.

Elder Carrie Schommer reminds us that the path to reclaiming our language is through our kinship and family. She explains, *"Grandfather, grandmother, father and mother made this path for us that we walk on. All of you are on it too and for that reason we're all here. Those ones over here, they want to travel that path and they are also here. Always think about those."*

On protecting our language, she continues, *"If the students learn it well and the next generation learns it well, then the language will for sure go on."*

What values can we call on to revitalize the Dakota language today?

CHANGE

For hundreds of years after the arrival of Europeans in North America, the Dakota people continued to live and prosper in many communities on the Upper Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers.

Through treaties signed in the nineteenth century, the Dakota ceded land to the U.S. government, but we remained here and moved to reservations along the Minnesota River into the early-1860s. We Dakota did not truly receive compensation for our lands.

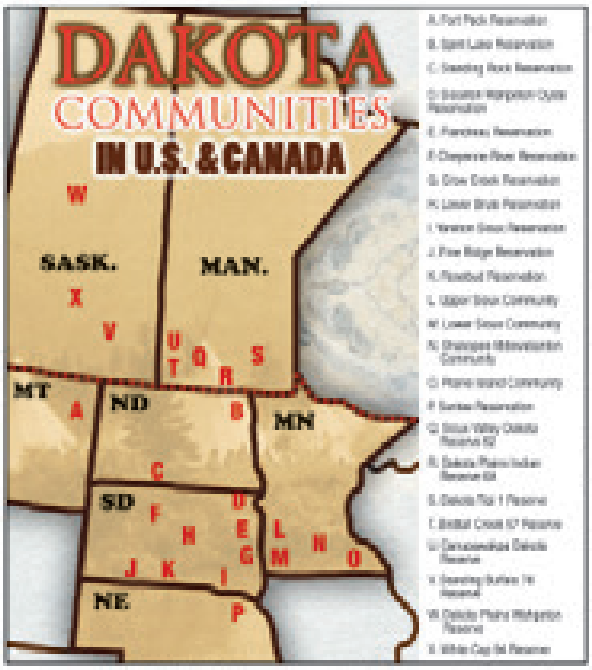
As elder Dean Blue explains, *"The annuity payments that were in the U.S. Treasury, the interest that accumulated from that money that was sitting there, they paid us the annuity. So they never actually paid for the land; never paid a cent for all this vast territory. It was the interest money that accrued. That's history, but you don't hear that, and it's not in history books, certainly"* (MHS Dakota Oral Histories).

The devastating events of 1862 U.S.-Dakota War changed things forever. As elder John Robertson says of this time, *"It was a pivotal, earth-shaking thing in the lives of all kinds of people."*

After the war ended, the U.S. government renounced the Dakota treaties and the Dakota were exiled from Minnesota. Many fled to Canada or were forced onto reservations in Nebraska and South Dakota. Only a few Dakota were allowed to remain in Minnesota. During the 1870s and 1880s, some of the exiled Dakota began to return to Minnesota. Federal appropriations led to the purchase of land at Morton, Granite Falls, Prior Lake, Prairie Island, and Wabasha. In some cases, the decision to buy lands at these places was made because Dakota people had already bought small pieces of land there. Today's four federally recognized Dakota communities spring from these federal appropriations and Dakota land purchases.

- 12,000 BC to 1570: Indigenous homelands
- 1570 -1805: Contact with European fur traders
- 1805 – 1862: Treaty period with U.S. government
- 1862: Dakota-U.S. War & Mankato executions
- 1863: Exile & Diaspora
- 1870s to 1930s: Return & Formation of Dakota Reservations and Communities

EXILE



After 1862, the majority of the Dakota were forced to leave their homeland of **Mni Sota Makoçe**. Elder Super LaBatte, Jr. shares the story of his grandmother's exile to Canada after 1862, *"My mother's grandma, her Indian name was Tasina Susbeca Win but in everyday life they just called her Susbe. She was nine or twelve years old. She was just a young girl. They were Mdewakanton. They lived at Lower Sioux. They went to Pipestone and they dug pipestone and they were on their way back. They had their wagon loaded with stone and they were coming back. They must have been on the coutou because they could see over east and they could see just smoke, smoke, smoke coming. They didn't know what that was so they continued on and they encountered some Dakotas on horseback. They were fleeing and they said, 'Don't go back there, there's a war started over there.' So they buried their pipestone in the ground and then they took off north. My grandpa wrote these stories down so I shall shorten it. They eventually made it to Canada. On the way of course, they were being chased. They made it to Canada"* (MHS Dakota Oral Histories).

While Super's family made it back to Minnesota in 1897, not all Dakota families could return to **Mni Sota Makoçe**. Today many Dakota remain in exile, living all across parts of the west and Canada. However, no matter where we live, we carry on the beautiful Dakota language. To survive, many Dakota learned not to talk about the exile, the war, and the suffering our relatives endured. Elder Chris Leith said, *"My grandma used to talk about it, but then she said don't say anything, don't tell anybody. If you do, they'll put you in jail or kill you."*

Has your family ever experienced exile or war?

BOARDING SCHOOLS

Image from Pipestone, 1893. (Minnesota Historical Society)

For nearly a century, many Dakota children were sent away to day schools and boarding schools run by the U.S. government and missionaries. Many children were forced to attend. As a result, generations of children were removed from their **ţiwahe** and **ţioŝpaye.** They were separated from the strong loving kinship structure that had supported the Dakota language for thousands of years.

In **Mni Sota Maḳoçe,** the first school for Dakota children was established near the Birch Coulee agency near today's town of Morton in 1891. The next year, the government established a boarding school at Pipestone. For many years, the superintendent of the day school also served as the Indian agent for the Dakota in Minnesota. The day school at Birch Coulee closed in 1920, but the boarding school at Pipestone didn't close until 1954.

The goal of these schools was to prepare Dakota children for jobs in the American economy, on farms, in cities, and in factories, far away from our community. Continuing to speak the Dakota language was not encouraged in the schools. In fact, students caught speaking the language were often punished. Later, children were even punished for speaking the language in local schools, as Gary Cavendar shares at right.

DESTROYING THE LANGUAGE

In many families, up to three generations of children were educated in the boarding schools where they were forbidden to speak the language. While the boarding school era did not cause harm to all Dakota students, the majority of those who attended the schools experienced significant hardship.

Elder Gary Cavender shared one story from his experience at school, *"One day the teacher asked me a question. She pressured me to answer her. I forgot my English, so I spoke Dakota. Then she got very angry. 'Come stand here!' she said. I obeyed and stood there. I held my hand out. She had a ruler with a metal edge. 'We don't speak that devil's language here. We speak English.' Then she hit me. She really hurt me."*

When students went home, they experienced confusion, as elder Garrett Wilson explained, *"You couldn't talk Indian at school, couldn't talk English at home, and for me it was confusing."*

The trauma from the harsh treatment at school for speaking Dakota didn't end after students left school. Many students carried the trauma and the scars of the boarding school experience with them as adults and as parents. To protect their children from this pain, many parents did not want their children to speak Dakota. John Robertson recalls asking his father why he didn't teach his children Dakota, *"He said, 'I made a decision after my experiences that you kids would never learn the language.'"*

Elder LaVonne Swenson shares a similar experience, *"Later on, they (my parents) explained that it was because they were punished and they didn't want us to be punished that way for speaking the language."*

Did you ever have to give up something in order to protect your friends or family?

RECLAIM

Dakota elders report that in the early 1900s, more than 90% of Dakota people in Minnesota spoke the language. Today, only a handful of elders speak the language fluently. But thanks to reclamation efforts, many people are now studying and speaking the language.

In the mid-1900s, new government policies continued to weaken the sovereignty of Native communities, such as Termination and the 1956 Relocation Act which forced Native people into America's cities. But on the heels of the Civil Rights Movement, the U.S. passed the Freedom of Religion Act in 1978. This act permitted Native communities to practice their religion and use language freely. Many Native communities began organizing to reclaim their cultural lifeways and languages. The Twin Cities was an active center for Native rights in this exciting time of reclamation.

In 1969, the University of Minnesota started the first American Indian Studies department in the country. By the early 1970s, the Twin Cities was also home to the first Native charter schools, the first urban Indian health clinic, and the American Indian Movement.

Elder Yvonne Leith worked with several schools and organizations in the Twin Cities, including Nawayee Center School and the Red School House. Elder Carrie Schommer began teaching Dakota language at the University in 1969. Of these landmark events, these women are very humble. As **Ḳúŋši** Carrie says, *"I was able to do it. Every day I walked happily to work because we were doing a good job with the Dakota language."*

Several other institutions that made significant contributions to Native language reclamation in the late 1900s and early 2000s in **Mni Sota Maḳoçe,** include: the Grotto Foundation, the Alliance of Early Childhood Professionals, and the Dakota Ojibwe Language Revitalization Alliance. In 2009, Minnesota voted to increase taxes to create the Legacy Fund for 25 years. From this fund approximately $550,000 per year supports Dakota and Ojibwe language efforts in Minnesota. These funds are managed by the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council.

KIYUWAŠTE

The Dakota language recalls, instructs, and heals our inherent relationship with Creation, which is essential to the continuation of indigenous communities.

Reclaiming the language is also a pathway to reclaim our kinship ties. In this story, a community member shares how learning the language brought healing to three generations in the family – to herself, her mother, and her grandmother.

"I started learning Dakota through visits to my grandmother. One day my grandmother commented on how my mom had never returned. She was sure it must have been because my mom didn't like her family. Later I asked my mother about this. She stated that my grandmother and family, in fact, didn't want her. And so both parties had gone on like this, separated for many years.

"The truth was that the government had relocated my mother to an urban area to learn a trade during the Indian Relocation Act, another policy meant to break family ties. The happy ending is that because I started learning the language I could help bridge and reunite my mother and my grandmother."

Language heals. Through speech and song, through the drum and prayer, the language can heal one's soul, repair kinship, build nations, and bridge communities.

How does language connect the different generations in your family? In your community?

RECONNECT

Thanks to the compassion and generosity of our elders, the Dakota language is in an exciting period of renewal. Families and learners are studying the language all around the state. Take **Dakȟota Wiçoȟaŋ**, for example.

Founded in 2002 by a group of Dakota language speakers and activists, **Dakȟota Wiçoȟaŋ** is located in Morton, not too far from Minnesota's first day school at Birch Coulee. **Dakȟota Wiçoȟaŋ's** mission is to revitalize Dakota language and lifeways. It is working toward a time when Dakota families and communities again have intergenerational fluency – can sing, talk and laugh together in Dakota. A time when they are healthy and sustainable, grounded in Dakota culture and history, and connected to each other through **ţiošpaye** (kinship).

Yvonne Leith, one of the founders of **Dakȟota Wiçoȟaŋ** recalls, *"I can remember the early days of DW, a staff of one, and a handful of learners – to what it is today, a thriving, growing organization. We operated out of a desk in a kitchen, working with just three families of Dakota language learners and a group of volunteer families who wanted to learn the language."*

Today **Dakȟota Wiçoȟaŋ's** language programs teach Dakota language to over 50 families, reaching over 150 youth and adults. Here is a group of **Dakȟota Wiçoȟaŋ Wiȟoŋka** and **Ȟoŋka** (young women and men) on a 2013 college tour at University of Minnesota-Morris, which was once an Indian boarding school. In a recent survey conducted at **Dakȟota Wiçoȟaŋ,** over 80% of the families said that they want to continue learning to speak the Dakota language.

Dakȟota Wiçoȟaŋ also seeks to increase understanding and awareness of the Dakota language in **Mni Sota Makoçe.** By reconnecting the **ţiwahe, ţiošpaye,** and **oyate** with the language, healing can happen here in the Dakota homeland.

Grace Goldtooth-Campos and her family are actively involved in **Dakota Wiçoȟan** where Grace is a Dakota Language Teacher Apprentice. She studies the language at the University and with master speaker Carrie Schommer, and until recently Yvonne Leith who passed into the spirit world. We are fortunate that younger people like Grace love the language and love to teach so they can pass on the teachings of our elders and first language speakers.

Grace also teaches the language in the community and is raising her two children to speak Dakota, *"My children are my inspiration to keep learning more. I won't know as much as my ancestors, but I strive every day to retain as much as possible. I will continue to teach myself the language so that I can teach others.*

"The Dakota Teacher Apprenticeship program at ***Dakota Wiçoȟan*** *has been so beneficial in encouraging me to continue my goal of retaining and teaching the Dakota language. My role in the revitalization movement has been sharing the language within my own community to all ages and doing this in an open caring environment. We need to remember our values and treat each other with compassion when we begin to learn our language.*

"I believe our language carries a spirit. When I am sharing the language within my community I always start with a prayer. Our Dakota language carries a good feeling when you speak it. It is healing medicine for our community. The power of the spirit that our language carries helps to uplift our community from historical trauma. Our traditional values and traditions are embedded in our language, and some things lose a deeper meaning when translated to English. Our language will live on through all of our efforts so that our grandchildren will be able to hear their language of their ancestors."

Why would you like your children to speak Dakota?

DAḲOTA IAPI—THE ALPHABET

The Dakota language has many unique sounds not found in English. To write the sounds in our language, we combine the English alphabet with unique Dakota symbols. Pronunciation and spelling can vary in different Dakota communities. The University of Minnesota Dakota language Orthography was used throughout this booklet. The pronunciation guide below provides a good introduction to the alphabet and tips for pronouncing each sound (LaFontaine & McKay, 5-6).

The Dakota language has eight vowels:

a
aŋ
e
i
iŋ
o
u
uŋ

Absent from the Dakota are these English consonants: f, j, l, q, r, v, and x.

Vowel	Pronounced	Sound
a	a	as in *wash*
aŋ	aŋ	*a* as in *wash* but nasal
b	ba	as in *boy*
c	ca	*ch* sound, but soft (unaspirated), almost like a *j*
ç	ça	*ch* sound, but hard (aspirated), as in *chalk* or *chop*
c'	c'a	*ch* sound with a pause (glottal stop) before a vowel
d	da	as in *dog*
e	e	as a in *stay*
ğ	ğa	guttural *g* sound
g	ga	only used when *k* is contracted, ex., *wanyanka* to *wayag*
h	ha	as in help

ȟ	ȟa	guttural *h* like *ch* in Germen (machen)
i	i	as in *pizza*
iŋ	iŋ	as in *pink*
k	ka	soft (unaspirated)*k*, almost like a *g*
ķ	ka	hard (aspirated) k as in kite
k'	k'a	*k* with a pause, (glottal stop) before a vowel
m	ma	as in *mom*
n	na	as in *noon*
o	o	as in *open*
p	pa	soft (unaspirated) *p*, almost like a *b*
p	pa	hard (aspirated) *p* as in *pop*
p'	p'o	*p* with a pause (glottal stop) before a vowel
s	sa	as in *simple*
s'	s'a	*s* with a pause (glottal stop) before a vowel
š	ša	*sh* as in *shop*
š'	š'a	*sh* should with a pause (glottal stop before a vowel
t	ta	soft (unaspirated) *t* as in *storm*, almost like a *d*
ţ	ţa	hard (aspirated) *t* as in *top*
t'	t'a	*t* with a pause (glottal stop) before a vowel
u	u	as the *oo* sound in *loop*
uŋ	uŋ	as in *oo* sound in *loop*, but nasal
w	wa	as in *water*
y	ya	as in *yellow*
z	za	as in *zap*
ž	ža	as the *s* sound in *pleasure*

How do you say, "I'm from Minnesota" in Dakota?
Mni Sota Makoçe hemataŋhaŋ!

DAḲOTA IAPI—A SURVIVAL GUIDE

Below are some beginning phrases in Dakota. Use the alphabet at left to sound out the words. Many Dakota words change if the speaker is male or female. Below you'll find the appropriate ending needed if you are female/male. The emphasis is on the second syllable except where marked.

Ƥidamayaye ye/do (female/male)	Thank you
Tóḳed eniciyapi he?	What is your name?
_____ emakiyapi ye/do	_____ I am called.
ḳúŋši	grandmother
unkaŋna	grandfather
ate	father
ina	mother
hokšida	boy
wiçiyaŋna	girl
ḳoda	friend
Aŋpetu waŠte yuha	Have a nice day
Tóḳed yauŋ he?	How are you?
***mawaŠte**	I'm good
***mawaŠte šni**	I'm not good
***taŋyaŋ wauŋ**	I'm fine
***wamatuḳa**	I'm tired
***iyomakpi**	I'm happy
***çaŋte maŠica**	I'm sad

LANGUAGE RESOURCES

If you are interested in learning to speak more Dakota language, please check out the following resources:

- Dakota Wicohan: www.dakotawicohan.com
- University of Minnesota Mnisota Dakota Iapi Owayawa Dakota Language Program: http://amin.umn.edu/languageprog/
- *Beginning Dakota/Tokaheya Dakota Iapi Kin* by Clifford Canku, Nicolette Knudson, and Jody Snow. http://www.beginningdakota.org/index.php
- Online Dakota/English Dictionary: https://filemaker.cla.umn.edu/dakota/
- Dakota language is taught in several other colleges and schools around the state, including Minneapolis Community & Technical College (MCTC), Metropolitan State University, and Concordia Language Village.
- Many communities sponsor Dakota language tables around the Twin Cities, including: Little Earth, Mendota, and the Minneapolis American Indian Center.

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REFLECTION

"We are taking our Dakota language back! You learn one Dakota word and you use it in your conversation. You do it like that and we'll surely take our Dakota language back. But they have to speak Dakota in the community, where they're together, at the school and if they teach Dakota. Then they'll carry that language as they go."
– Carrie Schommer

What do you cherish about your ancestral culture and language?

What have you learned about the Dakota language, the mother tongue of Mni Sota Maḳoçe?

How do feel when you reflect on the challenges and opportunities for the Dakota language?

What part of this story will you share with family members or friends?

Mni Sota Maḳoçe is now home to a very diverse population. How can we all cherish the Dakota language since we are all relatives, mitakuye owasiŋ?

Now that you've finished, we invite you to share what you've learned with others so that the circle of those who cherish the Dakota language in **Mni Sota Maḳoçe** continues to grow!

Ƥidamayaye!
Thank you.
Daḳota Iapi Ƭeuŋȟiŋdapi
We Cherish the Dakota Language

CMYK

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