

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 233 850

RC 014 280

**TITLE** Makah Alphabet Book.  
**INSTITUTION** Makah Cultural and Research Center, Neah Bay, WA.  
**SPONS AGENCY** National Endowment for the Humanities (NFAH), Washington, D.C.  
**PUB DATE** Aug 79  
**NOTE** 43p.; For related documents, see RC 014 281-283.  
**AVAILABLE FROM** Makah Cultural and Research Center, P. O. Box 95, Neah Bay, WA 98357 (\$3.50).  
**PUB TYPE** Guides - Classroom Use - Materials (For Learner) (051)  
**EDRS PRICE** MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.  
**DESCRIPTORS** \*American Indian Languages; American Indians; Consonants; Elementary Secondary Education; English; \*Instructional Materials; Language Usage; \*Letters (Alphabet); Native Language Instruction; \*Orthographic Symbols; \*Phoneme Grapheme Correspondence; Vowels; Written Language  
**IDENTIFIERS** \*Makah (Language)

**ABSTRACT**

The book presents the Makah alphabet decided upon in a public workshop held by the Makah Language Program in 1978, before which there was no standard Makah orthography. The 10 vowels and 34 consonants of the alphabet are presented in relation to English sounds. The book groups vowels sounds together but devotes a page to each consonant telling how to produce the sound and giving a series of words containing the sound and the English equivalent of the words. Each page is illustrated with bold black, white, and red drawings. The book contains an English-Makah vocabulary of 165 words.  
(SB)

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# MAKAH ALPHABET BOOK

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RC014200



# MAKAH ALPHABET BOOK

prepared by

The Makah Language Program  
Makah Cultural and Research Center

1978-1979

Cover Design by Scott Tyler

Illustrated by Scott Tyler and Chris Walsh

Funds provided by a grant from the National Endowment for the  
Humanities and in part by the Makah Tribe

Printed by Olympic Graphic Arts, Inc.

Forks, Washington

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## FOREWORD

The alphabet presented in this book was decided on in a public workshop held by the Makah Language Program in the summer of 1978. Until that time there was no standard orthography for Makah. It is the hope of the Language Program that this system will be accepted as the most accurate and efficient system to use in writing Makah and will therefore be accepted as the standard writing system.

Writing systems similar to this one are used for most of the northwestern languages, including the other languages of the Nootkan family, Nitinaht and Nootka.

The people of the program would like to acknowledge the many elders of the Makah tribe who were the source of this knowledge. We would also like to recognize Dr. William H. Jacobsen, Jr. who has taken the path of researching Makah before us and is now helping us along the way. He was the first to use this alphabet for Makah and many of the words in this book come from his research. Finally we thank the National Endowment for the Humanities which has been our main source of financial support.

August, 1979

Hildred Ides

Arlington Flinn

Edith McCarty

Sheela McLean

## MAKAH VOWELS

- a** sounds like the a in bus, mutt.  
baʔas (house), čapac (canoe)
- a-** sounds like the a in far, father.  
ba-ckʷa-d (fly), kʷa-dis (wild onion)
- e** sounds like the e in set, left.  
cikey (elderberry), weʔič (sleeping)
- e-** sounds like the a in ant.  
čape-ʔi (heart), ʔatkse-ʔi (wood)
- i** sounds like the i in bit, sit.  
čibičibi (mouse, rat), qʷiša (smoke)
- i-** sounds like the ee in bee, feet.  
qidi-ʔ (dog), wi-qsɪ (wind)
- o** sounds like the o in sore.  
dačʔoʔ (seeing), bakowas (store)
- o-** sounds like the o, only it is held longer.  
lišo-l (shawl), quso-ʔi (stomach)
- u** sounds like the oo in hook, took.  
tupkuk (black), huktu-p (bird)
- u-** sounds like the oo in loon, moon.  
cu-ccu-c (scratching), čibu-d (halibut hook)

The English sounds represented above are not exactly equivalent to the Makah sounds. This listing is meant only to give you a rough idea of what the Makah vowels are like.

Remember that the dot (·) after a vowel means basically that the vowel is held for a longer time.

## MAKAH ALPHABET

Here are the letters of the Makah alphabet. Read them by row, not by column.

### VOWELS

|    |    |    |    |   |    |   |
|----|----|----|----|---|----|---|
| a  | a· | e  | e· | i | i· | o |
| o· | u  | u· |    |   |    |   |

### CONSONANTS

|    |     |     |     |      |     |    |
|----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|----|
| ʔ  | b   | c   | č   | č̣   | č̣̣ | d  |
| h  | k   | ḳ  | ḳ̣ | ḳ̣̣ | l   | t  |
| ʔ̣ | ʔ̣̣ | m   | n   | p    | p̣  | q  |
| q  | q̣  | q̣̣ | s   | š    | t   | ṭ |
| w  | x   | x̣  | x̣̣ | x̣̣̣ | y   |    |

### Notes—

A dot (·) after a vowel shows that the vowel is long.

A glottal mark (ʔ) above a consonant indicates that the consonant is glottalized, that is, pronounced with a glottal pop.

A raised w (̣) indicates that the consonant is pronounced with rounded lips.

Emphasis in Makah falls on the first syllable unless the vowel in that syllable is short—then the emphasis falls on the second syllable.

Any consonant which can be rounded which follows a u or a u· is rounded, although it is not spelled that way. For example 'owl' is actually pronounced 'tuḳ̣̣tuḳ̣̣adi' but is spelled 'tuktukadi'.

ʔ represents a glottal stop. It is the movement in the throat used by English speakers when they say "uh-uh", indicating "no". You can practice this movement by saying the vowel sound "ah" and making the sound stop and start, moving only your throat.

ʔada·k

fire



Here are some Makah words beginning with ʔ

ʔiki (son)

ʔakwati·d (eagle)

ʔaha·ha (chicken)

ʔapta (hiding)



The symbol **b** represents the same sound in both Makah and English.  
It is the **b** of **ball**, **bat**, and **bee**.



bita rain

Here are some Makah words beginning with **b** :

bistati (bow)

bu-sbu-s (cow)

babuyak (work)

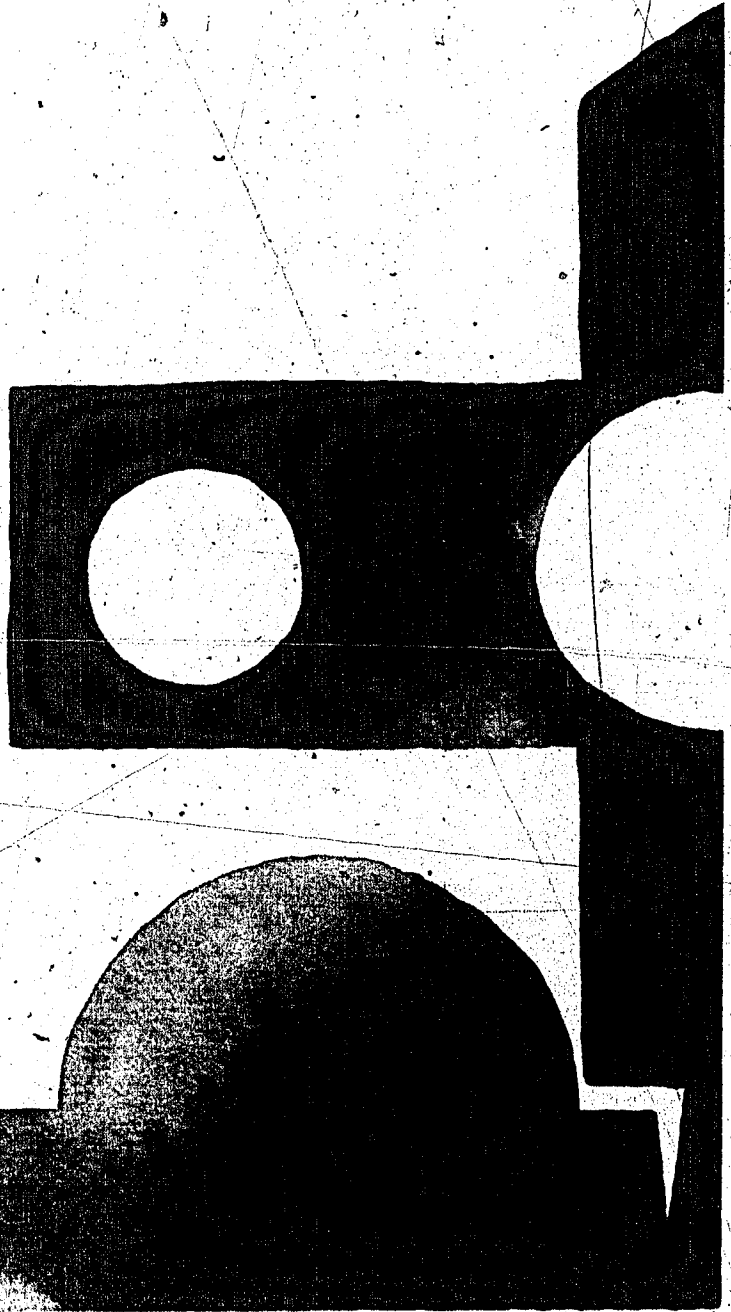
buta-s (short hair)



This letter, c, indicates a sound completely different from the c in English. It represents the sound that you get by pronouncing t and s together as one sound, as in cats, boats or hats.

round

caxwapt



Here are some Makah words beginning with this c :

cu-ccu-c (scratching)

cuba (full)

cu-wit (coho salmon)

cikyey (elderberry)

This letter, **č**, is called a glottalized c. Once again it is like t and s pronounced together, but **č** has a simultaneous catch in the throat, a glottal stop which is released right after the c, giving the sound an explosive effect.

čɪtku-ʔ

dolphin



Here are some Makah words to practice the **č** with :

čakwa-ʔak (one)

čibičibi (mouse)

čakwa-sub (nine)

čɪ-kčɪ-k (wagon)

The wedge c, č, stands for a completely different sound than either c or č. This letter is equivalent to ch in English and represents the first sound in the words chowder, child or chat.

dripping



čáxčáx

Here are some practice words :

čabas (sweet)

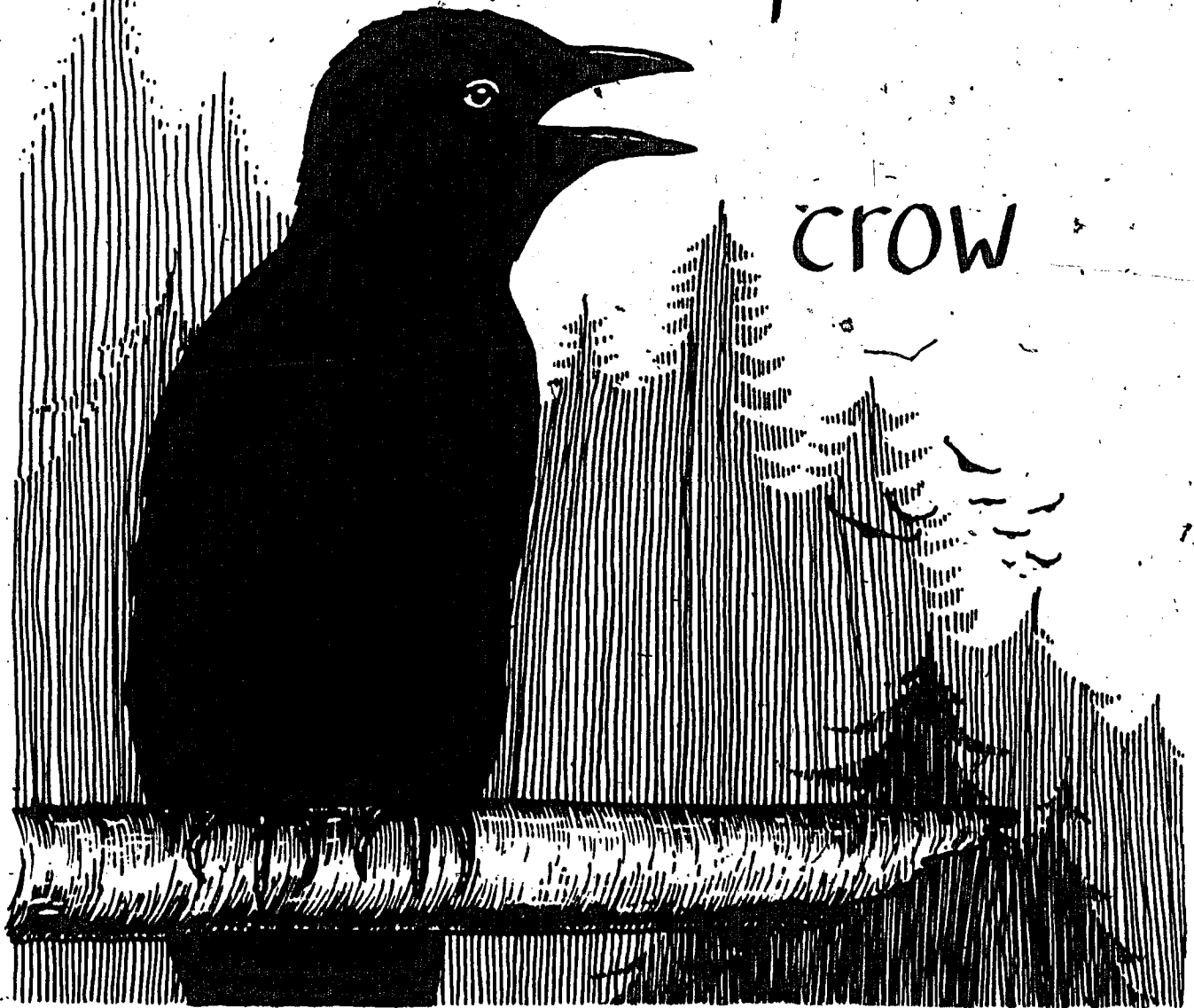
čibu-d (halibut hook)

či-tči-t (sawing)

čaba-cpa (right side)

This is a glottalized wedge c: č̣. Once again we have the English ch sound but glottalized, that is, pronounced with the extra emphasis of a released glottal stop.

č̣a·q̣a·duʔu



These are Makah words beginning with č̣ :

č̣i·ta (digging clams)

č̣aʔak (water)

č̣apac (canoe)

č̣iʔic (butter clam)

The letter d stands for the same sound in both English and Makah.  
It is the first and last sound of the words dad and deed.



dučiči

mountain

Makah practice words :

dudu·k (singing)

daka (sun/moon)

dí·ya (Neah Bay)

dí·č (short)



This letter indicates a sound very similar to the h in the English alphabet as heard in the words he, here and hats.

hitak<sup>w</sup>ad



bow of canoe

Makah words to practice with :

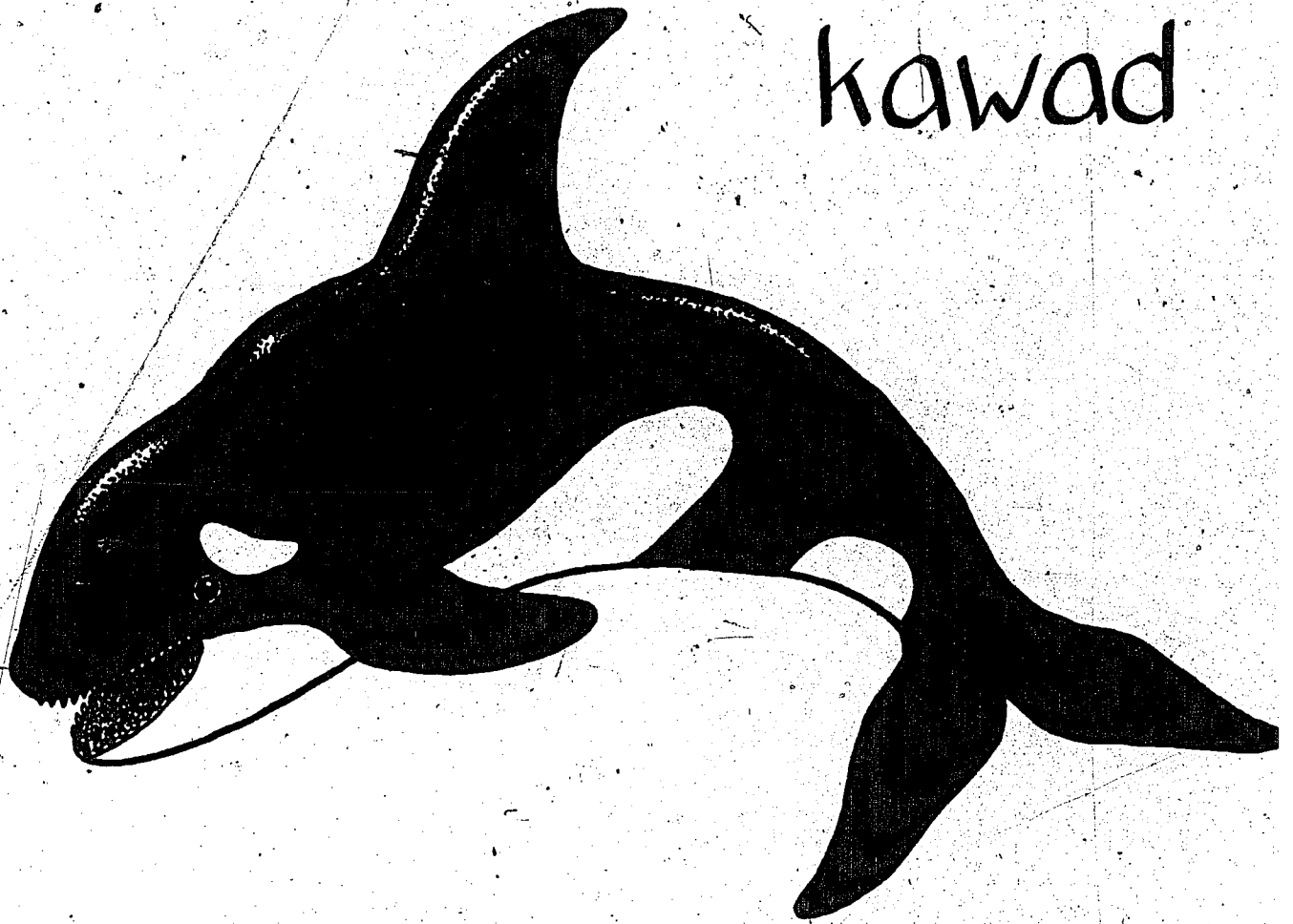
huktu-p (bird)

ha<sup>?</sup>uk (eating)

ha-ha-cic (running)

hiti-d (blanket)

This **k** symbolizes the **k** sound like in the English words **keep**, **kelp**, and **kin**.



kawad

killer whale

Makah practice words :

kala-kali (ankle)

ku-wi-yik (thief)

kiwa-l (horse)

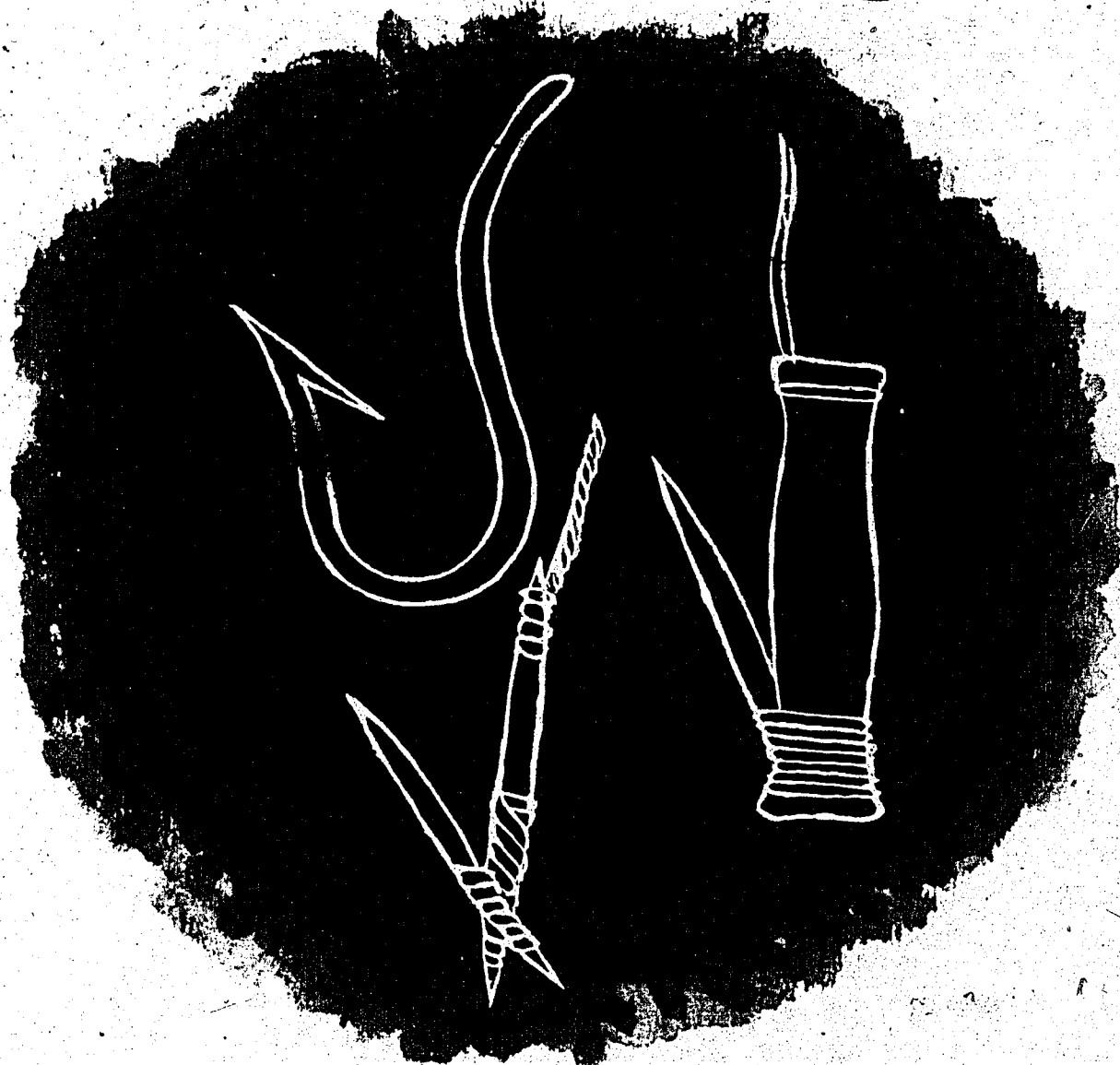
kaca-yak (little snake)



This is a glottalized k; **ḳ**. It has the same k sound as before, but with the glottal or explosive effect mentioned earlier.

hook

ḳuyak



Here are some Makah words beginning with **ḳ** :

ḳatuk (whale or seal oil)

ḳuyak (fish hook)

ḳaka-bakdukub (ring)

ḳaʔak (ashamed)

The rounded k,  $k^w$  is simply a k sound, as in English, only made with the lips rounded, much like the qu in quick.

$k^w a^? ak$

small



Here are some Makah words beginning with  $k^w$ :

$k^w a^? ap$  (bending over)

$k^w a^? dis$  (wild onion)

$k^w a^? ta$  (quarter-25¢)

$k^w a^? uk$  (backing up)

This letter is a glottalized rounded k: ḳ. It shows basically the same sound as before, like the qu in quick, but with glottal emphasis.



ḳiti-ḳitš  
hummingbird

Remember the qu with the emphasis while saying :

ḳisi (snow)

ḳa-čib (poor boy)

ḳaḳʷaqṭi (porpoise)

taḳas (gills)

This letter l, like the l of the English alphabet, represents the first sound of the words long, let and lep.

lu-lapi  
hand



Here are some Makah words beginning with l :

laka-yak (tongue)

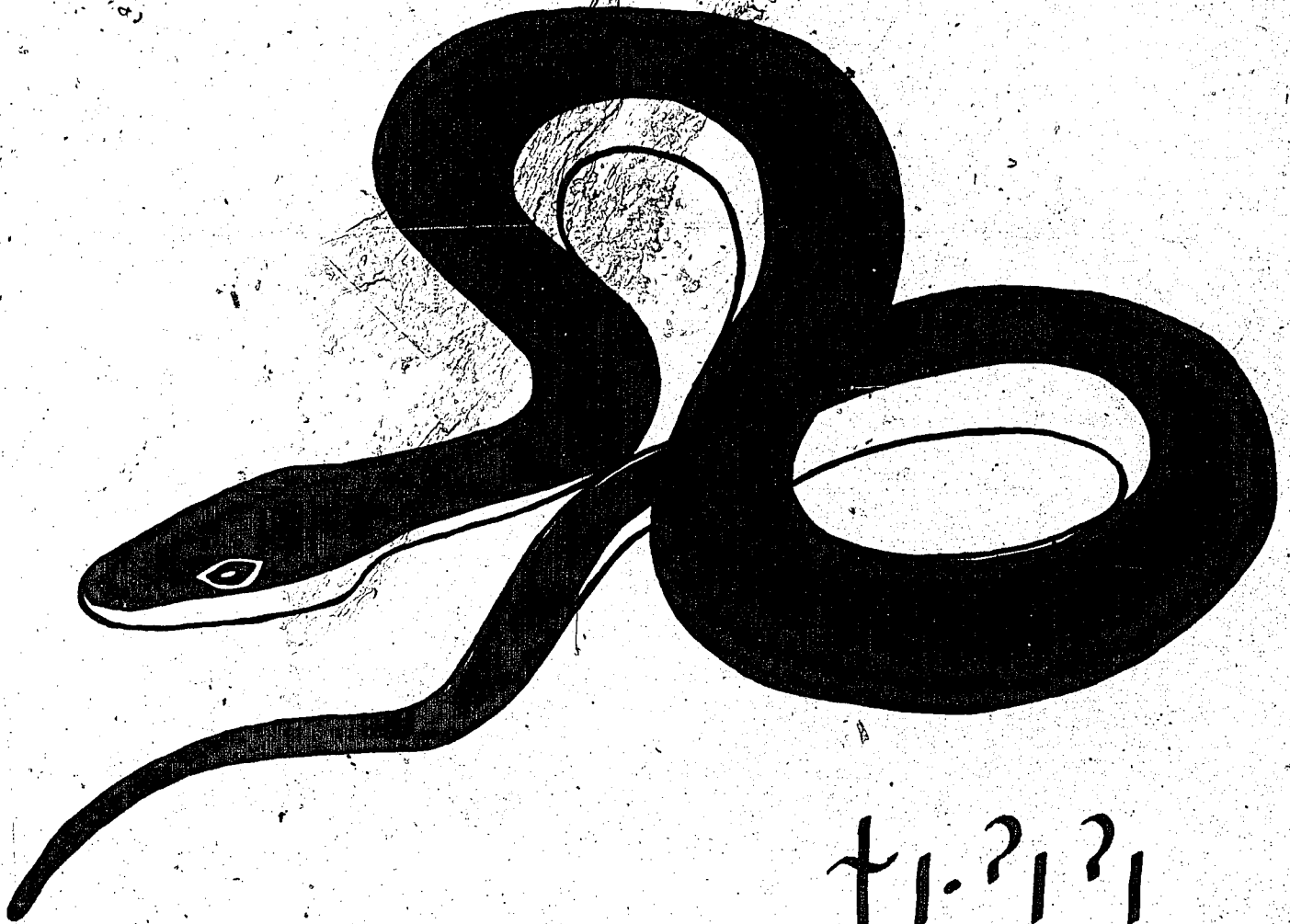
lakčuk (light)

lakča-la-kč (lightning)

libi-tu (lamb)

This is a barred l: ḷ. The sound this letter represents can be made by pronouncing s while holding your tongue in the position for saying an l.

snake



ḷi-?i-?i

Here are some Makah words beginning with ḷ :

ḷiciḷub (rug)

ḷuʔat (board)

ḷa-ḷa-kīt (chewing gum)

ḷa-yi-k (generous)

This is a barred lambda: λ. It expresses a sound like t and l pronounced together as if they were one sound. If the word "clean" started with a t, to give "tlean", the tl would be like a Makah λ.



Practice these words beginning with λ :

λaškatuk (stiff)

λata-wačak (paddle)

λulu (good)

λadit (wedge)



This is a glottalized barred lambda:  $\lambdạ$ . Again we have the glottal action during articulation, giving the  $\lambda$  sound a popped effect.



$\lambdạ$ isuk

white

Here are some Makah practice words with  $\lambdạ$ :

$\lambdạ$ upač (root)

$\lambdạ$ ipsi-ka-d (barnacle)

$\lambdạ$ uča-b (mussel)

$\lambdạ$ aba-s (fat)



meow



This letter m represents the same sound as in the English alphabet, for example the m in moose and in moon. This is a very rare sound in Makah.

grizzly bear

na-ni

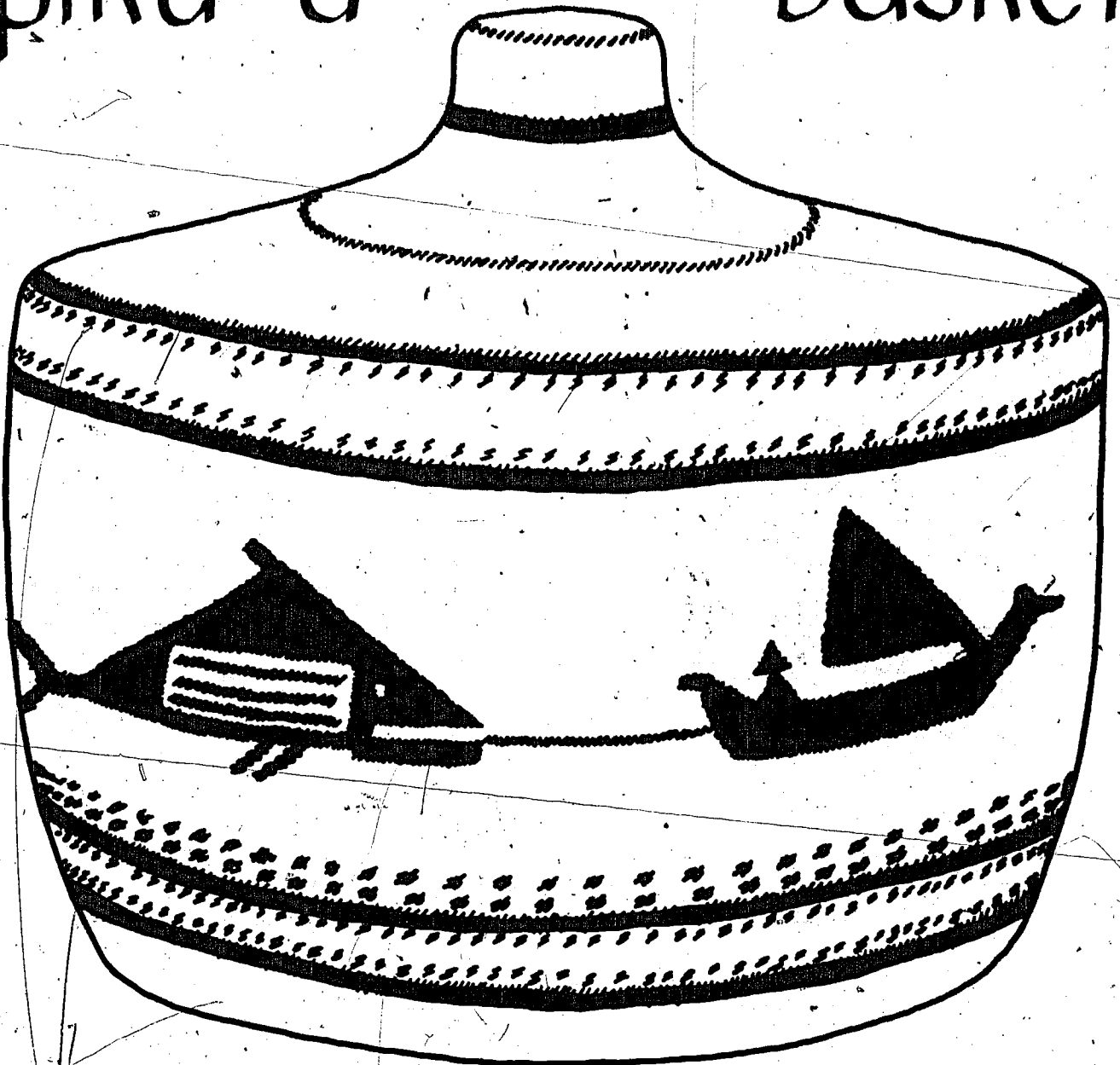


The letter **n** stands for the same sound in both English and Makah. It too is a rare sound in the Makah language, but here is one example: **na-ni** (grizzly bear)

The letter **p**, as in the English alphabet, represents the sound heard in the words **pot**, **pet** and **pop**.

**piku-pu**

**basket**



Here are some Makah words beginning with **p** :

**picup** (inner cedar bark)

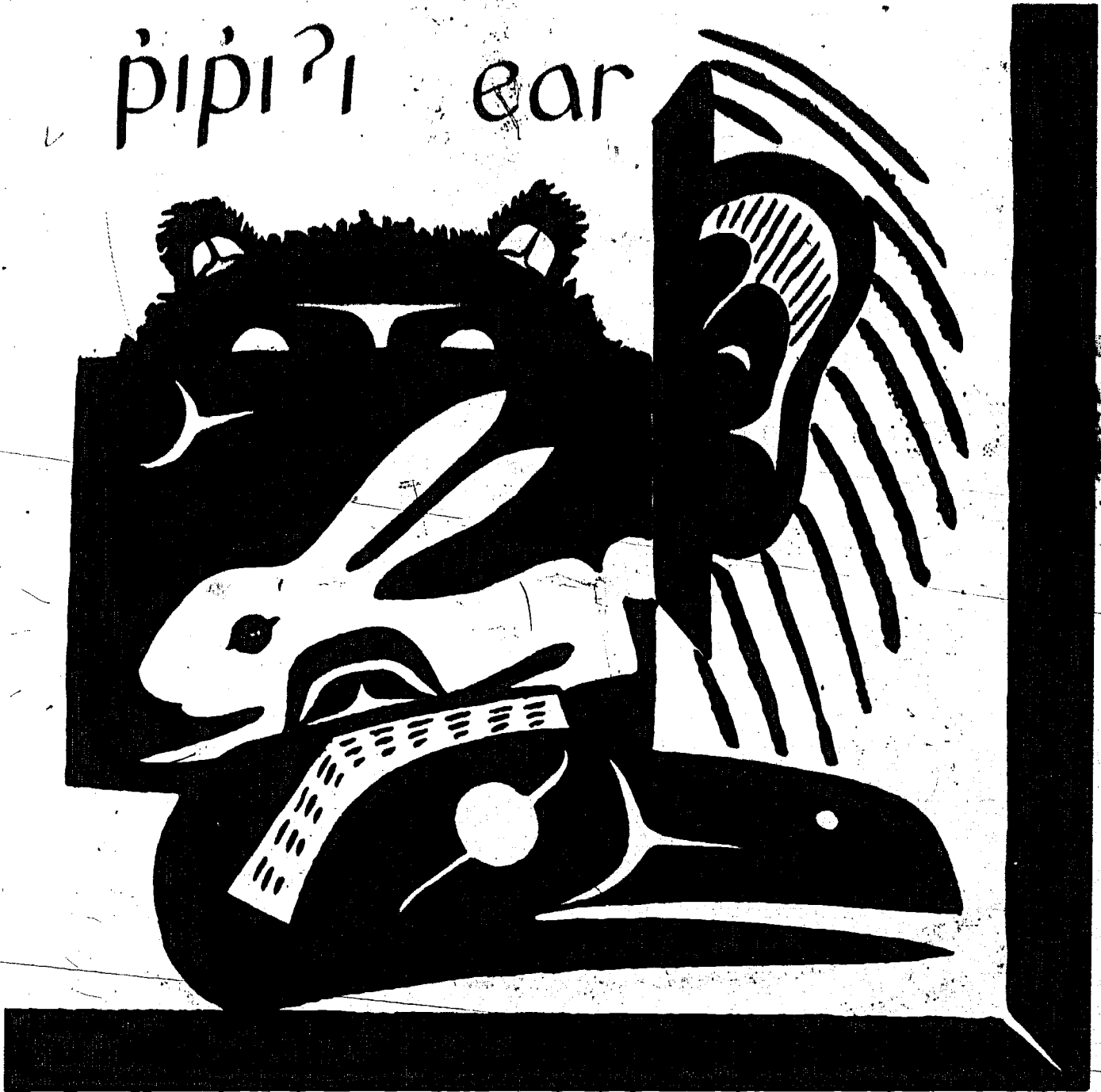
**pisatuk** (moving)

**pu-yak** (gun)

**pu-ku-l** (small crab)

This letter is a glottalized p: p̣. It has the same p sound as before but again with the added emphasis of glottalization.

p̣ipi?i ear



Makah practice words :

p̣ap̣?es (cranberry)

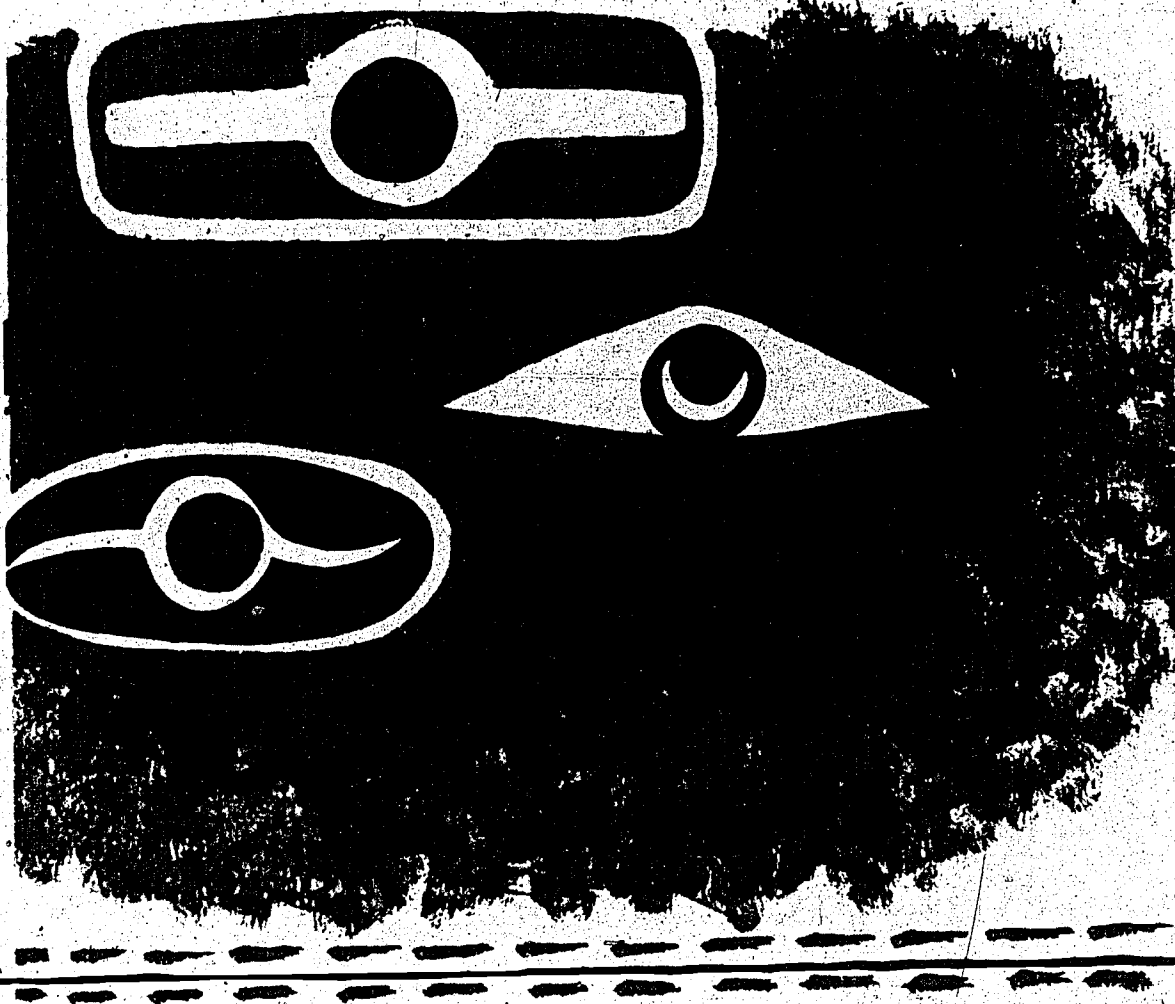
p̣u?up (moss)

p̣aca-bis (foam)

p̣itukut (soft cloth)

The letter q represents a sound which is similar to a k but is pronounced farther back in the throat, more like the sound of c in car and the c in caught.

eye qali?i



Here are some Makah words for practice :

qata (hard or tough)

qalupqi (nettle)

qacpa (left side)

qac̣ak (pin, needle)

The glottalized q, q̣, is a q made with the extra emphasis of glottalization.

dog

q̣idi·x



Here are some words beginning with q̣ :

q̣iq̣ič̣ (eyebrow)

q̣u-y (medicine)

q̣i·ṭi·ʔi-t (feather)

q̣iʔaʔuk (crying)

This letter, the rounded q: q<sup>w</sup> is made the same as the q except that it is produced with rounded lips, similar to the English qu in queer but farther back in the throat.

smoke

q<sup>w</sup>iša



Here are practice words with q<sup>w</sup>:

q<sup>w</sup>i-ʔiqs (in-law)

q<sup>w</sup>acat (attractive)

q<sup>w</sup>aq<sup>w</sup>aca-yad (sounds good)

q<sup>w</sup>išsac (pipe)



The rounded glottalized q,  $q^w$ , is a q made with rounded lips and a glottal pop.

$q^w a \cdot l i s$   
crane



Here are some Makah words which contain  $q^w$ :

$q^w i \check{c} a \cdot k$  (rotten)

$q^w i \lambda a$  (Koitlah Point)

$q^w i t y a \cdot t$  (mink)

$q^w a b a q a k$  (green/yellow)

The **ḡ** stands for the same sound in Makah and English.



su·suk swimming

Practice these words which contain **ḡ** :

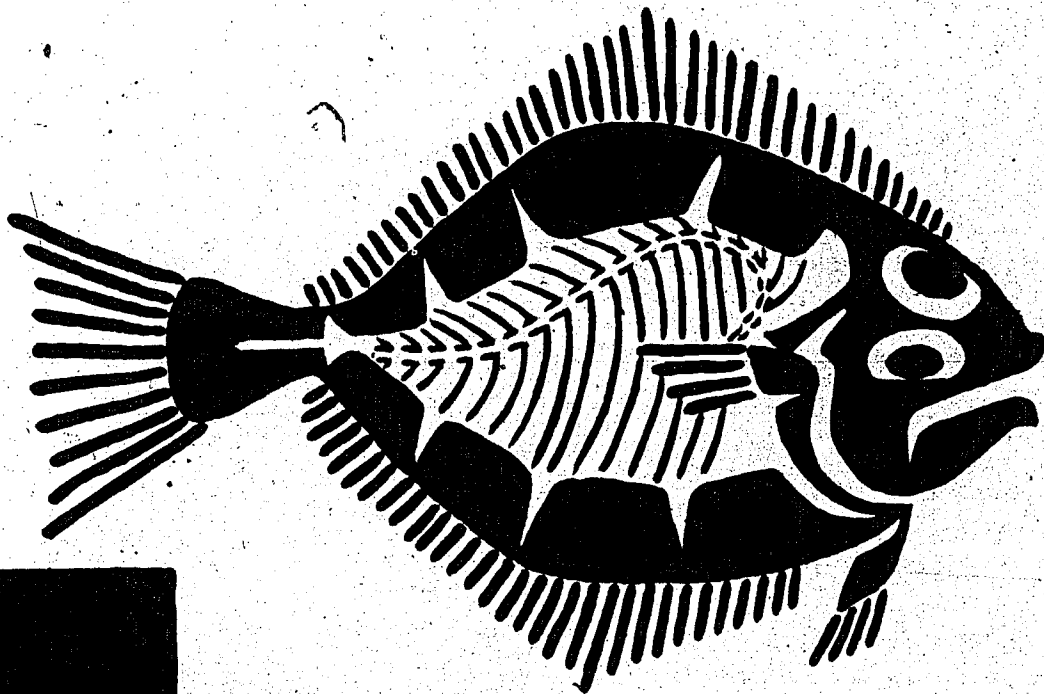
saba·s (shark)

susutkiḡ (shaking hands)

siqi·da·k (cooking)

si·ka (sailing)

The wedge s, š, represents a sound like sh in English. Examples are the sh in shoe and shy.



šuyut

halibut

Here are Makah practice words with š :

šučos (tree)

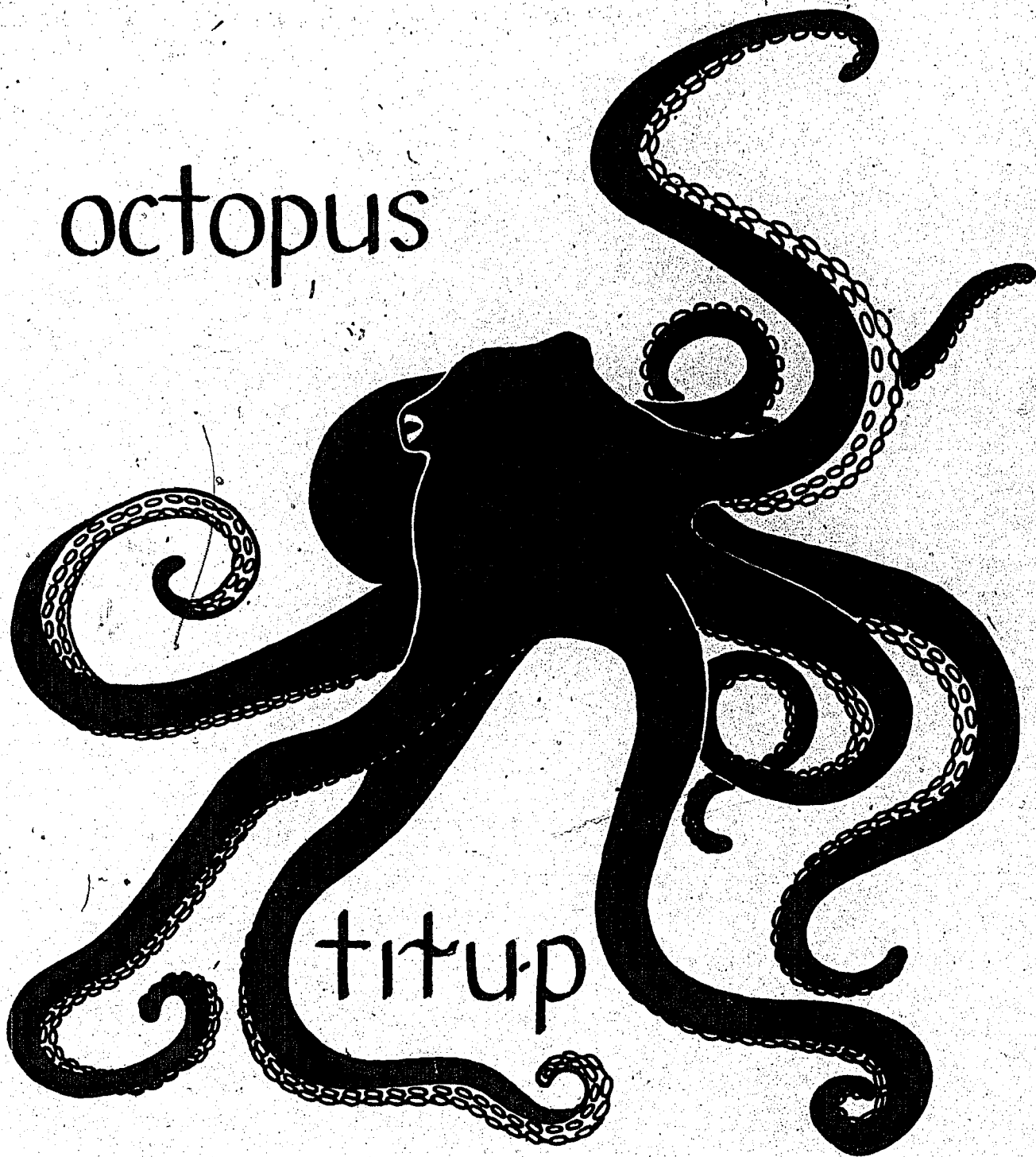
šuyuk (come here!)

šiqi-wod (dress)

šačaqat (sharp)

The symbol t stands for the same sound in Makah as in English.  
It is the sound of t in tall and tickle.

octopus



Practice words:

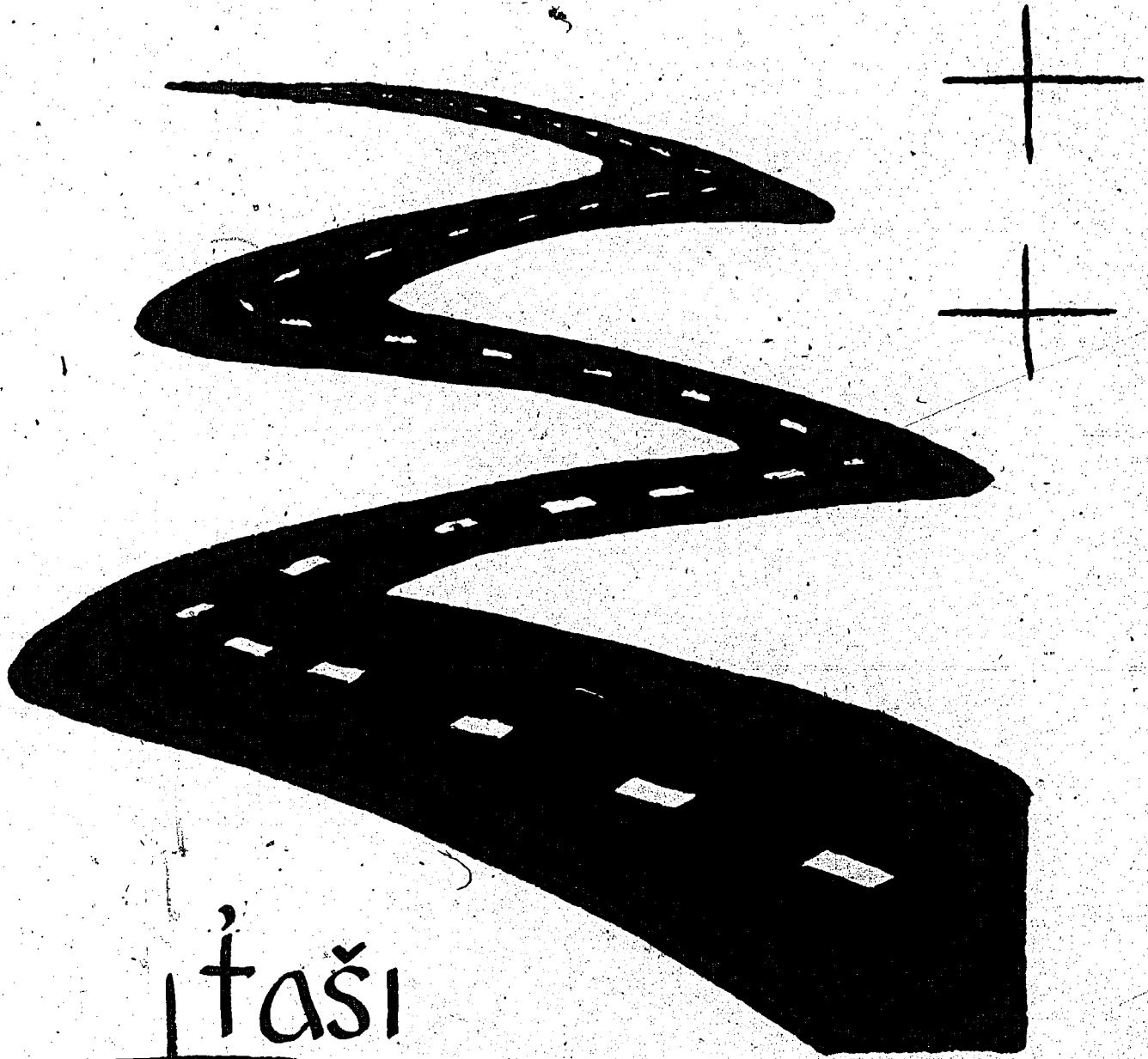
takya-y (oldest brother)

taqšix (squeeze)

tibu-t (skunk cabbage)

tupax (salt, ocean)

The glottal t, ṭ, is a t with the added emphasis of a glottal stop and release.



ṭaši  
road

Practice words:

ṭiʔat (wet)

ṭa-qa (straight)

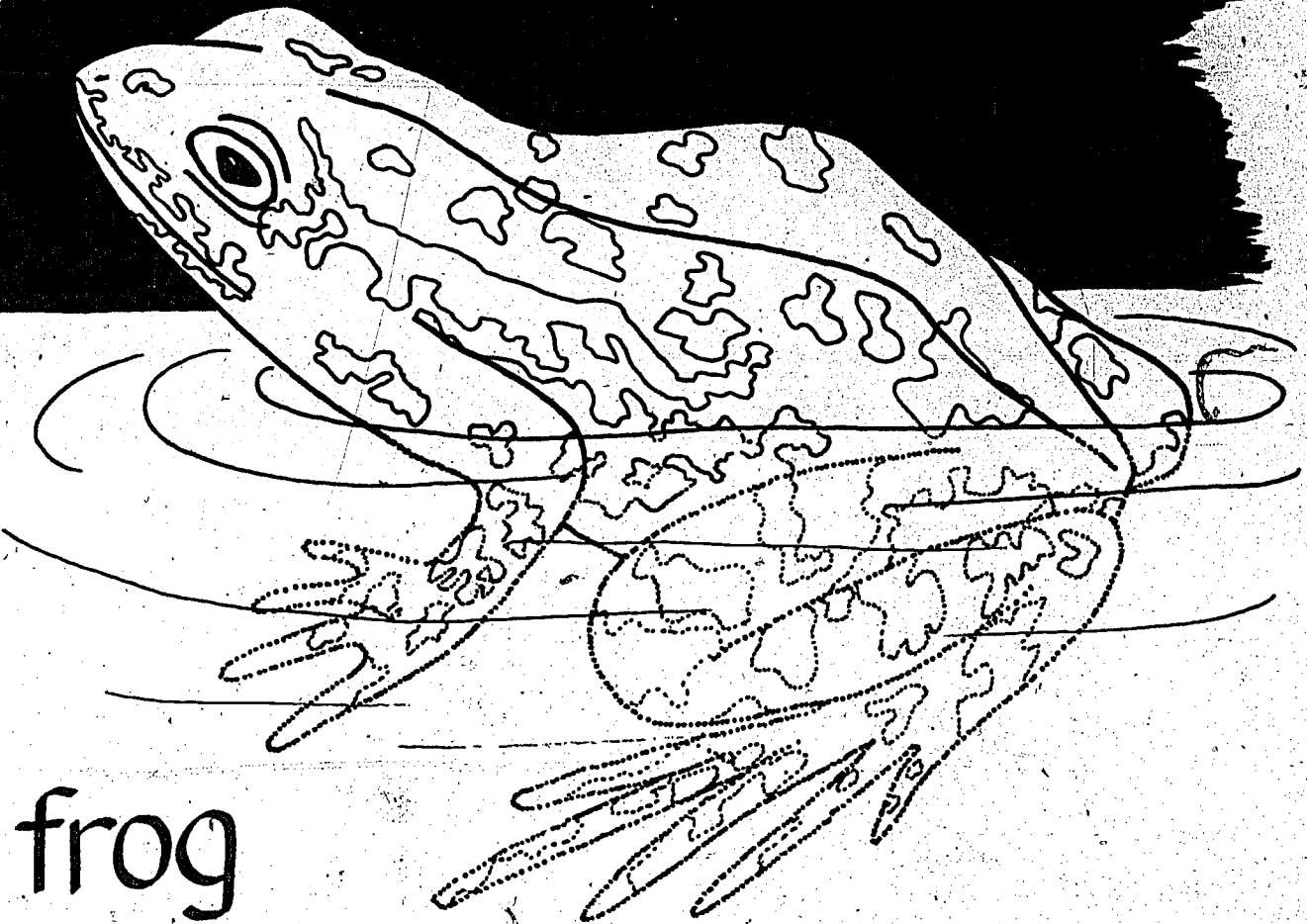
ṭutupčas (rabbit)

ṭakʔas (gills)



The w in Makah is similar to the w in English. It stands for the first sound in the words wild and water.

waqit



frog

Here are some words beginning with w :

wadiš (skirt)

wičq̄i (bald)

wikwi-ya-k (boy)

wiq̄is (dirty, bad)

The symbol **x** in Makah stands for a sound like an h in English but is made with the tongue raised in the middle.

xad<sup>?</sup>ak  
woman



Makah practice words :

xutac (bucket)

xutaqsix̣ (taking a drink)

xad<sup>?</sup>awix̣č (girl)

wipaxbix̣ (nuisance)



The rounded x, xʷ, is an x sound made with rounded lips.



xʷakšit  
swelling up

Practice words :

xʷakšit (swell up)

xʷakos (hill)

qatxʷak (curled up)

caxʷapt (round)

The wedge x,  $\check{x}$ , stands for a sound like the x only made even farther back in the throat.



Practice words :

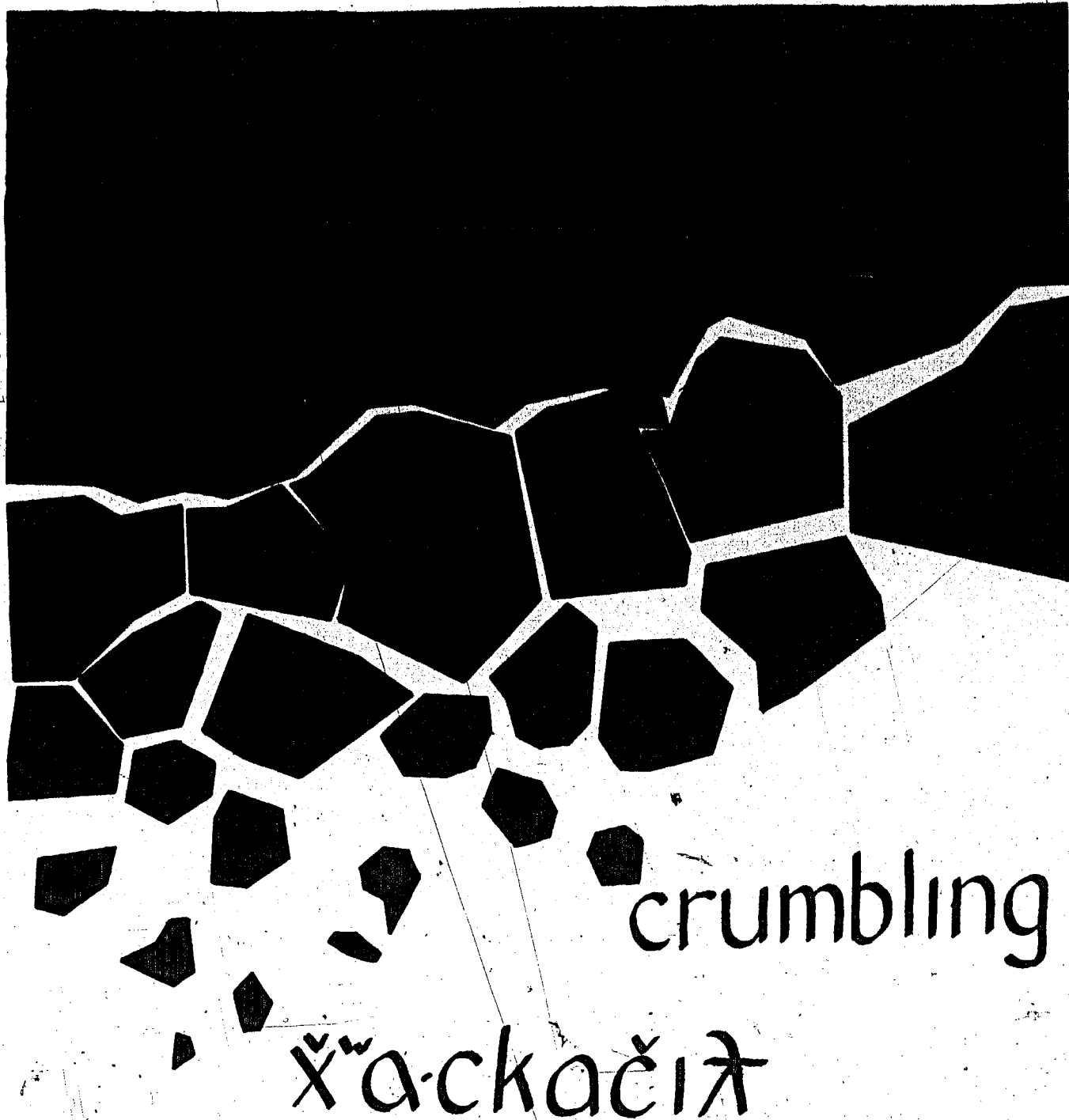
$\check{x}a^?atop\check{x}$  (steamer clam)

$\check{x}a\text{-}ya$  (far)

$\check{x}a\check{x}ap\check{x}t$  (lecturing)

$\check{x}a\check{s}a\text{-}bis$  (bone)

The rounded wedge x, x̣, is made like the wedge x but with the lips rounded.



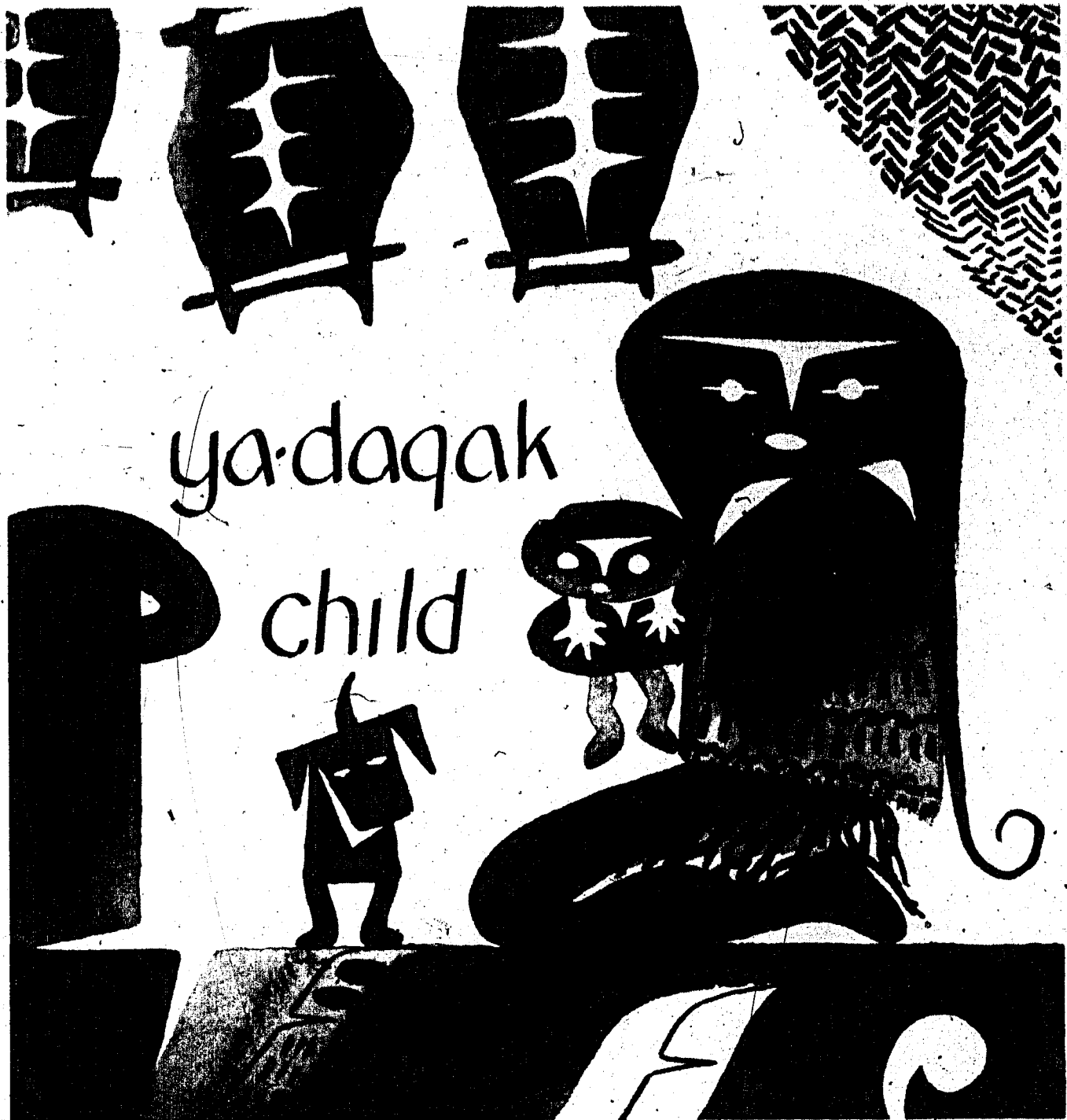
Makah practice words :

ʔi·ʔix̣ (big)

ʔax̣ (ten)

wi·qsiʔx̣adi? (sounds windy)

The **y** in Makah stands for the same sound as the **y** in the English words **yellow** and **year**.



Here are Makah practice words with **y** in them :

yuči-tit (narrow)

yuyubaŋ (wrong)

yu-y (morning)

yu-xlap (floating)

English-Makah Word List

|                     |                                   |                 |                                    |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| ankle               | kala·kali                         | crow            | ča·qa·du <sup>u</sup>              |
| ashamed             | k'a <sup>?</sup> ak               | crumbling       | šwa·ckačix                         |
| attractive          | q <sup>w</sup> acał               | crying          | qi <sup>?</sup> ałuk               |
| backing up          | k <sup>w</sup> a· <sup>?</sup> uk | curled up       | q <sup>?</sup> atx <sup>w</sup> ak |
| bad                 | wiqis                             | digging clams   | či·ta                              |
| bald                | wičqqi                            | dirty           | wiqis                              |
| bark, inner cedar   | picup                             | dog             | qidi·x                             |
| barnacle            | šipsi·ka·d                        | dress           | šiqi·wad                           |
| basket              | piku· <sup>?</sup> u              | drink, taking a | xutaqsix                           |
| bear, grizzly       | na·ni                             | dripping        | čaččač                             |
| bending over        | k <sup>w</sup> a· <sup>?</sup> ap | dolphin         | čičku· <sup>?</sup>                |
| big                 | ?i· <sup>?</sup> i·š <sup>w</sup> | eagle           | ?akwati·d                          |
| bird                | huktu·p                           | ear             | pipi <sup>?</sup> i                |
| black               | tupkuk                            | eating          | ha <sup>?</sup> uk                 |
| blanket             | hiti·d                            | elderberry      | cikyey                             |
| board               | łu <sup>?</sup> ał                | eye             | qali <sup>?</sup> i                |
| bone                | šaša·bis                          | eyebrow         | qiqi <sup>č</sup>                  |
| bow (bow and arrow) | bistati                           | far             | ša·ya                              |
| bow (canoe)         | hitak <sup>w</sup> ad             | fat, blubber    | šaba·s                             |
| boy                 | wikwi·ya·k                        | feather         | qifi· <sup>?</sup> i·t             |
| boy, poor           | k <sup>w</sup> a·čib              | fire            | ?ada·k                             |
| brother, oldest     | takya·y                           | floating        | yu·xłap                            |
| bucket              | xutac                             | fly (insect)    | ba·ck <sup>w</sup> a·d             |
| canoe               | čapac                             | foam            | paca·bis                           |
| chewing gum         | ła·ła·kıt                         | frog            | wa·qıt                             |
| chicken             | ?aha·ha                           | full            | cuba                               |
| child               | ya·daqak                          | generous        | ła·yi·k                            |
| clam, butter        | či <sup>?</sup> ic                | gills           | łak <sup>w</sup> as                |
| clam, steamer       | ša <sup>?</sup> ałapiš            | girl            | xad <sup>?</sup> awšč              |
| cloth, soft         | pıłukuł                           | good            | łulu                               |
| come here           | su <sup>?</sup> uk                | green/yellow    | q <sup>w</sup> abaqak              |
| cooking             | siqi·da·k                         | gun             | pu·yak                             |
| cow                 | bu·sbu·s                          | hair, short     | buta·s                             |
| crab, small         | pu·k <sup>ł</sup> u·ł             | halibut         | šu·yu·ł                            |
| cranberry           | p <sup>?</sup> ap <sup>?</sup> es | hand            | lu·łapi                            |

|                 |                  |                    |               |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| hard, tough     | qata             | pin                | qačak         |
| heart           | čape·?i          | pipe               | qwiššac       |
| hiding          | ?apta            | porpoise           | kʷakʷ?aqxi    |
| hill            | šwakas           | quarter (25 cents) | kʷa·ta        |
| hook, fish      | kuyak            | rabbit             | tutupčas      |
| hook, halibut   | čibu·d           | rat                | čibicibi      |
| horse           | kiwta·l, kibta·l | raven              | xu·kšu·d      |
| house           | ba?as            | right side         | čaba·cpa      |
| hummingbird     | kʷiti·kʷitš      | ring               | kaka·bakdukub |
| in-law          | qʷi·?iqs         | road               | taši          |
| killer whale    | kawad            | root               | xupač         |
| Koistlah Point  | qʷiša            | rotten             | qʷiča·k       |
| lamb            | libi·tu          | round              | caxʷapf       |
| lecturing       | šašapxt          | rug                | řicifub       |
| left side       | qacpa            | running            | ha·ha·čic     |
| light           | lakčuk           | sailing            | si·ka         |
| lightning       | lakča·la·kč      | salmon, coho       | cu·wit        |
| medicine        | qu·y             | salt               | tupař         |
| meow            | ma·w ma·w        | sawing             | či·tči·t      |
| mink            | qʷitya·t         | scratching         | cu·ccu·c      |
| moon, sun       | đaka             | seeing             | dač?oř        |
| morning         | yu·y             | shaking hands      | susutkiš      |
| moss            | pu?up            | shark              | saba·s        |
| mountain        | duči?i           | sharp              | šačaqar       |
| mouse           | čibicibi         | shawl              | lišo·l        |
| moving          | pisatuk          | short              | di·c          |
| mussel          | xuča·b           | singing            | duđu·k        |
| narrow          | yuči·tiř         | skirt              | wadiš         |
| Neah Bay        | di·ya            | skunk cabbage      | tibu·t        |
| needle          | qačak            | sleeping           | we?ič         |
| nettle          | qalupqi          | small              | kʷa?ak        |
| nine            | čakwa·sub        | smoke              | qʷiša         |
| nuisance        | wipaxbis         | snake              | ři·?i?i       |
| ocean           | tupař            | snake, small       | kaca·yak      |
| octopus         | tiřu·p           | snow               | kʷisi         |
| oil, whale/seal | katuk            | son                | ?iki          |
| one             | čakwa·?ak        | sounds good        | qʷaqʷača·yad  |
| onion, wild     | kʷa·dis          | sounds windy       | wi·qsi?xʷadi? |
| paddle          | xata·wačak       | squeeze            | taqřix        |



|              |           |
|--------------|-----------|
| stiff        | kaškatuk  |
| stomach      | quso•ti   |
| store        | bakowas   |
| straight     | ta•qa     |
| sun, moon    | daka      |
| sweet        | čabas     |
| swell up     | xwakšix   |
| swimming     | su•suk    |
| ten          | kašv      |
| thief        | ku•wi•yik |
| tongue       | laka•yak  |
| tough, hard  | qata      |
| trade        | xu?uya•   |
| tree         | šučas     |
| wagon        | ci•kci•k  |
| water        | ča?ak     |
| wedge        | radit     |
| wet          | tiraš     |
| white        | šisuk     |
| wind         | wi•qsi    |
| woman        | xad?ak    |
| wood         | ?atkse•?i |
| work         | babuyak   |
| wrong        | yuyubaš   |
| yellow/green | qwabaqak  |