

Linguistics Challenge

Chickasaw

by Tom Payne, with thanks to Catherine Willmond and Pamela Munro.

Chickasaw is an American Indian language of the Muskogean language family. Currently, there are about 3,000 fluent speakers of Chickasaw, most of whom live in Oklahoma. However, the homeland of the Chickasaw people at the time of the arrival of Europeans in North America was in what is now Alabama and Mississippi. Other Muskogean languages include Choctaw, Alabama, Natchez and Seminole. Chickasaw is most closely related to Choctaw.

Note: The sound represented as *ã* is a "nasalized" vowel. It is pronounced like the "a" in "father," but with the air passing through the nose, as in the French word "ban."

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| 1. Ofi'at kowi'ã lhiyohli. | 'The dog chases the cat.' |
| 2. Kowi'at ofi'ã lhiyohli. | 'The cat chases the dog.' |
| 3. Ofi'at shoha. | 'The dog stinks' |
| 4. Ihooat hattakã hollo. | 'The woman loves the man.' |
| 5. Lhiyohlili. | 'I chase her/him.' |
| 6. Salhiyohli. | 'She/he chases me.' |
| 7. Hilha. | 'She/he dances.' |

Now you can translate the following into Chickasaw. Since the nasalized "ã" is very important in Chickasaw, you must enter it where appropriate. There are several ways you can do this, including just cutting and pasting this -> *ã*. The apostrophe (') in some Chickasaw words is also very important:

The man loves the woman. _____
 The cat stinks _____
 I love her/him. _____

Translate the following into English:

_____ Ihooat sahollo.
 _____ Ofi'at hilha.
 _____ Kowi'ã lhiyohlili.