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A Syllabics Supplement

(writing paragraphs)

Cree

497.3
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CREE
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A SYLLABICS SUPPLEMENT
(writing paragraphs)

A publication of:

Native Education Branch
Manitoba Department of Education
Winnipeg, Manitoba

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FORWARD

The paragraphs contained in this booklet were written by grades seven and eight students attending the Moose Lake School during the 1981 school year, under the direction of their Cree language instructor, Mr. Dan Ehman. It is of interest to note that the students used Cree syllabics symbols to write the paragraphs and then translated them to English. The stories in these paragraphs are local and contain examples of legends, philosophy and tall tales.

Although the Roman orthography is now frequently used in writing Cree and Ojibway (Saulteaux), it is a common belief amongst the speakers of Cree and Ojibway languages that the symbols used in the syllabics writing system best represent the sounds in the Cree and Ojibway languages.

As far as we know, the syllabary was introduced to the Indians of Central Canada during the 1840's by James Evans. Prior to that there was no known written form of their languages other than picture writing which seemingly was used extensively to communicate with one another and to convey ideas.

Hopefully, this booklet will be an encouragement to the speakers of Cree and Ojibway who have been striving to preserve and master the syllabics writing system.

NOTE TO TEACHERS

1. This booklet should be used with students who have a basic knowledge of the alphabet in syllabic form.
2. The objective of this booklet is to get students to read and write in their language using syllabics.
3. In planning a lesson, carefully analyze the paragraph and see which vocabulary the student may find difficult. Drill students with unfamiliar phrases and words. Xerox a copy of the paragraph (syllabics only) you are teaching for each student and follow suggestions as outlined in Discussion and Activities.
4. Have students read the paragraph orally to the class.
5. Point out pertinent grammatical structure, vocabulary, local customs and culture to students.
6. Discuss the story contained in the paragraphs extensively.
7. Get students to write their own paragraphs.
8. Paragraphs and short stories composed and written by students should be analyzed by the class as a whole in terms of grammar, structure, vocabulary, local customs, culture, etc.
9. Get students to research, using local elders, the views, customs and culture heritage of their community.
10. Continue to encourage your students to write stories, legends and materials pertaining to their people, pointing out to them that there is an acute shortage of written materials in Cree and Ojibway.

11. Point out to students that when they begin writing in syllabics, they will have the tendency to write exactly what they are saying. That is, sounds are frequently dropped in rapid speech. This is acceptable when speaking but not in writing. Therefore, stress the importance of spelling out the complete words when writing.
12. Always praise and encourage the student for his work. Any criticism must be constructive.

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MUSKRATS DIDN'T COME BACK

בל"ן

בל"ן ל"א א"ר"ב"ר"ן ס"ר"א"ר"ב"ר"ן א"ר"ב"ר"ן א"ר"ב"ר"ן א"ר"ב"ר"ן א"ר"ב"ר"ן
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VOCABULARY

аууууу	down by the water
ируу	melted
<Аууууу	throwing things at
Аууу	a little bit far, literally

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES:

Why didn't the muskrats come the next year? Talk about the weather and animal cycles, etc.

Write short paragraphs similar to the paragraphs about other such seasonal or enjoyable activities that young people get involved in.

MUSKRATS DIDN'T COME BACK

A long time ago, we used to go down to the lake before all the ice had melted. There were muskrats on the ice and we would throw rocks at them. Donald Easter killed one but he couldn't get it because it was too far from the shore. So he had to throw rocks at it to make it go ashore. One year, the muskrats did not come any more.

Anthony Nasikapow

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W E D D I N G

Δ·Ρ·Ω·σ·Δ·?

▷C ∇Δ·Ρ·Ω·σ·Δ· <<^ρ·ρ·q·Δ· ∇V·Δ·q·λ·r· ∆σ bΔ·Ρ·Ω·r·x
▷r· ∆N·Ω·U·Δ· bσ·Γ·Ω·σ·Δ· ∇^U·σ·Γ·Ω·r·x ∆h·q·Δ· Γ·q >δ·l· C·P·U·Γ·r·x
∇dσ CV ∆N·J·r·P·C·Δ· ∇N·Γ·σ·q·r·x <b·^ Γ·q ΔU J· <^ρ·ρ·q·Δ· Γ·q b·P·q·°
∆σ Ω·C·L· C·Γ·r·r· C·σ·Γ·Ω·r· ∇d C·Γ·σ·q·r·x

∇dσ

VOCABULARY

∇Δ·ρ∩σ<∧	there is a wedding
<∩∩ρρ<∧	start to have fun
	different

DISCUSSION:

The use of ati, meaning the beginning or the starting of something.

WEDDING

When there is a wedding here the people shoot guns outside when the wedding couple come outside. Then they go to the dance hall for dancing. They serve food and everyone can go. After that they really start to have fun and they start drinking. But in other places, they don't shoot. They do all the rest, eating, dancing and drinking.

Agnes Ettawapapow

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L I F E A T C R O S S I N G B A Y

VOCABULARY

LŋʹΔʹ	life
CʹbʹbʹΔʹ	Crossing Bay
CʹʹVσʹ	go and check
ΔC<ʹq	snares
σʹC<ʹʹ	we are riding
∇VʹΔʹ Lq Δʹʹ ΔC CVbVʹʹ	bringing someone over to spend the night
UrʹʹbʹqCΔqʹ	skating
<Δʹqʹʹʹʹ	clearing snow, as for skating
ΛdΔbσΔʹ	visitors

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES:

Write similar paragraphs about the winter season and the seasonal activities that they do, such as skating, skidooing, etc.

Discuss different place names of the area and record what they mean or where the name may have originated.

LI FEAT CROSSING BAY

Life at Crossing Bay is fun. You can do a lot of things. Sometimes we go with my dad to check his snares. We ride at the back of the skidoo in the sleigh. Sometimes we do skidoo riding for fun or we go check our snares in the bush. When we bring somebody to spend the night, we go skating but we have to clear the snow first. We don't get that many visitors but we don't mind, because right now we are busy fixing up the house. That's all I can think of to say about Crossing Bay.

Miriam Lathlin

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I T B E L O N G E D T O T H E I N D I A N S

VOCABULARY

ᠨᠠᠯᠠᠰᠢᠨᠠᠨᠠᠭ manage, run, in charge of

ᠠᠨᠠᠭᠢᠨᠠᠨᠠᠭ engines, may also refer to rules or guidelines, as in this
paragraph

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES:

Associate with the idea of land ownership and discuss how
this has affected the traditional life style of Indians.

Make other paragraphs starting with, "It used to be that.....".

IT BELONGED TO THE INDIANS

Long ago, Indians possessed this land. Now they only own a little of it. They used to hunt whenever they wanted. They didn't have to obey any rules about hunting. But when the white man came, they took most of the land, besides making rules about hunting. Indians long ago were free, but not any more. White man came. They brought trouble to the Indians and they made a lot of rules. They traded with the Indians for things to use. Indians did not give any of the land to the white man. So, it still belongs to us.

Muriel Martin

MOOSE LAKE

VOCABULARY

CV<PC∇·<·\	they will come fishing
C<·<·σ<·\	they will be trapping
bVr<·\	spending the night
▷<·σ<·ρ\	trap line

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES:

Discuss and make maps of various trap lines and fishing areas of the local people. Compare to historical trap lines and fishing areas of the Indians long ago.

MOOSE LAKE

In Moose Lake, they still go fishing and trapping. The fishermen go fishing out in the lake. I don't know if today they are killing lots of fish. When they go fishing they use a skidoo and a sleigh. They leave early in the morning and come back before it is dark. Maybe they kill lots of fish.

Some men go trapping out in the trap line. They go over there and trap and they come home as soon as they are finished trapping. Maybe some men stay at the trap line overnight.

Darlene Ballantyne

A L O N G T I M E A G O

VOCABULARY

ᠳᠢᠨᠦᠳᠠᠨ	possess
ᠰᠢᠨᠠᠵᠢᠨᠠᠵᠢ	going in reverse
ᠰᠤᠵᠢᠨᠠᠵᠢ	running short of
ᠠᠵᠢᠨᠠᠵᠢᠨᠠᠵᠢ	oil or gas engines
ᠰᠢᠨᠠᠵᠢᠨᠠᠵᠢ	fighting or war

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES:

Many prefixes can be added to pano (running) to make other meanings.

Discuss and write about the last statement of the paragraph.

Why? What causes fights? Wars?

Discuss overuse of natural resources and wastefulness of such.

A LONG TIME AGO

One time, a long time ago, people were very poor. They didn't have such a thing as electricity. They lived in old houses. They had no motors of any kind. People worked very hard at that time. Today, things seem to be going in reverse again. People are running out of everything like fuel and oil for machines. It seems like people are prepared to fight over these things today.

Mariam Patchinose

W H A T A R E F R I E N D S F O R ?

VOCABULARY

ԲՇՍԼ՝	your friends
ԲՂԻԻԳՃ.Ձ	secrets
ԳՐՍՀԾՂԴ՝	gossip
Բ.ՕՈՃ՝	they turn to you
ՎԼԻՀԾԺ՝	trouble
ԿՂՆՏԴ՝	patient
ՐԸՎ.Բ՝	sharing
ԴՂՎ.Օ ՐԸՈԲ՝	saying anything, making fun of
ՐԸԲՐԾԵԼՀ՝	very special

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES:

More paragraphs about friends and friendship. Share feelings that friends have, trusts, cares, and mutual interests. What makes good friends? When are friends really friends?

WHAT ARE FRIENDS FOR?

Friends are people you can tell all your secrets to and not expect any gossip. Friends are people who go to you when you are hurt. Friends understand when you are in trouble, and they are very patient with you. Friends are people who share everything they have. Friends are people who never make fun of you. Friends are people you love to be together with. Friends are very special to you.

Rita Clark

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A T A L L T A L E

VOCABULARY

∇∂∞∞	pass the time	σ∞∂∂∂∂∂∂	I was surprised
∇∞∞∞∞∞∞	rustling	∞∂∞∞∞∞∞	he pointed for him
∞∞∞∞	barely	∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞	to cut it down
∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞	scrambling up	σ∞∞∞∞∞∞	to be positive
∞∞∞∞∞∞	catching me	∇∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞	winked at him
∇∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞	shaking it	σ∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞	I was worried
∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞	put heads together	∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞	fell across
∇∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞	making plans	∞∞∞∞∞∞	swimming away
∇∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞	what was intended or planned	∇∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞	roaring angrily and loudly

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES:

Gather or write other such stories or legends about animals in hunting exploits. Have the students try illustrating these stories. Are there moral lessons to be learned?

A TALL TALE

One fine day, I was walking along a creek just to pass the time. Suddenly I heard rustling in the bushes. When I looked around, two bears were stalking me. They looked like they planned to make a meal of me. I took off running as fast as I could go. I just barely managed to scramble up a tree before the bears caught up to me. They growled and shook the tree for awhile, but they couldn't get me. After a time, they put their heads together and made low growling sounds, as if they were making plans. Then one bear went off, while the other remained at the bottom of the tree. I didn't know quite what to make of this. Soon the other bear returned. Was I ever surprised to see he had a beaver with him. The bear pointed at the tree and made signs for the beaver to get busy. The beaver didn't look like he wanted to co-operate, but he appeared to have no choice. Before he started work, he looked up at me, and I was sure I saw him wink. I knew he had some plan, but I didn't know what it was. I was very worried as the beaver completed his task. Soon the tree started falling. The tree fell towards the river, and fell right across the creek. I landed on the other side of the river, safe from the bears. The beaver had saved my life. I hurried quickly towards home, as I saw the beaver dive in the creek and swim away. I could hear the bears roaring loudly in anger as I hurried away.

Dan Ehman

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THE CUSTOM OF
GIVING AWAY MOOSEMEAT

VOCABULARY

◁bUbf'd`	freezer or locker
◁·dLba`	relatives

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES:

This selection presents many examples of how syllables are dropped in rapid speech.

EXAMPLES:

Vd	V4b°	peko	peyako
Λ<C	ΛΓ<C	pimpata	pimipata

Use other examples and make students aware of the correct spelling of words.

Discuss the pros and cons of giving away moosemeat. Is it as effective as long ago when sharing was a way of life among the people? Is there more wastage of resources now? Note that sinew used to be collected from the moose for sewing and the bones were all boiled to make fat or lard. Is this done now?

THE CUSTOM OF GIVING AWAY MOOSEMEAT

Once there was a man who went trapping. First, he looked for a moose. He saw a moose running so he killed it. He buried the moose and went to get it the next day. The man put away some meat in the freezer. He gave some to his relatives. Sometimes the other relatives kill a moose and they return the meat. Some people bought some meat from the man. He kept some for himself. The hide he kept.

Veronica Martin

T H E W A Y I T U S E D T O B E

THE WAY IT USED TO BE

A long time ago in Moose Lake there was no electricity. People used to light their lights with different kinds of lights. There were few houses here. The houses were made of wood from trees and the windows were made of cloth. The stoves were made out of earth and stone as a fireplace. There were a lot of trees around Moose Lake. There were two stores. The people planted their own gardens so they had their own food. They also ate fish, moose, muskrats and ducks. Their weapons were guns. The women made shoes out of moose hide. Money was not used that time.

John Knight

T A L K I N G A B O U T M Y S E L F

VOCABULARY

ፕንገገሩፈፊ	talking about myself
ሪሪፈፊ	my name
ርገሪሪ	my age is
ፈገፊሪሪ	I am named
ፕሪገሪሪ	so they will know

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES:

Everybody should write a paragraph about themselves, writing down their age, their nickname, their interests and history about them.

Count up to the teens. Write them down.

TALKING ABOUT MYSELF

I am talking about myself. My real name is Madeline. I am fourteen years old. I am in the Moose Lake School. My nickname is Comanche. People call me that because they don't know how to say my real name and I don't like it. I like coming to school in Moose Lake because it is fun. But sometimes it is boring in Moose Lake.

Madeline Umpherville

WHAT IS IN THE FUTURE
FOR MOOSE LAKE

VOCABULARY

σbσΓ\	in the future
Γ<↳\	ghosts or spirits
LL↳\	devil
CΠΔΠ'Δσ<Δ'Δ	war or fighting
<bΓ C> δ∇.∞ bΛLΠΓαα° ΔΓ <Δσ- b ΔΓΛLΠΓ↳\	
continue to live well enough as we are now	

SHORT FORM WORDS:

C'Γ	for tansi
<VU	for apetike

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES:

Use this paragraph to discuss the future of the community or village. What predictions can be made based on population growth, resources and development of resources, and so on.

Write similar paragraphs speculating about the future.

WHAT IS IN THE FUTURE FOR MOOSE LAKE

I wonder what it will be like in Moose Lake in the future. Maybe there will be only ghosts here. Nothing has happened yet. None of the people know what will happen. It may turn into a ghost town. Or, it may become a big town. There might be a war. But maybe we will continue to live well enough as we are now. No one knows.

Muriel Martin

T H E G O L D H O R N E D S N A K E

VOCABULARY

∇ρρLσρ ^ʼ	when everything was ready	bΛLCbσ ^ʼ	swimming by
▷<ρC<ρ ^ʼ ▷<▷	their fishing grounds	b ^h Lρ ^ʼ q<σ▷ ^ʼ	raised his head suddenly
ρ ^ʼ ▷σσ<▷<ρL<▷ ^h	fellow fishermen from Cedar Lake	▷ΓU ^ʼ bσ ^ʼ	had a horn
ρL▷<▷ ^ʼ	camped together	▷ ^h <▷Λ ^ʼ	gold
∇CCρρ ^ʼ	all together, as a group	∇bρ<σ<▷ ^ʼ	he dived under
∇ΛL>Uσ ^ʼ	floating on the water	∇NLcb ^ʼ	swimming away
∇<▷▷ρ<σ ^ʼ CP ^ʼ	as they approached it, with motors	∇ρρ ^ʼ ▷Cb ^ʼ	swimming fast
<▷qLρ<σ ^ʼ CP ^ʼ	as they neared it, with motors	∇ρ <▷σ<▷dρ ^ʼ	he lost them, by fleeing
b▷σρC▷qρ ^ʼ	as they recognized it		

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES:

Students should ask elders for other such stories and relate them. Discuss possible explanations for these stories.

How to tell time should be a topic here. Also the numbers in horse power engines should be learned and written down.

THE GOLD HORNED SNAKE

At one time here in Moose Lake fishermen were getting ready to go to their fishing areas at 6:00 a.m. in the morning. By 6:30 they had everything prepared and were ready to leave for their fishing grounds. People from Easterville were also fishing in the same area as Moose Lake, and they got along well. One of the fishermen from Easterville joined up with the Moose Lake fishermen. They had two tents and were camped at the same place. When morning came, the Easterville fishermen went their separate way. As they were riding along in their boat, they suddenly saw something moving along. At first they thought it was only a log drifting in the water. As they got closer they saw something long, and realized it was not a log. As they came very close, they saw that it was a huge snake. On its head it had a gold horn about one foot long. The horn was about three inches thick on the end and got thicker to about five inches at the base, according to these fishermen. They said that the snake's head came up and looked at them. Then its head went low again and it fled. They couldn't catch it, even with their 25 hp. and 35 hp. engines. Every time its head went up from the water, it shone. After they got back to camp, they told all the fishermen about it. They told how big it was, and that it carried a gold horn on its head.

Armando Blair

A S T O R Y F R O M A L O N G T I M E A G O

VOCABULARY

V4d once

▷dσ4L his fish

ρVρ∇·<σ◄·\ they drove home

ΛL∩ρσ' alive

ρΔ·Cbσddⁿ salt pork

ρdⁿdΛρQ\ eyes were startled, the literal expression

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES:

Possible explanation for the salt pork should be discussed. Cleaning the fish was one of this girl's chores. Have students write about their own chores after school.

Suggest using the proper words for mother and father in written paragraphs. These words are already disappearing from the every day language. Stressing that the proper words be used in paragraphs will keep the words alive and maybe back into the everyday language.

Look at the endings of words and look for ones which tell the location, ik or ok.

A STORY FROM A LONG TIME AGO

A long time ago there was a man who fished in Moose Creek. He woke up in the morning and he went to pick up his nets and fish at the creek. There was a storm coming. After he got all his gear ready he came right away to Moose Lake. As he was arriving in Moose Lake, the school was just dismissing. All his children were coming home from there. His daughter ran immediately to where the fish were. She didn't know that the fish were still alive. Her dad was already in the house. She went into the house to get a knife. She started to clean the fish and yet they were still alive. When she slit the jackfish's stomach there was a big salt pork inside. She called her mother and her father to come and look at the salt pork. They were startled to see the salt pork that the fish had swallowed.

Garry Ross

HARDHIP AND PLENTY

VOCABULARY

◁σΓ'Δ'◊	hardship
Γ'ρΔ'◊	plenty
ρ∩Lρ'◊'◊	they are poor
CΛL∩ρ'◊CL'◊	to live for
b ◊ρ'◊'◊'◊	the Creator, literally the one who makes

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES:

There are some good statements made in this paragraph to be used for discussion. An association is made with laziness and poverty. Discuss. Also, "Today there is still much to live on and a man who uses his head (thinks) still has things in plenty", could be discussed. Write similar paragraphs talking about the wise ways and ideas from the elders. Or, write paragraphs about the use of resources, wasteful or saving.

HARDSHIP AND PLENTY

A long time ago, Indians had hard times. When they were lazy, they were poor. But when they weren't lazy, they weren't poor. It still happens the same way today. A person that is lazy is still poor, and a man who works has lots of things he needs, like food. Today there is still much to live on and a man who uses his head still has things in plenty. We always have the things we need all the time. Nobody is poor. The Creator doesn't let anybody be poor because there is still things in plenty. We can still survive if we don't use the things we really don't need, like we often do today. (Today we use many things which are not that necessary.) We can continue to use the things our ancestors used. That's the only way we should think.

Miriam Lathlin

D R I N K I N G

VOCABULARY

ᑭᑎᑕᑭᑭ	payday
ᑕᑕᑕᑎᑎ	where they sell
ᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎ	Sunday
ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ	ran short of
ᑎᑎᑎᑎ	his little sister, or brother

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES:

Discuss morals and write viewpoints. Discuss problems of alcohol within families. Do household budgets. What can alcohol do to the budget or the salary?

List days of the week.

DRINKING

Once there was a man who worked very hard and got paid a lot of money. Every payday he would go to The Pas and go to the liquor store to buy a lot of liquor. Every Sunday he would run out of liquor and money and he would go to his sister's place to eat. His sister would always tell to stop drinking and he always would say he would. Maybe some day.

Doris Cook

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B I G F O O T

VOCABULARY

Γ ^α Π ρ ₄ σ ^ο	big old man
ρd ^α d<σ ^ο	he woke with a start
ρ<.<Γ ^ρ	he saw himself
Γ _α ∇.ρ ^ρ	he was hairy
ρ<.<σ∇<. ^α	they lost track of him
<C ^α	pelts
Γ ^α ΠρC	big footprints
Γ ^α C ^α	eventually

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES:

Have students search for similar stories about a hairy man and compare them. Discuss possible explanations.

Look at the prefixes and suffixes of words and explain the grammar.

BIGFOOT

Long ago, there lived a big old man. He lived alone in his cabin. He was a trapper. Everyday he killed beaver, muskrats and fox. Then he would go sell the pelts. One night he woke up with a start. He discovered that he had a hairy body. He fled from his cabin because he was so scared. He ate moose and bear. The people lost track of him when he did not come and sell any more pelts. Then, the people started noticing big footprints. This was the hairy man. Eventually, the bigfoot left the area.

Albert Genaille

L O N G A G O

VOCABULARY

ᑭᑭᑭᑭ just

ᑭᑭᑭᑭ cedar

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES:

Discuss and write about life long ago, what it may have been like and was it better.

What are young people doing now?

LONG AGO

Long ago people had to kill animals for clothing. They used to kill deer, moose and buffalo. They made their houses out of wood, animal skins and grass. They made their boats out of wood and birch-bark. Some of them used cedar. In the winter they lived in the bush and in the summer they lived in the open where there are hardly any trees. Some people are still using canoes like that in far away places. Here now, they use aluminum canoes for travelling long distances.

Now, the old people kill fish, moose and muskrats for food.

Anthony Nasikapow

W E N D I G O , A L O N G T I M E A G O

