



# LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION PROJECT HANDBOOK

Timiskaming First Nation Culture Department

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## Part I: Welcome, Purpose, and Project Overview

### 1.1 Welcome and purpose of the handbook

This handbook was created to guide participants in the Timiskaming First Nation Language Revitalization Project as you learn, document, and share Anishinābemowin. It provides an introduction to how the program works, what tools and methods are available to be used, and how these connect to the overall community goals for language revitalization.

In addition to documenting the language, this program will also introduce you to, and encourage you to use, the Mentor–Apprentice approach. This approach is based on learning the language through its use--that is, through listening, observing, and speaking with language speakers (your Mentors) in everyday contexts. This handbook will help you, the Apprentices, understand the structure of the language while learning to collect, organize, and use language data in a way that will be of benefit to the community both now and in the future. The goal is for you to develop both confidence in speaking and a growing awareness of how the language works.

You will also find guidance on how documentation supports revitalization, which will also be a part of this program. Making recordings of your work and helping to organize and archive materials will help to bring the language back to TFN as well as serve the community for years to come. The documentation that you make while on your own language journey will help others in the community to begin or continue their own language journey. The handbook links this individual and work with larger efforts such as the Rapid Word Collection project, community gatherings, and our future immersion work, with speakers, learners, and community coming together to share progress and shape the next steps.

This handbook is meant to support you and the TFN community in strengthening Anishinābemowin through learning, collaboration, and long-term care for the language.

### 1.2 The Timiskaming First Nation Language Revitalization Project

The long-term goal of the Timiskaming First Nation Language Revitalization Project is to restore and strengthen Anishinābemowin within the community. The language has been in decline due to historical pressures from English and French, as well as the lasting impacts of the Timiskaming Day School, which did not close until 1991.

Language is intergenerational: it is passed from caregiver to child, and the language a child is exposed to in their early years becomes their “mother tongue.” This means that to fully

revitalize Anishinābemowin, we must focus not only on creating opportunities for learning in the present but also on ensuring that future generations have access to the language.

We are at the very beginning of this journey, so our immediate work focuses on building the tools and opportunities for community members to engage with the language. This includes not only providing resources for learning, such as lessons and materials, but also creating spaces to actively use and practice the language.

To develop these tools and opportunities effectively, we must ensure access to the language as it is spoken today, not just its words and meanings, but also the ways in which the language is used. Because there are only a small number of speakers remaining, it is vital that we document their knowledge, so their voices can continue to guide the revitalization process even after they are gone. This is why documentation is a central and foundational component of our revitalization efforts.

### 1.3 Community Roles in Language Revitalization

Language revitalization at Timiskaming First Nation must be a community-wide effort. Every member plays a role in supporting the preservation, growth, and use of Anishinābemowin. While individual programs and program participants are key contributors, the strength and success of the project depends on the participation and support of the entire community. The community can support this effort in several different ways:

1. **Sharing Knowledge and Stories**

Community members contribute words, phrases, stories, and cultural knowledge. These contributions allow language documentation, create meaningful connections to the language and culture, and provide learning opportunities for everyone.

2. **Supporting Learners and Language Workers**

Community members should encourage participation, attend events, mentor, or simply help to create a welcoming environment which will help learners engage with the language. Your support strengthens documentation, programs, and activities, and reinforces the value of language use in daily life.

3. **Providing Feedback and Guidance**

Community insight shapes language revitalization efforts. By suggesting topics, themes, activities, and priorities, you help ensure that programs and materials reflect community needs, and interests.

4. **Cultural and Contextual Insight**

Beyond individual words, the community shares knowledge of the land, history,

traditions, and culture. These understandings help everyone learn the language as it is lived and used in daily life.

It is important that learners and program participants recognize that your work documenting, learning, or using the language is part of a larger, interconnected effort. Every word recorded, story documented, or conversation held contributes to the project's long-term goal. Community gatherings and events are opportunities to share work, learn from others, and see how your contributions fit into the bigger picture. Active engagement now will build a strong foundation for future language programs, resources, and initiatives, benefiting both current learners and the next generation.

In short, language revitalization is a shared responsibility. Learners, program participants, and all community members together work to create a living, growing language ecosystem that strengthens Anishinābemowin now and for generations to come.

## 1.4 How This Handbook Is Organized

This handbook is designed to guide community members, apprentices, and anyone involved in the language revitalization project through beginning the work of learning, documenting, and using Anishinābemowin. It is structured to reflect the starting point in the revitalization process, from ensuring we have the materials we need to do the work now and in the future, to beginning to use it in everyday life within the community.

The handbook is organized into six main parts:

1. **Welcome, Purpose, and Project Overview** – Introduces the vision of the Timiskaming First Nation Language Revitalization Project, explains its long-term goals, and outlines the beginning of the revitalization process.
2. **Ethics, Responsibility, and Data Governance** – Explains the principles and practices that guide all language work, including the Seven Grandfather Teachings and OCAP principles, and shows how they shape the project.
3. **Documentation Basics** – Highlights the importance of documenting the language today as a foundation for revitalization, and provides guidance on tools, methods, and workshops used in the work.
4. **The Mentor–Apprentice Method** – Describes the Mentor–Apprentice approach as one way to practice and use the language, including session structure and techniques.

5. **Overview of Anishinābemowin** – Offers an introduction to the language itself, including foundational grammar, practical examples, and guidance for learning from fluent speakers.
6. **Mādjādān! (Program Information)** – Provides information on specific programs, events, and opportunities to engage with the language in practice.

Each part of this handbook is meant to be used together, but you can also focus on the sections that apply to your current role or interest. The goal is to give you both the tools to engage with the language now and the context to support future generations.

## Part II : Ethics, Responsibility and Data Governance

Before we begin outlining the overall processes of documentation, it is essential to first establish the principles that guide how we collect, store, protect, and steward the language we collect, and the materials that we create as a result of this collection. A strong data governance framework ensures that all work done in the community aligns with Anishinābeg values and with the Nation’s rights to ownership, control, access, and possession of its own language and traditional knowledge.

### 2.1 The Seven Grandfather Teachings

All language work in this program is guided by the **Seven Grandfather Teachings**. These teachings will guide how we relate to one another, how we conduct ourselves, how we share knowledge, and how we make decisions. These teachings are interconnected in that each one strengthens the others, and none should stand alone. Each one of these is given in Anishinābemowin, below, together with how these will apply to our program.

- **Debwewin**                      **‘truth’**  
     debwe                      -                      win  
     truth    the way something is done

To speak our own truths, but only for ourselves; to not speak for another. Honor the truth and ensure that research translates into action without causing harm.

- **Tabasnidizowin**            **‘humility’**  
     Tabasnid                      izo                                      win  
     to think humbly            to be a state                      the way something is done

To not place ourselves above that which sustains us, i.e., above each other or Creation. Humility is recognizing that we are part of nature and equal to one another. Approach research with humility and avoid preconceived expectations.

- **Manadji’idiwin**            **‘respect’**

Manadji	idi	win
To go easy on someone	reciprocal	the way something is done

To give ourselves and each other the room to make mistakes. Respect the diversity of all individuals and their experiences and knowledge. This program creates safe learning spaces where all voices are welcome, and where different learning speeds, abilities, and backgrounds are honoured without judgment.

- **Sagi’idiwin**                      **‘love’**  
Sag                      idi                      win  
To flow out      reciprocal      the way something is done

Conduct research with kindness for the benefit of all. To act reciprocally towards each other and towards Creation.

We recognize that language learning is an act of love toward oneself, family, and ancestors, and we will work to centre love for the language and the people by uplifting speakers and working for future generations.

- **Gweyākwādiziwin**      **‘honesty’**  
Gweyāk                      wādizi                      win  
Correct/straight      s/he lives                      the way something is done

We will work to build trust-based relationships with each other and with the community as a whole. For example, we will acknowledge when we have made an error in a document or recording and correct it openly. We will communicate openly with the community about what we can realistically do, rather than over-promising or working in secrecy.

- **Sōginijiwin**                      **‘courage’**  
Sōgin                      iji                      win  
to be solid, strong      to be in a state                      the way something is done

Courage allows us to face challenges with bravery and use our strengths to handle difficult situations. To have the courage to participate in research and speak the truth.

- **Nibwākawin**                      **‘wisdom’**  
ni                      bwā                      ka                      win  
I/me                      to see                      much                      the way something is done

Wisdom is embedded within the language itself and within each person contributing. This means we will include the community and value the diversity of community knowledge as essential to the revitalization process. We will commit to long-term revitalization work even

when the tasks feel daunting as the work is for the good of the community as a whole, as well as for each individual within it.

These traditional protocols shape our data governance model and our interactions with each other and the language. They are paired with OCAP principles which compliment the protocols within a non-Indigenous governance framework.

## 2.2 OCAP Principles

**OCAP** is an acronym which stands for **Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession**, and is a First Nations–led framework for governing data, knowledge, and information. Created by the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC), OCAP asserts that First Nations have the inherent right to:

- **Ownership:** The community collectively owns all data about themselves, including recordings, transcriptions, curriculum materials, images, and knowledge shared in the course of this project.
- **Control:** The community determines how data is collected, used, stored, managed, interpreted, and shared.
- **Access:** The community has full access to its data at all times and decides who else may access it.
- **Possession:** The community physically holds the data and maintains custody to ensure its protection.

OCAP protects the rights of the Nation over its cultural and linguistic materials. It prevents misuse, misrepresentation, extraction, and external ownership of Indigenous knowledge.

## 2.3 Why OCAP Matters in Language Work

Language work often involves recordings of language speakers, stories, teachings, cultural knowledge, and community history. Without OCAP:

- individuals or partners from outside the community could claim ownership;
- materials could be stored outside the Nation and lost or misused;
- consent could be ignored or overridden;
- future generations could lose access to their own language materials.

OCAP ensures that all language work strengthens the community rather than fragmenting it or giving control to outside entities.

## 2.4 Applying OCAP in This Program

In this specific language revitalization program, all participants, staff, researchers, students, volunteers, and collaborators, regardless of whether they come from inside or outside the community, are required to work under OCAP.

This means:

- Any materials they create *as part of the TFN language revitalization program* belong to the entire community, not to the individual who produced them.
- No one may remove, claim, publish, store, or use the data outside this program without formal community authorization.
- Materials cannot be withheld, privately stored, or controlled by a single individual.

By participating in this program, individuals agree that all language work produced through this project will be owned, controlled, accessed, and possessed by the community as a whole in following the Seven Grandfather Teachings and the protocols of OCAP. This ensures continuity, protects community rights, and keeps the work centred on the wellbeing of future generations.

Please be sure to sign the acknowledgement to this agreement, which is given as a separate document, and will be stored as a digital copy on the community language machine as well as a hard copy at the Cultural Centre.

## Part III: Documentation Basics

### 3.1 What is language documentation?

Language documentation is the creation of records of a language in the forms of audio, video, notes, transcriptions, and translations. These recordings include not only the pronunciation of words and phrases, but stories, conversations, giving instructions, singing, joking, teaching, or simply talking naturally. These recordings are prepared, analyzed, and stored in order to:

- Create a lasting record of a language before it is no longer spoken, or before it changes significantly.
- Make the language data usable to the community, speakers, and educators.
- Offer resources for community members trying to learn or revive their language

Language documentation is extremely important for languages which are at risk, including Anishinābemowin.

### 3.2 Why we document and how it supports revitalization

Language documentation is a foundational component of long-term revitalization. It provides the raw material (sometimes just called “data”) that current and future learners, teachers, and educators need in order to build language programs, curriculum, and community resources. Having this data allows us to be able to create lessons, examples, dialogues, pronunciation guides, and teaching materials for the community, and to understand how speakers actually use the sentence structures, vocabulary, and tell stories. Having a record of all of these will help to shape additional programming needs in the future, such as immersion programs.

Documentation captures not only the language, but the stories, teachings, humour, and ways of speaking of individuals that cannot be recreated later. It aims to capture part of who someone is through their language use. As such, when a community owns and controls its documentation (as outlined in OCAP, above), it protects the language, protects speaker dignity, and ensures that cultural knowledge stays where it belongs.

Finally, the documentation will ensure that even if language work shifts directions over time, young people (both now and the young people a generation from now) will have access to their language, even if they are not ready now, and even if there are fewer speakers in the future.

### 3.3 Overview of the tools used for the Language Documentation program at TFN

Documentation of the language can occur on your own without needing to use Anishinābemowin. However, we recommend the use of as little English or French as possible, and we **especially encourage** the use of the Mentor-Apprentice Method and the techniques outlined in Parts IV and V, below. Recordings of your interactions with language speakers **is** language documentation and will be used to create materials and programs. This section will give you an introduction to the different tools we will be using to record and archive the language. Although you will need to know the basics of the Living Dictionaries language platform, you don’t need to use each one of the other tools; for example, you might find that you are most comfortable recording video at community gatherings rather than working within the dictionary software. What matters most is that the language is recorded and that it makes its way either into the Living Dictionary, or onto the community language computer which will serve as the overall archive. Once it is there, it is safe, and it can simply stay there until it can be fully transcribed and analyzed, whether by you or someone else.

### 3.3.1 Tascam Ultra-Compact 32-bit Float Audio Field Recorder With Lavalier Mic



This is an MP3 recorder with a very small microphone. The controls are on the side of the recorder. Both the recorder and the microphone can be clipped onto clothing to keep your hands free for other documentation. These recorders are often used to record language speakers all over the world and produce excellent recordings. You will not need to worry too much about the volume of your speaking or background noise. However, there are several things to keep in mind when using this recorder. First, you will need to decide if you want to make **one** long recording or **several** shorter recordings. If you want to make one long recording, you can simply hit “record” and let the recorder run. However, if you want to make several shorter recordings, you will need to stop it and start it repeatedly. Making shorter recordings is better for individual word and phrase collection. Longer recordings are better for stories, or when you are simply having a conversation with a speaker. This leads to the second thing to keep in mind: there is only one microphone on this recorder. If you are having a conversation, or there is more than one speaker, you will have to ensure that the microphone moves between those who are speaking. The MP3s produced from this recorder will have to be saved on a laptop in order to be imported into the Living Dictionaries software. You will then also need to make sure you enter the correct metadata for your session (see below).

### 3.3.2 Video Camera

The Vetek video camera produces MP4 video files as well as still photos (jpg format). In addition, the camera has some distinct features that may be useful:

- This camera is equipped with an infrared night vision function, which allows you to take clear photos and detailed videos at night or in dark places. These videos will not be produced in colour, only in black and white.
- This camera comes with a remote control so you can set it down somewhere or attach it to a tripod and then use the remote to begin filming.
- You can use the pause feature to stop recording without starting a new file.
- You can connect this camera to a laptop computer via the included USB cable and use it as a webcam. YouTube camera has a PC webcam function, and plugging the USB cable in will select the webcam option.

Videos will need to be downloaded onto a laptop in order to be added to the Living Dictionary software.

### 3.3.3 Photos and Notes

Photos and field notes are essential components of high-quality language documentation. They capture the context in which recordings are made including who is involved, what activities are taking place, and the cultural or environmental setting that shapes each speech event. This contextual information strengthens the long-term value of your materials: it helps future learners, teachers, researchers, and community members understand how language was used at the moment it was recorded, and it preserves details that may otherwise fade from memory.

Photos and notes should be entered into the Living Dictionary software where possible, ensuring that this contextual information is linked directly to the recordings it belongs to. Hard copies can also be left in the language room at the Cultural Centre.

### 3.3.4 Living Dictionaries Platform

Living Dictionaries is language documentation framework created in 2006 by the Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages, a non-profit organization located in Salem, Oregon, USA. The framework is a free online tool that helps communities record, organize, and share language in a simple and interactive way. Each entry allows for words, translations, example sentences, audio, images, and videos so that we can record real language use from our speakers.

An Algonquin dictionary has already been set up for Timiskaming, and it can be used on any device including a computer, smartphone, or tablet. You don't need any special software, and everything you enter can be managed directly from your device. This means you can record and enter language data anywhere, even in the community or at home.

In addition, the Algonquin Living Dictionary allows us to work in both English and French, allows us to write how a word is said phonetically, and allows us to add additional information to each entry, including parts of grammar, and semantic categories. You can find out more about Living Dictionaries at <https://livingdictionaries.app/about>, but you will need to be added as a Collaborator in order to be able to use the dictionary.

Here are some basics on how to use the software, but training will also be provided.

#### **Living Dictionaries**

##### 1. Signing In

Click the "Sign In" button in the top-right corner of the screen. Once signed in, you'll be able to create, edit, and manage dictionary entries.

## 2. Adding an Entry

To begin building your dictionary, click the blue “Add Entry” button. A pop-up will appear prompting you to enter a Lexeme, Word, or Phrase. This is the only required field. We will only be working with words or phrases for now.

## 3. Phonetic Transcription

Next, enter a phonetic transcription of the word. For now, it’s fine to use a sound-based transcription that reflects how the word sounds in English or French.

## 4. Translations

Add translations for your word in English, French, or both.

## 5. Parts of Speech

Choose the correct part of speech from the dropdown list: At the beginning, we will be focussing on nouns and verbs. Tags like “*animate noun*,” “*inanimate noun*,” and others are already available. Carefully select tags that best describe the word’s function based on Part V of this manual.

## 6. Semantic Domains

Living Dictionaries lets you tag entries with one or more semantic domains, core meaning categories that help organize and classify the data. Use the dropdown to choose the domains for the entry.

## 7. Creating a Speaker (for Audio)

Any time you add audio, first create a Speaker profile, because audio clips are tied to specific speakers.

Enter:

- Name
- Birthplace
- Age range
- Gender

**Important:** Confirm with the speaker whether it’s okay for their recordings to be publicly available online. If yes, check “The speaker agrees to let these recordings be publicly available online.” Although the dictionary currently set to “private”, this consent is needed in case we choose to make it public later.

## 8. Recording Audio

You can record sound:

- Directly through your computer microphone
- On a smartphone
- On a tablet

Click Audio, then tap the recording button to start, and tap again to stop. After stopping, the audio uploads to the cloud instantly. You can listen back with the “Listen” button. If you don’t like your recording, you can delete and re-record it.

You can also upload an existing audio file from your device. Always make sure you add as much information as possible about your recordings.

## 9. Adding a Photo

You can upload one or more photos to your entry. Each photo must have some sort of attribution displaying its source. Click “Source,” then “Add,” and type in the image’s source. If you took the photo, simply use your own name.

## 10. Adding a Video

You can record a video to add to a dictionary entry:

- directly on any device with a camera
- by uploading a video file from a laptop or device (must be under 100 MB)
- by adding YouTube links by pasting the URL

Remember to include Speaker info, tags, and attribution for every video.

## 11. Adding a Sentence

You can also add full sentences to your dictionary. Create a new entry, write the sentence, and enter the English or French translation. In the Parts of Speech field, choose “sentence.”

Everything that “lives” in the Living Dictionary, such as recordings, photos, and notes, are subject to OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession). This means the community owns and controls how the language data is used and shared.

### 3.4 Rapid Word Collection Workshops

Part of the language revitalization project will be having the community collect and practice language with speakers on their own. However, this work is also supported by Rapid Word Collection (RWC) workshops. RWC sessions focus on gathering as many words as possible over the course of a few hours. These workshops will take place over the course of the year and will help us build a base of vocabulary and expressions as spoken here at Timiskaming First Nation.

Both individual documentation work and Rapid Word Collection workshops contribute to a shared goal: documenting and archiving the language of living speakers. All of the material we gather will be kept in the online dictionary, where it will remain accessible for future generations. Collecting the language from our speakers is just the beginning but is an absolutely essential component of the success of Language Revitalization at Timiskaming First Nation.

### 3.5 Elicitation strategies

Having speakers say certain things in a certain way is called “elicitation” in linguistics. There are many techniques that can be used to elicit language, some of which you may have already tried without even knowing it. Some of these are outlined below. You may find you like one of these techniques more than the others, but it’s important to try them all out because each one will produce different results, and it’s important that we try to record the full range of the language. Take your time to experiment with these in your sessions.

#### 3.5.1 *Picture-Based Elicitation*

- Show a photo or drawing and ask, “Wegonen i’i?”
- Use images depicting actions (running, stirring, hugging) to elicit verbs.
- Lay out 2 to 4 pictures in an order that shows a specific process occurring; ask your mentor to describe what is happening in order. This can work both for an overall process like baking bread, but also to elicit different forms of the same verb. For example, “He begins to run,” “He is running”, “He was running”, “He ran”.
- Use landmarks in the community, your own family photos, or historical photos to ask what is happening, or who someone is. This is also a good way to get stories and history!

#### 3.5.2 *Objects Handling*

- Bring items with you (a tool, an article of clothing, a basket) and ask, “Wegonen i’i?” (“What is this?”). Make sure you ask about plurals!

- Ask how an object might be described in the language using

Ask, “Ān e` kidonāniwag o’o?” and then use the object to complete an action; for example, you may bring an apple, take a bite and say, pick up the object and say, “Ān e` kidonāniwag o’o?”

### 3.5.3 Word Lists

Sets of word lists have been created from our first community language gathering, and you can use these during your Mentor-Apprentice sessions. These word lists are available as Word or Excel sheets. You can simply record some words into the Living Dictionary as part of your Mentor-Apprentice session.

### 3.5.4 Change your Language

Ask related questions about a single piece of language. For example:

“Wegnonen ‘I run’? Wegonen ‘you run’? Wegonen ‘I am running’?”

“Wegonen ‘This is my son’? Wegonen ‘This is her son’?”

### 3.5.5 Scenario-Based Elicitation

This is actually the heart of Mentor-Apprentice! Go out and do things together. As you do, ask, “An e`jitayin?” (“What are you doing?”) “A’di e’jein?” (“Where are you going?”) Clip the audio recorder to the speaker you are working with, and record everything!

## Part IV: The Mentor-Apprentice Method

### 4.1 What is the Mentor-Apprentice Method?

In addition to documenting the language, the Language Revitalization Project also encourages the use of the Mentor–Apprentice Method, which will be outlined in this section. The Mentor–Apprentice Method was first developed by California Indigenous communities in the 1990s and has since been adopted by many Nations around the world. Mentor-Apprentice is based on learning the language through its use--that is, through listening, observing, and speaking with language speakers (the Mentors) in everyday contexts. This technique can be used while you document the language as part of the overall revitalization project. You can use both this section, and Section V in this handbook to help you learn techniques for Mentor-Apprentice which will in turn help you to collect, organize, and use the language in a way that will be of benefit to the community both now and in the future. The goal is for you to develop both confidence in speaking and a growing awareness of how the language works.

The main ideas to the Mentor-Apprentice Method are:

- One speaker (the *mentor*) spends regular, structured time with one or more *apprentices*.
- They commit to using the target language (in our case, Anishinābemowin) during their sessions.
- Learning happens naturally through shared activities, conversations, and immersion rather than traditional instruction.

The goal is not to memorize words, but to develop real communications abilities like listening, understanding, and speaking with increasing confidence.

The Mentor–Apprentice Method has proven to work to rebuild natural language use because it creates direct, person-to-person transmission, similar to how children learn language, it supports community-based language development, keeping learning rooted in the knowledge of the community, and it allows flexibility in that sessions can take place in people’s homes, on the land, or during the course of daily activities. This will allow people who have a busy schedule, or who have other commitments, to be able to participate.

Being an Apprentice involves:

1. **Commitment to the Mentor–Apprentice Method** – You will need to dedicate regular, consistent time to learning with your mentor. Following the methods and techniques in this handbook (see Part III) will help you make steady progress. The program works best when you stick with it, so commitment is essential.
2. **Learning About the Language** – You will not only be learning vocabulary and grammar, but also how the language works: its structure, patterns, and cultural context. Understanding the language in depth makes you a stronger speaker and helps you share it with others.
3. **Active Documentation** – Part of your role is to document your learning, conversations, and practice using any of the tools outlined here, or your own. Your notes, recordings, and other materials will help create language resources for the whole community. Without this documentation, it is extremely difficult to build the programs and materials that support a language ecosystem, so what you record now will be a lasting resource for future learners.
4. **Engagement in Community Language Activities** – Attend gatherings, word collection events, and other initiatives whenever you can. Every contribution strengthens the language ecosystem and helps everyone learn.

5. **Making the Language Visible** – Speak the language in daily life and talk about what you’re learning. Sharing your experiences with friends, family, and other community members helps make the language a living part of everyday life.
6. **Role Modeling** – By showing dedication to using the language, you become a role model for others. Your efforts encourage more people to get involved and show that language revitalization is possible. You can help people to believe in themselves and in each other.
7. **Respect and Ethics** – This means honouring the knowledge and guidance of your mentor, elders, and fluent speakers as well as following the Ethics, Responsibility, and Data Governance guidelines presented in Part II of this handbook.
8. **Reflection and Growth** – Take time to notice your progress and think about what’s working and what’s challenging. Reflecting on your learning helps you grow as a speaker and makes your work more effective for the community.

## 4.2 Mentor–Apprentice Sessions and Techniques

This section will introduce you to some techniques that you can try to use when documenting the language, and as part of the Mentor-Apprentice Method.

### 4.2.1 How to structure sessions

Before each meeting, the mentor and apprentice should agree on a short list of goals, like practicing certain verbs, describing actions, or practicing words in a semantic domain like foods or weather. Try to do 10–15 minute activity blocks allowing yourself to switch tasks, adjust your pace, or take breaks. This will help you to stay focussed without losing momentum. After each session, take a few minutes to reflect on what went well, which language forms were challenging, and what should be practiced next time. This cycle of planning, doing, and reflecting helps the learning stay focused.

### 4.2.2 Immersion

The Mentor–Apprentice approach works best in an immersion environment. The idea is to stay in the language as much as possible, and that means using any means necessary (such as, for example, gestures, pointing, facial expressions, repetition, and real objects) for communication. Instead of translating, mentors may slow down, simplify, rephrase, or repeat. Apprentices respond with what they can, building up from single words to short phrases and eventually to full sentences. Immersion sessions will feel challenging at first. You may think that you cannot do immersion as a total beginner. However, most immersion programs are built for beginners, so it is possible. In order to help you stay in the language, use these basic phrases:

What is this?	Wegonen o'o?
What is that?	Wegonen i'i?
What?	Wegonen?
How do you say it in Anishinābemowin?	An e'ejī-ikidoyang Anishinābemowin?
What is this called?	Ān e'jinikādeg o'o?
What do you call this?	Ān e'jinikādaman o'o?
Can you name this?	Kigashki wīdan ina o'o?
What does it mean?	An e'shejikidiyin?
How do you say this?	An e'kidonāniwag o'o?
What are you saying?	An e'kidoyin?
What is s/he saying?	An e'kidodj?
What are you doing?	An e'jitayin?
How does one do this?	An dash i'i gweyak tōdjigadeg?
Speak slowly.	Pekadj animwen.
Please, say it again.	Enabigis, ikidon mīna.
Say it again.	Ikidon mīnā
I don't understand.	Kāwin ninisidotazīn.
I understand now.	Ninisidotān ajā
And	ashidj
Yes	e'enn/ehe
No	kāwin
Help me.	Widōkawishin.
Slowly	nayegadj; pabekadj
Wait	Pābīwon
Again	Mīnā

#### *4.2.3 Using materials and creating your own learning supports*

While the Mentor–Apprentice model emphasizes natural, real-world activities, materials can play a helpful supporting role. You may want to make picture cards, labels, diagrams, or your own games and worksheets to help you remember the language. Apprentices and mentors are encouraged to create these supports, but also to share these supports with the wider TFN learning community as part of the community's developing language program. Your notes, materials, and recordings can feed into future curriculum, community classes, immersion programming, and materials development. By sharing results, mentors and apprentices help strengthen TFN's long-term language goals.

### **Part V: Using the Language in Practice**

We encourage you to try to use the language—during documentation and on your own.

#### 5.1 Language Use as Practice, Not Performance

#### 5.2 Using Language During Documentation

### 5.3 The Mentor–Apprentice Method

### 5.4 The Mentor–Apprentice Approach at TFN

### 5.5 Structuring Mentor–Apprentice Sessions

- Immersion
- Elicitation strategies
- Creating and using learning materials

## Part V – Overview of Anishinābemowin

### 5.1 The Language of Timiskaming First Nation

The language spoken at Timiskaming First Nation is most often called *Algonquin*. This name, however, is an “exonym”, a name given from outside the community, likely used by colonial French speakers. Within the language itself, an Algonquin person is called *Anishinābe*, and the Algonquin people are the *Anishinābeg*. The language itself is called *Anishinābemowin*, which can be understood as “the way the Anishinaabe speak.” You can see the commonalities in these words:

Anishinābe				‘Algonquin person’
Anishinābeg	Anishinābe + g	-g = plural marker		‘Algonquin people’
Anishinābemowin	Anishinābe + mo + win	-mo = speak -win = the way that something happens		‘Algonquin language’

Learning to see these commonalities and using them in different ways is one of the goals of this program.

Anishinābemowin is a living language with many regional varieties. Often times we used the word “dialect” to talk about these different varieties. Speakers across communities share linguistic, familial, and cultural connections, but each place has its own expressions, vocabulary, sounds, and ways of speaking. For example, the Anishinābemowin spoken at Kitigan Zibi and at Temiskaming are mutually intelligible, but not identical. These local ways of speaking reflect each community’s unique history, relationships, and landscape.

While the spoken language varies only slightly from place to place, the writing systems can be very different. Some communities use syllabics, others use Roman orthographies, and even among Roman systems there are multiple spelling styles. For example:

- Some varieties of Algonquin use “c” for the “ch” or the “sh” sound; you may see “Anishinābe” written as “Anicinabe”.
- In some Western or older Eastern varieties, the character “8” is used to represent a sound similar to “w”; you may see “mīgwech” written as “miig8tc”.
- Other communities, including Temiskaming, tend to use a Roman writing system based on more familiar English letters, though spelling may vary from speaker to speaker. Some varieties use the acute ( ´ ) and the grave ( ` ) accents instead of the line used in Temiskaming.

All of these systems are valid. Each reflects the history and relationships of the community that uses it. In this program, we focus primarily on the way Anishinābemowin is spoken and written at Temiskaming, while recognizing that there is no one “correct” way of speaking or writing the language; rather there are many.

## 5.2 Foundational grammar overview


Learning Anishinābemowin might feel intimidating at first, because it’s very different from English. The Anishinābeg see the world differently, and these differences are reflected in the language itself.

This means that the way you talk about the world in Anishinābemowin is different from English. For example, sometimes a single word in Anishinābemowin encodes an idea that would be a phrase or even a whole sentence in English:

Minikwe  
S/he is drinking.

Anwatin  
It is calm weather.

But it’s not just that a word represents a large idea, it’s also that the way you use the word in a sentence is different. That’s why it’s important to understand not only the **meaning** of words, phrases, and their pieces, but also how you use these, their **grammar**. To communicate clearly, you need both.

**Meaning** is what a word represents, in other words, the core idea or concept. For example, knowing the word for ‘dog’ tells you we are talking about  .

**Grammar** is the system that tells us how to put words and smaller pieces of meaning together to make bigger ideas. For example, when we put an -s at the end of ‘dog’ to make ‘dogs,’ we are adding the idea that there is more than one dog. But in order for you to

understand how to express the fact that there is more than one dog, you have to know two things: a) that the -s means there is more than one, and b) that it goes at the end of the word. For example, you can't put the -s in front of the word "dog"; English speakers wouldn't understand you (and it's also really hard to say!)

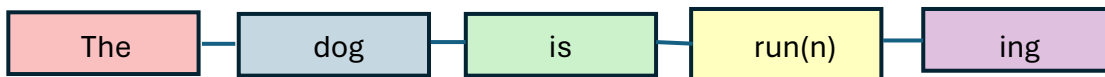
Grammar defines how words fit together to create bigger chunks of meaning. It shows you how to put words together so others understand exactly what you mean.

You could try using words knowing only their meaning, without understanding the grammar, but it's difficult, confusing, and your point often won't come across clearly. Meaning and use are intertwined — you can't really learn one without the other.

### How grammar works differently in English and Anishinābemowin

#### English

English is a language where meaning is often spread across many small units, which we call words. We can add small pieces, like the -s in 'dogs' or -ing in 'running,' to give additional information. Then we string words together in a very specific order to communicate meaning:



Every word here except "running" is its own unit, that is, each word makes sense on its own.

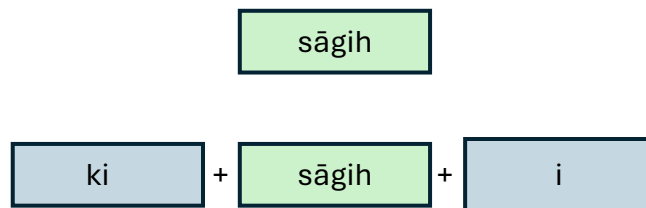
#### Anishinābemowin

In Anishinābemowin, meaning is more focused around a single unit describing actions, states of being, or relationships which is usually a single "word". Often, the "main idea" of a sentence is the verb itself, and smaller units that would be individual words in English are added directly to this verb. This is why an entire sentence will look like one single word:

Kisāgihā  
Ki- sāgih ā  
You love him/her

Kisāgihi  
Ki- sāgih i  
You love me

Putting a sentence together in Anishinābemowin works more like this:



All of these pieces need to be attached to each other in order to be understandable; they cannot function in isolation from each other.

### Vocabulary You Will Need

A few important grammar terms will make it easier to learn the language. You might be familiar with some of these already.

#### 1. Stem

A **stem** is the core meaning of a word. It carries the basic idea, such as *see, arm, walk, dog, eat*. Many times, stems cannot stand alone as complete words. They need other pieces added to them to make sense in a sentence.

Think of the stem as the idea behind the word, before we add information about who, what, or how.

-*sāgih*- in the example above is the stem:

Kisāgihā		
Ki-	sāgih	ā
You	love	him/her

Kisāgihi		
Ki-	sāgih	i
You	love	me

In the example below, -*nik, arm* is also a stem:

onik	
o-	nik
his	arm

ninik

ni- nik  
my arm

## 2. Prefixes

Prefixes are word parts that come before a stem.

In Anishnaabemwin, they tell us things like:

- who is involved (I, you, someone)
- possession (my, your)
- tense (when something happens)
- certain grammatical relationships

The *ki-* in the example above is a prefix:

Kisāgihā		
Ki-	sāgih	ā
You	love	him/her

Kisāgihi		
Ki-	sāgih	i
You	love	me

Not every word has a prefix, but when one is present, it adds important meaning.

## 3. Suffixes

**Suffixes** are word parts that come **after** the base. There are many different suffixes in Anishinābemowin, including:

- whether something is **singular or plural**
- whether a verb involves one participant or more
- relationships between people or things

Suffixes are extremely important in Anishinābemowin and are one of the main ways meaning is expressed. Here are two examples of suffixes:

wāgosh

fox

wāgoshag  
foxes

odena  
town

odenag  
in town

#### 4. Particles

**Particles** are small words that usually stand on their own. They are not built from roots and affixes in the same way as verbs and nouns.

Particles can express:

- describe number or quantity
- specify time, place, manner, or degree
- connect sentences together
- identify if something is a question

They often help clarify or support the meaning of a sentence but are not attached to other words.

It's important to understand that there may be several different forms of prefixes and suffixes, and that these also adapt to their sound environment. The sounds that come before or after them naturally influence their shape. This often creates predictable patterns rather than random variation, but they still all need to be remembered! As you work through the language, try to watch for these patterns. Recognizing how and why prefixes and suffixes shift will make it much easier to understand their shapes and to see the underlying structure of the language.

#### 5.3 Ambe!

You can have an introductory conversation in the language by using the following words and phrases. Some of these are found on the Greetings and Introduction sheet, which is included in this package.

#### Greetings and Introductions

Hi, hello	Kwey!
What's your name?	An e'shinkikazoyin?
My name is...	... nindishinikāz.
I am...	...nīn.
And you?	Kīn dash?
Where are you from?	Adī wedoseyin?
I am from...	... nidodise.
... ningododem.	My clan is...
Kāwin ningikenimāsī ningododem.	I don't know my clan.
Kāwin nindayāwāsī dodem.	I don't have a clan.
Nimikinonan ...i/ong.	I work at...
Mīgwech!	Thank you

New language and learning materials will also be available through TFN's new language resource page, located at [atfn.geolinguistics.ca](http://atfn.geolinguistics.ca). While this handbook gives you a start to documenting the language, the resource page will give you a starting point to begin learning the grammar of the language which you can then use during other language revitalization programs. Use these resources and tools together with the opportunities to practice whenever you can!

## Part VI – Mādjādān!

Language revitalization is a long-term, intergenerational effort, and the work we begin today is only the first step. By documenting, learning, and using Anishinābemowin, we are creating the resources, opportunities, and community relationships needed to sustain the language for the future. Every word that you record and learn, story shared, and conversation held carries a responsibility not just to preserve the knowledge of today's speakers, but to ensure that future generations can continue to learn and speak the language.

This handbook is a starting point. The ongoing success of the project depends on the active participation and care of the entire community, as together we build a living, growing language ecosystem that will benefit generations to come.

## Program Information

For questions, or more information, please contact:

Dan Lavigne, Internal Resource Manager

[dan.lavigne@tfnhwc.ca](mailto:dan.lavigne@tfnhwc.ca)

Rebekah Ingram, Language Revitalization Project Manager

[Rebekah.ingram@atfn.ca](mailto:Rebekah.ingram@atfn.ca)