

# How To Kit



## Culture and Traditions



**NWT Literacy Council**



### **Other How To Kits & Literacy Activities**

This How To Kit was developed to help organizations celebrate National Family Literacy Day. This is one in a series of How to Kits available to download on the NWT Literacy Council website at [www.nwt.literacy.ca](http://www.nwt.literacy.ca).

#### **How To Kits Developed to Date:**

- 1-2-3 Rhyme with Me
- Community Book Swap
- Family Reading Party
- Games Night
- Literacy Treasure Hunt
- Pyjamas and Book Party
- Reading Circles and Story Extenders
- Scattergories
- Storytime on the Radio
- Family Literacy Activities Night
- Book Making
- Involving Families in Children's Learning
- Literacy Games for Adults
- Election
- Environmental Print Games
- Literacy Activities for Holidays – Thanksgiving, Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Spring
- Puppet Making
- Writing Contest
- Culture and Traditions
- Books in the Home
- Facilitating a Workshop

#### **Other activities:**

- Literacy Bingos
  - Reading Bingo
  - Introduction Bingo
  - Picture Bingo
  - Word Bingo
  - Plain Language Word Bingo
- Memory Game
- Learning Activity Cards
- Baby Book Project
- My Family booklet
- On the Right Track

Please feel free to photocopy and use these activities in your programs and adapt them to meet your needs.

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### Culture and Traditions

The NWT is rich in Aboriginal cultures. Children learn their culture by taking part in traditional activities within the family and in the community, and by learning the language that represents that culture. Children learn a language by living the language, by hearing it spoken and by seeing adults using the language together in real communication. They will copy what they hear and see. Building your family literacy activities around your culture and traditions and using your Aboriginal language as often as you can will give your child a strong foundation for learning.



This *How to Kit* will give parents, family literacy providers and teachers some tips and ideas on how to make their family literacy culture-based.

In this *How to Kit*, you will find ...

- ✓ Information on why it is important to do traditional activities and to speak in your Aboriginal language
- ✓ Practical ideas that you can do in your language with your children
- ✓ Some examples of Aboriginal language activities
- ✓ Sources for materials in Aboriginal languages



# **Why Use Culture and Language in Literacy Activities?**

Culture and language are important parts of who we are. Culture shapes the way we look at the world. Language represents culture, and shows which cultural group we belong to. We use language to pass on our culture from one generation to the next. Through language, we learn about the culture and traditions of our ancestors; and we learn our stories.

The NWT has eleven official languages—nine of these are Aboriginal: Gwich'in, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, Inuinnaqtun, North Slavey, South Slavey, Dogrib, Chipewyan and Cree. The health of these languages varies greatly, but unfortunately most are declining.

For a language to survive, it needs to pass from generation to generation. Ideally, this happens in the home and the community, where family members learn the language from birth and use it as part of their everyday lives.

However, everyone in the community can be involved in culture and language activities. You don't have to be fluent in the language yourself. You can invite elders and other people who know the traditions and culture and who are fluent in the language to help with some of the activities.





## **How Children Learn Language**

No language is too hard for a child to learn. Children can easily learn more than one language or dialect at a time. A child can master up to 90% of a language in the first four years!

Here are some ways children learn a language:

- ★ They learn by listening to and speaking the languages they are learning. Give them lots of opportunities to do those things.
- ★ They copy what they hear and see. Model the language for them. Help them learn the words and phrases they need to express themselves. They don't always need formal lessons.
- ★ They learn by playing. Using dolls and other toys to "talk" to each other helps children play and learn at the same time.
- ★ They often have a "silent period". This means they are getting ready to speak the language as soon as they feel comfortable.
- ★ They sometimes make mistakes. This is a natural part of language development. Sometimes they can't make a certain sound or say a word properly because their mouths, tongues, throats and lungs are still developing. Don't focus on correcting their errors all the time.





## **Celebrate Family Literacy in the NWT**

★ They like to repeat things. They often want to read or hear the same story over and over. They like it when they can tell the story themselves. They have great memories.

★ They sometimes learn the last part of words or sentences first.

★ They love singing. Singing uses a different part of the brain than speaking, so children often learn the words to songs faster than those words in normal speech.



★ They need to hear both languages, if they are learning more than one language. One parent can speak one language and the other parent can speak the other with the child. Or you can speak one language all the time in certain situations (like shopping, bath time, at meals) and the other language in other situations. It is also great to use both languages all the time.

★ They sometimes mix up the languages. Don't worry. It won't take long for them to sort them out and put the pieces together. It just takes time, and a lot of listening and trying to speak.



(Adapted from materials prepared through the GNWT's Early Childhood Development Framework for Action by Harnum & Associates)



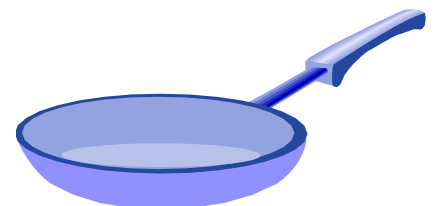


# How To Encourage Language Use at Home



- ★ Speak your language at home—every little bit helps! Even if you aren't fluent, use what you do know.
- ★ Ask people who are fluent in the language to visit your family.
- ★ Try to limit how much English language TV your children watch. Watch Aboriginal language programs even if you or your children don't understand.
- ★ Use your language when you are doing things with your children.
- ★ Make up stories in your language and tell them to your children.
- ★ If you can, bring home books, tapes and other materials.
- ★ Write labels in your language and put them on things in your home.
- ★ Teach your child one word a day.
- ★ Help your children with their language homework and learn with them.
- ★ Go on the land with your family. You'll have lots to talk about: planning, and being on the land.

(Adapted from materials prepared through the GNWT's Early Childhood Development Framework for Action by Harnum & Associates)



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# Including Culture and Language in Your Family Literacy Program

- ★ Include traditional activities like storytelling, drum dancing, games and singing in your program. These are good ways for children to learn culture and language.
- ★ Make learning fun. Use humour. Don't discourage children who are learning new skills.
- ★ Have several fluent speakers who can talk to each other. This lets children "see" and hear the language working and the rules around language.
- ★ Use different activities in your program. Some people need to write things down to learn, while others need to hear. Other people need to do something physical, like drawing, to learn.
- ★ Model what you want people to learn. Let them watch until they feel comfortable trying by themselves.
- ★ Take people out of your usual space into another context, such as a tipi in the yard for storytelling. This makes it more real.
- ★ Find out what people like to do. They learn better when they are doing things they like.



(Adapted from materials prepared through the GNWT's Early Childhood Development Framework for Action by Harnum & Associates)







### **Storytelling**

Storytelling is an oral tradition, passed from one generation to another. The stories may be memorized and repeated and may change each time they are told. Stories are not only fun, they help people to learn.

Stories were, and still are, one of the main teaching methods of Aboriginal people. They use stories to tell about their past: their ancestors, their history, their traditions and their culture. They use stories to teach children and young people about the values and beliefs that are important to them. Good storytellers create images with words and sounds. They make learners feel part of the story.



Stories are also a wonderful way of teaching and learning Aboriginal languages. They help children with memory skills, oral communication, and imagination.

Customs around storytelling may vary from community to community. In some communities, only certain people are the storytellers. In others, stories may be told only at specific times of the year, such as winter. Be sure to find out about the traditions in your community.

Once you are familiar with storytelling traditions and “rules”, invite an Elder or other storyteller into your home or family literacy program to share their stories with your family or program participants.





## Language Bundles or Storytelling Bags

Language bundles, sometimes called “storytelling bags”, are fun. Here is how to make one:



- ★ Use a piece of tanned hide or other material—a basket or box works too.
- ★ Put small objects into the bundle that you can use to tell stories in your language. They can be real or you can make miniatures, like dogsleds, animals, transportation, dolls, etc. Use things from the natural world, such as feathers, shells or stones.
- ★ Let your whole family and community bring something to your family language bundle.
- ★ Use the things in the language bundle to tell stories in your language.





## **Household Labels**

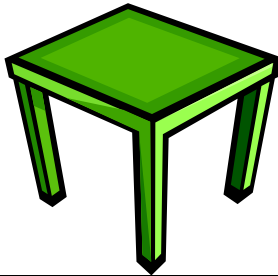
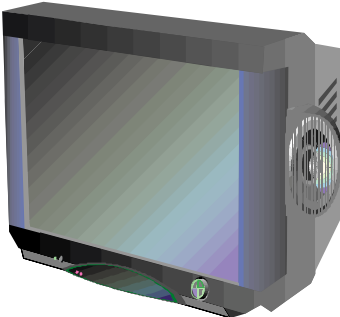

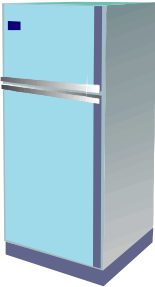



**A great way to teach any language!**

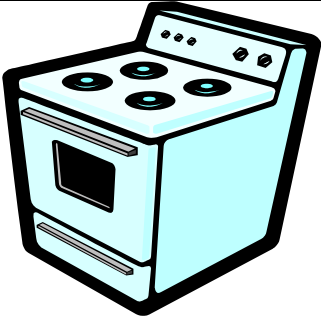

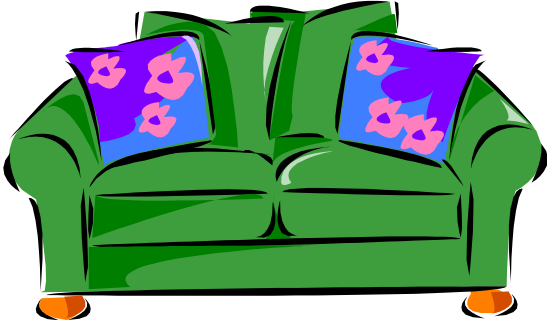

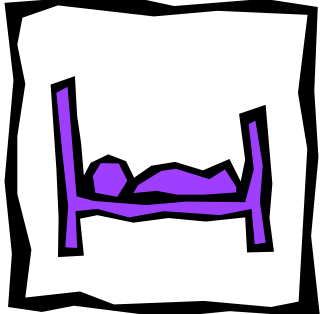
- ★ Fill in the blank set of labels next to the pictures of household items on the next three pages using your own language.
- ★ Have your children help you write out the labels.
- ★ Glue the labels onto pieces of cardboard, such as cereal boxes.
- ★ Put the labels up around the house.
- ★ Every night before your children go to bed, have them say all the labels in their room or around the house.
- ★ You can also use these pictures and words as a matching or memory game.

**Matching the word to the picture is a great way to learn language!**



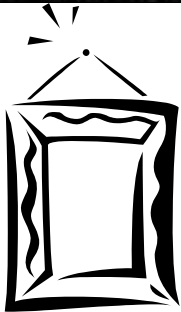

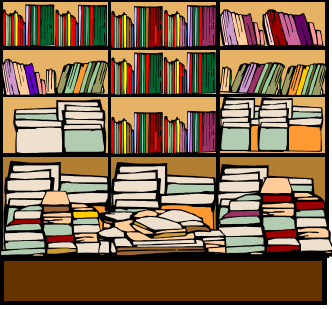








## **Grocery Store Labels**




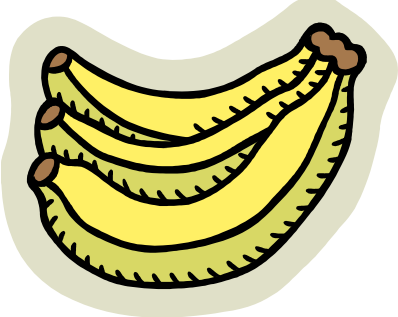

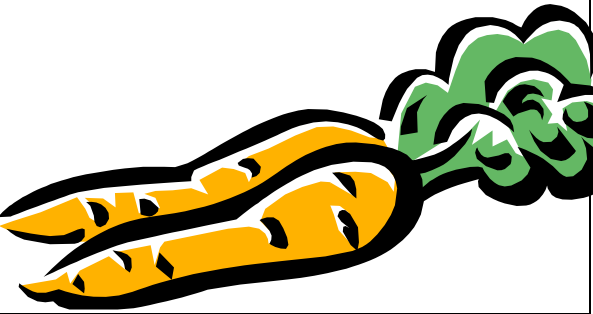
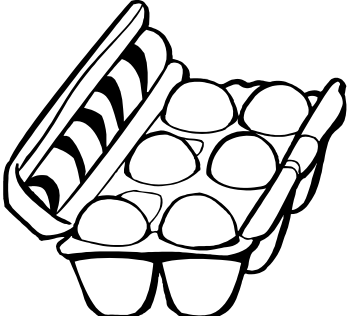
This is similar to the household labels activity, but this time you use it for shopping.

- ★ Fill in the blank set of labels next to the pictures of food items on the next three pages using your own language.
- ★ Have your children help you write out the labels.
- ★ Glue the labels onto pieces of cardboard, such as cereal boxes.
- ★ Give your children the labels when you go grocery shopping and ask them to find the matching items in the store.
- ★ You can also use these labels as a matching or memory game.

**Another great way to teach language!**

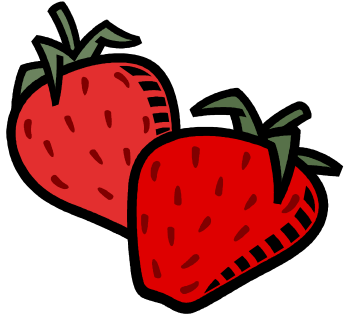
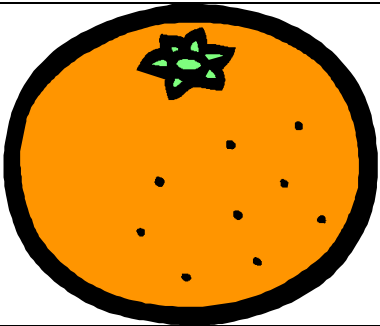
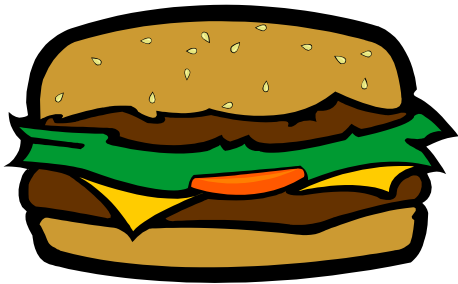
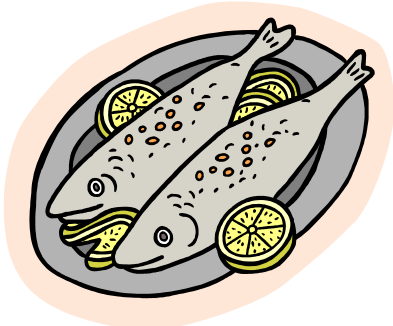
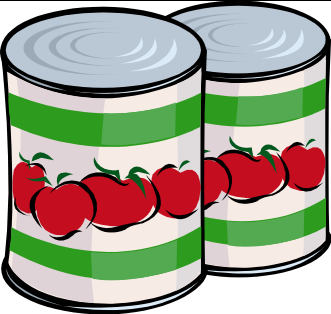




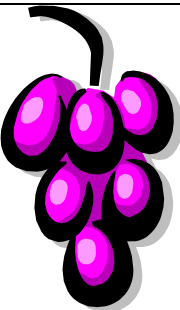
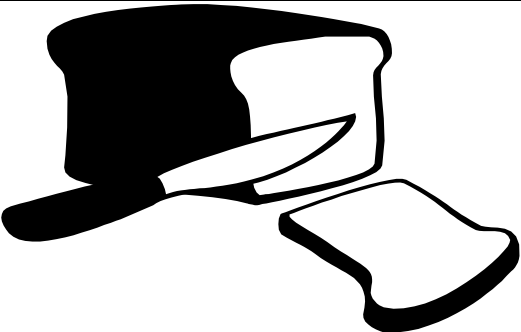

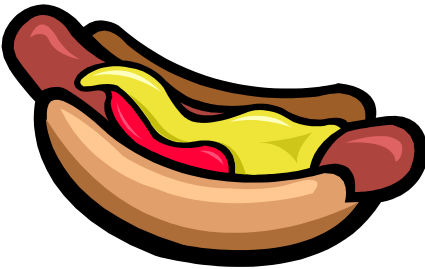

	
	
	
	
	









## **Memory Game Instructions**

Here's how to play the Memory Game:

1. Fill in the blank spaces with words in your first language or use the Memory Game that has only pictures.
2. Glue whichever sheet you will be using to cardboard or some other type of backing, such as cereal boxes.
3. Cut out the individual cards.
4. Mix up all the cards and turn them face down.
5. Each player flips over two cards at a time and tries to find matching pairs. Say each word in your first language as you turn over the card. This will help you learn the words.
6. One person can play as well. Just flip the cards over, two at a time, and try to find matching pairs.

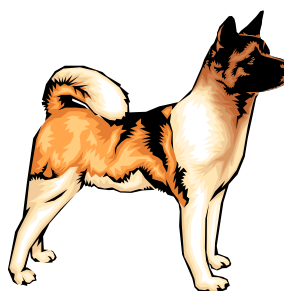
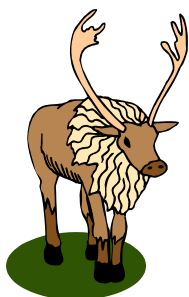
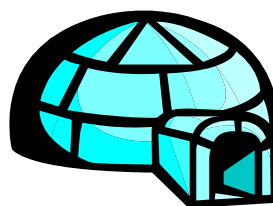
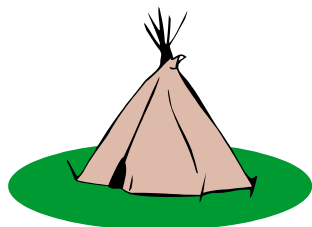


**Have fun!!**



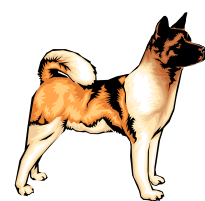
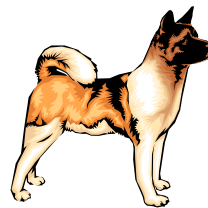
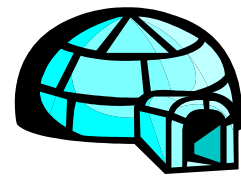
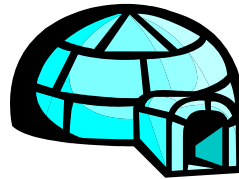
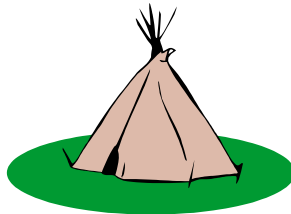
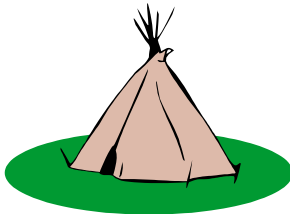
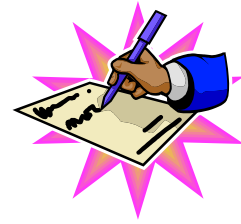
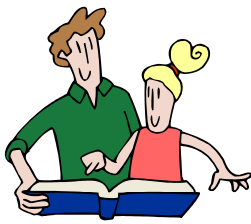


## Celebrate Family Literacy in the NWT





## Celebrate Family Literacy in the NWT

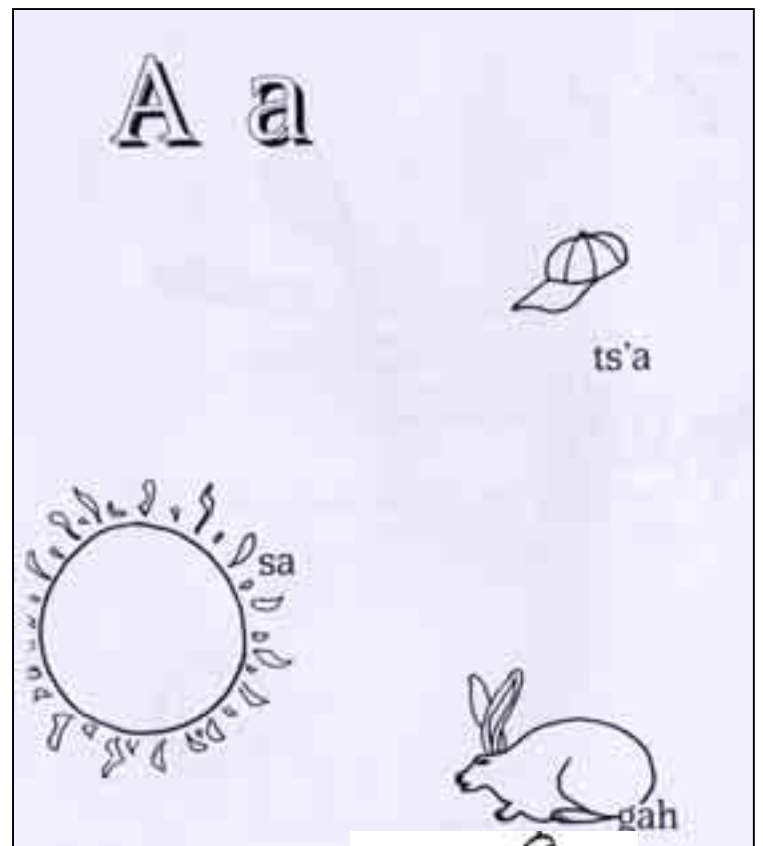
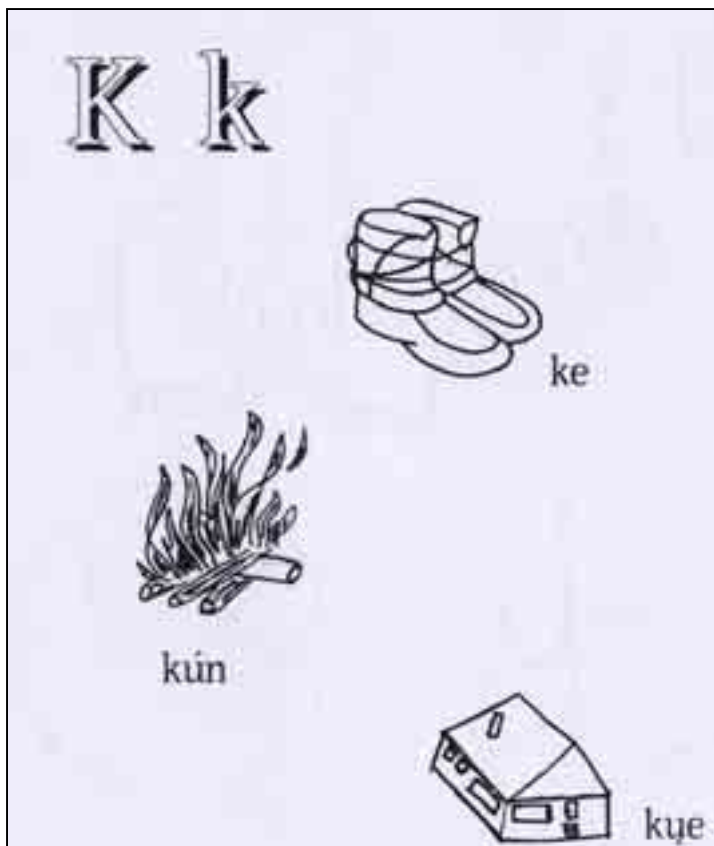




## **Word Dictionary**

Make a word dictionary in your Aboriginal language. It is easy to do and lots of fun. Have your children decorate the book.

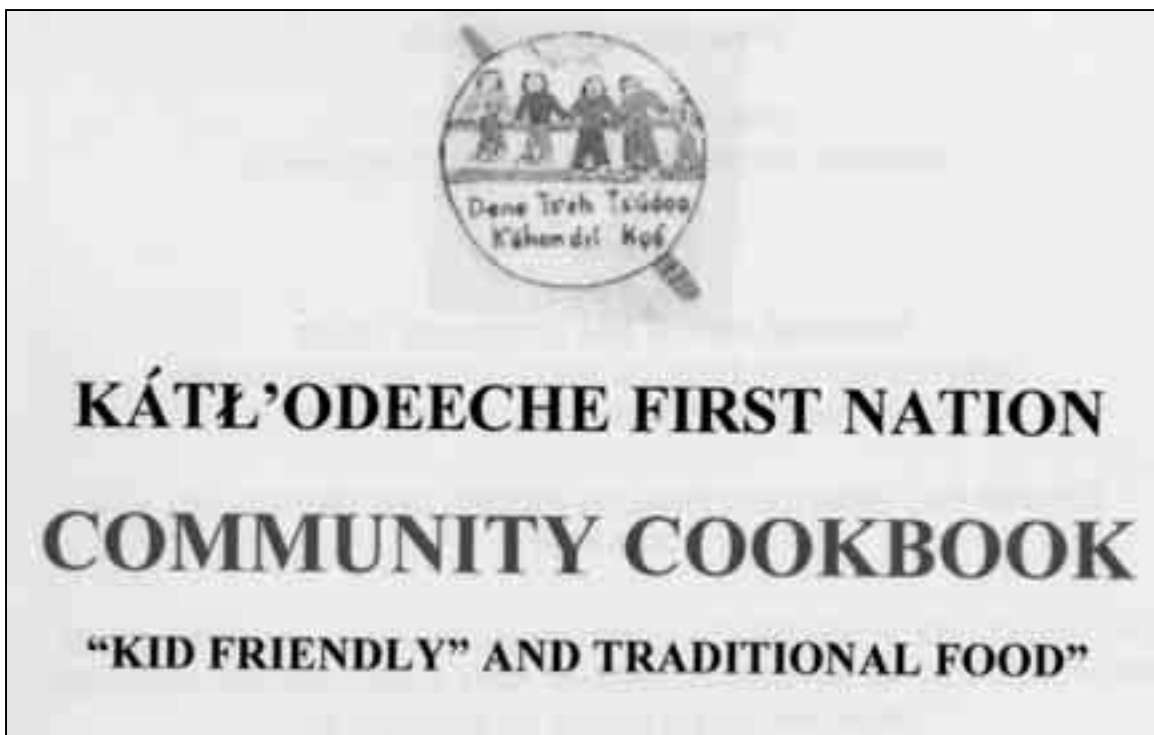
Here is an example of a Chipewyan Dictionary written by Elizabeth Biscaye and illustrated by Georgie Biscaye.





## **Northern Cookbook**

Develop a cookbook for your community. You can do it in English and your Aboriginal language. Dene Ts'eh Ts'údąą K'éhondí K'ę (the Day Care Centre) recently published a Kátł'odeeche First Nation Community Cookbook in South Slavey and English that has lots of wonderful traditional recipes from Elders in the community. Have a look!



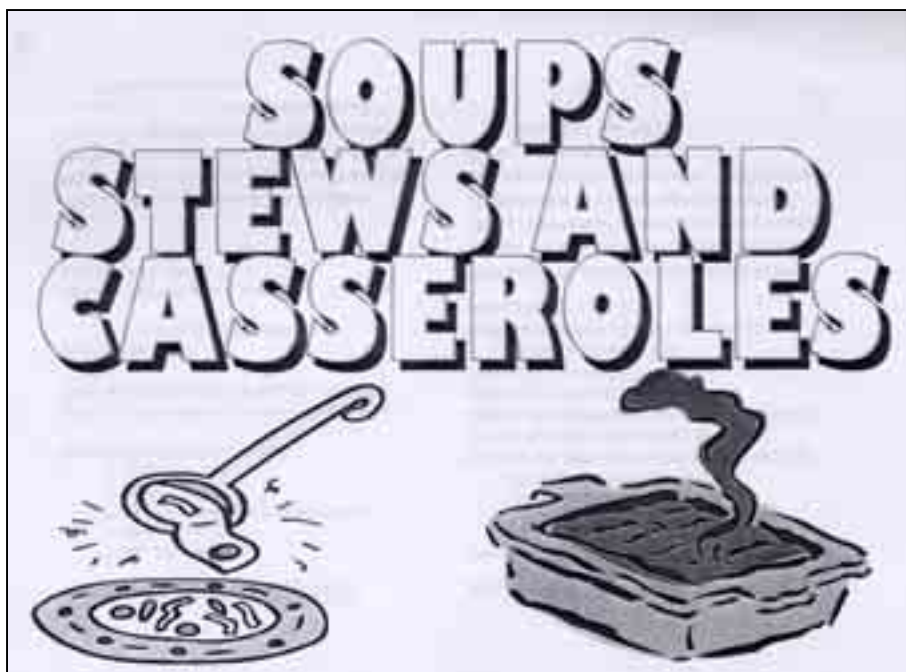
You can get a copy for \$10 by contacting:

Elaine Rene Tambour  
Day Care Centre Coordinator  
Dene Ts'eh Ts'údąą K'éhondí K'ę  
Box 3099  
Hay River Dene Reserve, NT X0E 1G4

Phone: 867-874-2639

Fax: 867-874-3649





### **CRANBERRY CHICKEN CASSEROLE**

Heat together and bring to a boil

- 3 cups of water
- 1 cup apple juice
- 3 tsp chicken bouillon powder
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp poultry seasoning

Add 4 chicken breasts, cut into bite sized pieces.  
Cover and simmer over low heat for 10 minutes.

- Add 2 cups of rice
- ½ cup cranberries
  - 1 cup sliced celery
  - 1 cup chopped onion

Return to boil and reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer for 25 minutes.

### **K'AMBA HÉH NETL'É**

- Tai libó tu
- Lié libó apple juice
- Tai lua-aqtsília chicken bouillon powder (OXO)
- Lié lua-aqtsília garlic powder
- Lié lua-aqtsília paprika
- Lié lua-aqtsília poultry seasoning

Dí azhóq tem met'á-naombia zhí elé ts'ehumbe tl'qá.

K'amba dji mejqá káet'aa. Gots'q tegháitq tem medádenitq t'áh honéno namuhgeliá ts'q thínee hembe. K'qé hénide njats'etj tl'qá k'achu danats'etj dhq.

Méh ats'eleti chu qki libó tl'olágaa

Tanqé libó netl'é

Lié libó celery tádat'a

Lié libó thleechjé tádat'a.

Ezhi k'qé médqets'edqchu t'áh k'achu 25 namuhgeliá gots'q tsíne nats'embe.





### A Family Tree

A great way to celebrate your family history is to do a family tree. You can follow the format on the next page or make up your own.

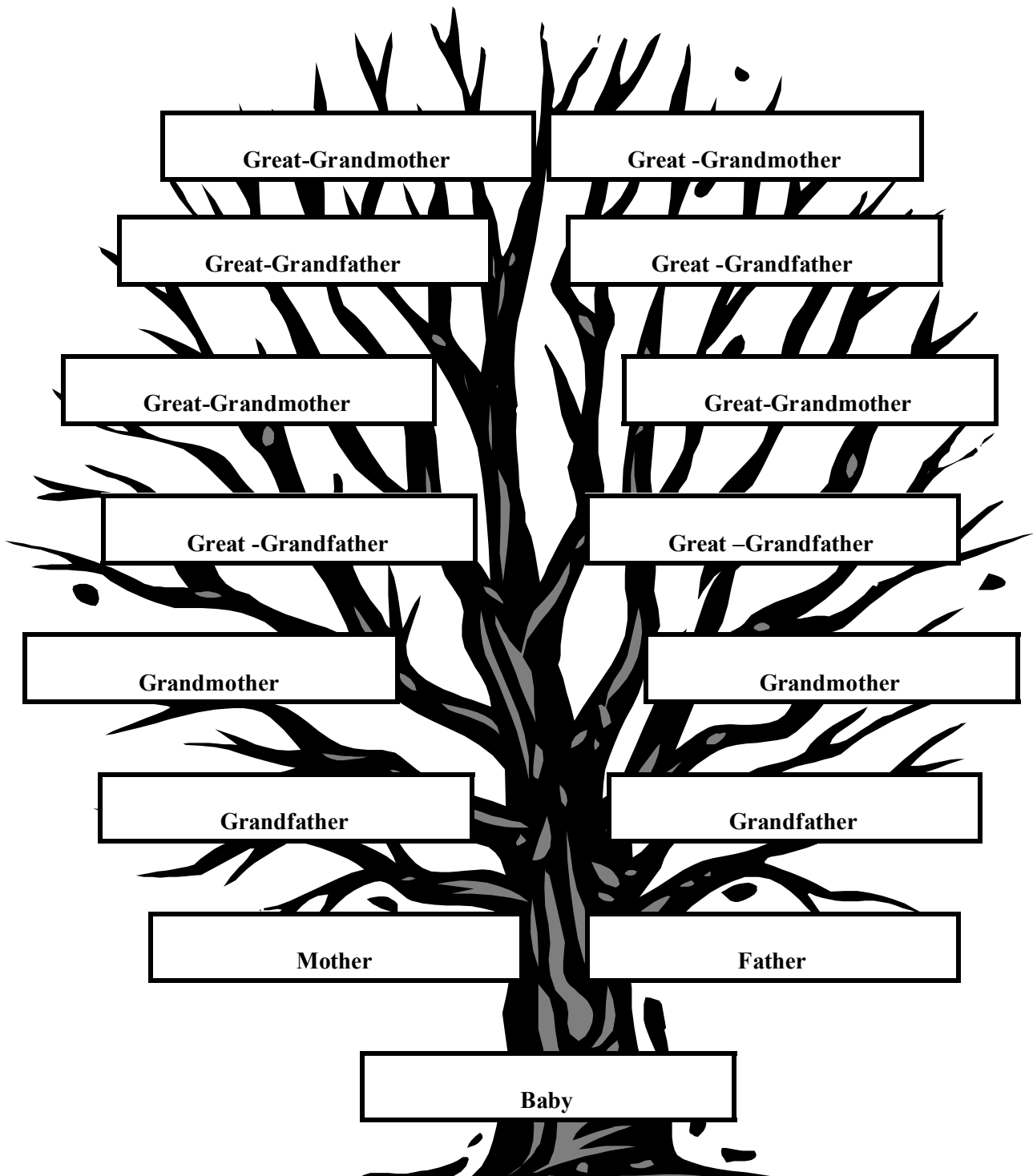
If you have pictures of family members you can add these to your family tree. You can work on the family tree with your children and other family members. It is a wonderful way to share language, culture and history with your family. Use your Aboriginal language to name the relationships of the different people. For example *nohkam* is Bush Cree for Grandmother.



These pictures are from the Bush Cree Children's Book, *My Family*. For more information on them, or to obtain a copy, contact:

Paula Anderson,  
Cree Language Coordinator  
P.O. Box 720  
Fort Smith, NT X0E 0P0  
Phone: 867-872-2733  
Fax: 867-872-2735







### My Family Book

Make a book about your child's family. Include all the people in your family. Write their relationship name in your language, if possible.

Here is what you will need:

- ★ Several copies of the next page, and 1 copy of the following page
- ★ Crayons, pens, markers
- ★ Hole punch and some ribbon, or stapler, to bind the book
- ★ 3-ring binder, if you are going to use that method to bind the book
- ★ Glue stick and photos (optional)

You can make the book by binding the pages of the book together by stapling them or by punching holes in the left margin and tying the pages together with a ribbon. Or you can punch holes and put the book in a binder or notebook.

Have your child write and draw on the pages of the book. The next few pages give you some ideas for the pages.

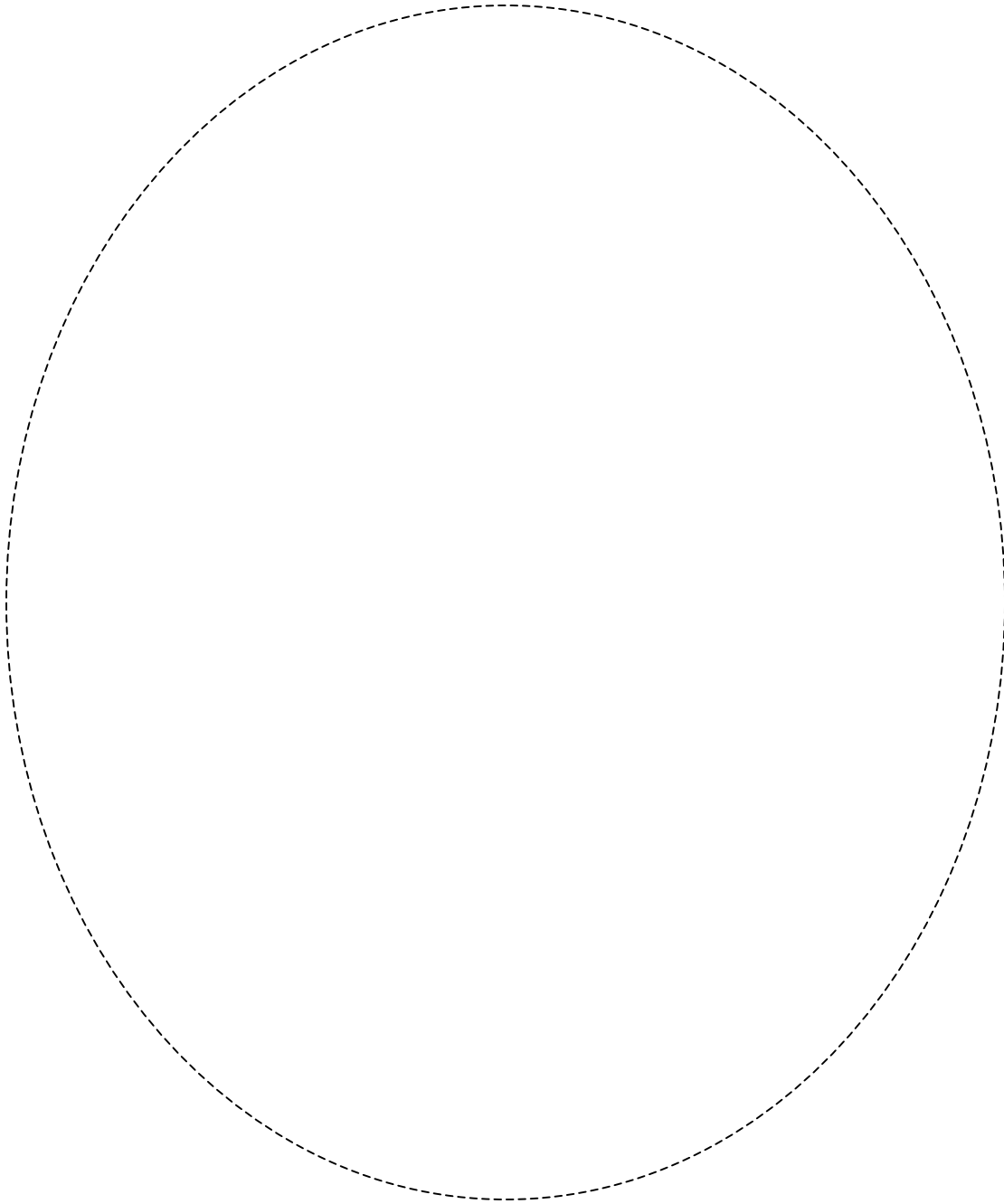


From the Bush Cree Children's Books, *My Family*.  
See P. 24 for more information.





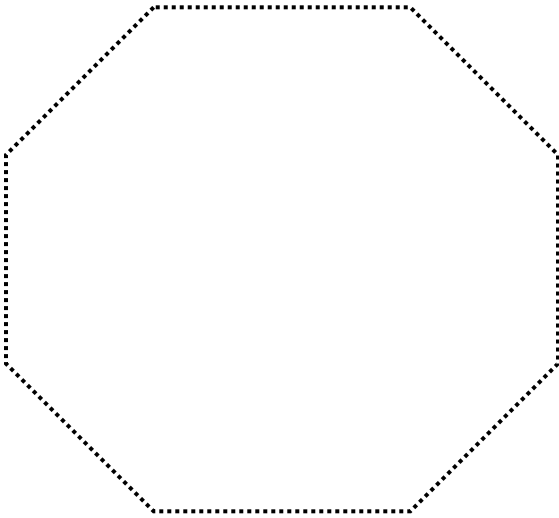
## **My Family Book: People in My Family**



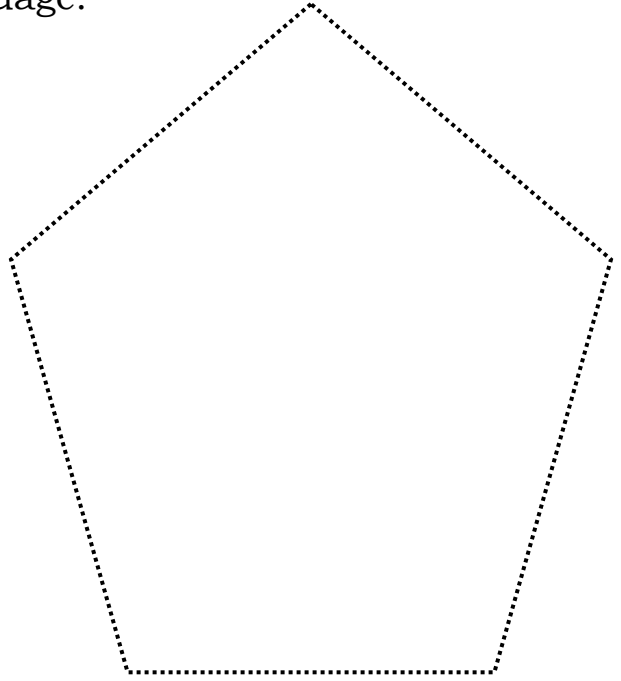


## **My Family Book: Things I Do with My Family**

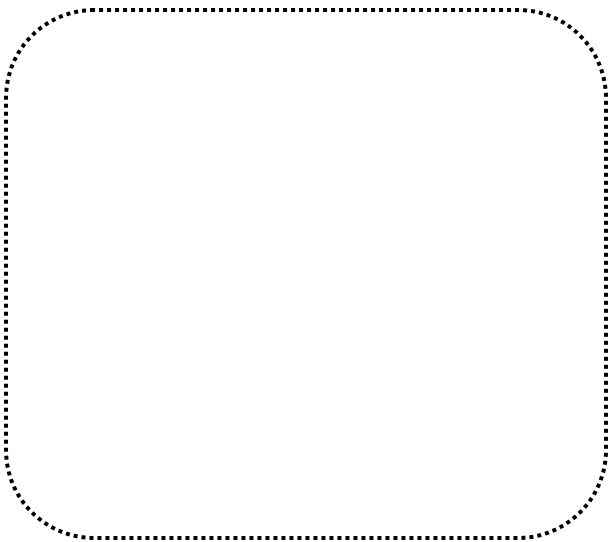
Draw pictures of things you like to do with your family. Write the words under the picture in your language.



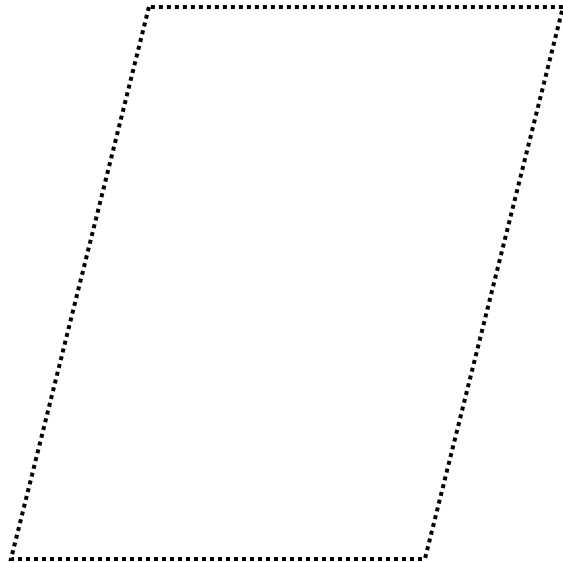
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## **Group Language Bingo**

1. Divide participants into groups of 4 or 5.
2. Give each group a piece of flipchart paper and ask them to fold their sheet into 16 boxes.
3. Give a different coloured marker to each group.
4. Using themes like food, animals, numbers, etc., ask participants to call out the names of examples for that theme.
5. Write one word at a time on the board. At the same time, ask groups to write the word in any box on their sheet of paper. Make sure everyone gets a chance to write. When all 16 boxes are filled, each group will have a different Bingo card.
6. For the first game, the participants circle the word on their sheet when they hear it. Call out the words randomly and put a circle beside each one that you call out. When a group has a whole line, they win.
7. Now ask groups to exchange papers.
8. For the second game, they mark the words with an "X". When a group has a straight line, they win.
9. Exchange the papers again, and continue to play like this until all the words have been called.
10. You can play this game using an Aboriginal language.



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## **Body Parts**

Write the names of the body parts in your language.

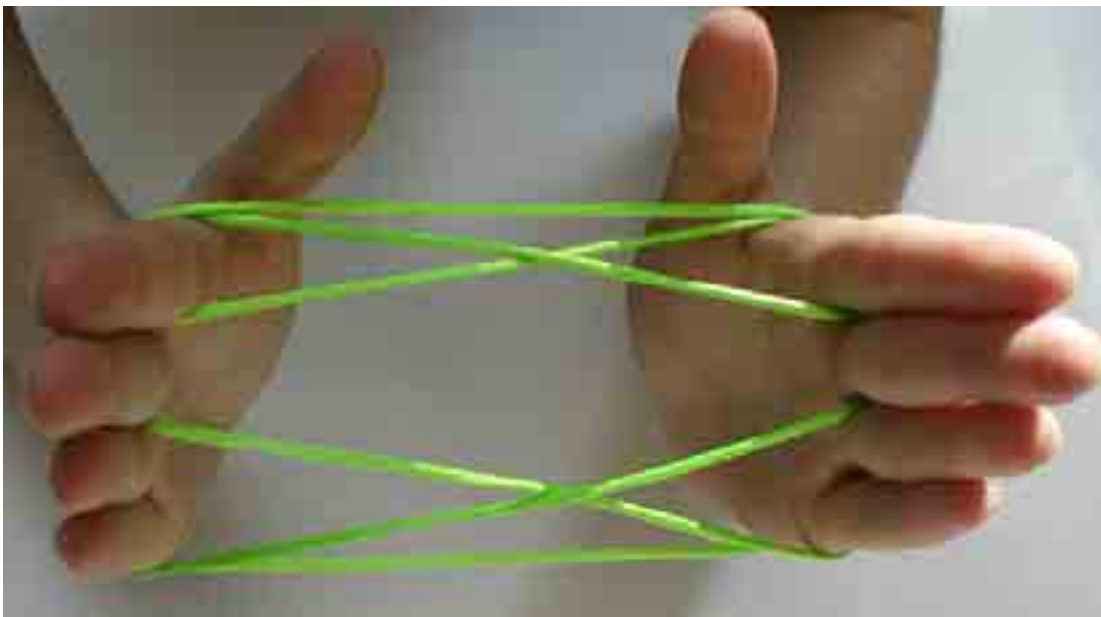




## **String Games**

String Games are very popular around the world, including in the north. Nobody really knows how they started or who started developing them. The Inuit have created some of the most complicated and beautiful string figures. This activity was seen as a form of art, however it also was used to help develop stories that were told in the igloo in winter time.

All you need to play a string game is a single loop of string about 1 metre long, and your two hands. Of course, if you play a game that involves two people, you need four hands!



On the next three pages, you will find instructions for Cat's Cradle, a string game for two people. If you want to learn some more games, find out which people in your community are good at string games, and invite them to come and teach you some others.



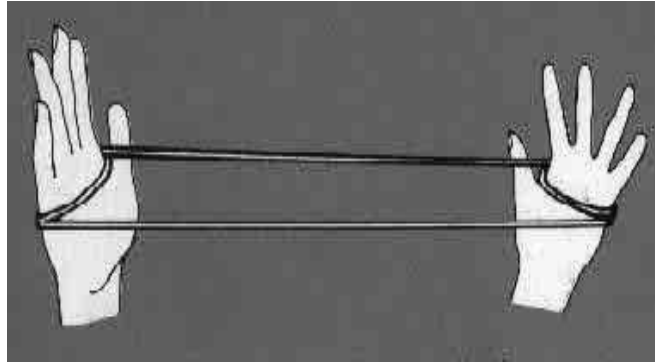




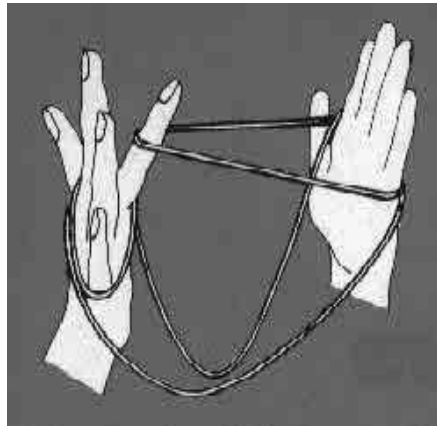
## **CAT'S CRADLE**

A string game for two players.

**1**

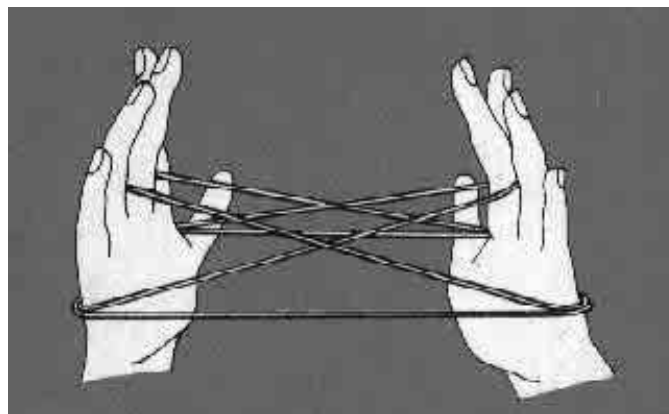


**2**



Repeat first one  
hand, then the  
other.

**3**

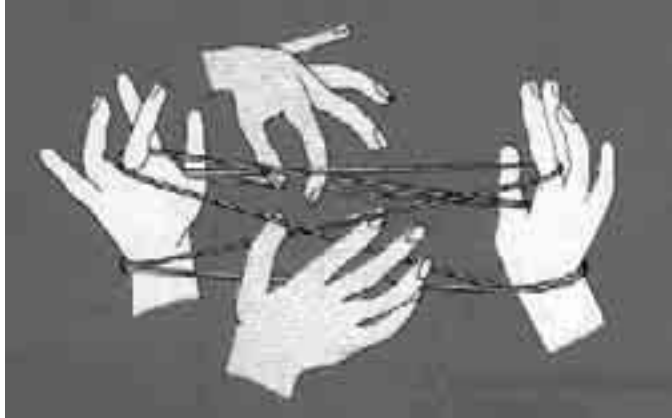




## Celebrate Family Literacy in the NWT

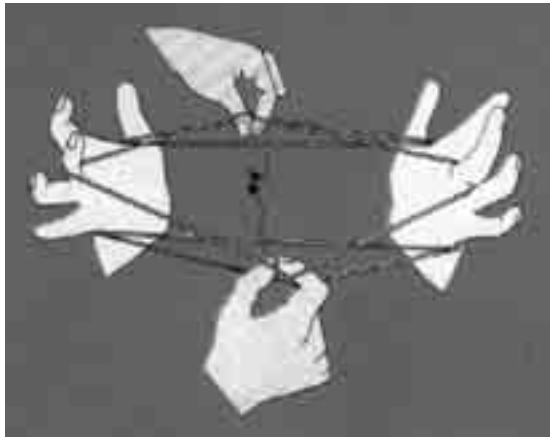
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4



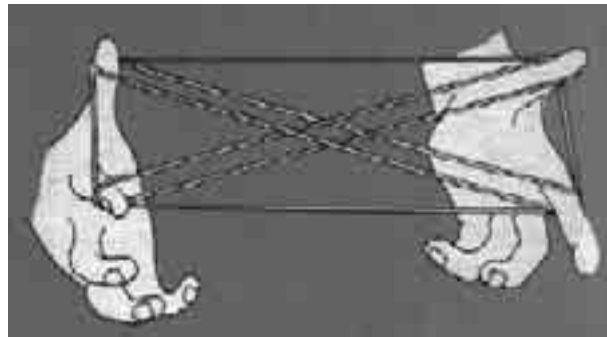
B grasps middle strings at intersection.

5

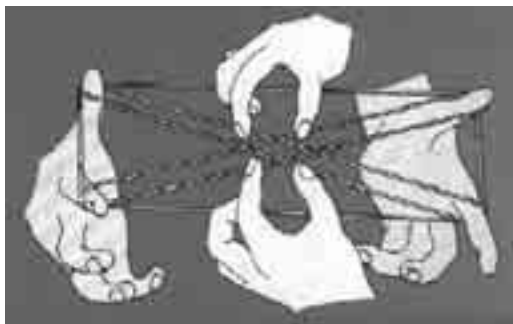


B's hands move outwards, down, inwards and up through the middle, lifting off A hands.

6



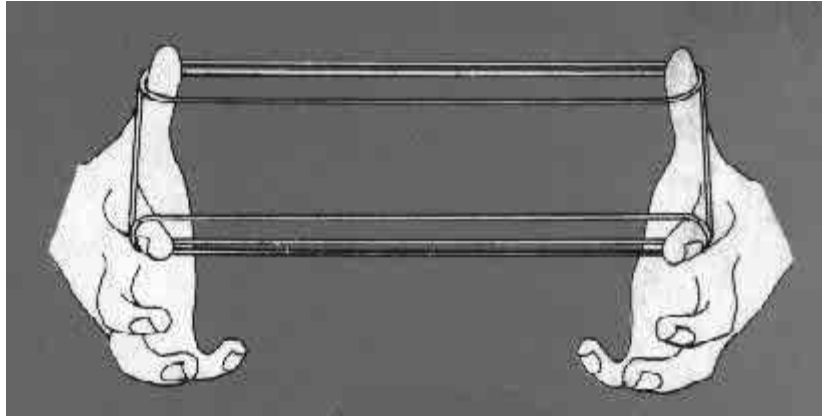
7



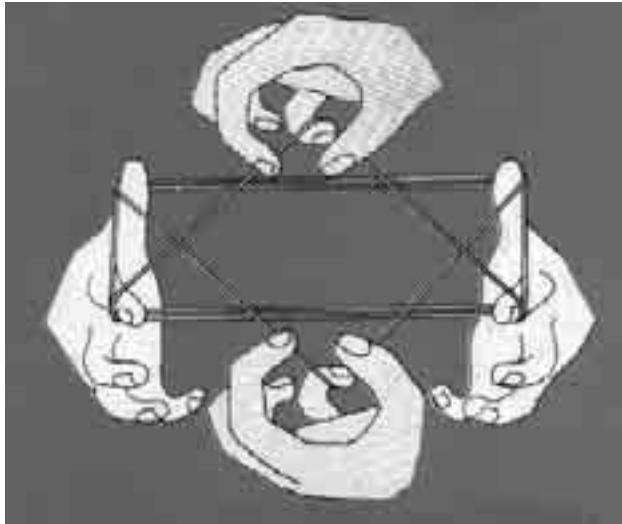
A grasps string at intersection and repeats steps in Picture 5, lifting string off B's hands.



**8**

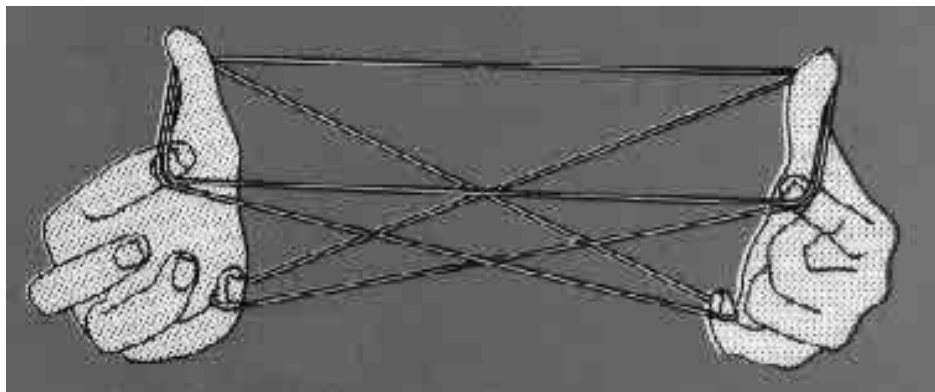


**9**



Hook little finger around  
opposing middle strings  
and repeat steps in  
Picture 5.

**10**





## **A Counting Book**

It's easy to make a counting book in your language.

Here is what you will need:

- ★ Copies of the next five pages
- ★ Crayons, pens, markers
- ★ Hole punch and some ribbon, or stapler, to bind the book
- ★ Glue stick

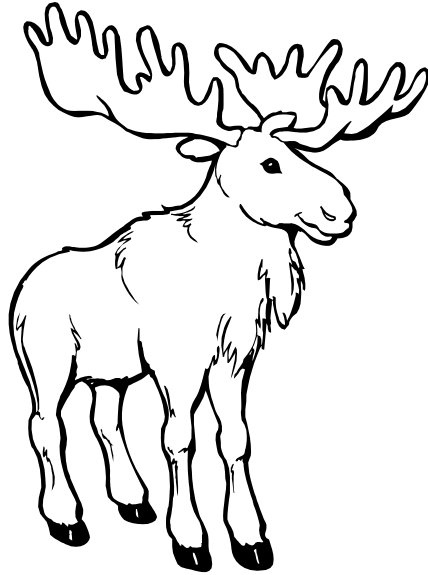
You can make the book by binding the pages of the book together by stapling them or by punching holes in the left margin and tying the pages together with a ribbon.

Have your child write the words for the numbers in your language and colour the animals.



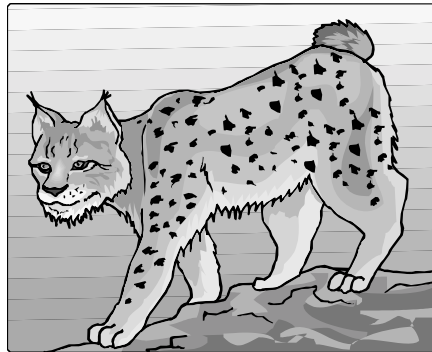
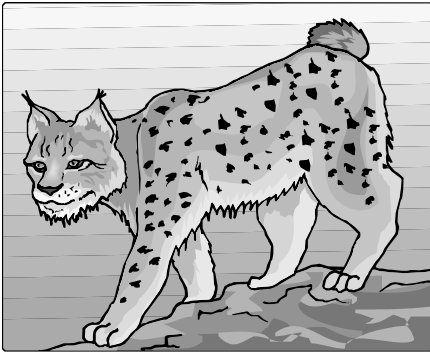


## My Counting Book



1

\_\_\_\_\_

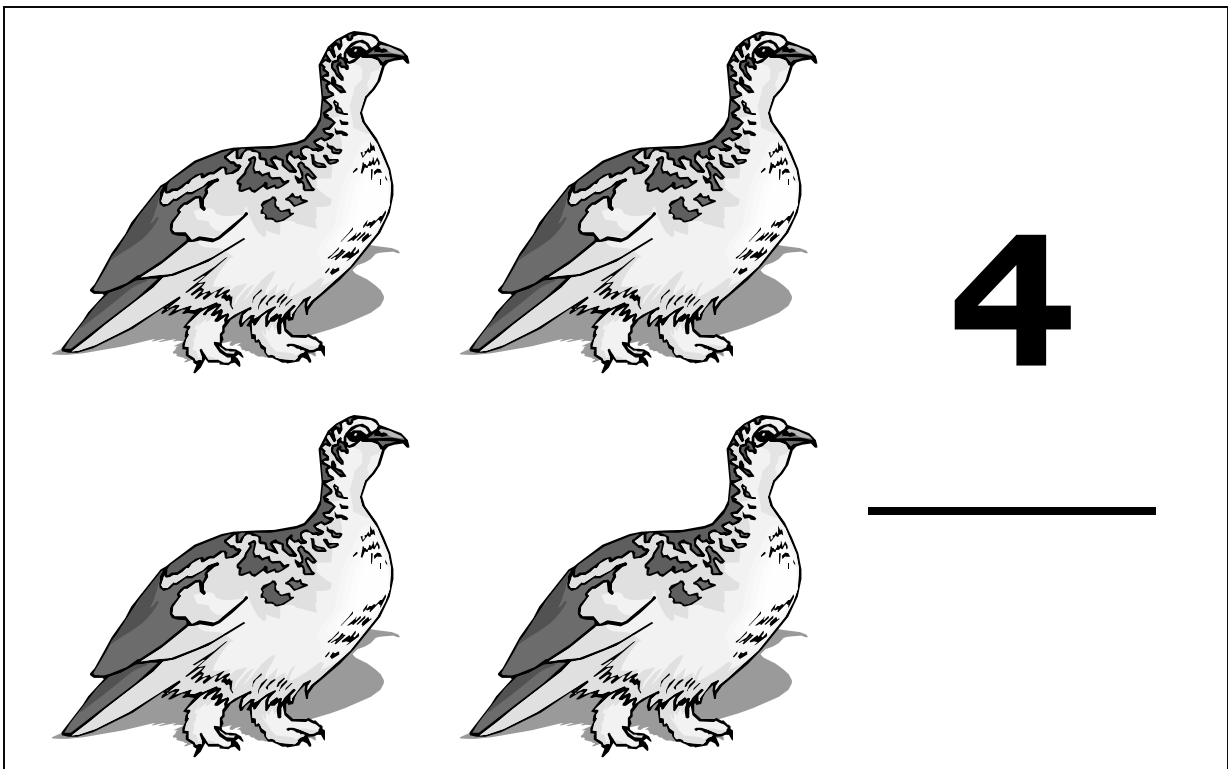
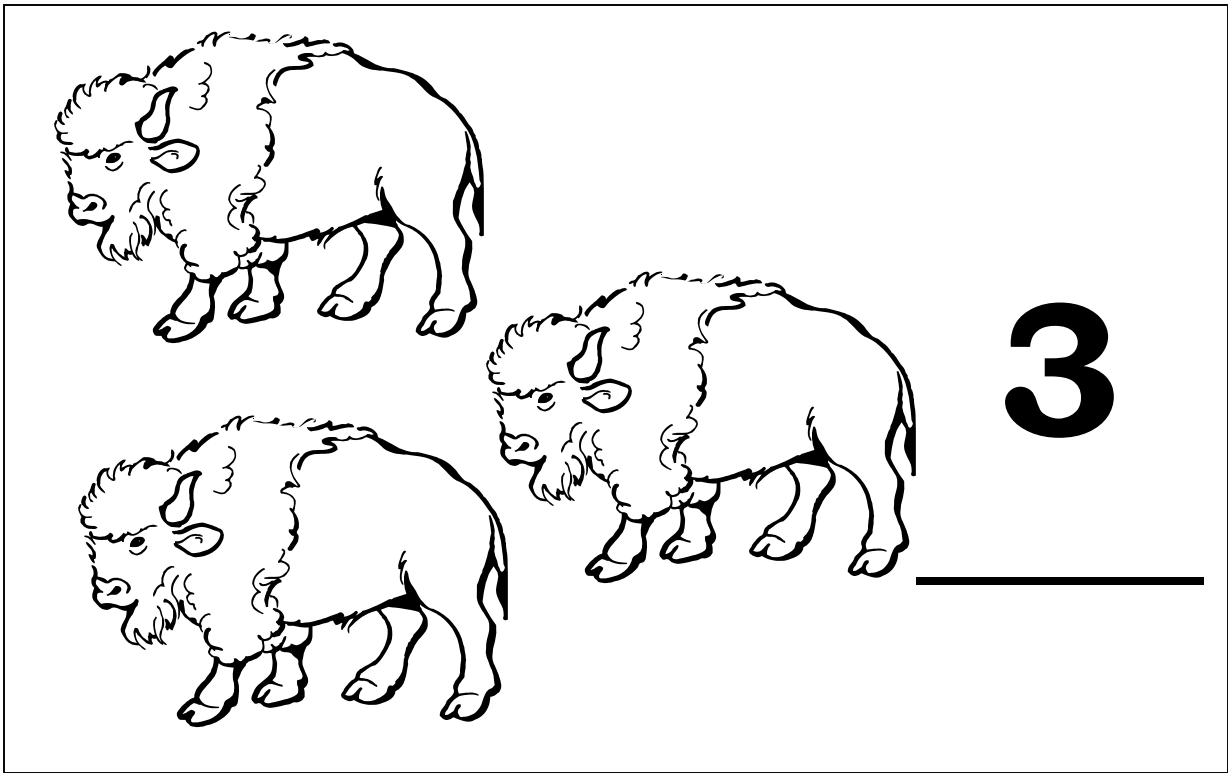


2

\_\_\_\_\_

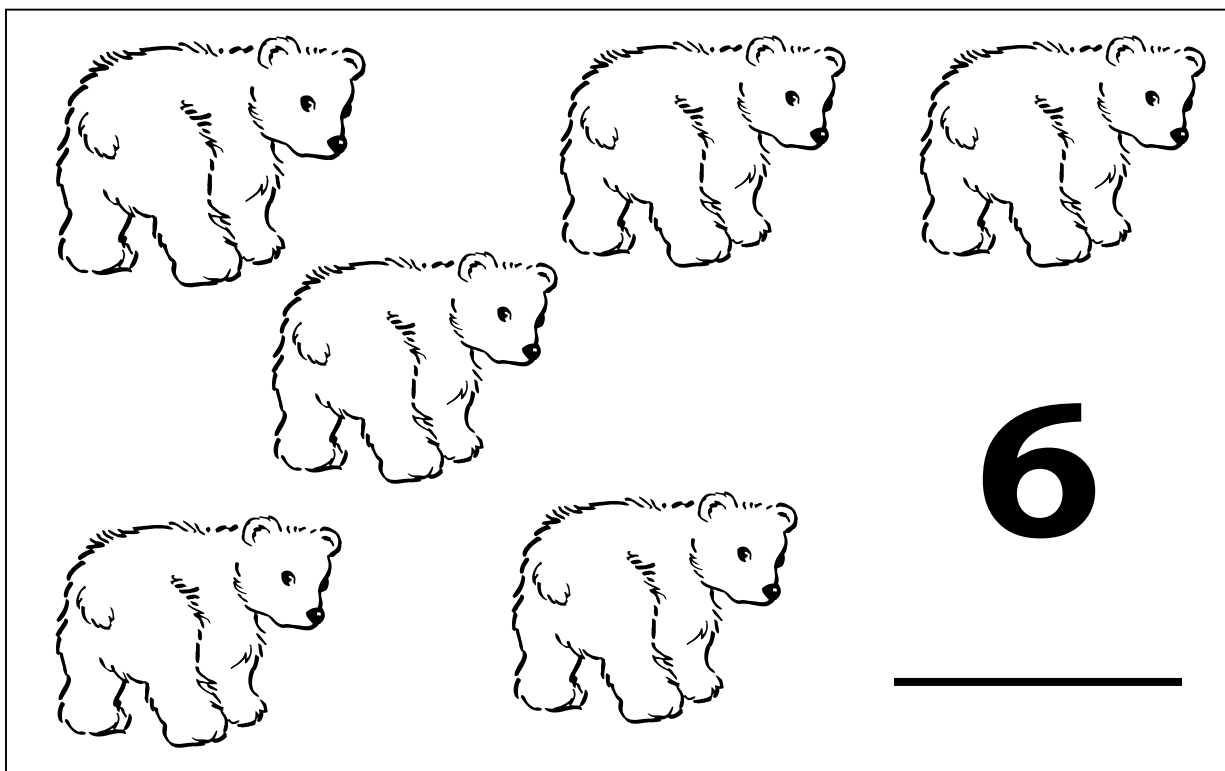
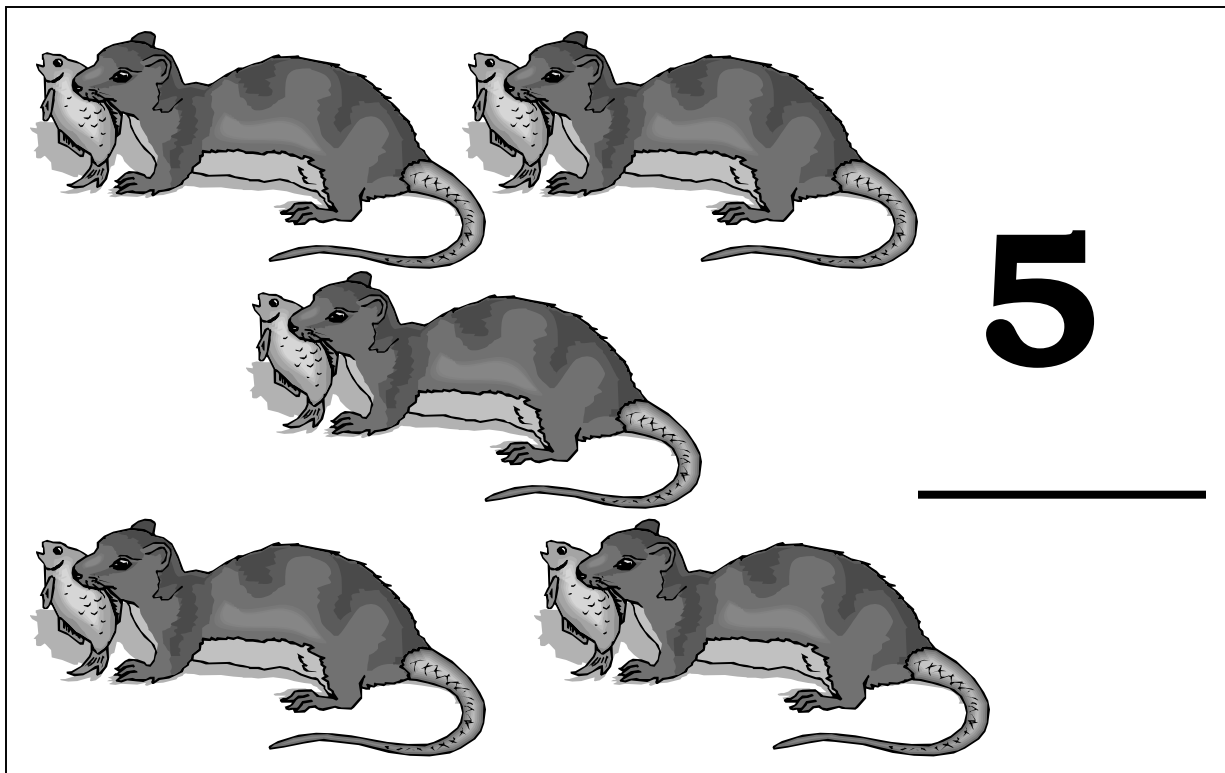


## My Counting Book



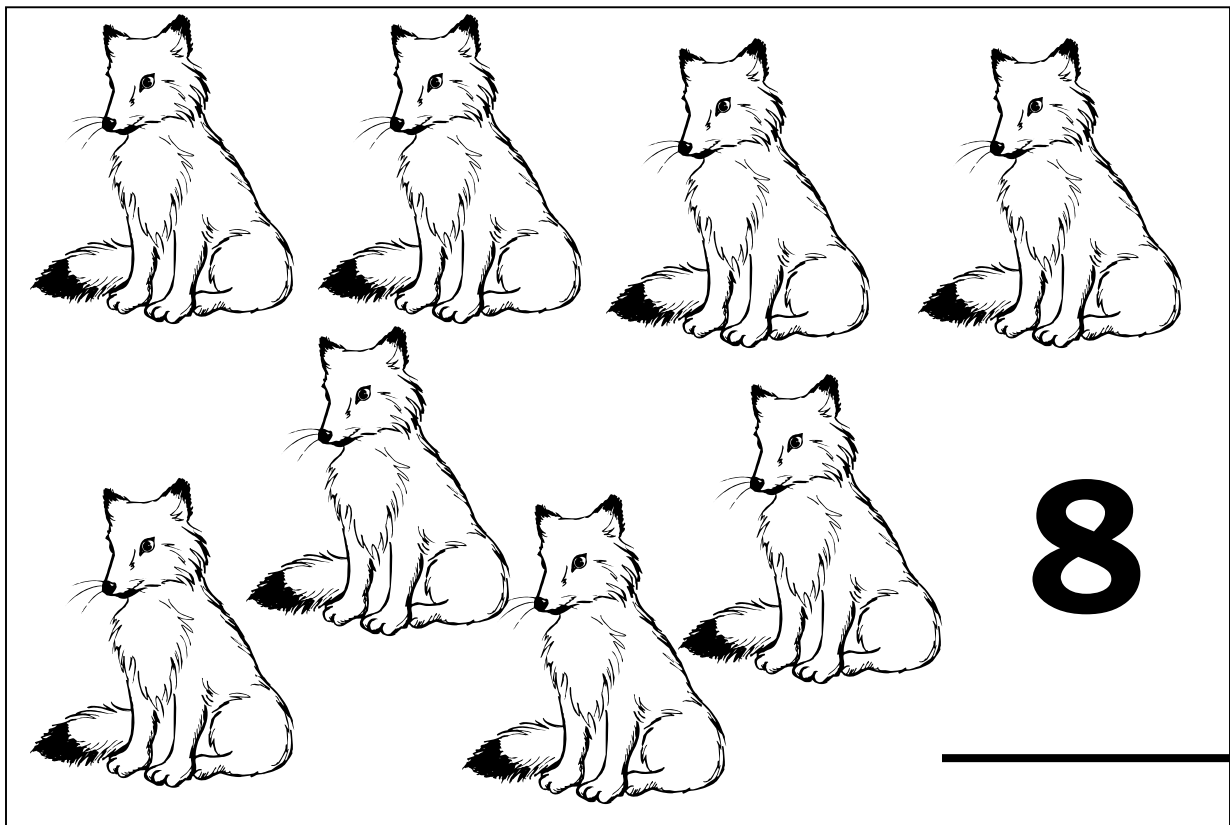
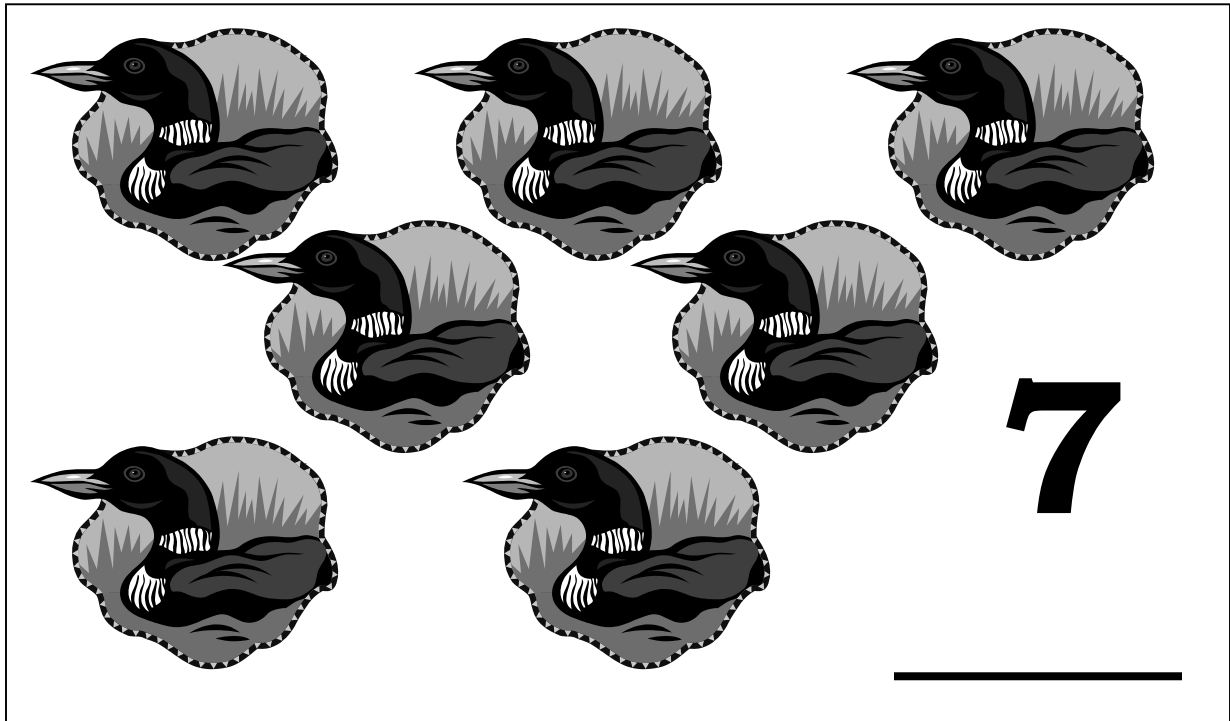


## My Counting Book





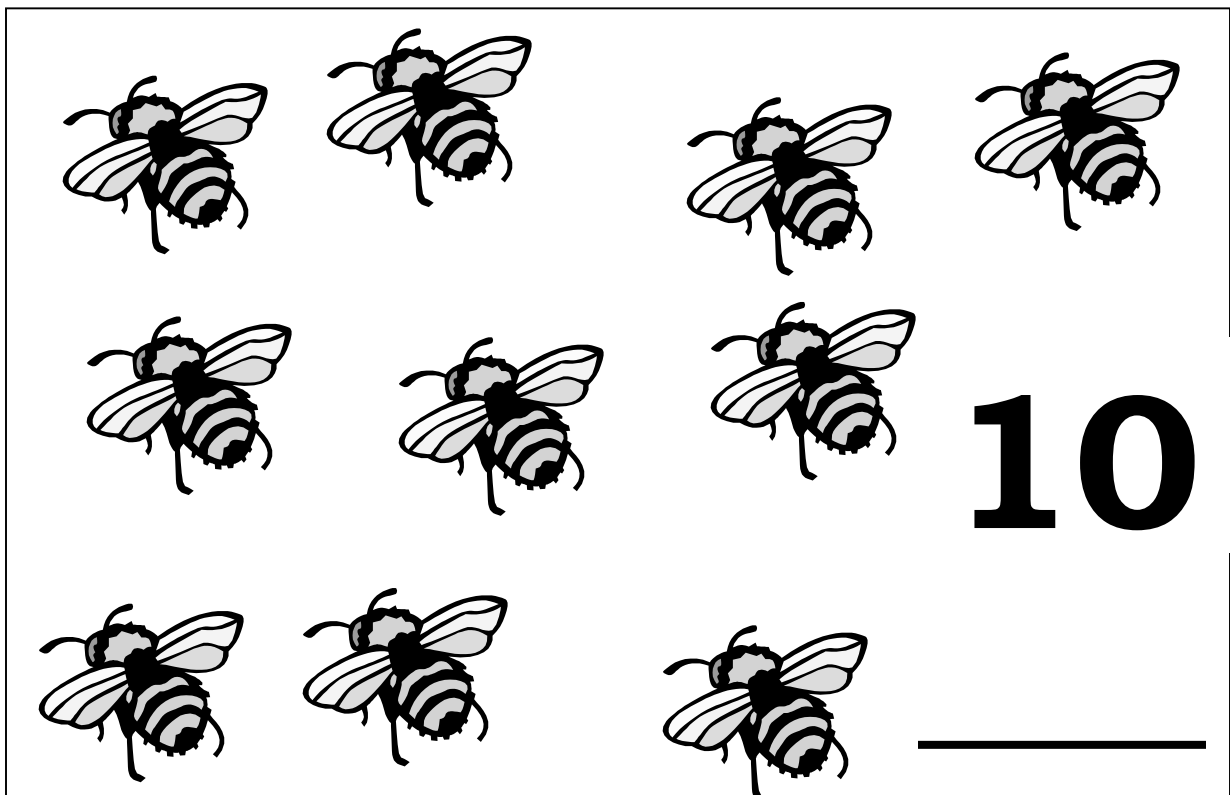
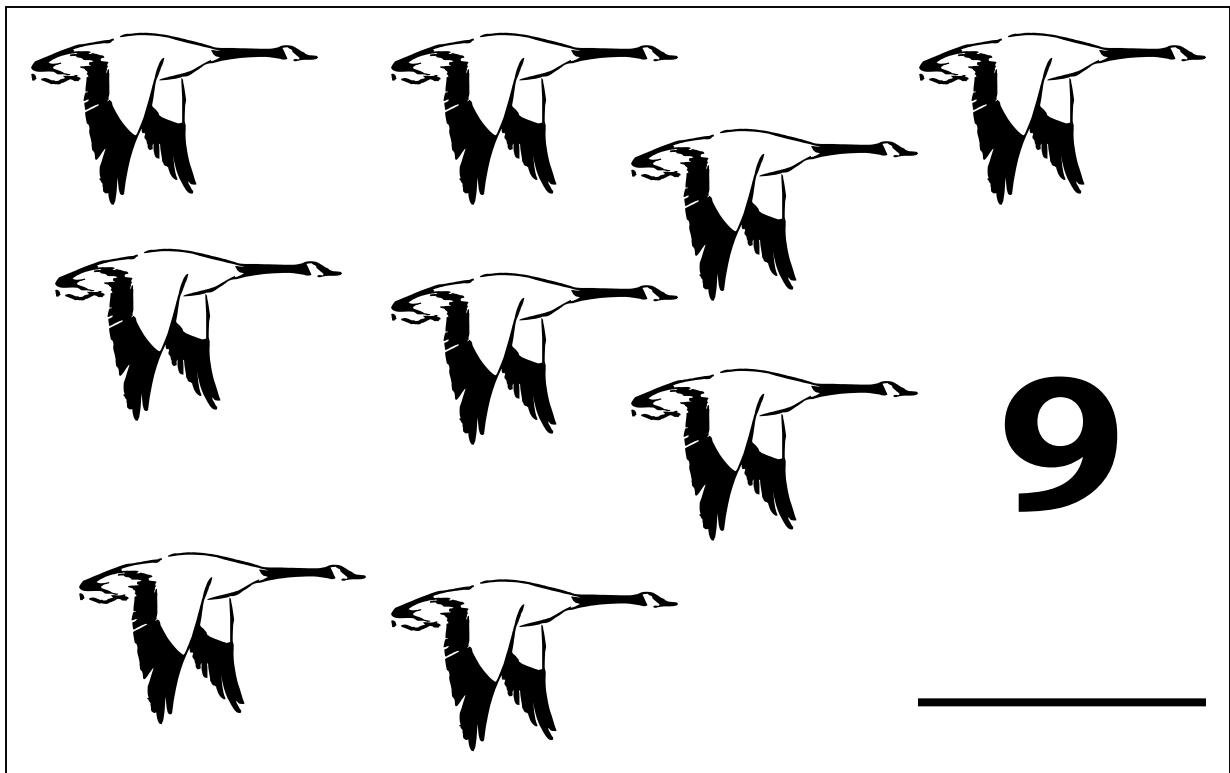
## My Counting Book







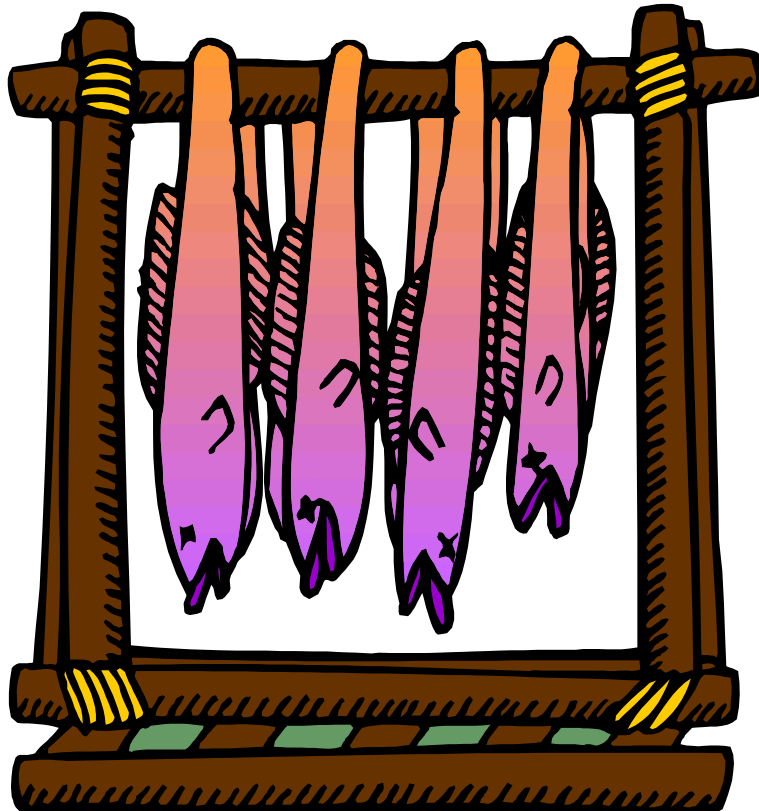
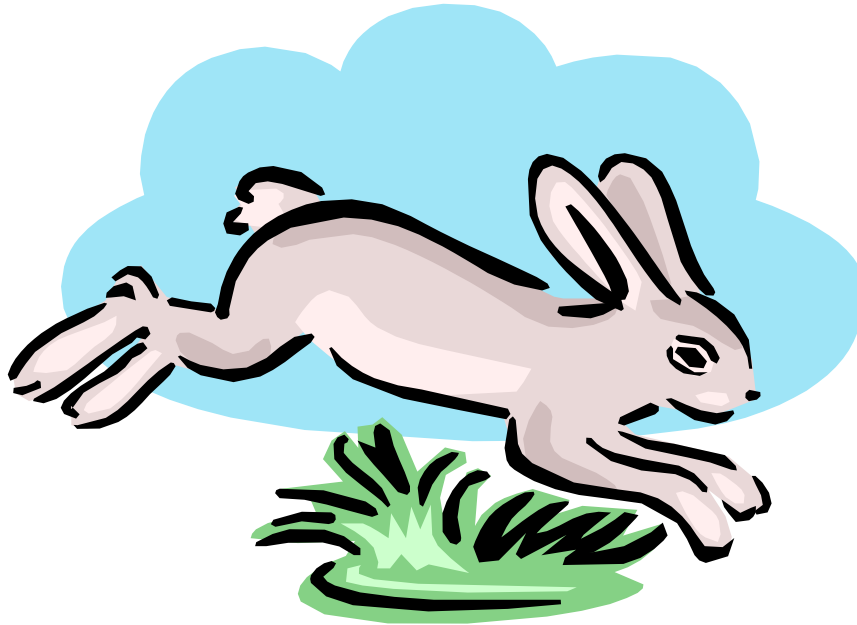
## My Counting Book





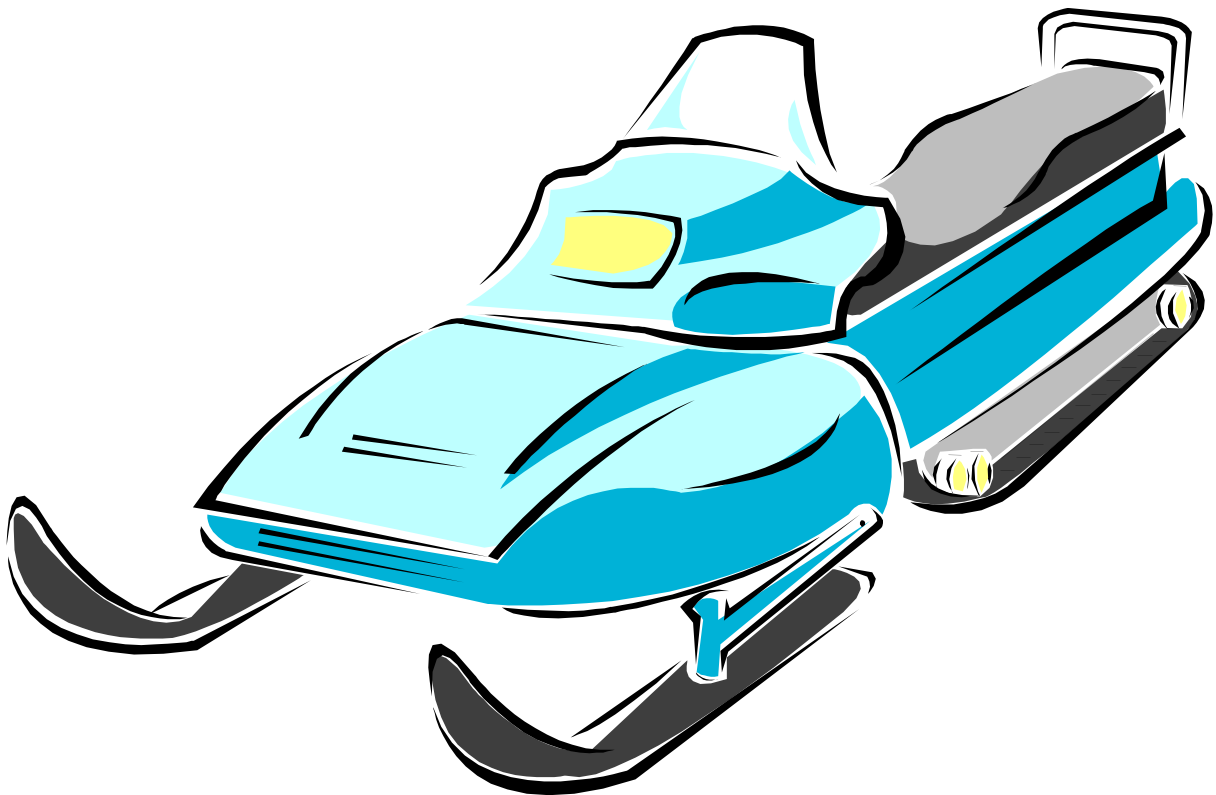
## **Northern Clip Art**

Here is some clip art that might help you with some of your projects.





## **Northern Clip Art**



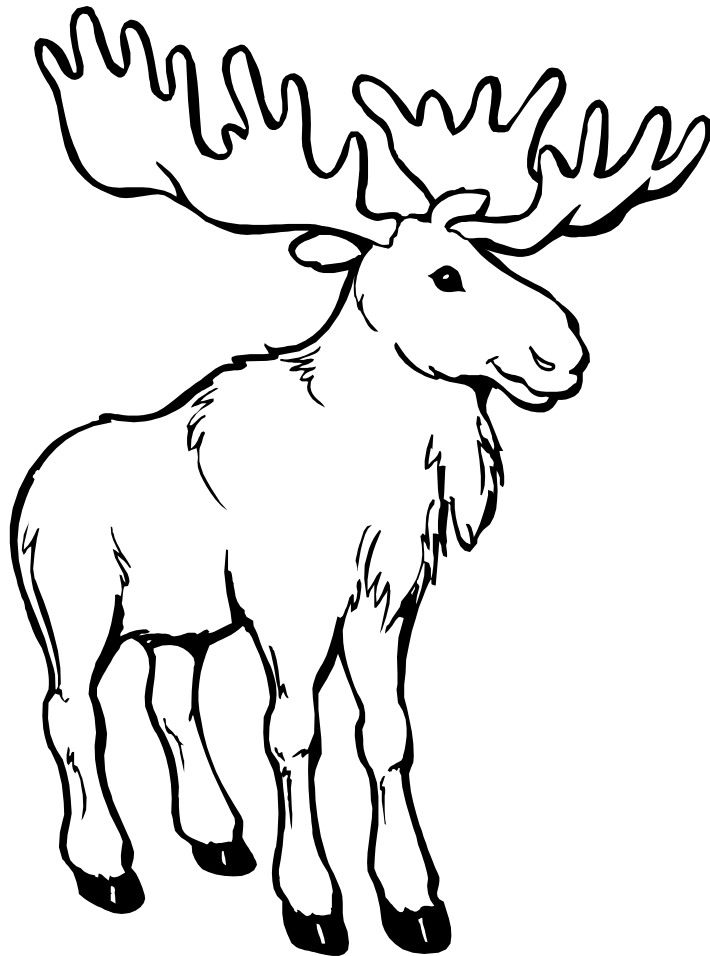


## Northern Clip Art



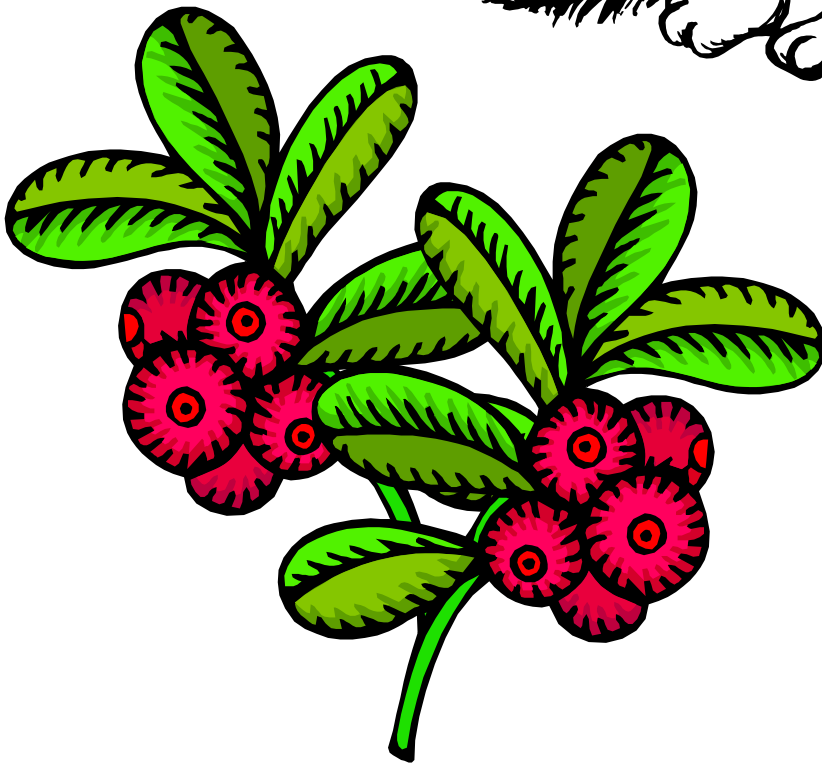
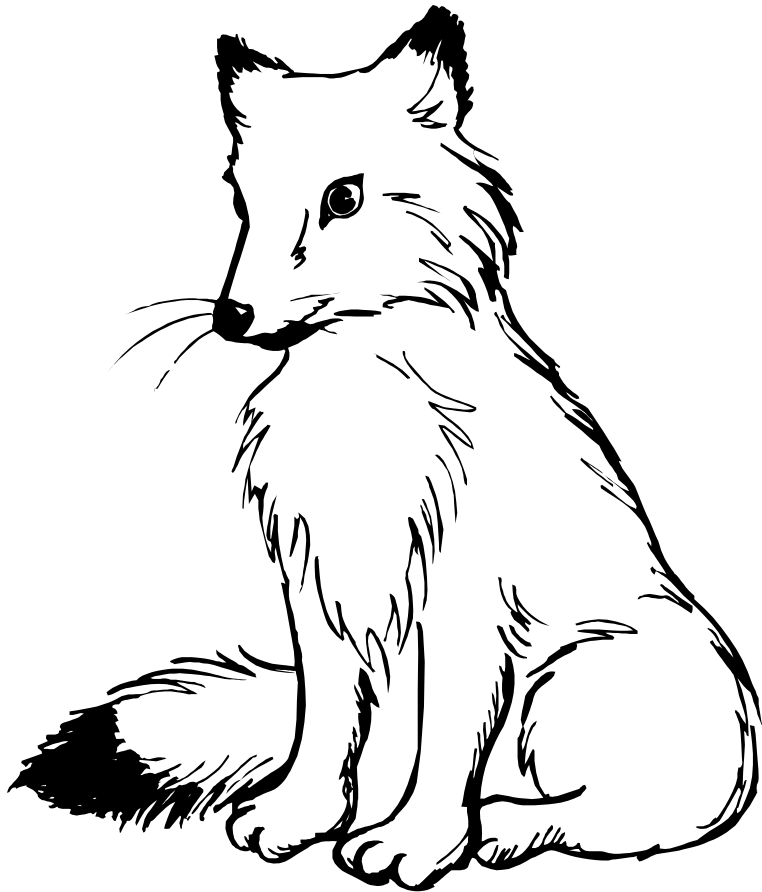


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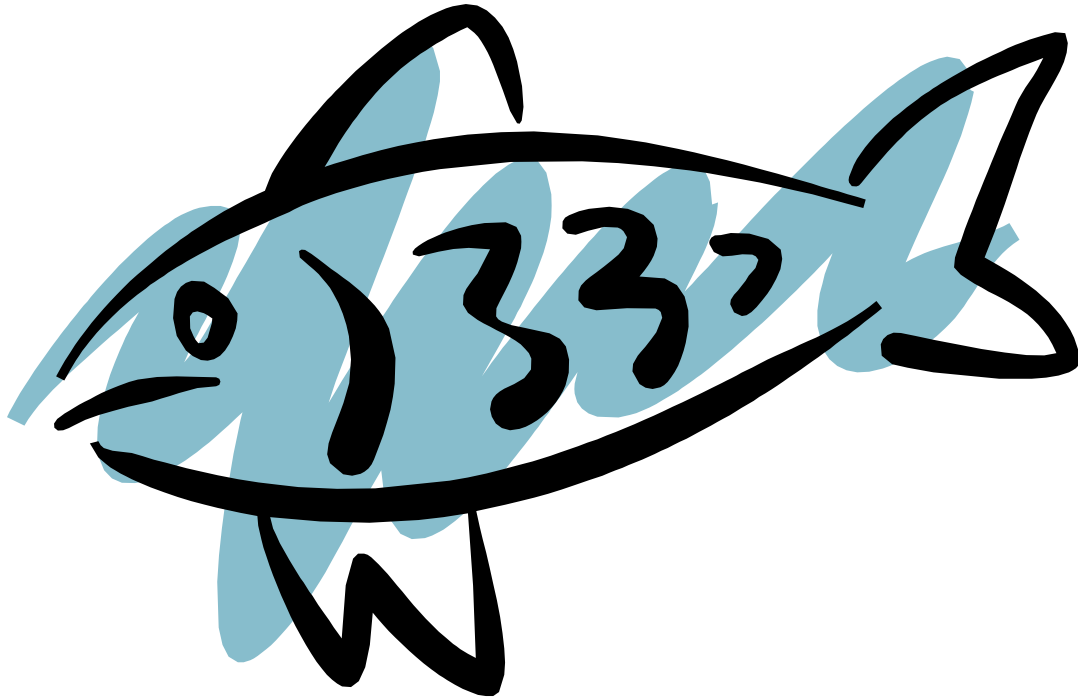


## **Northern Clip Art**





## **Northern Clip Art**





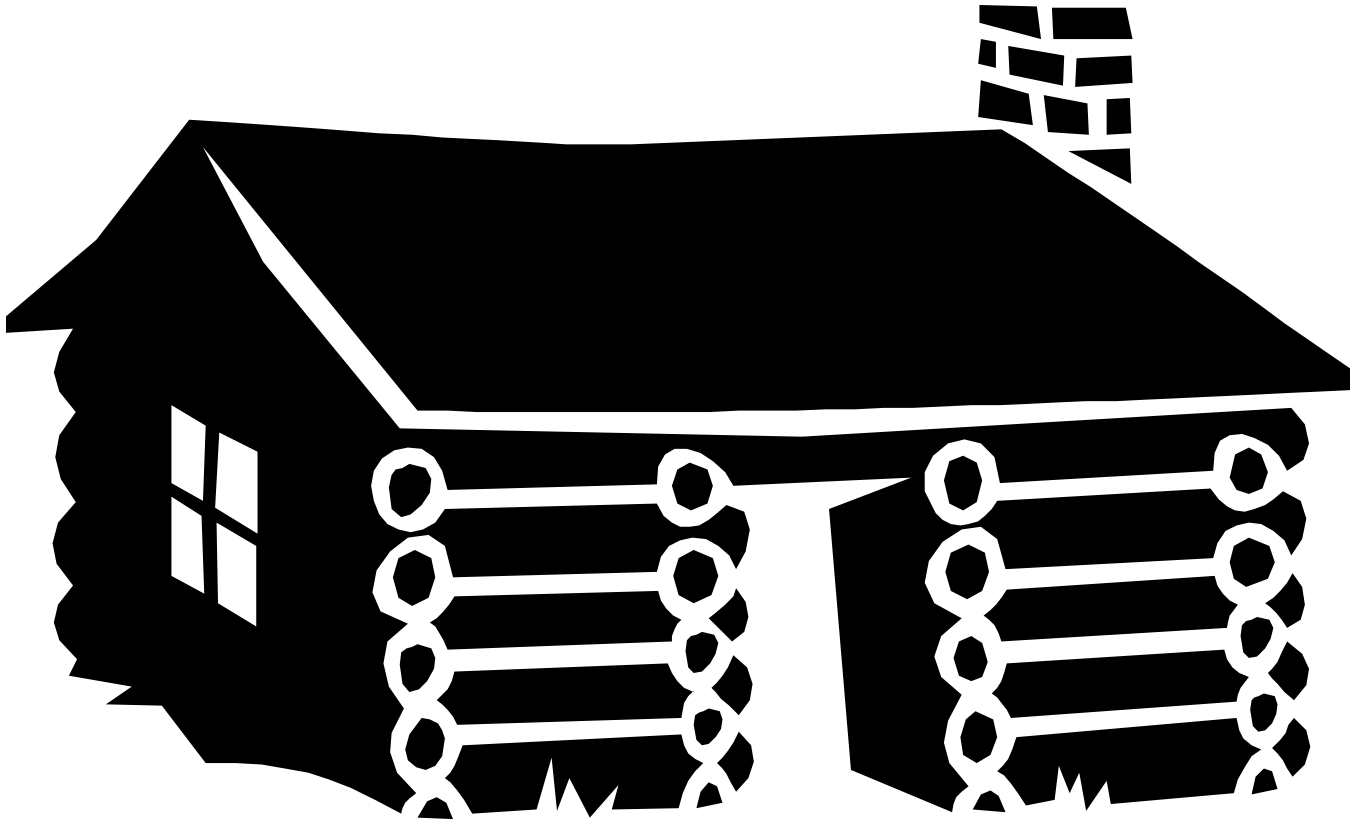
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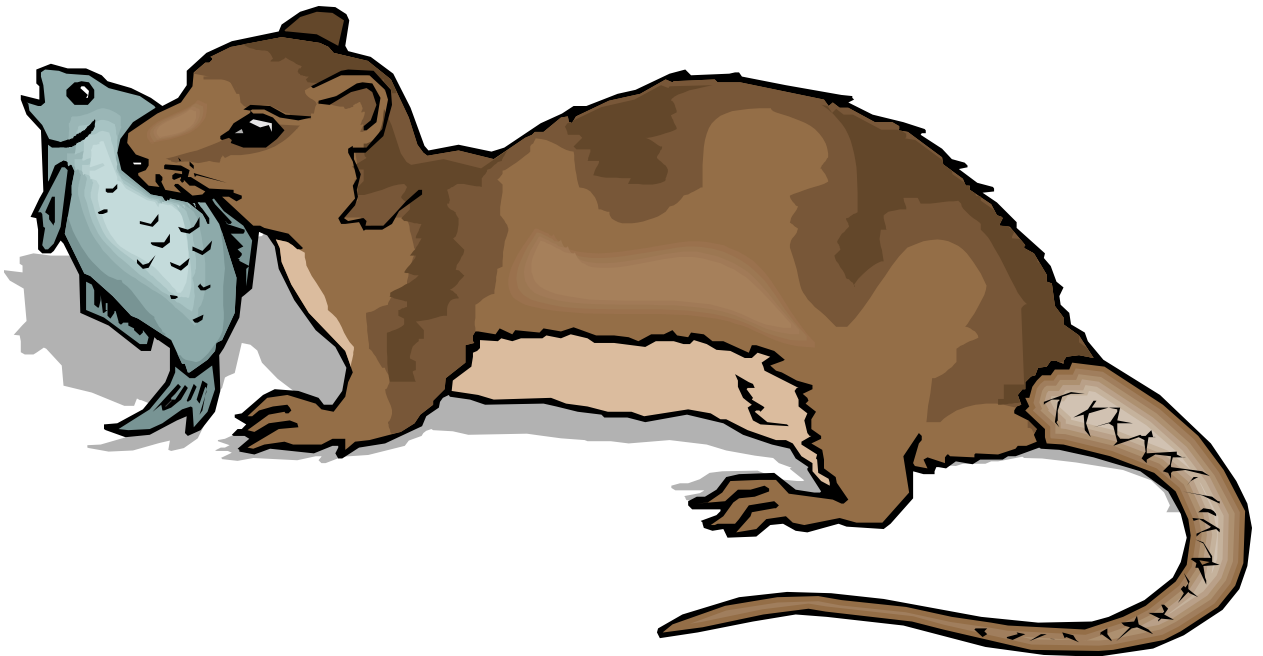


## Northern Clip Art





## Northern Clip Art





## **Northern Clip Art**



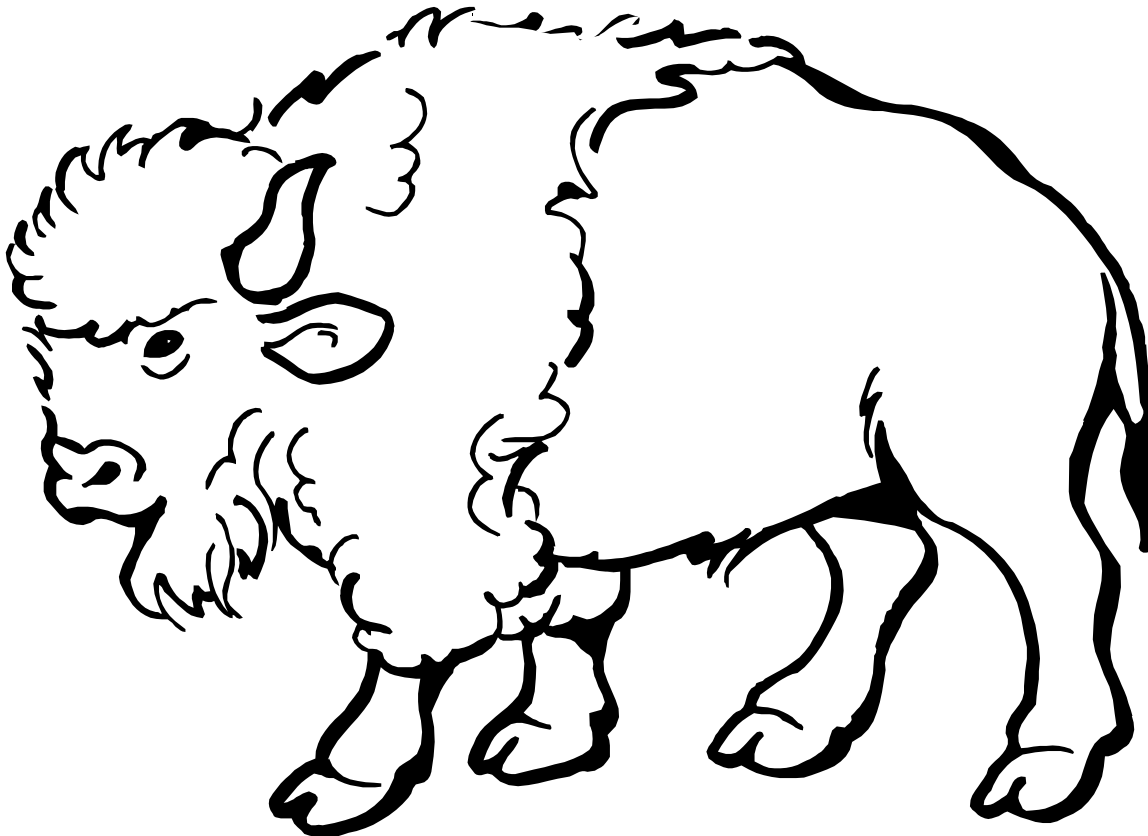


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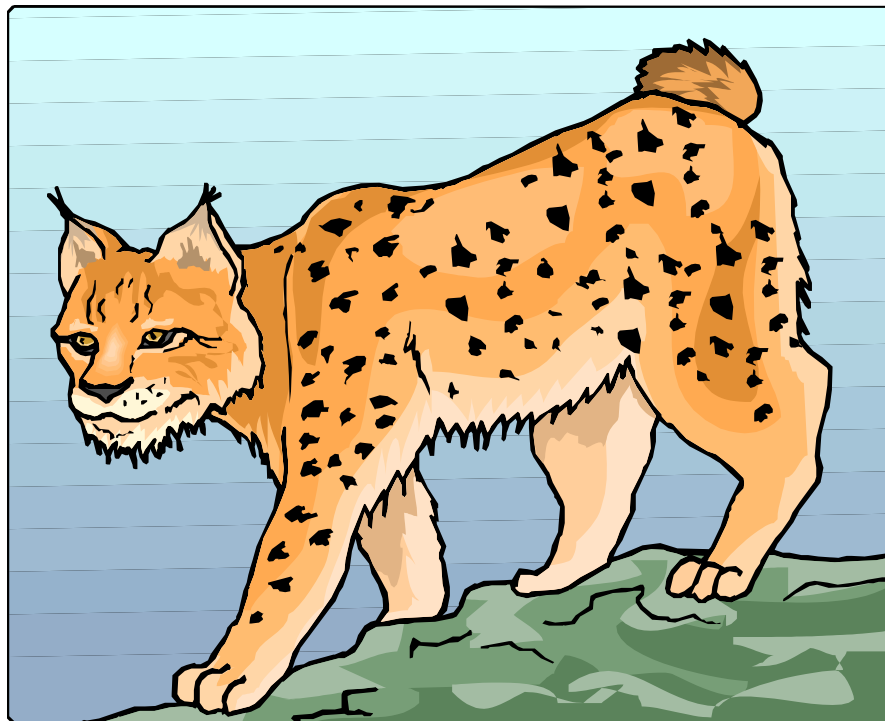


## Northern Clip Art





## **Northern Clip Art**





## **Community Contacts for Language Materials**

Here are the language coordinators for each language group. You may be able to get materials in your language from them.

Paula Anderson Cree Language Coordinator P.O. Box 720 Fort Smith, NT X0E 0P0 Ph: 867-872-2733 Fax: 867-872-2735 Email: <a href="mailto:creeprogram@gardtal.com">creeprogram@gardtal.com</a>	Sabet Biscaye Chipewyan Coordinator Box 1919 Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P4 Ph: 867-873-4419/ 920-2277 Fax: 867-920-4205 Email: <a href="mailto:sabet@internorth.com">sabet@internorth.com</a>
Philip Rabesca Teaching & Learning Centre Dogrib Community Services Centre, Bag Service #1 Rae-Edzo NT X0E 0Y0 Phone: 867-392-3000 Fax: 867-392-3001 Email: <a href="mailto:prabesca@dogrib.net">prabesca@dogrib.net</a>	Sara McLeod Executive Secretary Deh Cho First Nations Box 89 Fort Simpson, NT X0E 0N0 Ph: (867)695-2355 Fax: (867)695-2038 E-Mail: <a href="mailto:sara_dcfn@yahoo.ca">sara_dcfn@yahoo.ca</a>
Tracy Orbell North Slavey Coordinator Sahtu Secretariat Inc., Box 155 Deline, NT Phone: 867-589-4719 Fax: 867-589-4908 Email: <a href="mailto:tracy_orbell@gov.deline.ca">tracy_orbell@gov.deline.ca</a>	William Firth Manager. Language Programs Box 54 Fort McPherson, NT X0E 0J0 Phone: 867-952-2377 Fax: 867-952-2433 Email: <a href="mailto:wgfirth@learnnet.net.ca">wgfirth@learnnet.net.ca</a>
Pat Winfield Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre 107 Mackenzie Rd./ Box 2120 Inuvik, NT X0E 0T0 Ph: 867-777-2595 Fax: 867-678-2597 Email: <a href="mailto:tukcultc@irc.inuvialuit.com">tukcultc@irc.inuvialuit.com</a>	Association Franco-Culturelle de Yellowknife 5016-48 <sup>th</sup> St.. P.O. Box 1586 Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P2 Ph: 867-873-3292 Fax: 867-873-2158