Talking Cards: Moving from Words to Sentences

Virginia Beavert, Jesse Blackburn Morrow, Judith Fernandes, Joana Jansen and Janne Underriner: Northwest Indian Language Institute, University of Oregon

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In working with Native American language teachers in a variety of settings, it became clear that a tangible way to teach grammar and sentence structure would be helpful for instruction. Inspired by our Yakama Ichishkíin teacher and Elder, Virginia Beavert, the Northwest Indian Language Institute (NILI) has developed a teaching tool, Talking Cards, that makes the abstract elements of a sentence concrete.

Virginia Beavert uses cards with stick-figures representing actions to teach Ichishkíin verbs, and has wanted a way to visually represent other grammatical categories. So at NILI’s 2004 Summer Institute, staff and Ichishkíin language teachers from the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the Yakama Nation worked to devise user-friendly materials for their students, materials that could break down and make accessible some of the complex grammar of their language. During the institute, teachers focused on ways to help their students move from word-level language to sentences. Visuals were an important part of the process.

Talking Cards are pictures and symbols that correspond to sentence components, enabling students to visualize the grammar of their language. They are printed on card stock paper using images from clip art or original sources. The Native language word (and/or the English word) corresponding to what is represented on the card is written on the bottom.¹ (See Appendix I for a sample of Talking Cards.) Cards are grouped into categories of people and animals, objects, places, verbs, locational terms, time, question words, and pronouns. The cards are portable and adaptable, and can be used in a variety of contexts. Larger cards (the size of a full page and larger) can be used in a classroom, while a smaller size card (a half page) can be used with a small group of students, or in a one-on-one setting such as a Master-Apprentice situation. The cards are useful for beginners of all ages, ranging from Head Start to adult education classes, and can be used in the home as well as the classroom.

For years, teachers and students have found flash cards useful for learning. Whether in math, music, science, or language, flash cards connect an image or word with a concept. In language learning, this is a three-way connection between the image (a visual representation), a concept (knowledge about an event or object, for example), and the sounds the student is hearing. It is long-established that visual aids enhance students’ comprehension of sound-meaning correspondences in the new language. For example,

¹ It is not necessary for cards to include a word that corresponds to the picture. Some teachers prefer that cards include both pictures and words as they see that words are anchors for their students.
seeing a picture of a dog and hearing the word *k’usík’usi* creates an immediate link between the meaning and the sounds, facilitating acquisition. Studies have shown that among Native American groups, there are greater proportions of students who learn in a visual manner as opposed to learning from spoken input (Hilberg & Tharp, 2002; Rougas, 2000). Students who are visual learners almost double their learning performance when presented with information that includes text and illustrations compared to just text (Riding & Rayner, 1998).

In addition, educational research suggests that the more actively engaged learners are, the greater their retention of new information. Asher and colleagues (e.g. Asher, 1969; Kunihura & Asher, 1965) found that language students learned action commands best when they responded physically (performing the action), rather than with written or spoken translations. A curriculum that takes advantage of multiple modalities, targeting aural, visual, and kinesthetic skills, enriches each student’s learning and ensures that the teacher reaches students with different learning styles. Talking Cards combine the visual benefits of traditional flash cards with the opportunity for kinesthetic learning.

Additional educational research has stressed the importance of providing ‘comprehensible input’ (Krashen, 1982). This is language that is familiar enough to anchor learners, ensuring that they understand a large portion of what the teacher is saying, while still challenging them to move beyond their current level of proficiency (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 1994). Talking Cards provide the learner with this necessary comprehensible input.

### Moving from words to complete sentences

Beginning language learners have little difficulty understanding single words in a new language. As soon as they hear connected speech (phrases and sentences), the challenge is in assigning meaning to units within a stream of sounds. Eventually, learners must also combine words to form their own sentences. In both of these tasks, learners must use the grammar of the language. Learning is easier when the language of study has the same sentence structure as the student’s first language. Students of Native American languages whose first language is English are faced with a different grammatical structure, and typically, words that are rich in prefixes and suffixes. As teachers line up Talking Cards in the appropriate word order while saying a sentence, students can begin to recognize a grouping of sounds, for example a word or an affix, as meaningful. This process can lead to direct or indirect grammar awareness on the part of the learner.

A learner of Ichishkiin² will not be accustomed to either the word order or the prefixes and suffixes of the language. Ichishkiin is a morphologically complex language.

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² The Ichishkiin and Nez Perce languages comprise the Sahaptian Family. Ichishkiin was traditionally spoken in the southern plateau region along the Columbia River and its drainages in what is now Eastern Oregon and Washington. Rigsby (1965) describes three groups of Ichishkiin dialects:
in which one word can be comprised of many smaller meaningful parts, as in the sentence below. (Examples are in the Yakama dialect and use the Yakama practical alphabet.)

1. *ku  ishíchpa  itɬúpwiiɬtxa*

   *ku  ishích-pa    i-tɬúp-wii-ɬtx-a*

   and  nest-Location  s/he-jump-go-up-Past

   ‘And s/he jumped up on the nest.’

Most language learners would find it difficult to piece all these individual parts together right away. The word order doesn’t match that of English, various prefixes and suffixes are required on the verb, and a locational suffix is needed on the noun ‘nest’. If all of this grammar were explained in the same lesson, the student would become hopelessly confused. Talking Cards can show these individual grammatical elements in relation to one another.

Language teachers need a variety of instructional techniques to help students attain fluency. Talking Cards are one teaching strategy that helps students grow from speaking words to combining words into phrases and sentences. The cards help students to:

- Speak in simple everyday sentences
- Ask and respond to basic questions (who, what ,where, when)
- Learn word order possibilities
- Explain where something is located
- Describe events in the past, present, and future
- Move from a simple sentence to a more complex sentence

Talking Cards then, facilitate a learner to move from speaking in isolated words to complete sentences. Additionally, they allow students to demonstrate a passive understanding of the language by physically manipulating the cards to build sentences in response to a teacher’s spoken statement or request.

Northeast dialects, spoken along the Columbia from Priest Rapids to the lower Yakima and Snake Rivers; Northwest, spoken mainly in the Yakima drainage; and Columbia River, spoken along the Columbia east of what is now The Dalles, Oregon, and along the Deschutes, John Day, and Umatilla Rivers. NILI classes have included teachers from each of the three groupings, with Walla Walla in the Northeast dialects, Yakama in the Northwest grouping, and Umatilla and Warm Springs two of the Columbia River dialects. These Ichishkiin dialects are mutually intelligible, with slight differences in orthographies, phonology, and lexical items. Today, there are few fluent speakers, most of whom are elderly, although there is great interest in learning and teaching to pass the language on to the next generations. For more information about the Ichishkiin language, see Rude and Rigby 1996.

3 The idea of creating complete sentences from such cards emerged from an idea published by Symtalk (www.symtalk.com).
Ichishkíin Talking Cards

The first time NILI and Sahaptian language teachers were able to experiment with Talking Cards was in January 2005, when we came together at Heritage University in Toppenish Washington. For Ichishkíin, we developed cards and lessons that focus on location, questions and answers, tense, and word order variations. In initial talking card lessons, simpler sentence structures are used. (See Appendix I for two beginning lessons.) Examples below are grammatically less complex than many Ichishkiin sentences, yet they are “real language,” things a fluent speaker would say in everyday conversation.

**Talking Cards and location and questions:**
To show that something is a location in Ichishkiin, the suffix -pa (loosely translated as ‘in, on, at, by’) is added to a noun:

2a. wána 'river'
    wána-pa 'located at the river'
    river-Location

2b. pátat 'tree'
    pátat-pa 'located at the tree'
    tree-Location

2c. ɨníit 'house'
    ɨníit-pa 'located at the house'
    house-Location

Talking Cards showing people or animals at different locations help students build sentences with the suffix -pa. So, a card with a picture of a woman is placed by or on top of a larger picture of a house to elicit the sentence:

3. ɨníit-pa iwá áyat (or áyat iwá ɨníit-pa)
    house-Location is woman
    ‘The woman is at the house.’

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4 This First Annual Sahaptian Conference was made possible with the support of NILI, Heritage University, the Yakama Nation, the Department of Linguistics at the University of Oregon and the Spirit Mountain Community Fund.
5 These examples do not reflect all of the meanings and uses of the sound "pa," which occurs as a prefix and a suffix in Ichishkiin. It focuses on the suffix, which has only one interpretation meaning where something is located.
(Note that we decided not to include a card for iwá ‘s/he, it is’ in the set we developed for Ichishkíin, as students can usually infer this meaning through visual context and an understanding of the nouns and their spatial relationship. A card representing ‘be’ can be made if desired.)

After students are comfortable with these sentences, other elements are substituted into the sentence one at a time. It is helpful to the student to introduce only one detail at a time, with only one change in the sentence at a time in any given lesson. For example, if the location is changed to a river or tree by changing the card, students can then see that the suffix -pa has to be added to that location word:

4. áyat iwá pátat-pa
   ‘The woman is by the tree.’

Different animals or people can be placed by the tree, and students can practice the words for these.

After students are comfortable with the basic sentence, yes/no questions can let the teacher know how the students are doing. To form a yes/no question in Ichishkíin, add the word mish to the beginning of the sentence. Mish indicates that the sentence is a question, and doesn’t have a direct translation in English:

5. Mish iwá áyat ɨníitpa?
   Mish   iwá    áyat   ɨnít-pa?
   Question  is  woman  house-Location
   ‘Is the woman at the house?’

This sentence involves three cards - one with a question mark to indicate it is a question, one with the picture of the person or animal, and one with a picture of the location. Students respond with ii (yes) or chaw (no). They can also correct wrong information: “No, the woman is not at the house; the cat is at the house.”

In a second type of question that can be formed, the question word minán ‘where at’ is used.

6. Minán iwá áyat?
   Where    is  woman
   ‘Where is the woman?’

And then students answer by giving the woman’s location.

Further lessons include being more precise about where things are. This sentence also indicates location, but is a little more specific:
7. *asht  áyat  iwá  inút-pa*
   inside  woman  is  house-Location
   ‘The woman is inside the house.’

For this sentence, cards indicating ‘woman,’ ‘house’ and ‘inside’ show the student how to form the sentence. Other words with more specific locations can be substituted into location sentences, such as *xwíimichnik* ‘above, on top of’, *xálukt* ‘under, below’ and *anáchnik* ‘behind.’

**Talking Cards and time**

Eventually, students can move from simply talking about being located at a place to carrying out an action. The teacher substitutes an action verb for ‘is’:

8. *áyat  iwalptáyksha  inút-pa*
   áyat  *i-walptáyk-sha  inút-pa*
   woman  s/he-sing-Ongoing  house-Location
   ‘The woman is singing at (in, by) the house.’

   This step requires that students learn more about Ichishkiin verbs, as the verb requires a prefix indicating the subject. With singular 3rd person (he, she or it) subjects, the prefix is *i-.* The verb also needs to have a suffix indicating when in time the action occurred. These suffixes are in bold below, and indicate the change in time.

9. *áyat  iwalptáyksha*  ‘The woman is singing,’
   *áyat  iwalptáyka*  ‘The woman sang,’
   *áyat  iwalpáykta*  ‘The woman will sing.’

With a talking card for the woman, one for the action, and one indicating the time, students can create more complex sentences by learning to substitute different endings on the verbs to indicate when an action took place. Many teachers begin with the first suffix above, *-sha,* which indicates present time and a continuing action, much like English *-ing.* Once students can produce this form easily, other tenses can be added. (Note that these are not the only suffixes for indicating time in Ichishkiin.)

**Talking Cards and word order**

The order of words in an Ichishkiin sentence is not fixed, and many variations are possible. Teachers find that their students most often want to use “English word order” even if this is not the desired word order or the order an elder would use. For example, in
response to the question Mɨnán iwá áyat? ‘Where is the woman?’ a student could respond with any of the following:

10. áyat iwá inítpa
    inítpa iwá áyat
    ‘The woman is at the house.’

    iwá inítpa
    inítpa iwá
    ‘She’s at the house’

All are grammatical and understandable sentences. However, the bolded examples stress the woman’s location, and are more likely to be used in response to the question. A sentence specifying location may not be found in the same order as English:

11. xwíimichnik áy'ay iwá patát-pa
    on top of  magpie  is  tree-Location
    ‘The magpie is on top of the tree.’ (Ichishkiiin order: On top of - magpie - is -tree.)

Talking Cards can help students see the possibilities for word order, as teachers and students rearrange the order of the cards to create different sentences.

A more advanced lesson in Ichishkiiin word order involves person marking for 1st person (I, we) and 2nd person (you, you all). We struggled to choose pictures or symbols that indicate ‘I’, ‘you’, and ‘we’. Some have used pictures pointing to individuals (for example, a person pointing to him or herself means ‘I’), but we did not find visual representations of these concepts that were clear to teachers and students. We decided to put the Ichishkiiin and English words on the card instead of a picture. For other teachers, pictures may be preferable.

In Ichishkiiin, the words for 1st and 2nd person are ‘enclitics,’ meaning they attach to the end of another word of the sentence. In Ichishkiiin, these attach to the end of the first word in the sentence, which is not necessarily the verb. This is unlike the he/she/it examples, where the prefix always attaches to the beginning of the verb. In the two examples of enclitics shown below, the first letters are in parentheses to show that these sounds are not always used:

12. -(na)sh       ‘I’
    - (n)am       ‘you’ (one person)

In sentences, these generally follow the first word, regardless of what kind of word it is:
Our first set of Talking Cards was developed specifically for Ichishkíin and with the input of Ichishkíin teachers. Different language communities will need to adapt the cards to their own linguistic needs. For example, we decided not to include some transitive verbs in the first lessons. Ichishkíin requires a large number of grammatical forms indicating relationships between subjects and objects. Other Native American languages may not have such complexity in the marking of transitive verbs, but may have to consider, for example, the effect of noun classes on grammar.

**Talking Cards and other Native American languages**

Even though modifications for other languages and cultures will certainly be needed, the Talking Cards are currently flexible enough to be used with a variety of languages. For example, instructors at the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde have used the cards to teach Chinuk Wawa to children in the immersion pre-school program as well as to adult learners. NILI is preparing an instructional video including segments from a Chinuk Wawa teacher’s first experience using the cards. Following the lesson, this teacher, Tony Johnson, noted that the cards were valuable as an assessment instrument. A teacher can use them to elicit evidence of student proficiency, whether by asking for a simple yes or no response, having the student arrange the cards in an appropriate order, or having the student speak the sentence presented by the cards.

Talking Cards are compatible with the teaching and learning styles that have been found to be appropriate for many Native American cultures. The majority of these students benefit more from visual input, and the cards’ design addresses this. In addition, Talking Cards allow the student to observe first as the teacher works with the cards, and only after this is the student asked to complete a task. This method may also be well-suited for settings where instructors are elders following more traditional oral teaching styles.

Talking Cards can minimize the use of written language, whether English or the Native American language. The less English is used, the more the learner is exposed to

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6 We did include the verbs ‘cook,’ ‘count’ and ‘eat.’ These verbs are frequently used intransitively, and these would be the first uses taught. Later, to introduce the grammar of transitive verbs, these same cards could be used with an object card (such as the apple or deer meat).
the language of study. A teacher’s reliance on English translation imposes an extra cognitive task on the learner, as she must then connect the written symbols, the English sentence they represent, and the entire sentence meaning to the sounds of the Native language words. This is especially problematic if the word order patterns differ between the two languages. Since Talking Cards convey word meaning using pictures, they are suitable for Native American languages which are taught without a writing system. Additionally, preschool age children who haven’t learned how to read are able to form sentences using the cards, building their pre-literacy skills.

The Ichishkiin communities, like many Native American language programs, must overcome the challenges of limited teaching materials and less than fully fluent teachers. The basic set of Talking Cards NILI has developed can be used in a number of different lessons and settings to teach a variety of objectives. And in the not uncommon situation where the teachers are themselves learners, Talking Cards can provide structure to a teacher’s lesson, and keep the language needed at a manageable level of complexity.

Talking Cards are still in development, and we recognize that the images in the current set are not necessarily the best representations possible. For instance, the verb cards depict a human figure carrying out the action of the verb. These figures are easily identified as male or female. When the verb card for ‘sit’ (a man sitting) is combined with the noun card for ‘woman’ with the intention to create the sentence ‘the woman is sitting,’ some students have misinterpreted the combination as meaning ‘the woman and man are sitting.’ One solution would be to design more gender-neutral verb cards, but this diminishes the suggestion of a real-world context for each action. The pictures on the cards are representations, and students have to become familiar with the idea that the picture of the man sitting symbolizes the general meaning ‘sit.’ Teachers will discover what works best for their students. As previously mentioned, some images will need to be replaced with ones that fit the culture specific to the language being taught. Clip art sources are limited. However, teachers and students can collaborate to build their own sets of cards using photos or drawings of people and objects in their community.

NILI’s initial experiences using the Talking Cards and feedback from Ichishkiin and Chinuk Wawa teachers suggest that the cards are a valuable addition to a teacher’s lesson plans. They provide the learner with comprehensible input and facilitate the presentation and learning of complex, unfamiliar grammar. Talking Cards take advantage of multiple learning styles, including those often preferred by Native American students. They are easily adaptable to a variety of languages and cultures and can be used in the classroom or anywhere language teaching takes place. As teachers in other language communities use this instructional tool, their comments and suggestions will be incorporated into future versions of the cards.
References


Appendix I - Talking Cards Lessons

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“TALKING CARDS”

Moving from Words to Simple Sentences

Beginning language learners have little difficulty understanding single words in a new language. Their bigger challenge is putting words together to form sentences. The minute they try to create simple sentences, they are faced with the "grammar" of the language.

Keep it simple!

Learning is easier when the language being learned has the same sentence structure as the language the student is used to. When learning Native American languages, students are faced with a sentence structure that is different, and words that are rich in prefixes and suffixes.

Ichishkiin example: The magpie / is / on top of / the tree.
\[ \text{xwíimichnik áy'ay iwá patát-pa} \]
on top of magpie is tree -location

Assuming the learner’s first language is English, they are not used to the sentence starting with "on top of," or why there needs to be a "-pa" on the word 'tree' to show location. Too much grammar explanation in the same lesson can become confusing. Because of this, it is helpful to the student to introduce only one detail at a time, with only one change in the sentence at a time in any given lesson.

Example: When we want to show location in Ichishkiin, we add "-pa." (in, on, at, etc.)
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{inifít-pa} & \quad \text{is located at the house} \\
\text{pchish-pa} & \quad \text{is located at the door} \\
\text{patát-pa} & \quad \text{is located at the tree} \\
\text{wána-pa} & \quad \text{is located at the river}
\end{align*}
\]

This simple rule is very easy for students to grasp and apply. The teacher should carefully choose vocabulary that will clearly demonstrate the rule and allow students to apply it without difficulty.
Two "Talking Cards" Lessons

Content of the lessons:
- Limited number of words for everyday objects and actions
- Question words
- Location phrases
- Yes, no

Materials:
- Talking cards
- Large picture of a house
- A way to display cards (if teaching in front of a group)

Goal:
Students will begin to feel comfortable speaking in simple "teacher-guided" sentences.

The following lessons are built in a step-by-step manner from the first lesson to the next. In this manner, the students receive limited new vocabulary in each lesson. This allows them to focus on one detail at a time, avoiding confusion and discouragement.

More advanced students may be able to do more than one step at a time.

Lesson 1  Saying "yes and no" about where things are located

New Vocabulary:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>chaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>man</td>
<td>iwnsh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>woman</td>
<td>ayat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cat</td>
<td>ip’uus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>house</td>
<td>iniit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedure:
- **Teach the vocabulary** using "talking cards."
- Then **ask students to respond with 'yes' or 'no'** when they hear a vocabulary item and are shown a card (like ‘true/false’, depending on whether the spoken label matches the picture on the card).
- When students are able to correctly respond with 'yes' and 'no,' they are ready to hear the words in a simple sentence.
- Place the talking cards in the right order to **show the sentence pattern**.
Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Ichishkíin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The man is in/at the house.&quot;</td>
<td>iníit-pa</td>
<td>&quot;The man is in/at the house.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iwá</td>
<td>is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iwínsh</td>
<td>man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The woman is in/at the house.&quot;</td>
<td>iníit -pa</td>
<td>&quot;The woman is in/at the house.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iwá</td>
<td>is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>áyat</td>
<td>woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The cat is in/at the house.&quot;</td>
<td>iníit -pa</td>
<td>&quot;The cat is in/at the house.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iwá</td>
<td>is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ip’úus</td>
<td>cat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Explain that '-pa' is added to the word for 'house' to indicate location. If the students are confused by hearing 'iwá,' explain to them that it means 'is.'
- Now the students are ready to agree or disagree about whether the man, the woman or the cat is in the house. Using the same 'yes' or 'no' strategy, challenge the students to agree or disagree with your statement about who or what is in the house (for example, they should disagree if you state that ‘the woman is at the house’, when the ‘cat’ card is actually the one you placed there).
- Once they are ready to do this comfortably, ask them to respond in complete sentences as you put the man, the woman or the cat in the house. For Ichishkiin, recall that word order is flexible, so the sample responses below are not the only correct ones.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Ichishkíin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, the cat is in/at the house.</td>
<td>ii iníit-pa</td>
<td>&quot;Yes, the cat is in/at the house.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iwá</td>
<td>is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ip’úus</td>
<td>cat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, the cat is not in/at the house.</td>
<td>chaw</td>
<td>&quot;No, the cat is not in/at the house.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iníit-pa</td>
<td>is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iwá</td>
<td>cat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ip’úus</td>
<td>cat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have more than one student, ask the students to work in pairs with the talking cards and a picture of a house to agree and disagree about "who" or "what" is in the house.

Example:

Student 1:  iníitpa iwá iwínsh
"The man is in/at the house."

Student 2:  chaw iwá iníitpa iwínsh
"No, the man is not in/at the house."

If you have more experienced students, they could add one more sentence to the dialogue:

Student 2:  chaw iníitpa iwá iwínsh
"No, the man is not in/at the house."
iníitpa iwá ip’úus
"The cat is in/at the house."

Expanding the lesson:
- Add more objects or people that can be "in the house."
  'boy, girl'
• Add more places for the objects or people to be.
  'in the tree, at the river'
• Ask a simple yes/no question. In Ichishkiin, we need a card for the general question word ‘mish’, and it is placed at the beginning of the sentence:
  Mish ínítpa iwá ip’úus? ‘Is the cat in the house?’

Lesson 2
Saying more about where things are located

New Vocabulary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location terms</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>where at?</td>
<td>minán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inside</td>
<td>asht</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on top of</td>
<td>xwíimichnik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under</td>
<td>xálukt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behind</td>
<td>anáchnik</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Review vocabulary:

See Lesson 1 Vocabulary

Teaching sequence:

• Review the previous lesson so that the students can review the vocabulary.
• Introduce the new location terms one at a time, and then “quiz” students (as you did in Lesson 1) by encouraging them to respond ‘yes’ or ‘no’ when you name a card correctly or incorrectly.
• Move on to a statement about location with the new words. Demonstrate the word order with the talking cards.

Example:

The man is inside the house.

aasht ínítpa iwá iwínsh
inside house-at is man

Additional location phrases:

The man is on top of the house.
The man is behind the house.

• Until students are comfortable with the new "location" phrases, keep using "the man" and "the house" so your students are hearing only one change in the sentence at a time. In this case, the change happening is the location phrase.
• As you say each description, you can move the “man” card around to different locations inside, on, or behind the large picture of the house. When students can
distinguish the location phrases by correctly answering "yes and no" when they hear them and see the man moved around, ask the students to use the new vocabulary.

- **Ask Minán iwá iwínsh?** ("Where is the man?"). Demonstrate the word order for this question with the cards. Then place the man in some location relative to the large picture of the house. The students would answer in Ichishkiin: "The man is (wherever you have placed the man)."

- When they are confident enough, give the students a picture of a "man" and the "house." Here they get to **practice both asking "Where is the man?" and answering in complete sentences.**

- The next step in this lesson would be to change the card that is being placed in different locations in the house. **Introduce "cat" or "woman" into the questions.**

Example:

| "Where is the cat?" | Minán iwá ip’úus? |
| "Where is the woman?" | Minán iwá áyat? |

**A Few Possibilities for Further Lessons...**

- **Actions:** Move beyond simply talking about being located at a place, to carrying out an action at that location. Teach vocabulary for action words, and substitute these cards in the slot for ‘is’.

- **Time:** Verbs in Ichishkiin require the speaker to indicate the time of action as past (before), present (now), or future (later). Individual cards are used for each of these meanings, and students will learn to recognize the verb suffixes they hear that represent those meanings.

- **Person-marking:** Ichishkiin verbs also require a prefix that lets the listener know how many people (or animals or things) are doing the action. There are many different verb prefixes like this in Ichishkiin (that give more information than just ‘how many’), but substituting cards that indicate ‘she, he, it’ or ‘they’ is a good place to start when explaining these prefixes.

- **Word order:** Talking cards can be used to demonstrate the possibilities for word order variations in the language being taught, why you would use certain orders, and how these orders might be different from those that are allowed in English.
For more information about Talking Cards, please contact us at: nwili@uoregon.edu

Northwest Indian Language Institute
1290 University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403
voicemail: 541.346.0722
web: http://babel.uoregon.edu/nili/
woman  man
now

sit
behind river