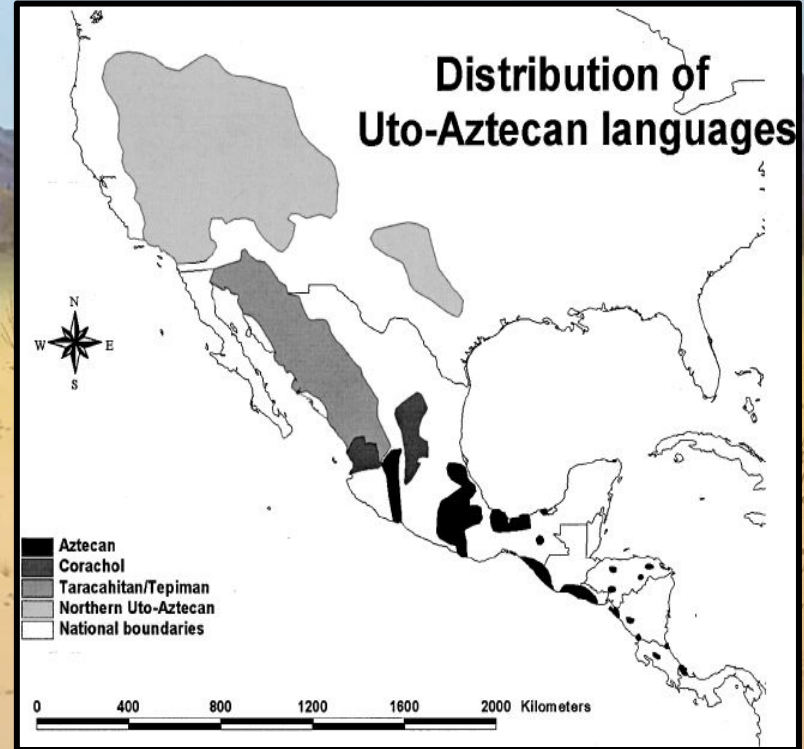




# O'odham Language Lesson

O'odham is a language in the Uto-Aztecan family that is spoken by the Tohono O'odham and Pima people. It is spoken in southern Arizona as well as Sonora, Mexico. After Apache and Navajo, it is the third most spoken Indigenous language in Arizona.



# O'odham Language Lesson

In the United States, O'odham is the language of the following federally registered tribes:

- Tohono O'odham Nation of Arizona
- Ak Chin Indian Community of the Maricopa Indian Reservation
- Gila River Indian Community of the Gila River Indian Reservation,
- Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community of the Salt River Reservation

Today O'odham is taught in schools of the Tohono O'odham Nation and at the University of Arizona.

<https://omniglot.com/writing/oodham.htm>

*Literally!*

Tohono O'odham means desert people.  
Akimel O'odham means river people

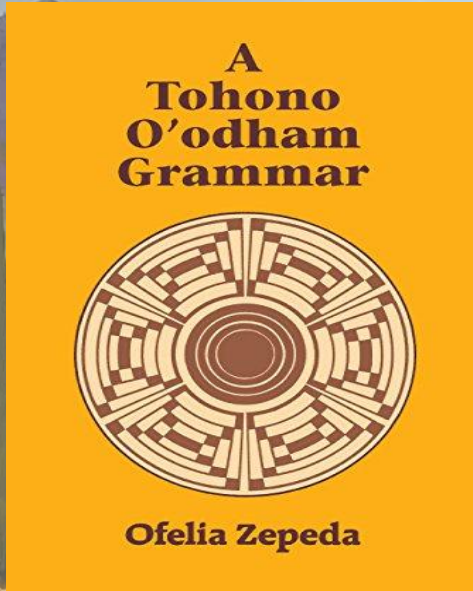
The Desert People were previously known as the Papago,  
and the River People were previously known as the Pima.



There are two main O'odham dialects:  
Tohono O'odham, formerly known as Papago, and  
Akimel O'odham, which is also known as Pima.

Tohono O'odham	Akimel O'odham	English
'a'ad	hotş	to send
ñeñida	tamiam	to wait for
s-hewhogĩ	s-heubagĩ	to be cool
sisiş	ho'iumi (but si:şpakud, stapler)	to fasten
pi: ha'icug	pi 'ac	to be absent
wia	'o'oid	hunt tr.

Let's explore the O'odham Language with  
Tohono O'odham Pronunciation of letters and  
by Ofelia Zepeda  
Tohono O'odham Word and Phrase of the Day  
by Selina Jesus with NAAF



Selina Jesus

The sounds of the O'odham language are very different from the sounds of English language and, therefore, require a different alphabet.



like the a in father



like the b in big



like the ch in chip



Brought to you by Selina Jesus,  
NAAF's Director of Programs and Tribal Relations!

**Haiwañ**

**Hi wahn (Pronunciation)**

**COW**

**This week's phrase is:**

**N'apt 'o ha'icu e? (O'odham Language)**

**Nahpth 'o hi choo ee? (Pronunciation)**

**Would you like something to drink? (English Language)**

With this writing system, an apostrophe is used to symbolize a glottal stop /ʔ/. A glottal stop represents a closing of the glottis that stops the flow of air. An example of this is found in the middle of an expression commonly used by English speakers: “oh-oh”, as in “Oh-oh, I think we’re in trouble.”



like the th in this



like the t with a glottal stop in  
but



like the u in hum



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NEID  
Nuh-eeth (Pronunciation)  
SEE  
This week's phrase is:  
N'ap neid m'at mu g masad? (O'odham language)  
Did you see the solar eclipse? (English Language)

The stress on most O'odham words is on the first syllable.



g

like the g in go



h

like the h in hat



i

like the i in machine



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**KO:JI**

**KOH-gee (Pronunciation)**

**PIG**

**This week's phrase is:**

**N'apt bihugim? (O'odham language)**

**Nahpth bee hu gim? (Pronunciation)**

**Are you hungry? (English Language)**

Vowel sounds in O'odham can be drawn out to a long sound or cut off as a short sound. The sound of a long or a short vowel does not change. It is simply held for a longer or shorter duration.



like the j in job



like the k in kiss



No similar sound  
in English



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JE:K

JUH (Pronunciation)

TASTE

This week's phrase is:

N'ap je:k 'eg bahidaj m'o si'ow?

(O'odham language)

Did you taste the sweetness of the saguaro fruit?  
(English Language)

- A colon : following a vowel makes it a long vowel.
- A breve ˘ above a vowel makes it a short vowel (almost silent).



like the m in miss



like the n in no



like the ny in canyon



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**MI:STOL**

**ME sthol (Pronunciation)**

**CAT**

**This week's Phrase is:**

**Sa:p a'i masma? (O'odham language)**

**Shap eye mas ma (Pronunciation)**

**How are you doing? (English Language)**

The most common way of pluralizing nouns is reduplication of the first consonant and vowel, or just the initial vowel.

EXAMPLE: gogs » gogogs or mi:tol » mimi:tol



ŋ

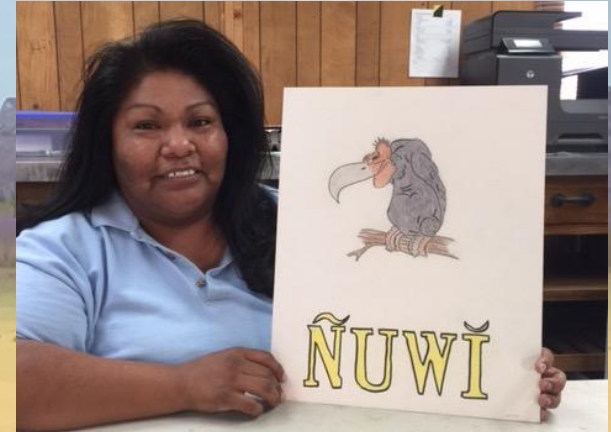
like the ng in finger

o

like the a in all

p

like the p in pot



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**ÑUWĪ**

**NY oof (Pronunciation)**

**BUZZARD**

**This week's phrase is:**

**S-ke:g tas. (O'odham language)**

**Sk- heg thash. (Pronunciation)**

**Good day. (English Language)**

Tohono O'odham is very flexible and functions as a free word order language.



like the s in see



like the sh in ship



like the t in top



Weekly Word: B'AHI:DAJ  
BAH-HEE THUTCH (Pronunciation)  
SAGUARO CACTUS FRUIT  
This week's phrase is:  
Ha:san 'o sceda:g. (O'odham language)  
Ha shan o schethag. (Pronunciation)  
The saguaro cactus is green. (English Language)

Take a look at the Akimel and Tohono O'odham alphabet page  
[http://www.native-languages.org/oodham\\_guide.htm](http://www.native-languages.org/oodham_guide.htm)



like the u in  
brute



like the w in win



like the y in yes



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**U:PIO**

**UUU-PEEYO (Pronunciation)**

**SKUNK**

**This week's phrase is:**

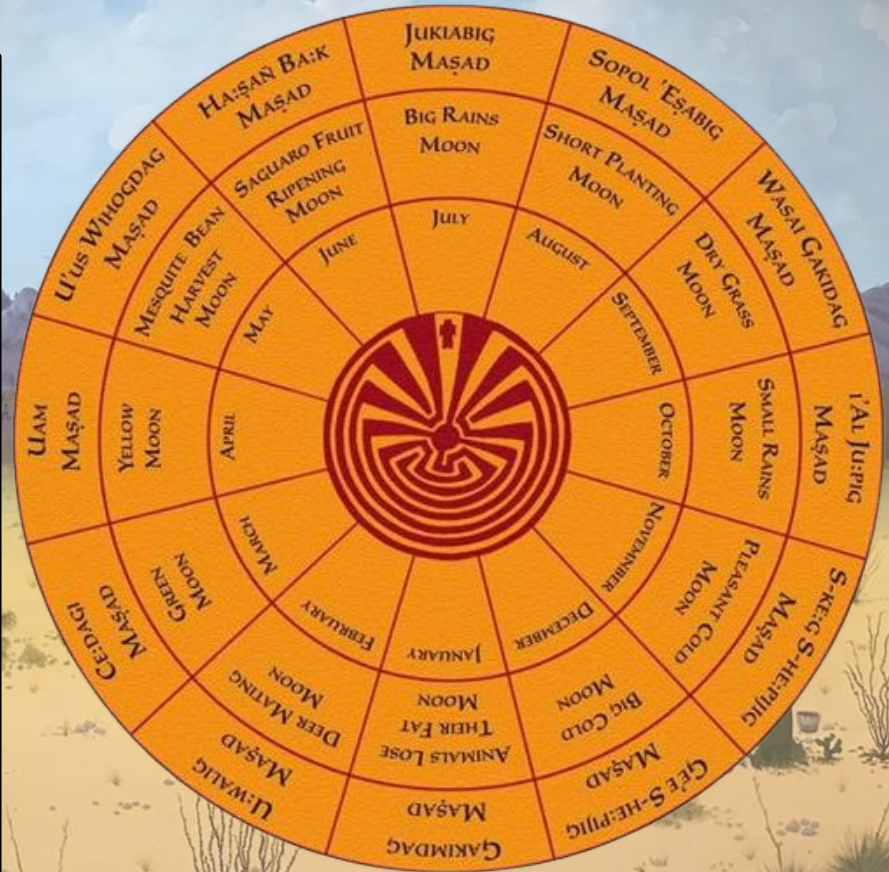
**Hascu si hasu uf? (O'odham language)**

**Has chu si has u oof? (Pronunciation)**

**What is that smell? (English Language)**

## O'odham Calendar

In the O'odham calendar, the outer ring is the phase of the moon (season) written in O'odham. The second ring describes what is likely happening during that month written in English. (For example, May is the month to gather dry beans and a time of hunger.) The third ring is the name of the Month written in English. The center of the circle is the Man in the Maze. The maze represents life's journey.



Let's compare and contrast this song by Olfelia Zepeda

## Na:nko Ma:s Cewagi/Cloud

Song by Olfelia Zepeda

### Sample text in O'odham

Ce:daghim 'o 'ab wu:sañhim.

To:tahim 'o 'ab wu:sañhim.

Cuckuhim 'o 'ab him.

Wepeghim 'o 'abai him.



### Translation

Greenly they emerge.

In colors of blue they emerge

Whitely they emerge.

In colors of black they are coming.

Reddening, they are right here.



# Preserving and Revitalizing the O'odham Language

The O'odham language was placed on UNESCO's (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) endangered list in 2018, which has allowed the nation to obtain funding for a language center. Both the Akimel O'odham and Tohono O'odham tribes have started programs to preserve the language. Their programs hosts activities and programs designed to strengthen and spread the language, both at school and at home.



<https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/>

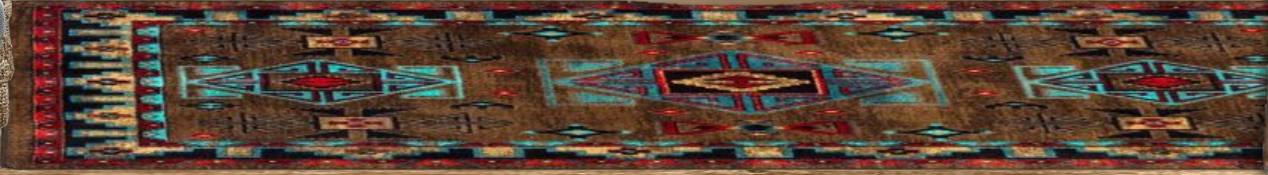


"They need to hear it, hear it, hear it, because that's how I learned," said Patricia Enos King, a fluent speaker and O'odham teacher at Salt River Elementary School.



O'odham Alphabet

Aa	Bb	Cc	Dd
Pp	Ee	Gg	Hh
Ii	Jj	Kk	Ll
Mm	Nn	N̄n̄	Nu
Oo	Pp	Ss	Šs
Tt	Uu	Ww	Yy



# O'odham Language

**CLICK HERE TO  
LEARN MORE!**



# HIMDAG

