

Cherokee Heritage

Lesson 3: Learning another Language

Sequoyah's Cherokee Syllabary

D _a	R _e	T _i	Ꭰ _o	Ꭱ _u	Ꭲ _v
Ꭶ _{ga} Ꭷ _{ka}	Ꭸ _{ge}	Ꭹ _{gi}	Ꭺ _{go}	Ꭻ _{gu}	Ꭼ _{gv}
Ꭽ _{ha}	Ꭾ _{he}	Ꭿ _{hi}	Ꮀ _{ho}	Ꮁ _{hu}	Ꮂ _{hv}
Ꮇ _{la}	Ꮈ _{le}	Ꮉ _{li}	Ꮊ _{lo}	Ꮋ _{lu}	Ꮌ _{lv}
Ꮎ _{ma}	Ꮏ _{me}	Ꮐ _{mi}	Ꮑ _{mo}	Ꮒ _{mu}	
Ꮓ _{na} Ꮏ _{hna}	Ꮔ _{ne}	Ꮕ _{ni}	Ꮖ _{no}	Ꮗ _{nu}	Ꮘ _{nv}
Ꮚ _{qua}	Ꮛ _{que}	Ꮜ _{qui}	Ꮝ _{quo}	Ꮞ _{quu}	Ꮟ _{quv}
Ꮠ _{sa} Ꮡ _s	Ꮢ _{se}	Ꮣ _{si}	Ꮤ _{so}	Ꮥ _{su}	Ꮦ _{sv}
Ꮧ _{da} Ꭰ _{ta}	Ꮫ _{de} Ꭱ _{te}	Ꮬ _{di} Ꭲ _{ti}	Ꮮ _{do}	Ꮯ _{du}	Ꮰ _{dv}
Ꮭ _{dla} Ꭰ _{tla}	Ꮮ _{tle}	Ꮯ _{tli}	Ꮰ _{tlo}	Ꮱ _{tlu}	Ꮲ _{tlv}
Ꮳ _{tsa}	Ꮴ _{tse}	Ꮵ _{tsi}	Ꮶ _{tso}	Ꮷ _{tsu}	Ꮸ _{tsv}
Ꮹ _{wa}	Ꮺ _{we}	Ꮻ _{wi}	Ꮼ _{wo}	Ꮽ _{wu}	Ꮾ _{wv}
Ꮿ _{ya}	Ᏸ _{ye}	Ᏹ _{yi}	Ᏺ _{yo}	Ᏻ _{yu}	Ᏼ _{yv}

Vowel Sounds

a, as a in father, or short as a in rival
e, as a in hate, or short as e in met
i, as i in pique, or short as i in pit

o, as o in note, approaching aw in law
u, as oo in fool, or short as u in pull
v as u in but, nasalized.

Consonant Sounds

g nearly as in English, but approaching to k.
d nearly as in English but approaching to t.
h k l m n q s t w y as in English.

Syllables beginning with g except Ꭶ (ga)
have sometimes the power of k.
Ꭰ (go), Ꭱ (du), Ꭲ (dv) are sometimes
sounded to, tu, tv and syllables written with tl
except Ꭰ (tla) sometimes vary to dl.



© 2006
Cherokee Nation
All Rights
Reserved

George Guess (or Gist), better known as Sequoyah, was born in about 1770 in the lower Appalachian region of Tennessee. In 1821, Sequoyah revealed a written version of the Cherokee language, called a syllabary. He was curious about the "talking leaves," what he called the books of the Europeans. This inspired him to develop a syllabary that would provide the

Cherokee people a means of written communication in the tsalagi, or Cherokee, language.

Within a year after its introduction, 90% of the Cherokee people could read and write in Sequoyah's syllabary because it was so logical to the native Cherokee speaker. The syllabary enabled the Cherokees to communicate in a widespread and permanent fashion.

Directions: Using the syllabary chart, draw the syllabary characters for the words and phrases listed below.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Cherokee Spoken

o si yo
to hi tsu
ga do u s di de tsa do a
ga go s da li i
tsa la gi s hi wo ni s gi
ha la a tli i li
wa do
do na da go hv i

Phonetic

oh'see yo
toe' hee joo
gah' doe oo' sdee deh' jah-doe ah
gah' go shdah lee'
Jah lah geehs' hee woe neesk'
ha' lah ah tlee' ee lee
wah' doe
doh nah dah go huh ee

English Translation

Hello
How are you?
What is your name?
Who is your friend?
Do you speak Cherokee?
What time is it?
Thank you
Let's see each other again

Look for lesson 4 on Monday, December 5.

Source: CNE Department of Cultural Tourism Education Tour Student Activity Book