

A Pima Word Book

O'Odham Niok̄i O'ohana

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Salt River O'odham Piipaash Language Program Writing System

An orthography is simply a method of writing a language. There are many different types of writing systems, but most of us are probably most familiar with alphabetic writing systems such as the English alphabet. An efficient alphabet uses a symbol to represent each sound within a language. The sounds of the O'odham language are very different from the sounds of English language and, therefore, require a different alphabet. Writing the O'odham language is something that is relatively new to most O'odham speakers, but it can be a powerful tool for language preservation.

Alvarez / Hale Orthography

The Alvarez / Hale writing system was developed by Dr. Albert Alvarez, a Tohono O'odham linguist and Mr. Kenneth Hale, a milga:n professor from MIT, and has been the official writing system of the Tohono O'odham Nation since 1974. This system uses many of the same letters or symbols that are used in the English alphabet, but the sounds they represent can be very different.

The Alvarez/Hale system has been the basis for all materials developed by the SRPMIC O'odham Piipaash Language Program and schools for the past twenty years. Some slight modifications to the original system were necessary to reflect the distinct differences that exist between Tohono O'odham and Onk Akimel O'odham.

Pronunciation & Helpful Hints

1. With this writing system, an apostrophe is used to symbolize a glottal stop '/'. 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."
2. The stress on most O'odham words is on the first syllable.
3. 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.
 - A colon : following a vowel makes it a long vowel.
 - A breve ^ above a vowel makes it a short vowel (almost silent).
4. 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

Some words have unique plural forms, however, that do not follow this pattern.

In the following orthography description, we introduce each O'odham letter, followed by an English word that contains a somewhat similar sound. Some of these English sounds are not exactly the same but are used as a general pronunciation guide for new learners. Next, we introduce an O'odham word that contains the sound represented by the letter, followed by the English translation.

Alvarez/Hale Orthography

Letter	Sound	O'odham	Milga:n
a	father	ali	baby
b	big	ban	coyote
c	chip	cehia	little girl
d	this	do'ag	mountain
đ	but	tađ	foot
đ	dam	judum	bear
e	earth	eş	chin
g	go	gogs	dog
h	hot	huñ	corn
i	machine	ipud	dress
j	job	ju:k	raining
k	kiss	ka:lit	car
l	rolling "l"	lial	money
m	miss	mi:tol	cat
n	no	nalaş	orange
ñ	canyon	ñulas	peach
o	all	o'o	bone
p	pot	pi:las	pear
s	see	sişpakuđ	safety pin
ş	ship	şuşk	shoes
t	thin	taş	sun
u	brute	uhig	bird
v	vine	violi:n	violin
w	what	wuai	deer
y	yes	yavř	key

Alvarez/Hale Orthography

Vowels

Letter	Sound	O'odham	Milga:n
a	father	ba'ag	eagle
e	earth	eldagi	skin
i	machine	ispul	spur
o	all	oks	old woman
u	brute	uvř	female

Long Vowels

Letter	O'odham	Milga:n
a:	ma:gina	machine
e:	e:ed	blood
i:	i:bhai	prickly pear
o:	o:b	apaches
u:	u:s	wood

A few words use vowels that have a symbol above them called a breve. A vowel with a breve above it is only found at the end of words and can be difficult to hear. It may simply sound like an aspiration.

Letter	Sound	O'odham	Milga:n
ĩ	an aspiration	svegĩ	red

Alvarez/Hale Orthography

Diphthongs

When two vowels occur together in an O'odham word, the resulting diphthongs (the second vowel is always “i”) can produce new sounds.

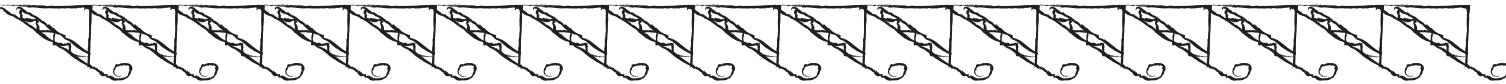
Letter	Sound	O'odham	Milga:n
ai	<u>aisle</u>	vaiñom	knife
ei	<u>gooey</u>	i:gei	fell down
oi	<u>poi</u>	ṣoiga	pet
ui	<u>oui</u>	kui	mesquite tree

Engwa

Letter	Sound	O'odham	Milga:n
ŋ	<u>thing</u>	*ca:ŋgo	monkey

* In Salt River we use the word “Gogs O'odham” to describe monkey.
(Tohono O’Odham word for monkey is ca:ŋgo)

The Salt River O'odham Piipaash Language Program recognizes no right, wrong or “one way” of speaking and recognizes that spelling variations are commonplace. We all have, within our families, our individual dialects depending on the location of our homes and our relationships. If there is a “correct way” it is one of using the language in your everyday life. The greatest resources available to you are the elders in your families, communities, and those O'odham speaking tribal members.



FAMILY & KINSHIP

Paternal

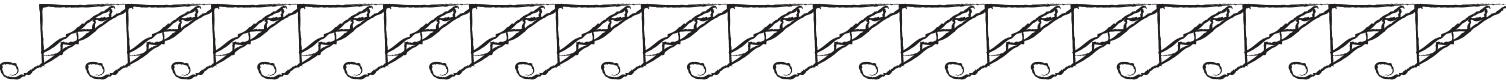
Relationship to Me:	I call them:	They call me:
Father	Heñ Og	Heñ Alidag
Grandfather	Heñ Vosk	Heñ Vosmađ
Grandmother	Heñ Ka:k	Heñ Ka'amad
Father's older brother	Heñ Og Keli	Heñ Cucuđ
Father's older sister	Heñ Oksi	Heñ Cucuđ
Father's younger brother	Heñ Hakit	Heñ Hakimad
Father's younger sister	Heñ Vovoit	Heñ Hakimad

Maternal

Relationship to Me:	I call them:	They call me:
Mother	Heñ Je'e	Heñ Mađ
Grandfather	Heñ Ba:b	Heñ Ba'amad
Grandmother	Heñ Hu'ul	Heñ Mo:s
Mother's older brother	Heñ Je'es	Heñ Mađ
Mother's older sister	Heñ Da:d	Heñ Mađ
Mother's younger brother	Heñ Tatal	Heñ Ma'i
Mother's younger sister	Heñ Jisk	Heñ Ma'i

Siblings

Relationship to Me:	I call them:	They call me:
My older brother	Heñ Si:s	Heñ Sikul
My older sister	Heñ Si:s	Heñ Sikul
My younger brother	Heñ Sikul	Heñ Si:s
My younger sister	Heñ Sikul	Heñ Si:s



FAMILY & KINSHIP

Great Grandparents

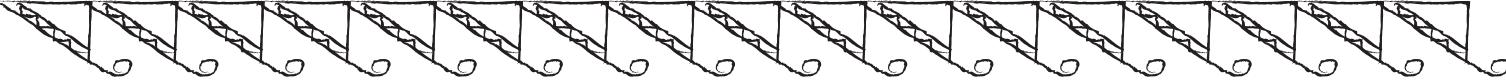
Relationship to Me:	I call them:	They call me:
Great Grandfather	Heñ Vi:kol	Heñ Vişad
Great Grandmother	Heñ Vivi'i	Heñ Vişad
Great, Great Grandparents	Heñ Sikul	Heñ Si:s

Other Relations

Relationship to Me:	I call them:	They call me:
First cousin/cousins	Heñ Vena:k	Heñ Vena:k
Stepfather	Heñ Hakit	Heñ Hakimad
Stepmother	Heñ Jisk	Heñ Ma'i

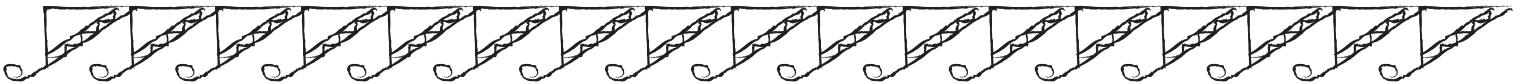
GREETINGS

English	O'odhamac
My friend	Heñ navoc
What did you say?	Şap kaic?
What is your name?	Şap cegig?
My name is	Añi añ ap ce:gig?
How are you?	Şapai cui'ig?
What are you doing?	Şap e wa?
What about you?	Api hik?
It's good / It is okay / It's alright	Sape



NUMBERS

English	O'odhamac
Zero	Pi Haicu
One	Hemako
Two	Go:k
Three	Vaik
Four	Gi'ik
Five	Hetasp
Six	Cudp
Seven	Vevkam
Eight	Gigi'ik
Nine	Hemuckam
Ten	Vestma:m
One hundred	Siant
Thousand	Mil
Million	Miyon



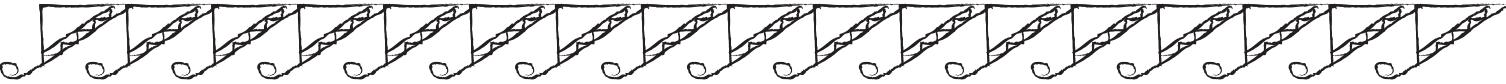
DAYS OF THE WEEK

English	O'odhamac
One Week	Hemako Domik
Monday	Lunas
Tuesday	Go:k taş
Wednesday	Vaik taş
Thursday	Gi'ik taş
Friday	Vialas
Saturday	Şavai
Sunday	Domik



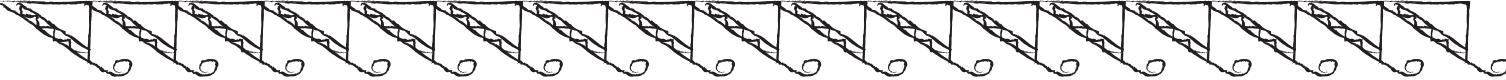
COLORS

English	O'odhamac
Red	Sveḡi
Pink	Svegium
Brown	Soam
Yellow	Soam
Orange	Soam
Green	Scedaḡi
Blue	Scedaḡi
Purple	Sibhaimagi
Black	Scuk
White	Stoa
Gray	Skomagi



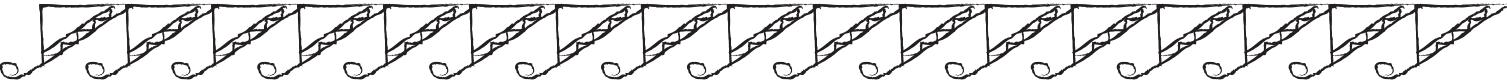
MONTHS

English	O'odhamac	
June	Haşaň Baidag Maşad	Saguaro fruit month: Harvest of the saguaro fruit
July	Jukiabig Maşad	Rainy month: Month when most planting occurs
August	Şopol E'esbig Maşad	Short planting month: Late summer rains and short planting crops are sown
September	Vaşai Gakidag Maşad	Dry grass month: Harvesting begins
October	Sepijig Maşad	Cold month: Gather left over fruits, tubers, roots etc for winter food supply
November	Soam Maşad	Also known: U'velig Maşad – deer rutting or also as deer mating season
December	Skomagi Maşad	Gray month: Trees are bare, vegetation is scant
January	Aupa l'ivagidag Maşad	Leafing of the cottonwood month
February	Aupa Hyosik Maşad	Blooming of the cottonwood month
March	Kui l'ivagidag Maşad	Leafing of the mesquite month
April	Kui Hyosik Maşad	Blooming of the mesquite month
May	Kai Cuklig Maşad	Black seed month



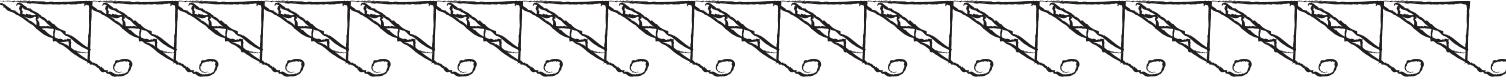
FOOD

English	O'odhamac
Pinto Beans	Muñ
Lima Beans	Havul
Tepary Beans (Brown)	Oa'am Bav̄i
White Tepary Beans	Tota Bav̄i
Mesquite Bean	Viohog
Pinole	Ha:k̄i cu'i
Meat	Cu:kug
Pork Meat	Cu:kug
Bacon / Ham	Hamon
Beef	Cu:kug
Fish	Vatop̄i
Chicken	Cucul
Fruit	Haicu Baidag
Apple	A:bal
Apricot	Vilgodi
Banana	Hovic
Pomegranate	Kalnayu
Cantaloupe	Wua'amakam
Watermelon	Miliñ
Casaba	Keli Baṣo



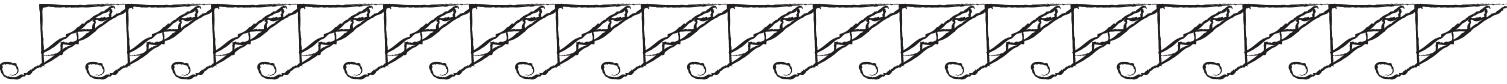
FOOD

English	O'odhamac
Grapes	Hu:dvis
Orange	Nalaş
Peach	Ñulaş
Pear	Pilas
Prickly Pear	Ibhai
Wheat	Pilkañ
Onion	Sivol
Corn	Huñ
Squash	Ha:l
Potato	Ba:bas
Spinach	l:vag̃i
Wild Spinach	Opoñ
Chili (any kind but a few have names)	Ko'okol
Tomato	Domadi
Carrot	Tobi haicu huk̃i
Lettuce	l:vag̃i
Milk	Vi:p
Butter	Mandagia
Eggs (Chicken)	Cucul Nonha
Cheese	Gi:ṣo



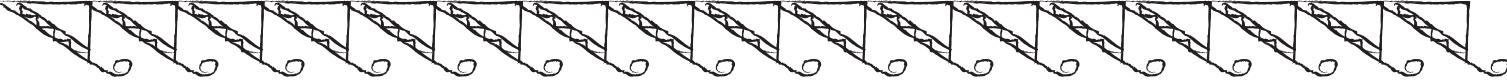
FOOD

English	O'odhamac
Sugar	Asuga
Pepper	Cuk on (This is a given name)
Lard	Mañjik
Baking Powder	Koşodkdakud
Water	Şudagi
Coffee	Ko:vi
Rice	A:loş (Nickname “Totoni Mamađ”)
Oatmeal	Vulo Ki'ivi (Nickname)
Bread	Pan
Tortilla	Cemait
Frybread	Wuamajda
Lazy Bread	Skovk Cemait
Cake	Si'ovi Pan
Pie	Pastil
Cookies	Si'ovi Cecmait
Gravy	Ho'oşna
Pudding	A'tol
Syrup	Sitol
Candy	Lulsi
Gum	Ki'ivi



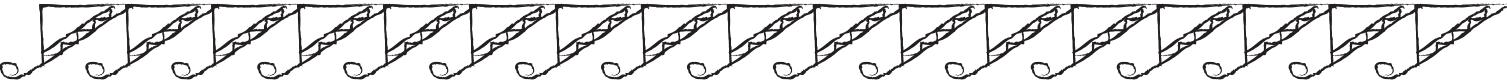
BODY

English	O'odhamac
Body	Honşpadag
Skull	Koşva
Head / Hair	Mo'o
Face	Wiyoşa
Back of Head	Kuṣo
Skin	Eldagi
Forehead	Kua
Eyebrows	Hehevo
Eye	Wi'
Eyelashes	Wi'po
Nose	Da:k
Cheek	Ka:m
Mouth	Ciñ
Lips	Ciñ Ku:g
Ear	Na:k
Chin	Eş
Neck	Kusva
Throat	Bai'dk
Shoulder	Kodva
Chest	Başo
Heart	Ibdak



BODY

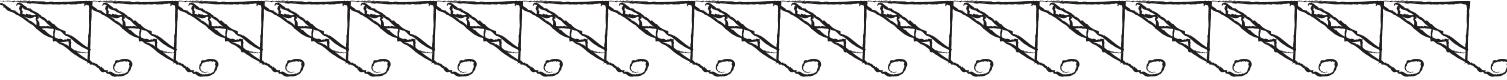
English	O'odhamac
Breasts	Vip'pi
Arm	No:vĩ
Elbows	Si:ş
Wrist	Maşva
Fingers	Mamş
Stomach	Vo:k
Belly Button	Hik
Waist	Huda
Back	O:
Small of Back	Komř
Hip	Cu:l
Buttock	Atapud
Leg	Kaiyo
Thigh	Um
Knee	To:n
Calf	U:kş
Ankle	Cekva
Foot	Ta:t
Toe	Macpođ
Heel	Ce:m
Nail	Huc



BODY

Short Sentences

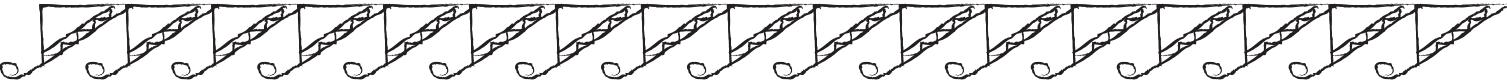
Say It In English	O'odhamac Bo Cei
This is my head or hair This is your head or hair Where is my head or hair? Where is your head or hair?	Ida ođ eñ mo'o Ida ođ em mo'o Hebai hasko geñ mo'o? Hebai hasko gem mo'o?
This is my face This is your face Where is my face? Where is your face?	Ida ođ eñ wiyoşa Ida ođ em wiyoşa Hebai hasko geñ wiyoşa? Hebai hasko gem wiyoşa?
This is my forehead This is your forehead Where is my forehead? Where is your forehead?	Ida ođ eñ kua Ida ođ em kua Hebai hasko geñ kua? Hebai hasko gem kua?
This is my nose This is your nose Where is my nose? Where is your nose?	Ida ođ eñ da:k Ida ođ em da:k Hebai hasko geñ da:k? Hebai hasko gem da:k?
This is my eye This is your eye Where is my eye? Where is your eye? These are my eyes These are your eyes Where are my eyes? Where are your eyes?	Ida ođ eñ wi' Ida ođ em wi' Hebai hasko geñ wi'? Hebai hasko gem wi'? Idam ođ eñ vupoi Idam ođ em vupoi Hebai hasko geñ vupoi? Hebai hasko gem vupoi?



BODY

Short Sentences

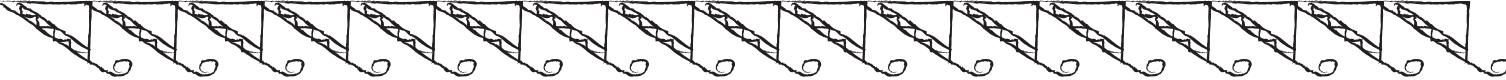
Say It In English	O'odhamac Bo Cei
This is my ear This is your ear Where is my ear? Where is your ear? These are my ears These are your ears Where are my ears? Where are your ears?	Ida ođ eñ na:k Ida ođ em na:k Hebai hasko geñ na:k? Hebai hasko gem na:k? Idam ođ eñ na:nk Ida ođ em na:nk Hebai hasko geñ na:nk? Hebai hasko gem na:nk?
This is my mouth This is your mouth Where is my mouth? Where is your mouth?	Ida ođ eñ ciñ Ida ođ em ciñ Hebai hasko geñ ciñ? Hebai hasko gem ciñ?
This is my cheek This is your cheek Where is my cheek? Where is your cheek? These are my cheeks These are your cheeks Where are my cheeks? Where are your cheeks?	Ida ođ eñ ka:m Ida ođ em ka:m Hebai hasko geñ ka:m? Hebai hasko gem ka:m? Idam ođ eñ ka:kam Idam ođ em ka:kam Hebai hasko geñ ka:kam? Hebai hasko gem ka:kam?
This is my chin This is your chin Where is my chin? Where is your chin?	Ida ođ eñ eş Ida ođ em eş Hebai hasko geñ eş? Hebai hasko gem eş?
This is my neck This is your neck Where is my neck? Where is your neck?	Ida ođ eñ kusva Ida ođ em kusva Hebai hasko geñ kusva? Hebai hasko gem kusva?



BODY

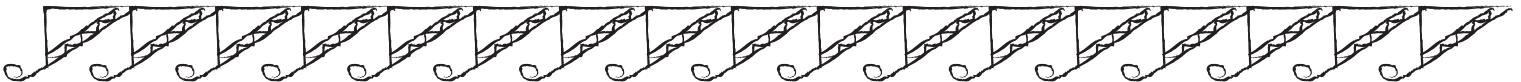
Short Sentences

Say It In English	O'odhamac Bo Cei
This is my throat	Ida ođ eñ bai'dk
This is your throat	Ida ođ em bai'dk
Where is my throat?	Hebai hasko geñ bai'dk?
Where is your throat?	Hebai hasko gem bai'dk?
This is my hand	Ida ođ eñ no:ví
This is your hand	Ida ođ em no:ví
Where is my hand?	Hebai hasko geñ no:ví?
Where is your hand?	Hebai hasko gem no:ví?
These are my hands	Idam ođ eñ nonoví
These are your hands	Ida ođ em nonoví
Where are my hands?	Hebai hasko geñ nonoví?
Where are your hands?	Hebai hasko gem nonoví?
This is my leg	Ida ođ eñ kaiyo
This is your leg	Ida ođ em kaiyo
Where is my leg?	Hebai hasko geñ kaiyo?
Where is your leg?	Hebai hasko gem kaiyo?
These are my legs	Idam ođ eñ kakiyo
These are your legs	Idam ođ em kakiyo
Where are my legs?	Hebai hasko geñ kakiyo?
Where are your legs?	Hebai hasko gem kakiyo?



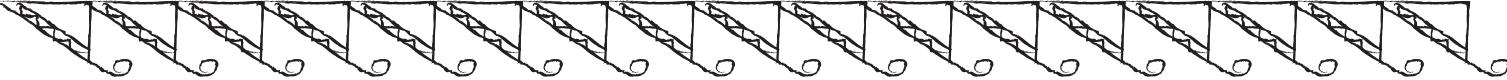
CLOTHES

English	O'odhamac
Clothes	Eñiga
Socks	Kakalsido
Slip	Vecodak
Skirt	Şa:kum Ipuḍ
Shoes	Şuşk
Shirt	Kamış
Scarf	Moñjelik
Blouse	Uvř Kamiş
Coat	Vagdalik
Dress	Ipuḍ
Glove	No:vř Koşodak
Handkerchief	Tovaş
Loincloth	Atovsâ
Pant	Şaliv
Belt	Givod
Hat	Vonam
Sandals	Gigidkam Şuşk



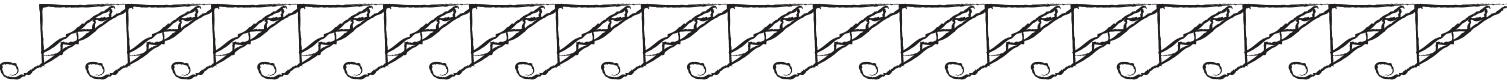
EMOTIONS & ACTIONS

English	O'odhamac
Happy	Sekik
Sad	Şoikcud
Crying	Şoak
Laughing	He'hem
Mad	Bagat
Singing	Ne'e
Running	Med
Dancing	Vaila
Coughing	Iihok
Sick	Mumko
Want	Tac'cu
Not here / absent	Piac



ANIMALS

English	O'odhamac
Ant	Totoñī
Butterfly	Ho'hokimel
Cricket	Cukugşvađ
Grasshopper	Şo:o
Grey Spider	Komagī Tokdod
Lady Bug	Ju:kī mad
Locust	Ko:ktpol
Mosquito	Vamok
Scorpion	Nakşel
Tarantula	Hiañ
Termite	Hiopc
Velvet Ant	Wuimal
Wasp	Vi:pş
Worm	Vatopī
Tick	Mamş
Bird	Uhig
Buzzard	Ñui
Cactus Wren	Hokađ
Cardinal	Sipuk
Mourning Dove	Ho:hi



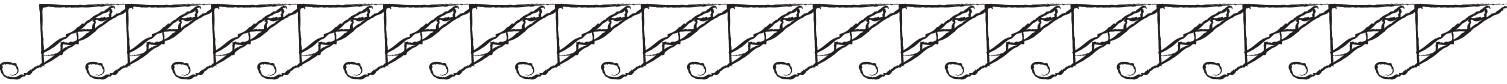
ANIMALS

English	O'odhamac
White Wing Dove	Okokoi
Duck	Vapkak̄
Eagle	Ba'ag
Chicken Hawk	Viṣak
Night Hawk	Ñe:pod
Red-tailed Hawk	Haupal
Hummingbird	Vipismal
Oriole	Vajiko
Burrowing Owl	Kokoho
Horned Owl	Cukud̄
Pigeon	Paploñ
Quail	Kakaicu
Roadrunner	Tadai
Swallow	Gitvol
Antelope	Kuvid
Bat	Nanakmel
Bear	Judum̄
Bobcat	Gevo
Cat	Mi:tol
Cougar / Mountain Lion	Mavit



ANIMALS

English	O'odhamac
Cow	Haivan̄
Coyote	Ban
Deer (Mule)	Wuai
Deer (Whitetail)	Si:k̄i
Dog	Gogs
Field Rat	Koson
Fox	Gaso
Gopher	Cevo
Horse	Kaviyo
Jaguar	Oṣad̄
Javalina	Misciñ Koji
Mouse	Nahagio
Pig	Koji
Prairie Dog	Şelik
Cottontail Rabbit	To:b̄i
Jackrabbit	Cu:v̄i
Raccoon	Vavuk
Sheep	Ka:vul
Bighorn Sheep	Ceşonī
Skunk	U:pio



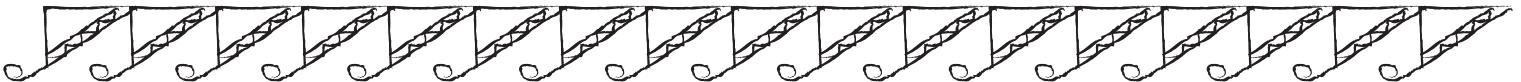
ANIMALS

English	O'odhamac
Goat	Sivato
Squirrel	Ce:kol
Wolf	Şe'eh
Fish	Vatopĩ
Frog	Babad
Horned Toad	Cemamaigĩ
Gila Monster	Ciadagĩ
Lizard (Black)	Hujud
Gecko Lizard	Pitoicu
Tree Lizard	Jusukal
Whiptail Lizard	Vajelho
Snake (Any kind unless named)	Vamađ
Gopher Snake	Şo'ova
Rattlesnake	Ko'oi
Sidewinder	A'agam ko'oi
Red Racer Snake	Vegi Vamađ
Whale	Ne:big



NATURE

English	O'odhamac
Sun	Taṣ
Moon	Maṣad
Star	Hu'u
Sky	Da:m ka:cim
Morning	Sialik
Noon	Da:m ju:k
Afternoon / Mid-Afternoon	Imui'i ju:k
Sunset	Taṣ Hudoñig
Evening	Hudonk
Night	Cu'hug
Cloud	Cevagi
Wind	Hevel
Whirlwind	Sivlikī
Dust Storm	Jegos
Rain	Ju:kī
Rainbow	Kiohod
Thunder	Tatañik
Thunder Bolt	Wiham
Land / Earth / Dirt	Jeved
Rock	Hodai



NATURE

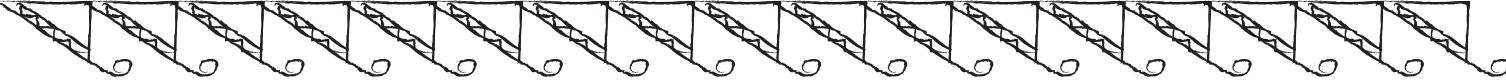
English	O'odhamac
Mountain	Do'ag
Sand	O'od
River	Akimel

DIRECTIONS

North	Da:m
West	Kuiva
South	Veco
East	Tai'i

PLANTS

Cholla Buds	Hanam
Century Plant	A'uḍ
Ocotillo	Melhog
Prickly Pear Pad	Nav
Prickly Pear Fruit	Ibhai
Saguaro	Ha:ṣañ
Saguaro Fruit	Haṣañ Baidag



PLANTS

English	O'odhamac
Cottonwood	Aupa
Mesquite	Kui
Willow	Ce'ul
Apricot	Vilgodi
Apple	A:bal
Fig	Suna
Grapefruit	Soam eldakam
Orange	Nalaş
Peach	Ñulaş
Pear	Pilas
Creosote	Şegoi
Wolfberry / Squawberry	Kuavul
Arrowweed	U'us kokmag̃i
Cattails	Uđvak
Devils Claw	Ihug
Flower (Any Kind)	Hyosik
Gourd	Vakoa
Sunflower	Hivai

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O'Odham Piipaash Language Program



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