

PUYALLUP TRIBAL LANGUAGE QUIZ

1) What is the language of the Puyallup Tribal people?

- a) Salish
- b) Chinook Wawa
- c) Lushootseed
- d) Ichishkíin

2) What dialect is spoken?

- a) Northern
- b) Southern

3) Circle 4 tribes that speak our tribal language.

- a) Muckleshoot
- b) Skokomish
- c) Snoqualmie
- d) Chehalis
- e) Tulalip
- f) Upper Skagit

4) What language family does the Puyallup Tribal language belong to?

- a) Athabaskan
- b) Salishan
- c) Algonqian
- d) Siouan

5) How many letters are in our alphabet?

- a) 41
- b) 42
- c) 43

6) Are there any living Puyallup Tribal members who speak our language fluently?

- a) Yes
- b) No

7) What does 'haʔt sləxil' mean?

- a) Good morning.
- b) Good day.
- c) Good evening.

PUYALLUP TRIBAL LANGUAGE QUIZ

1) What is the language of the Puyallup Tribal people?

The Puyallup Tribal language is Lushootseed. Our language was referenced as txʷəlšucid ‘Twulshootseed’ by Billy Frank Sr., who was a first language speaker from the Nisqually Tribe. Linguist, Thom Hess coined the term “Lushootseed” that was accepted as the general term for the language. Other tribes reference the language as dxʷləšucid, xʷəlšucid, and others called it by their tribal names, for example puyaləpabšucid (Puyallup language), suqʷabšucid (Suquamish language), bəqəlšutucid (Muckleshoot language). Or people simply called it “speaking Indian.”

2) What dialect is spoken?

The Puyallup Tribal dialect is Southern Lushootseed. There are two primary dialects, Northern and Southern. There are minor differences within those two dialects between the tribes. Lushootseed speaking elders stressed that Northern and Southern dialects were clearly the same language.

3) Circle 4 tribes that speak our tribal language.

Northern Lushootseed: Sauk Suiattle, Stillaguamish, Swinomish, Tulalip, Upper Skagit

Southern Lushootseed: Puyallup, Muckleshoot, Nisqually, Snoqualmie, Squaxin Island, Suquamish

4) What language family does the Puyallup Tribal language belong to?

The Lushootseed language is a part of the Salish language family that extends from Washington State, up into Canada and through parts of Oregon and Montana and includes 23 languages. Languages in our family have enough similarities such as vocabulary, grammar and even sentence structure between all of them, that linguists are reasonably sure that these languages share a common ancestral language they call Proto-Salish. For a more recognizable example, the Romance language family that derives from Latin consists of Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian. And just to clarify, we are in the Salish language family, but the Salish language is spoken by the Kalispel and Salish Tribes from eastern Washington, Idaho and Montana.

5) How many letters are in our alphabet?

There are 43 letters in the Lushootseed alphabet. These include non-English and English sounds. Each letter represents one sound. In Lushootseed, combined letters do not produce blended sounds like in English. For example, in English, combining the letter “c” with the letter “h” would produce a “ch” sound. In Lushootseed, the letter “č” produces the “ch” sound. Some of our alphabet consists of English sounds, however there are 18 sounds that do not exist in English, therefore the English alphabet is not capable of expressing non-English sounds. Our Lushootseed speaking elders made it very clear that they did not want this system changed. They stressed the importance of keeping our alphabet the way it is. This is why we do not provide phonetic or anglicized spellings of our language.

6) Are there any living Puyallup Tribal members who speak our language fluently?

There are presently no living Puyallup Tribal members that fluently speak the Lushootseed language. These “First Language Speakers” are no longer with us. The implementation of Indian Boarding Schools helped to eliminate First Language Speakers, as tribal languages were not allowed to be spoken in the schools. There were Government policies implemented to assimilate Native Americans/Puyallup’s into Western Society, that did not include speaking or passing on their tribal languages.

There are several Puyallup Tribal members living today that heard Lushootseed spoken in their homes by their parents or grandparents. They have continuously used these words and phrases, and Lushootseed has never left their lives.

The current goals of the Puyallup Language Program, supported by Tribal Council is “language revitalization.” Language revitalization is the use of language in our daily lives. Currently, we have a total of about 100+ people who use Lushootseed for a total of 1 hour or more a day in their personal lives (2021).

7) What does ‘haʔ sləxil’ mean?

haʔ sləxil means ‘Good day.’ This phrase can be used throughout the day when greeting others. This is not a traditional greeting, but as a result of the English language influences on the Lushootseed language, it has been adopted as a greeting.

The literal translation is below:

haʔ	s-	ləx	-il
good	NOM	light	becoming