

ATHABASCAN

word of the week

The alphabet system of Denaakkenaage' (Athabaskan language) has 39 letters. This article will focus on the vowels.

aa	the a in hat the a in father
ee	the ee in see the ai in rain
e	the i in is the a in sofa
o	the o in coffee Note: There is no sound in our language that has a short "o." Remember: "No oh, say aw."
ū	the u in but, but more rounded and more in back of mouth
oo	the oo in hoot
u	the u in put

Denaakk'e English equivalent

aa	tlaabaas	semilunar knife, ulu
ee	boogee	flour (BOO-GEE)
	gheedo'	he sat down (GHAY-DO')
e	lezenh	it is shiny black (LE-ZENH)
	etseh	he/she/it is crying (sounds like "a") (AH-TSEH)
o	so	sun (SAW)
	sonot	hard-crust snow (SAW-NOT)
	oho'	yes (AH-HAW with glottal stop)
ū	gg ū h	snowshoe hare, rabbit (GUH)
oo	deldoole	sandhill crane (DEL-DOOL-A)
u	tut	sock, bootliner (TU†)

The Athabaskan Word of the Week appears every Saturday on page A3 of the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. The words are provided by Susan "K'etsoo" Paskvan of Yukon-Koyukuk School District. She is originally from the village of Koyukuk on the Yukon River in Interior Alaska. She is Tleeyegge Hut'aane, which is Koyukon Athabaskan. She seeks stories and phrases from both Denaakk'e (Koyukon Athabaskan) and Denak'a (Lower Tanana Athabaskan), which are languages spoken in the Yukon-Koyukuk School District region. Yukon-Koyukuk School District serves the villages of Allakaket, Hughes, Huslia, Koyukuk, Nulato, Kaltag, Ruby, Manley Hot Springs and Minto. The Board of Education places a priority on teaching the Native languages within the district.