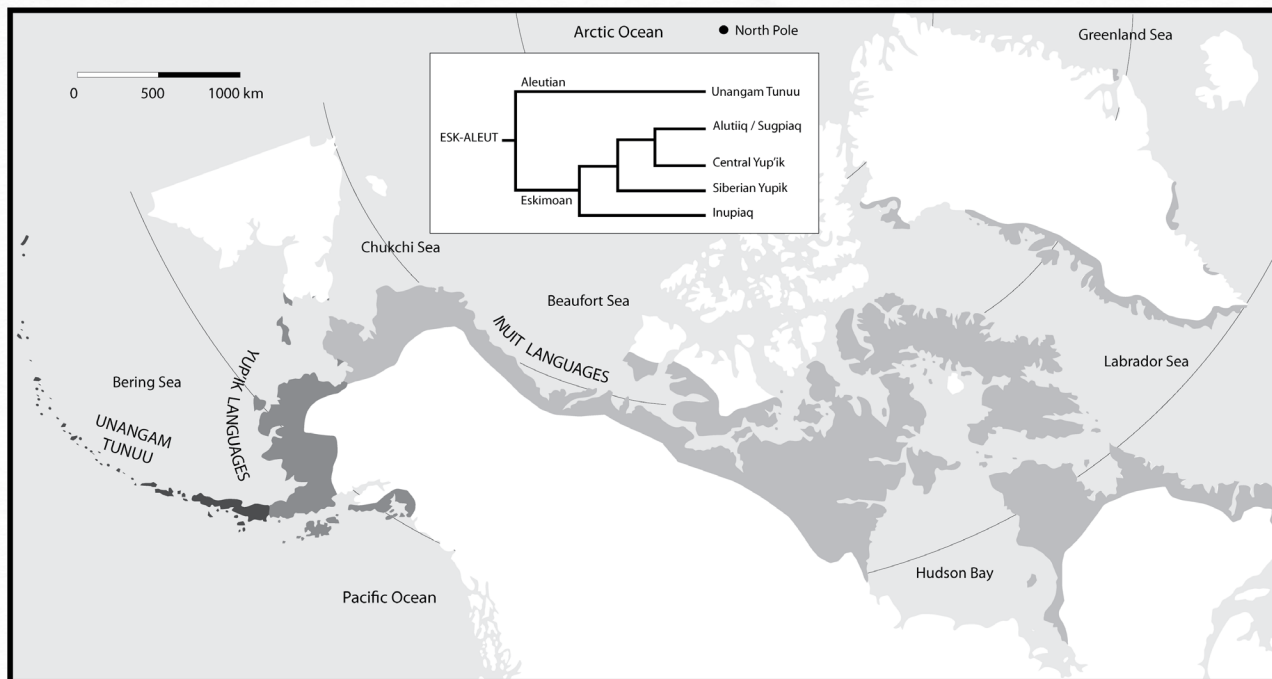


# LET'S ALL STUDY ALUTIIQ!

– *Guangkuta litnaurlita Alutiit'stun!*

The Alutiiq/Sugpiaq people speak Sugt'stun, or simply Alutiiq. Some people also refer to the language as *Alutiit'stun*—which means “like an Alutiiq.” This language belongs to the broader Esk-Aleut language family, which has two main branches. The Unangaꝯ people of the Aleutian chain speak Unangam Tunuu. The “Eskimoan” branch is spoken from southern Alaska to Greenland by a variety of different cultures. Speakers of Sugt'stun are found in the Gulf of Alaska, Yup'ik speakers are indigenous to western Alaska and Siberia, and speakers of Inupiaq or Inuit live in northern Alaska, Canada, and Greenland. This diagram shows the relationships between these languages.



Each branch in the diagram above represents a distinctive split between languages, with each language most closely related to its nearest neighbors on the chart. For example, an Alutiiq speaker can communicate easily with a Yup'ik speaker. Their languages are closely related as illustrated by their nearness on the chart. In contrast, Alutiiq and Unangam Tunuu speakers cannot understand each other. Although distantly related, their languages are very different. A comparison of some common Alutiiq, Yup'ik, and Unangam Tunuu words illustrates this situation.

## WORD COMPARISONS

ENGLISH	ALUTIIQ	YUP'IK	UNANGAM TUNUU
hair (plural)	nuyat	nuyat	imlin (E) / imlis (W)
person	suk	yuk	anġaġinaġ
ten	qulen	qula	hatiġ
ocean	imaq	imaq	alaġuġ



As a maritime culture, members of classical Alutiiq society were highly mobile, traveling and trading great distance across the Gulf of Alaska. In their travels, the Alutiiq interacted with Unangaġ, Dena'ina, Eyak, and Lingít peoples, who spoke very different languages. Thus, they learned their neighbors' languages to facilitate travel, trade, and intermarriage. Some people also used war captives as translators. It is not surprising that many Alutiiq families became multilingual when young men returned from visits to foreign villages or people from other societies joined Alutiiq families.

Today, there are two major dialects in the Alutiiq language—Koniag Alutiiq and Chugach Alutiiq. While part of the same language, each dialect has differences in accent and vocabulary, much like the difference between American and Australian English. Residents of the Kenai Peninsula and Prince William Sound speak Chugach Alutiiq, while residents of Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula speak Koniag Alutiiq. Each dialect is further broke into sub-dialects and sub-sub-dialects, refelcting smaller variations in Alutiiq speech.

#### PLURALIZATION

Singular words in Alutiiq usually (but not always) end in *q*. Dual (two) of a noun will end in *k*, and plural (three or more) of a noun will end in *t*. For example, one rock is *yaamaq*, two rocks is *yaamak*, and three or more is *yaamat*.

## ALUTIIQ SPEAKERS TODAY

During the period of Western colonization, Alutiiq people learned Russian and English in addition to their own language. Many people became bilingual and some trilingual. In the 20th century, however, American schoolteachers punished Native children for speaking anything but English. In later years, many parents chose not to teach Alutiiq to their children, hoping to protect them from racism. As a result, the number of Alutiiq speakers declined steadily during the 20th century. Today there are just a handful of Alutiiq speakers who learned the language as children.

To many Alutiiq people, reawakening the Alutiiq language is a critical part of preserving Native heritage. Many projects are underway in the Kodiak community to revitalize the language. Through these efforts, the sounds of Alutiiq are returning to Kodiak.



#### LEARN MORE:

#### PUBLISHED RESOURCES:

*Alutiiq Word of the Week: Fifteen Year Compilation*, 2012, by Amy Steffian and April Laktonen Counciller, Alutiiq Museum, Kodiak.

*Classroom Grammar of Koniag Alutiiq: Kodiak Island Dialect*, 1996, by Jeff Leer and Nina Zeedar, University of Alaska, Alaska Native Language Center, Fairbanks.

*A Conversational Dictionary of Kodiak Alutiiq*, 1978, by Jeff Leer, University of Alaska, Alaska Native Language Center, Fairbanks.

*Kodiak Alutiiq Language Conversational Phrasebook with Audio CD*, 2006, by April G. Laktonen Counciller, edited by Jeff Leer, Alutiiq Museum, Kodiak.

*Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit'stun Niugneret Kraasiirkii: "Color Kodiak Alutiiq Words": An Alutiiq Picture Dictionary*, 2012, by Alisha Drabek, Native Village of Afognak and Alutiiq Museum, Kodiak.

*Eskimo and Aleut Languages*, 1984, by A.C. Woodbury. In *Arctic*, edited by David Damas, *Handbook of North American Indians*, Volume 5, W.T. Sturtevant gen. ed., Pp. 49-63. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

#### ELECTRONIC RESOURCES:

Alutiiq Museum Website  
[www.alutiiqmuseum.org](http://www.alutiiqmuseum.org)  
Learn the Alutiiq alphabet, study grammar, and browse Alutiiq Word of the Week lessons.

Alutiiq Language Website  
[www.alutiiqlanguage.org](http://www.alutiiqlanguage.org)  
Learn the Alutiiq language through lessons, videos, and printables, and look up words in the online dictionary.



# Atret – NAMES



*Cestun atren?*—What’s your name? There is a lot of information in a name. In many societies, a person’s name reveals their gender, identifies their family, and suggests cultural and historical connections. Names in Sugt’stun, the language of the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq people, often reference personal characteristics or an event tied to the person. For example, an historic account tells of a girl named *Pelw*—Ash, because she was found in the ashes of a burning home. Some people receive names that reflect their personality, like *Ugausqaq*—Nice One, a habit or interest like *Mayurta*—Climber, their appearance, like *Ingartuliq*—Big Eyes, or their similarity to something. A talkative person might be called *Qallqaayaq*—Magpie, after the chatty bird. In Alutiiq society, people often accumulate names or nicknames over their lifetimes, accepting a new title to commemorate a deed, growing aptitude, new characteristic, or even a funny situation.



*Mrs. Pestrikkoff and her baby, Onz̄inkie, ca. 1940.  
Courtesy of Tim & Norman Smith.*

Historically, some Alutiiq babies had an *aalukaq*—namesake. When an Elder died, the next infant born in the community might be given the Elder’s name. People viewed the baby as a reincarnation of the Elder, and the infant was treated as family by the Elder’s relatives. Namesake relationships created ties between families, kept a beloved Elder close, and encouraged youth to live up to the legacy of their ancestors.

Like many Alutiiq traditions, the dramatic impacts of Western conquest changed naming practices. Alutiiq people began receiving Russian names in the early 19th century as they adopted the Russian Orthodox faith. Names like Iakov, Anastasia, Pavel, and Pariscovia often came from a baptismal sponsor. For some Native people, an Alutiiq name became their last name—like Aga, Ashouwak, or Shugak. Others adopted Russian surnames—like Boskofsky, Katelnikoff, or Panamarioff. In the 20th century, English and Scandinavian names became common in the Alutiiq community.

Today, the use of Sugt’stun names and nicknames is growing. People often receive an Alutiiq name from a relative or loved one—parents, grandparents, or a close friend. A language teacher or mentor may also give a name. If you are interested in having an Alutiiq name, consider reaching out to an Elder, Sugt’stun speaker, or teacher.

## LEARN MORE:

What’s in a Name? Alutiiq Naming Traditions, 2018, by Alisha Agsiaq Drabek, *Kodiak Daily Mirror*, May 9.

# Ellpet Macaqa

**Ellpet macaqa,  
Kesiin macaqa,  
Atgurt'starp'nga talumakan,  
Nalluciqan,  
Cestun qunukamken,  
Macaqa tun'illkiu gwamnek.**

**Akgua'am yaatiini  
qawarngama,  
qawangumni tuumiaq'gkemken.  
Taumi esgarngama.  
Alart'llrumaunga...  
Imasuugllianga, qiawagcaa.**

*You are my sun(shine),  
My only sun(shine),  
You make me happy when it's overcast.  
You will never know,  
How I love you,  
Don't take my sun(shine) away.*

*The day before yesterday,  
when I was sleeping,  
in my dream I was holding you.  
Then when I woke up,  
I made a mistake...  
I felt sad, then I cried.*

Sung to the tune of "You are My Sunshine"  
by April Laktonen Counciller, Shauna Hegna, Florence Pestrikoff & Nick Alokli,  
courtesy of the Alutiiq Museum. *Generations* CD Track 5.



# Ernerpak Suucillran

**Ernerpak suucillran.**

*Today is your birthday.*

**Ernerpak suucillran.**

*Today is your birthday.*

**Atgurtua suullriaten, \_\_\_\_\_.**

*I'm happy you were born, (name).*

**Nunaniqsaakina!**

*You have a lot of fun, (too)!*

Sung to the tune of "Happy Birthday"  
by the Alutiiq Language Club, courtesy of Alutiiq Museum.

# Gui Caininguangcuk

Gui caininguangcuk,

*I'm a little teapot,*

Nanitua lurtulua.

*Short and stout.*

Gwaa'i aigaqa.

*Here is my handle.*

Gwaa'i kugwika.

*Here is my spout.*

Gui qallakuma,

*When I start to boil [get all steamed up],*

Niicikarp'nga.

*Hear me [shout],*

"Kitngullua,

*[Just] "Tip me over,*

Taumi kuglua."

*And then pour me out."*

Sung to the tune of "I'm a little teapot," transcribed by Alisha Drabek  
with translations by Qik'tarmiut Alutiit Language Club Elders



# Nasquq, Tuik\*, Cisquuk, Angengquyut\*\*

**Nasquq, tuik\*, cisquuk, angengquyut\*\*.** *Head, shoulders, knees and toes.*

**cisquuk, angengquyut\*\*.** *Knees and toes.*

**cisquuk, angengquyut\*\*.** *Knees and toes.*

**Nasquq, tuik\*, cisquuk, angengquyut\*\*.** *Head, shoulders, knees and toes.*

**Iingalak, cuutek, qaneq, cali qengeq.** *Eyes, ears, mouth and nose.*

A chant, similar to “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes”  
by Sophie Katelnikoff Shepherd and Susie Malutin, with the Alutiiq Language Club.

\*Alternative Southern pronunciation of “shoulder” - “tusek; tuwik”

\*\* Alternative Southern Alutiiq use of “toes” - “putukut”

# KODIAK ISLAND ALUTIQ ALPHABET

**A**  
a



**Alagnaq**  
Berry

**Gw**  
gw



**Uqqwik**  
Alder

**K**  
k



**Keneq**  
Fox

**N**  
n



**Nanwaq**  
Lake

**R**  
R



**Witruuq**  
Pail

**W**  
w



**Wiinaq**  
Sea Lion

**C**  
c



**Cuuteq**  
Ear

**Hm**  
hm



**Sugkwarluku**

**Kw**  
kw



To give birth to her/him

**Ng**  
ng



**Buddy**, pal, partner

**S**  
s



**Saqul'aq**  
Duck

**E**  
e



**Emaa**  
Grandmother

**Hn**  
hn



**Arhnaq**  
Sea Otter

**L**  
l



**Laagaq**  
Chocolate lily

**P**  
P



**Patuq**  
Lid/cover

**F**  
f



**FanaRuq**  
Lantern

**Hng**  
hng



To kind of walk, walk for fun

**Ll**  
ll



To slide down

**Q**  
q



**Qik'rtaq**  
Island

**T**  
t



**Tamuq**  
Dried Fish

**G**  
g



**Giinaruaq**  
Mask

**I**  
I



**Iqalluk**  
Fish

**M**  
m



**Mingq'lluni**  
To sew

**R**  
r



**Ruuwaq**  
Arrow

**U**  
u



**Ulukaq**  
Uls

**Y**  
y



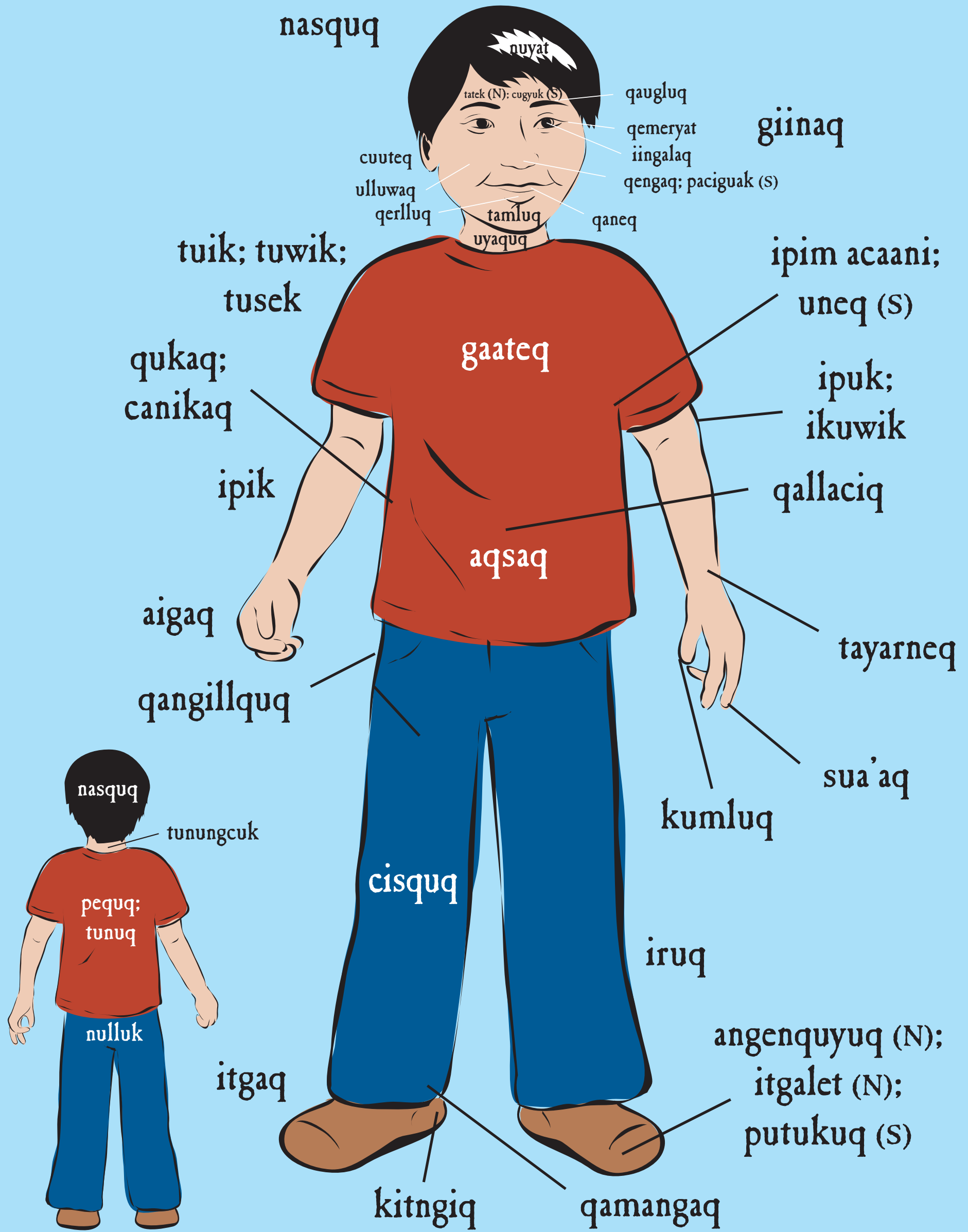
**Yaamat**  
Rocks, stones

Poster produced by the Alutiq Museum & Archaeological Repository with support from the Alutiq Heritage Foundation, Kodiak Island Borough School District, and Native Village of Afognak.

Special Thanks to Native Museum, Nook, John, Doreen, Kruger, Frances, Frances, George, Inge, May, Hilda, and the Alutiq Museum staff, all photograph contributors, The Old Kodiak Area Regional Planning Commission, Jack & Patricia, and Paul Lee.



# Qaik





# KODIAK ISLAND ALUTIIQ NUMBERS

1 allringuq  
/ allriluq\*

nacaq - headdress

Allringuq/Allriluq arya'aq nacartumauq.  
One girl is wearing a headdress.



2 mal'uk

tungak - puffins

Mal'uk tungak kuimagtuk imarmi.  
Two puffins are swimming in the ocean.



3 pingayun

tan'urat - boys

Pingayun tan'urat wam'ut aprutmi.  
Three boys are playing in the road.



skiifat/skiiguat -  
skiffs

Tang'ranka staaman siiguat/skiifat.  
I see four skiffs.

4 staaman



5 talliman

giinaruangcut - maskettes

Kinam klikai talliman giinaruangcut?  
Who carved five maskettes?



6 arwilgen

sagit - halibut (pl)

Tan'urat arwilgen sagit tumiaqait.  
Those boys are holding six halibut.



manit - eggs

Ikukenka mallrunjin  
manit.  
I found  
seven eggs.

7 mallrunjin



culut - feathers

Inglulgen culut  
stuulumi et'ut.  
Eight feathers are  
on the table.

8 inglulgen



9 qulnguyan

qatayat - sea gulls

Qulnguyan qatayat  
misngaut pRiistinami.  
Nine gulls are perched on the dock.



10 qulen

qayat - kayaks

Qulen qayat canak'gpet.  
We made ten kayaks.



\*There is a dialectal variation for number one. The first variant given is for the Northern Kodiak sub-dialect (Karluk, Afognak, Larsen Bay, Ouzinkie, Port Lions), while the second is for the Southern Kodiak sub-dialect (Akhiok, Kaguyak, Old Harbor)

Poster Produced by the Alutiiq Museum & Archaeological Repository  
with Support from the Kodiak Island Borough School District

PHOTO INFORMATION: 1-Headdress by June Simenoff Pardec, purchased with funding from the Rasmuson Foundation, Alutiiq Museum Library. 2-Puffins, Alutiiq Museum Library. 3-Boys playing in Afognak Village, ca. 1960, Chadwick Collection, Alutiiq Museum. 4-Old Harbor Skiffs, courtesy of Jasmine Larionoff. 5-Minature Wooden Masks, Karluk One Site, ca. AD 1400 - 1750, Koning, Inc. Collection, Alutiiq Museum. 6-Boys with Halibut, Goudy Collection, courtesy of Woody Island Tribal Council. 7-Wild bird eggs, Alutiiq Museum Library. 8-Feathers, courtesy of Kayla Christiansen. 9-Gulls, courtesy of Jasmine Larionoff. 10-Model kayak frames carved by Ouzinkie students, 2009, Alutiiq Museum Library. Background image, Eider skin blanket, courtesy of the Milwaukee Public Museum.

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LEGEND

BLEED  
SAFETY  
TRIMLINE  
FOLD

C

M

Y

K