



# Pimsleur®

## Ojibwe 1

### Reading Booklet

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Booklet Design: Maia Kennedy

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## **The Native American College Preparatory Center**

The inspiration for the initiation of the Ojibwe Language Project was provided by the voices of twenty-seven Ojibwe high school students. These students were part of a summer academic enrichment program which was created by the Native American College Preparatory Center in Norman, Oklahoma.

The Native American College Preparatory Center (NACPC) was originated by Ojibwe educator, Robert A. Fairbanks, and is dedicated to providing challenging educational opportunities to Native American high school students. The Center was inspired by the Native American Preparatory School, located in Rowe, New Mexico, a residential high school for Native American high school students who have demonstrated academic excellence and a clear desire to go to college.

It was in the summer of 1993 during a six-week academic enrichment program administered by the Native American College Preparatory Center that the students expressed their strong desire to learn the lessons of the Ojibwe language and, concurrently, Ojibwe culture. Looking for ways to acknowledge their request, Director Robert Fairbanks determined that returning the language to the youth, from whom it had been taken generations before, would fulfill

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their thirst for self knowledge. Indeed, he recognized that the lessons of culture were conveyed in the Ojibwe language.

According to US government policy, the deliberate destruction of Native American languages began in boarding schools which the government established. Ojibwe children were forced to attend these "schools" in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The children were punished if they spoke their native language. In most cases, they were not allowed to return home or to communicate with their families for years. Because the children could no longer converse with their families, they lost their native tongue, and when they did return home, familial relationships were permanently destroyed. The cultural values that were traditionally passed down by grandparents to children began to erode.

Ojibwe Elders Vivian Stately and Larry Cloud Morgan had experienced the pain of language loss and they were determined to retain the language of their ancestors, and to pass it on. In fact, Vivian had returned to college at the age of sixty-two to relearn her language, and Larry had devoted much of his time to recalling and retaining the language in his writing and lecturing. Neither hesitated when asked to participate in the Ojibwe Language Project.

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For both Larry and Vivian, the project meant leaving their homes and families and traveling nearly two thousand miles to work in Concord, Massachusetts with the Pimsleur Language Programs. They worked tirelessly for three months, and the efforts of their labor resulted in the first Ojibwe language course.

The Native American College Preparatory Center and its students are grateful to Charles A. S. Heinle of Heinle & Heinle Enterprises, to Larry Cloud Morgan, Vivian Thunder Stately, and Heidi Hecker, assistant to Larry and Vivian, for the blending of modern technology and ancient knowledge required to create this first spoken Ojibwe language course. *Mii-gwich.*

– *Barbara Ettinger*  
NACPC

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## Ojibwe — A Language — A Way of Living

There is no word for "Good-bye" in our tongue and that is as it should be. Whatever theory or legend we follow or believe, this language of the first people is expressed with utmost courtesy and respect.

In our ceremonies as ancient as the winds and water is woven a tradition so simple, which yet appears complex to those who walk life's path a bit more hurried than the Woodland Ojibwe. Now we add another ceremony, one of balance and blending, seeking in the remnants of our people those who will give back to the children their voice ... a voice coming forth through the oral and technical visions of very caring people.

As children we are taught silence and listening. We are told the importance of listening that will lead our way through the forest of life and its challenges. From the *Nanaboozhoo* stories after the first season's snow until the winter breath turns to spring, we lay at eve and listen to the voices of ancestors now gone. We think of those wonderful old gnarled, bronzed faces, with names like *Wabiigum* (Clay) or *Mis co bin aish ekwe* (Red Bird Woman), or perhaps *Maangozid* (Loonsfoot): voices and names who live in spirit in our hearts and in all our "ceremonies."



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We have no religion; what we do have is "a way of life," and the struggle to retain this way of life is neither a smooth nor quiet path. Our language has been so silent these past years, and now the season of speaking and hearing has come. The mystery of technology and the mastery of our traditional way of living emerges here in Concord in the Hollows of History, here where the cry for and about freedom lives on. In my quiet evening walks, I can hear the chants of the "Agawams." The roar of the musket is silent, yet in the rivers of the village lives the spirit of freedom's farmers from so long ago. Like our ancestors who lived and roamed here on this land of bounty and beauty, caring for the earth and all living relatives ... respecting all creatures, taking only what the needs for the moment were. How far have we come, we pitiful humans in our quest for the "good life," and how far shall we stray from the traditional path? Making noises, only sounds with no feelings, empty words and worlds if you would ... not hearing the vision, nor the voice of history gone perhaps to our ears, but certainly alive in the visions of our respected Elders and in the vision of Dr. Paul Pimsleur ... another great spirit who shared his gifts so willingly.

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As our seasons change, so also changes our living, yet in the rivers of history and in the drums and chants of the Anishinabe there are new voices now. Our Elders sit quiet in the spring winds and await the summer season, perhaps dreaming of the fish they shall catch and prepare, the spiritual gatherings and rites of passage which come with the warmth of summer. Skins are made ready, the repairs of the winter's work in the traditional dance regalia are finished. New moccasins are waiting for the first "Grand Entry" of the season. Memorial Day nears and we prepare feasts and "giveaways" for our relatives gone from this earth, yet very alive in the songs and dances of a grateful and generous people.

We have come far, we "people" trying to preserve for our children the richness of the *Ojibwemoien*, recognizing the immense responsibility we have assumed by uttering the voice of an ancient language into the technology of history ... to listen to the playback of life and come to the realization that indeed the world needs to know the vision of Elders like Dr. Paul Pimsleur, nurtured by the discipline and commitment of Charles A. S. Heinle and his very able language family.

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What footnotes can we add to history, what changes will come from this amazing blend of an ancient oral tradition and man's machines?

Perhaps there are no verbal answers, save to hear in the voices and souls of a grateful people, a quiet *Meigwetch* ... a small gift from the earth and a handful of tobacco given in the spirit of respect for all life and all earth. And as Chief Seattle so aptly said, "Perhaps we are all related after all."

– Larry Cloud-Morgan  
Concord, Massachussetts

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## **The First Native American Spoken Language Training Course**

When we were presented with the challenge to develop and publish a Pimsleur Language Program designed to help preserve the language and culture of an ancient North American people, a deep chord of the very nature of our work was touched and resonated.

The original work of Dr. Paul Pimsleur was essentially devoted to making spoken language proficiency readily available in modern European languages. However, there was a major difference between what was accomplished in those language courses and the objective of this course. In this case, the learners would be non-Ojibwe-speaking tribal members aspiring to acquire the culture of their elders through gaining proficiency in understanding and speaking the Ojibwe language. In short, the objective is the preservation of a way of life — the Ojibwe culture.

We are privileged to have a part in this experiment, which holds the exciting promise of a rebirth of a Native American culture.

*Charles A. S. Heinle*

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## The Language of Anishinaabeg

The Ojibwe language is one of a wide-spread family of North American Indian languages known as the Algonquian language family, one of many such families of languages. Ojibwe is spoken by perhaps 40,000 to 50,000 people in the north-central part of the continent. Although the English name "Chippewa" is commonly used both for the people and their ancestral language in Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin, in the language itself the people are the *Anishinaabeg* and the language is called *Anishinaabemowin* or *Ojibwemowin*.

"Ojibwe" or "Ojibwa" is the name used in Ontario; "Saulteaux" in Manitoba and Saskatchewan; "Odawa" or "Ottawa" on Manitoulin Island in Ontario and in parts of Michigan; and "Algonquin" in Eastern Ontario and Quebec. In Northwestern Ontario, around Sandy Lake and Big Trout Lake, the name "Cree" is used, although the languages there are more Ojibwe than Cree. It is difficult to draw sharp boundaries around these linguistic and social groups; speakers of one variety (dialect) can usually understand adjacent varieties without much difficulty even though there may be minor differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Detailed investigation into what these differences are and

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what relation they bear to the traditional named varieties is just now beginning.

Ojibwe and the other languages grouped together in the Algonquian language family resemble each other so closely in sound patterns, grammar, and vocabulary that at one time they must have been a single language. As the speakers of this ancient language, no longer spoken, became separated from one another, the way they spoke changed in different ways until we have the distinct languages spoken today. Linguists, carefully comparing the words of the contemporary Algonquian languages, are able to reconstruct something of what this ancestral language, known as Proto-Algonquian, must have been like. By examining the kinds of words that are reconstructable for this language, they are even able to tell us something about the homeland of the people and their way of life.

At the time of the European invasion of North America, the languages of the Algonquian language family were spoken by Indians along the Atlantic coast from what is now North Carolina to Newfoundland, inland across Canada to the Great Plains, and in the region of the Great Lakes, perhaps ranging as far south as Alabama and Georgia. The languages are conveniently grouped into three

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geographic groups: Western, Central, and Eastern. Many of the historic Central and Eastern groups have lost their ancestral languages and in some cases their cultural identity as well.

There are a number of regional dialects of this Algonquian tongue of the Woodland Indians. These may differ slightly, but all are mutually understandable. The dialects represented in this course are widely used in the Red Lake, Leech Lake, and White Earth Reservations in Northern Minnesota.

More information about the Algonquian language is available in *An Ojibwe Word Resource Book*, edited by John Nichols and Earl Nayholm, and published originally by the Indian Studies Program, Bemidji State College, Bemidji, Minnesota in 1973. An expanded and revised edition was later copyrighted in 1979 by the Board of Directors of The Minnesota Archaeological Society in Fort Snelling, St. Paul, Minnesota.

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