

# The Alutiiq Orthography: Kodiak Dialect



by  
*April G.L. Counciller, Ph.D.*

and  
*Jeff Leer, Ph.D.*

with  
*Nick Alokli*  
*Kathryn Chichenoff*  
*Mary Haakanson*  
*Julie Knagin*

*Stella Krumrey*  
*Florence Pestrikoff*  
*Sophie Shepherd*  
*Peter Boskofsky*  
*Alisha Drabek, Ph.D.*



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Second Edition

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*Alisha Drabek, Ph.D.*

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Culture and Language Program  
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Anchorage, Alaska 99508-3463  
(907) 562-4155  
<http://www.chugachmiut.org/>



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This book was produced collaboratively between Dr. Counciller and Dr. Leer, but based largely on Leer's linguistic research in the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq region over the past four decades. This document is a continual work in process, frozen at the date of publication. Future editions will be expanded. For information on errata and updates to the orthography, contact the Alutiiq Museum or Alaska Native Language Center.



*Kodiak Alutiiq Language Summit in 2011 at the Kodiak Wildlife Refuge Center, joined by friends from the Chugach Alutiiq region by Chugachmiut, Inc. representatives. Photo courtesy of the Alutiiq Museum.*

# Dedication

This book is dedicated to *Cuqllipet* (our Elders) who have contributed to Kodiak Alutiiq language revitalization. *Quyanaasinaq* for their perseverance in speaking the language and teaching, as well as for their friendship, patience, and willingness to share. There is no way to possibly thank all the Elders who have contributed to the Alutiiq language revitalization effort over the years. These dedication pages, as well as Elders pictured throughout the book, acknowledge those who have been active in recent year and who have helped make learning activities and this book and others possible. *Quyanaasinaq!*



*Nick (Nicholai K'siin) Alokli (Akhiok).*



*Kathryn Chichenoff (Karluk & Ouzinkie).*



*Mary Haakanson (Old Harbor).*



*Dennis & Julie Knagin (Afognak).*



*Sally Carlough (Kaguyak & Akhiok).*



*Nadia Mullan (Afognak).*



*Mary Peterson (Akhiok).*



*Clyda Christiansen  
(Karluk & Larsen Bay).*

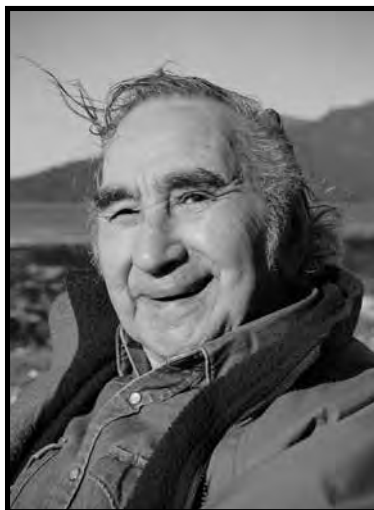


*Papa George Inga, Sr. (Old Harbor).*





*Fred & Irene Coyle (Akhiok).*



*John Pestrikoff  
(Port Lions & Afognak).*



*Phyllis (Wasilisa) Peterson  
(Kaguyak & Akhiok).*



*Sophie Shepherd  
(Karluk & Larsen Bay).*



*Paul Kahutak (Woody  
Island & Old Harbor).*



*Marina Waselie  
(Larsen Bay).*



*Florence (Kuukula) Pestrikoff  
(Akhiok & Old Harbor).*



*Elders and Alutiiq language learners from around Kodiak Island and the Chugach region gather for a Language Summit in 2009.*

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# INTRODUCTION: ALUTIIQ ORTHOGRAPHY

An *orthography* is a writing system for a language. It includes the *alphabet* — characters used to represent the language through a written form, as well as special symbols, spelling or writing rules, and any exceptions to those rules.

The Alutiiq orthography is designed to minimize exceptions to the rules. It is designed as a *phonetic* writing system, meaning one sound is assigned to each letter — a person familiar with the orthography should be able to determine how a word sounds just by sounding it out. The rules that have been developed to write the sounds have also been designed to show how and where each *syllable* of a word should be stressed or lengthened. This orthography is also designed to minimize the use of special symbols and entirely eliminate marks such as accents and underlines, which can be lost in email and cannot be printed in newspapers or on official maps.

Jeff Leer, Derenty Tabios, and Irene Reed developed an initial version of this orthography in the 1970s. It is similar to orthographies used by Yup'ik and Inupiaq languages (Counciller & Leer, 2006). The Alutiiq orthography went through a series of changes before reverting — for the sake of simplicity — back to a form very similar to the original 1970s version. This booklet will make note of any significant changes that have occurred to different spelling rules and letters in the chapters where each letter is discussed, and summarize notable changes in Chapter 12.

See Appendix I for a chart of various orthographies used through time and in neighboring languages.

## The Orthography Guide Development

Efforts to create a guide that could support consistent materials development for Alutiiq language teaching began in the 1990s with an earlier variation on today's writing system. Chugachmiut, Inc. was conducting a curriculum development project, and

participants in the project determined that a resource was needed that could guide developers in the creation of written materials following a “consistent, concise set of rules” (Leer, 1999). Participants in that effort included Jeff Leer, Derenty Tabios, Arthur Moonin, Feona Sawden, Seraphim Ukatish, Rhoda Moonin, and others. Their work would be referenced and built upon in subsequent years.

As changes were made to the orthography to accommodate increases in computer communication, it again became apparent that the work initially begun a decade earlier would need to be expanded and published. Chugachmiut brought together fluent speakers from around the Chugach dialect region in January of 2011. This Alutiiq orthography was revised to:

- 1) Simplify teaching Alutiiq;
- 2) Eliminate accents and underlines, making it easy to type on any platform;
- 3) Make the rules consistent while the language training material is developed; and
- 4) Help ensure all dialects from Prince William Sound to Kodiak Island, and the Alaska Peninsula can use the same basic orthography (with minor differences based on dialect).

The speakers participating in the 2011 workshop included Rhoda Moonin, Regional Language Coordinator, Nanwalek; Derenty Tabios, Anchorage; Mary Kompkoff, Chenega Bay; Leona Olsen, Tatitlek/Cordova; Nancy Pullam, Port Graham/ Ninilchik; Diane Selanoff, Port Graham/Valdez; Sally Ash, Nanwalek; Marie Meade, University of Alaska, Anchorage; Agatha John Shield, University of Alaska, Anchorage; and Bernice Tetpon, Anchorage. Jeff Leer led discussions about the writing system's changes and sought feedback and examples from speakers. Leer was assisted by April Laktonen Counciller,

Ph.D., Alutiiq Museum Language Program Manager, a second-language Alutiiq/Sugpiaq speaker from the Koniag dialect. Counciller offered to help complete the manuscript with Leer's help after the conclusion of the workshop. Work continued throughout 2011, and the first draft of that guide was completed in early 2012.

In 2012, the Alutiiq Heritage Foundation secured National Science Foundation RAPID grant funding (#1153156) to complete this Kodiak version of the orthography. Counciller and Leer began working with Kodiak Island Elders to modify the unpublished Chugach dialect draft to the Kodiak dialect and complete unfinished sections. Elders of the Northern and Southern Kodiak styles of Alutiiq met with Leer, Counciller, and project specialist Peter Boskofsky (Chignik) on May 24th and 25th, 2012 at Kodiak College. Their primary goals were to come up with example words for the Kodiak dialect and also deal with an unresolved question of depicting Russian letter sounds documented in the Northern Kodiak style (for more on Russian borrowings and sounds, refer to Chapter 9).

Elders present (some of whom also provided later consultation) included Nick Alokli (Akhiok), Kathryn Chichenoff (Karluk/Ouzinkie), Julie Knagin (Afognak/Kodiak), Mary Haakanson (Old Harbor), Florence Pestrikoff (Akhiok/Old Harbor), and Sophie Shepherd (Karluk/Larsen Bay). Other Alutiiq community members present for all or portions of the workshop included Melissa Borton, Alisha Drabek, Sven Haakanson, Jr., Marya Halvorsen, Susan Malutin, and Kari Sherod. Additional word checking was later provided by Stella Krumrey (Kaguyak/Old Harbor). Alisha Drabek assisted with final proofreading and editing.

## How to Use this Guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide speakers and language learners with a comprehensive, but not exhaustive, guide to the Alutiiq writing system. Users will understand the sounds of the Alutiiq alphabet, the

meanings and uses of symbols such as the apostrophe and hyphen, and determination of syllable breaks. Readers will gain a basic understanding of emphasis and lengthening of sounds within words, which can be used in sounding out written words or in aiding accurate writing of the spoken language. Exceptions and pronunciation rules that alter sounds of letters will also be addressed.

The value of this writing system and guide is limited for those with no prior exposure to the language. While those with linguistic training in other languages may be able to understand and apply the concepts and rules described here, those without formal linguistic training should have some access and exposure to the language. Fluent speakers and advanced learners should be able to understand and use the rules of the writing system, but should carefully read the information, as not everything is intuitive. Decisions on the writing system that seem arbitrary might have important reasons, which this guide attempts to explain.

Anyone who plans to use the Alutiiq writing system should carefully study the orthography, as confusing aspects of the system are explained within. As popular community use of the Alutiiq orthography is in its early decades, minor changes may occur over time as popular uses are standardized and integrated by other writers. This guide is therefore a primary community-use orthography, which can serve as a standard reference, while acknowledging that long-term literacy may result in changes in popular usage.

## Dialectal and Sub-dialectal Variation

There are two major dialects of the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq language. Chugach Alutiiq (C) is spoken on the Kenai Peninsula (KP) and Prince William Sound (PWS). Koniag Alutiiq (K) is spoken on the Alaska Peninsula (AP) and Kodiak Island (KOD). The Chugach and Koniag dialects each can be broken down into the sub-dialects identified above: KP, PWS, AP, and KOD. This book covers the KOD dialect, although it is

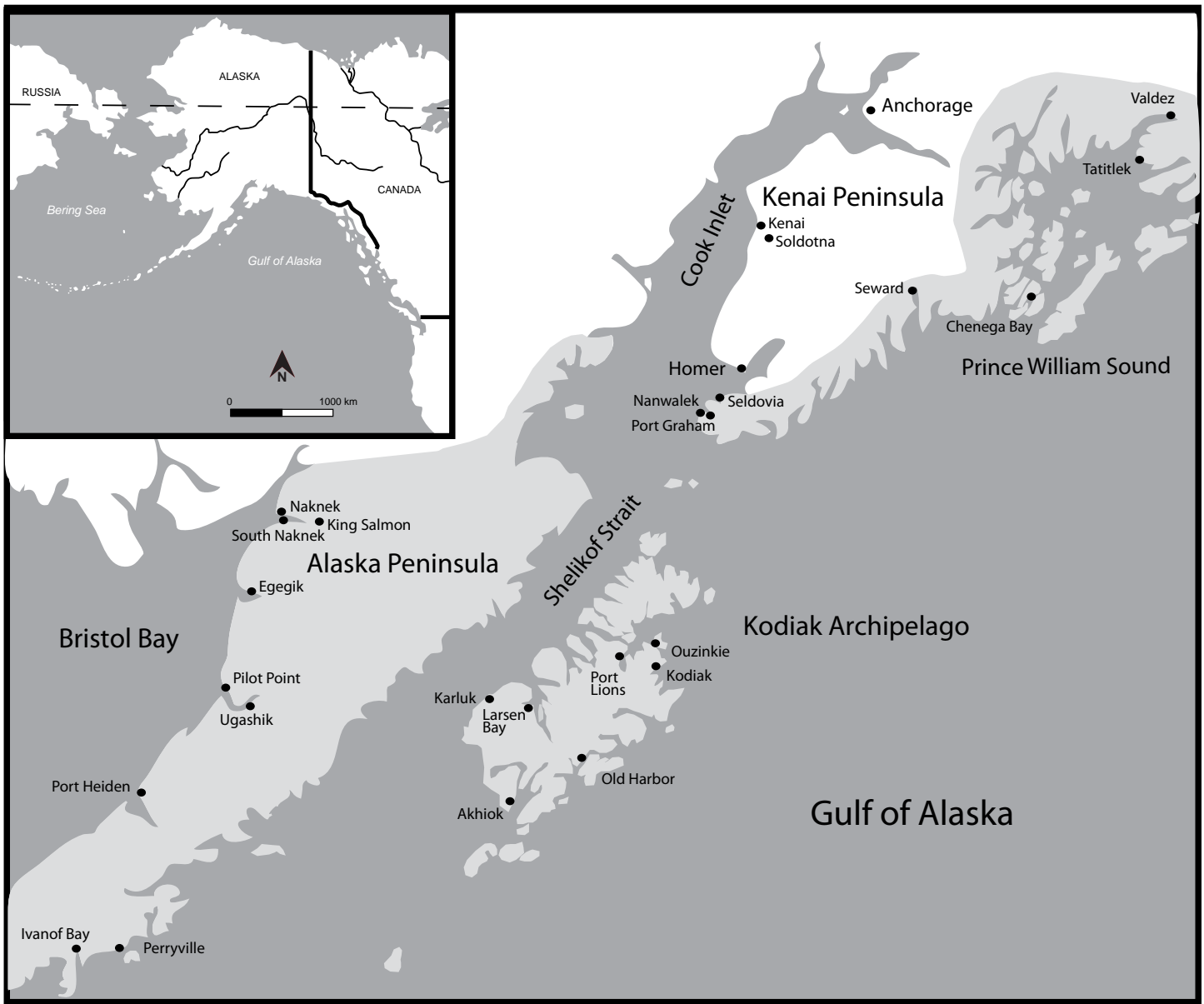


Figure 1: Alutiiq Region Map

relevant to the wider Koniag dialect, with exceptions in vocabulary, some letter usage, and aspects of the language's rhythmic structure.

On Kodiak Island it is common to speak of the *Northern style* (N) and *Southern style* (S). The Northern style is traditionally spoken among the communities of Woody Island (**Tangirnaq**), Ouzinkie (**Uusenkaaq**), Afognak (**Ag'waneq**), Port Lions (**Masiqsiraq**), Larsen Bay (**Uyaqsaq**), and Karluk (**Kal'ut**). The Southern style is traditionally spoken

in Akhiok (**Kasukuak**), Kaguyak (**Kangiyaq**), and Old Harbor (**Nuniaq**)<sup>1</sup>. The city of Kodiak (**Sun'aq**) may have traditionally been more in the Northern style, but is now a melting pot of numerous village styles. These style categories are somewhat arbitrary — as the style of Alutiiq spoken varies from village to

<sup>1</sup> The villages of Afognak, Kaguyak were destroyed in the 1964 earthquake and tsunami. Woody Island is now abandoned due to outmigration. However, living speakers from these villages now reside in other communities and their styles of speech live on.

village, it would be a mistake to think that all speakers of the same style use the same accent or vocabulary, or that there is no overlap between the styles. In fact, vocabulary differences between Kodiak styles are measured in the dozens of words out of tens of thousands of possible words.

Distinctions between the Kodiak styles have been important to many speakers and learners, so in publications like this, we do our best to identify when a word is used specifically in one dialect or style. If the difference in vocabulary or pronunciation occurs between the Northern Kodiak and Southern Kodiak style, the distinction is noted with a (N) or (S) in parenthesis, respectively. If the difference is heard in one specific village, the village name will be listed in the parenthesis, (i.e., Old Harbor). If there is no special notation after the word, it means that the word is generally used throughout the dialect covered by this publication (KOD); speakers from various parts (but perhaps not all) of the region use the word.

It is important to also remember that no publication will ever fully document every word or variation that occurs within Alutiiq, as the full lexicon of a language is simply too large (and ever changing) to completely document. The only guarantee when a word is used in a book like this, is that one speaker said the word at least one time to a linguist or learner. The appearance of a written word does not negate the existence of other words in the language that might have the same meaning. Example words in this book are often chosen for their use of specific letters or letter combinations, and it is not the intent of the authors to provide an exhaustive list of all other words with the same or similar meaning — especially as alternate words might not include the desired illustrative letter or construction.

Some variation on Kodiak exists between different Alutiiq-origin vocabulary. Some of this variation follows the Northern/Southern style differences, but some does not. For example, **aikuq** (dog) used in Northern Kodiak villages, while **piugta** (dog) is used

in Southern Kodiak. Some of these differences are not Northern or Southern style, but are village-specific, such as the word **mit'aq** (star) used historically in Karluk, while **agyaq** (star) is used around the rest of the archipelago. While the whole Kodiak region uses Russian borrowings for many modern terms, such as **stuuluq** (table), there are a higher number of Russian-origin Alutiiq words in the Northern style. Additionally, some Northern style pronunciations retain more of the original Russian flair, so may have slightly different spellings than the Southern Kodiak version of the same word, i.e., **skauluq** (N) and **skuuluq** (S) (school). For more on Russian borrowings and conventions, see Chapter 9.

## Writing Conventions and Abbreviations

Throughout this book various writing conventions (such as **bold** for Kodiak Alutiiq words within paragraphs, or # to designate the beginning or end of a hypothetical example word boundary) and abbreviations (such as (N) for Northern Kodiak style) are used to aid explanation and avoid lengthy repetitions. Sometimes these conventions are noted in text, but not thereafter. All of the abbreviations and writing conventions used in this book are summarized in Appendix II (Abbreviations) and Appendix III (Conventions). Important vocabulary, which is *italicized* upon first major use in text, is compiled in the glossary. Terms made up of a number of different vocabulary words (like *voiced fricative*) are generally not defined on their own if the average reader would understand that the definitions for voiced letters and fricative letters are combined in cases such as voiced fricatives.

## Future Updates

Changes and updates to the orthography are anticipated, such changes and errata will be listed on the Alutiiq Museum website (search: “orthography errata”) and provided as a print insert, as applicable, in advance of further editions of this orthography.

# Part I



*Alutiiq language learner Candace Branson reads along with an Alutiiq storybook produced by the Native Village of Afognak as she helps co-teach the first semester of Alutiiq Language I at Kodiak High School in 2010. Photo courtesy of Tyan Selby Hayes and Koniag Education Foundation.*



# Chapter 1: ALPHABET

## 1.1 Introduction

An *alphabet* are characters or written symbols used to represent different sounds for a language. There are other languages whose writing systems use symbols that refer to whole words or syllables, rather than individual sounds. The Alutiiq writing system is alphabet based, using symbols to represent each sound.

Our writing system uses letters from the English alphabet, using what is known as the Roman or Latin alphabet. Letters (also known as characters or symbols) from the Roman alphabet are used to represent various Alutiiq sounds. Some letters represent the same or almost the same sounds in the English language, while other letters represent sounds not found in English. Some sounds are similar to English sounds, but are represented with different letters than in English, as we will see later in this chapter.

The main thing to remember when looking at the Alutiiq alphabet is that although it looks like the English alphabet, it often sounds much different. This is why it is impossible to try to write Alutiiq words in English alphabet “phonetics”. Many Alutiiq sounds cannot be correctly expressed with combinations of English letters. For example, the word **llaami** (outside) contains a **ll** sound that is impossible to write with English letters. Writing that sound as a ‘sh’, ‘th’, or ‘shl’ using the English alphabet would confuse learners even more, and teach them to say our words incorrectly. When you get requests for writing words in “phonetics” you should explain these issues, because very few words in Alutiiq can be written in English letters while preserving the proper pronunciation. Using “phonetics” continues to place our language and writing system in a subservient position to English and the English writing system.

There is a very good reason to use the Alutiiq alphabet. Written Alutiiq is consistent — what you say is what you write. There are very few exceptions. In written English, however, the same letter can represent many different sounds (e. g., in ‘machine’, ‘church’, and ‘Christ’ ‘ch’ represents three different sounds). In some English cases, the same sounds can be represented by different letters (e. g.: in ‘beet’, ‘beat’, and ‘machine’, ‘ee’, ‘ea’, and ‘i’ represent the same sound of ‘e’). Also, there are silent letters in English (e. g., ‘ease’ where ‘e’ is silent, or ‘add’, where the second ‘d’ is silent; and ‘daughter’ where ‘gh’ is silent, ‘knife’ where ‘k’ is silent, and ‘ptarmigan’ where ‘p’ is silent, etc.).

Those who have studied English might remember having difficulty with these irregularities. The current Alutiiq orthography is far more regular than English and therefore it is much simpler than the English orthography.

## 1.2 Letters

The following 26 letters are used to represent the sounds of the Kodiak Alutiiq orthography:

**a, c, e, f, g, gw, hm, hn, hng, i, k, kw, l, ll, m, n, ng, p, q, r, R, s, t, u, w, and y.**

These examples will give some idea of the sound it represents for those familiar with the language. The sound and use of each letter will be covered in detail in the next two chapters.

Letter	Alutiiq	English
<b>a</b>	amiq	skin
<b>c</b>	Ca.	I don't know.
<b>e</b>	ellpet	you
<b>f</b>	flak	flag
<b>g</b>	gaaleq	window

<b>gw</b> <sup>2</sup>	uqgwik	alder; deciduous tree
<b>hm</b>	keghmiaqlluku	to hold it in one's teeth
<b>hn</b>	p'hnaq	cliff
<b>hng</b>	p'hnguq	hill
<b>i</b>	iqsak	hook
<b>k</b>	keneq	fire
<b>kw</b>	sugkwarluku	to give birth to him
<b>l</b>	lapaat' kaaq	shovel
<b>ll</b>	iqalluk	fish
<b>m</b>	maani	around here
<b>n</b>	nasquq	head
<b>ng</b>	angayuk	partner; buddy
<b>p</b>	puyuq	smoke
<b>q</b>	qugyuk	swan
<b>r</b>	ruuwaq	arrow
<b>R</b>	wiit' ruuq	pail
<b>s</b>	saquq	wing
<b>t</b>	tuntuq	deer
<b>u</b>	ul'uk	pants
<b>w</b>	wek	blade of grass
<b>y</b>	yaasiik	box

### 1.2.1 Special Characters

This orthography requires no special characters or accents. The only special letter is **R** (Russian R), and the only additional characters are the hyphen and apostrophe, which are present on all keyboards. This allows us to write emails, put names and words in the newspaper, on maps, and multiple other publication types without the use of special keyboards, macros, or computer software.

### 1.2.2 Multi-character Sounds

When **n** and **g** (**ng**) come together, and when **g** or **k** are combined with **w** (**gw** and **kw**), they represent single sounds. The alphabet also has voiceless nasals beginning with 'h' (**hm**, **hn**, **hng**) and a doubled consonant **ll**, all of which constitute single sounds.

<sup>2</sup> Note that the **gw** in the Alutiiq alphabet follows immediately after the **g**, but in the Chugach dialect which has additionally a **gg** and **ggw**, it is alphabetized before the letters containing **gg**. This is the one case where the alphabetization sequence in Alutiiq is different than in the English alphabet.

These sounds, although represented with two or more Roman characters, are considered one letter in Alutiiq.

### 1.2.3 Kodiak Alutiiq Non-use of Voiced Fricatives gg, ggw, and rr

Kodiak Alutiiq does not differentiate between *voiced* and *voiceless* versions of the fricatives **g**, **gw**, and **r**. Therefore, the Kodiak Alutiiq alphabet does not include voiced fricative letters **gg**, **ggw**, and **rr**. The Kodiak alphabet uses only the **g**, **gw**, and **r**. This is in contrast to the Chugach dialect and the Alaska Peninsula subdialect, which do differentiate between these pairs of letters, making Kodiak Alutiiq somewhat unique in the region (See Section 2.4 for further discussion).

### 1.2.4 Borrowed Letters

The characters **R** and **f** are used in words “borrowed” from Russian and occasionally from English. Any word containing these letters is a borrowed word, but not all borrowed words contain these letters. The borrowed Russian vowels **o** and **e** which are used in limited vocabulary, primarily in the Northern Kodiak style, are written as **au** and **ei** respectively (using existing letters) but are not treated as traditional vowel combinations (See Chapter 9 for further discussion).

Below are some additional example words to familiarize you with each letter. Pronounce, or have a fluent speaker pronounce the following words:

<b>a</b>	
allanertaq	stranger; guest
Agellriik.	They (two) left.
aarulik	hawk
atkuk	coat
<b>c</b>	
caayuq	tea
ciiwak	housefly; bluefly
Cami?	When?
Cama'i!	Hello!

**e**

emaa	grandmother
elltuwaq	grandchild
ellma	almost; a little
Et'ukut.	We are (located).

**f**

familiaq	surname; last name
faapriikaaq	cannery <sup>3</sup> (from Russian фабрика (fábrica), “factory”)
Futii!	Stink! (a Russian interjection)
flak	flag

**g**

guuteq	tooth
Agi.	Go. (command)
Agayun	God
igluku	to swallow it

**gw**

uqgwik	alder; deciduous tree
elgwia	his or her place
gwaten	this way; thus

**hm**

keghmarluku	to bite it repeatedly
unerhmigluku	to hold it under one's arm
cerhmak	sloshing noise

**hn**

p'hnaq	cliff
arhnaq	sea otter
nuus'hniik	outhouse; bathroom <sup>4</sup>
quuhnasqaq <sup>5</sup>	a sour thing (some KOD)

3 The word **kaanariiq** (cannery) is becoming more common on Kodiak.

4 Previous spellings of this word did not include the ` (representing a quiescent **e** as discussed in Section 8.2.6) but it has been updated to more accurately represent the Russian-origin rhythmic structure of the word. With the ` added, the previously dropped 'h' in the **hng** can now be included, since the **hng** is not immediately following the **s** (See Section 2.8 on h-dropping).

5 **Quunasqaq** (a sour thing) using **ng** rather than **hng**, is becoming the more common variant of this word.

**hng**

p'hnguq	hill
Tuquhnguaraa.	He is pretending to kill it.
kuinghnguarluni	to walk (for fun, aimlessly)

**i**

iingalaq	eye
ing'iq; ingriq	mountain
ingqiq	louse
iraluq	moon

**k**

kuik	river
Kita!	Let's go!
kanani	down there
Kawirtuq.	It is red.

**kw**

Neregkwaraa.	She is feeding it.
Sugkwaraa.	She is giving birth to him.
kwegluku	to lift it up (S)

**l**

laam`paaq	lamp
luumacirpet	our way of life; the way we are
Liitaa.	He is learning it.
iluani	inside of it

**ll**

Lliigaa.	She is putting it down.
llan	your common sense
ellpet	you
Qai-llu?	And why?

**m**

macaq	sun
maraq	wetland; swamp
Makten!	Get up!
yaamani	on the rocks

**n**

nanwaq	lake
nuta'aq	new one
Naama?	Where is it?
nuliq	wife

**ng**

angun	old man
tunngaq	puffin
angayuka	my partner; buddy
qunguk	grave

**p**

pisurta	hunter
panaq	spear
patuq	lid; cover
prikaasiik	storekeeper (from Russian приказчик (prikázchik), “storekeeper”)

**q**

qulen	ten
quta	beach
iqaq	dirt
qatayaq	seagull

**r**

Rirtuq.	It is shiny.
erneq	day
erinaq	voice
Ruuwartut.	They are shooting arrows.

**R**

wiit`ruuq	pail
trupaq	stovepipe
truup`kaa	pipe (for smoking)

**s**

salaq	shell
suk	person
ser`kalaq	mirror (N)
siinaq	arctic entryway; kellidor

**t**

tangluq	snowshoe
tukniluni	to be strong
tamuuq	dry fish
Tawa-ruq!	Stop; don't (darn it)!

**u**

uutuk	sea urchin
ukineq	hole
uksuq	winter; year

**w**

wiika	my husband
wamqutaq	toy
wiinaq	sealion
Awa.	Get away. (command)

**y**

yaqgwani	far away
yaasiik	box
taiyaq	wasp; yellow jacket; hornet
yaamaq	rock

### 1.2.5 Vowel Pairs

Vowels **a**, **i**, and **u**, known as the prime vowels, can be combined with themselves and each other to form vowel pairs known as double vowels and *diphthongs*, respectively. These letter combinations will be discussed in Section 3.6. Since vowel pairs are an important part of the writing system, an example word containing each possible prime vowel pair is given below.

<b>aa</b>	aakanaq	old (spawned out) fish
<b>ai</b>	aigaq	hand
<b>au</b>	auk	blood
<b>ii</b>	iingalaq	eye
<b>ia</b>	ingkiat	gums (of teeth)
<b>iu</b>	akiurneq	echo
<b>uu</b>	uutuk	sea urchin
<b>ui</b>	suit`kaa	flower
<b>ua</b>	nutguaq	BB gun

### 1.3 Special Characters

Two characters are used to guide readers to the correct pronunciation of a word — the hyphen and apostrophe. This section provides a brief overview. For a complete discussion on the hyphen and apostrophe, see Chapter 8.

### 1.3.1 Apostrophe (')

The apostrophe is used for a number of different purposes within Alutiiq words. These include:

1. To indicate a syllable boundary between vowels
2. Gemination
3. Representing a dropped weak consonant
4. Separating letters otherwise interpreted as a multi-character letter
5. Separating a voiced nasal from a voiceless consonant
6. Representing deleted, voiceless, or quiescent *e*.

#### Syllable Boundary

An apostrophe (') marks a boundary between two syllables. No matter what purpose it is used for, you will never find an apostrophe within a syllable.

#### Special Apostrophe Conventions Used in this Book

In general writing, apostrophes are written just as a normal apostrophe ('). In reference materials like this one, the deleted, voiceless, or quiescent *e* is marked as a backwards apostrophe ('), where the hanging tail points down to the right like the tail of the absent *e*. This backwards apostrophe, which is

different from the opening and closing apostrophes (") generated by Microsoft Word auto-formatting is not done in normal writing — just in reference materials to provide extra information to readers. This character is located on most keyboards on the top left, sharing a key with the tilde (~).

Additional discussion on the apostrophe appears in several sections throughout the book, corresponding to each of the above noted uses. Additionally, a compiled discussion of the apostrophe's use in the Alutiiq orthography can be found in Section 8.2.

### 1.3.2 Hyphen (-)

The hyphen is used for a number of purposes in the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq orthography. These include:

1. Enclitics (such as **-qaa?**, **-ruq!**, etc.)
2. Loan words (when adding endings to non-Alutiiq words, as in Benny Benson-**rem**)
3. Line breaks (placed between syllables when space runs out at the end of a line)

Each of these uses will be examined further in Section 8.3.



*Alutiiq language learners consult with Alutiiq Elders at the 2011 Cutmen Agnguartukut — We are Dancing Forward song composition and dance choreography workshop.*

## 1.4 Sentence Punctuation

As in English, a capital letter is used at the beginning of the first word of a sentence and at the beginning of a proper name (person, place, a day of week, or month). The period (.), question mark (?), and the exclamation mark (!) are used in the same way as in English.

Angun pekciiquq akgua'aqu.	The old man will work tonight.
Pekciiquq Kal'uni.	He will work in Karluk.
Maama, tai-gut!	Mother, come!
Kinam ukut pi?	Whose are these?

In all examples, the first word of the sentence is capitalized, as is the proper name Karluk. The sentences end with a period, exclamation mark, or question mark as needed for the intent of the sentence.

## 1.5 Summary: Alphabet

The Alutiiq alphabet is *phonetic*, meaning that there is one sound assigned to each letter. Words are written using rules that allow readers to sound them out. Exceptions and irregularities are minimal. There are 26 letters in the Koniag Alutiiq alphabet, including seven letters made up of two or three characters. In addition, there are two additional characters: the apostrophe and hyphen.

It should be noted that this orthography is guided by the principle that special markings such as

underlines or accents are totally eliminated. Only one special character is necessary: R, which is made in most word processing programs by typing a regular r, then changing it to "small caps" in the format > font menu. It may also be possible in certain word processing programs to create a shortcut key combination for the small caps R by assigning a "macro" (such as "Alt-r"). This makes the writing system optimal for modern communications and media such as emails, maps, newspapers, etc.

*Alutiiq language learner Susie Malutin works with Elders Dennis Knagin (Afognak) and Mary Haakanson (Old Harbor).*



# Chapter 2: CONSONANTS

## 2.1 Introduction

Of the 26 letters and letter combinations used in the Alutiiq orthography, 22 are consonants, and four are vowels. Most of the consonants are represented by single characters, but seven consonants are represented by symbol combinations (**gw**, **hm**, **hn**, **hng**, **kw**, **ll**, **ng**).

Consonants differ from vowels in that consonants always involve some degree of obstruction of airflow in the mouth. With vowels, there is no obstruction of airflow. Vowels will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

Depending on the manner and in which they are produced in your mouth, consonants can be classified as *stops*, *fricatives*, or *nasals*. A stop means that the air coming out of your mouth is stopped briefly, and then released, as with the letter **p**. A fricative consonant is produced by constricting airflow, or as the name implies, producing friction (but not a full stop) in

the airflow. An example of a fricative consonant is the letter **s**. A nasal consonant is produced by forcing air through the nasal passages rather than the mouth. The letter **m** is a nasal consonant. This chapter will go over each consonant type by describing how and where they are produced in the mouth.

## 2.2 Consonant Chart

The chart below contains all of the Alutiiq consonants. They are categorized by their method of production as a stop, fricative, or nasal (See first column), and also by location of production in the mouth (See header row). The numbers following each location term in the header row correspond to the tongue placement figure above (See Figure 2: Location of Production for Consonants at right).

### Consonant Chart

<i>Location of Production</i>	<i>Labial: lips (1)</i>	<i>Apical: tip of tongue (2)</i>	<i>Laminal: blade of tongue (3)</i>	<i>Velar: roof of mouth (4)</i>	<i>Rounded Velar: roof of mouth &amp; rounded lips (4, 1)</i>	<i>Uvular: back of mouth (5)</i>
<i>Consonant Type</i>						
<i>Stops</i>	<b>p</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>c</b>	<b>k</b>	<b>kw</b>	<b>q</b>
<i>Voiced fricatives</i>		<b>l</b>	<b>y</b>		<b>w</b>	
<i>Voiceless fricatives</i>	<b>f</b>	<b>ll</b>	<b>s</b>	<b>g</b>	<b>gw</b>	<b>r</b>
<i>Voiced nasals</i>	<b>m</b>	<b>n</b>		<b>ng</b>		
<i>Voiceless nasals</i>	<b>hm</b>	<b>hn</b>		<b>hng</b>		
<i>Russian</i>		<b>R</b>				



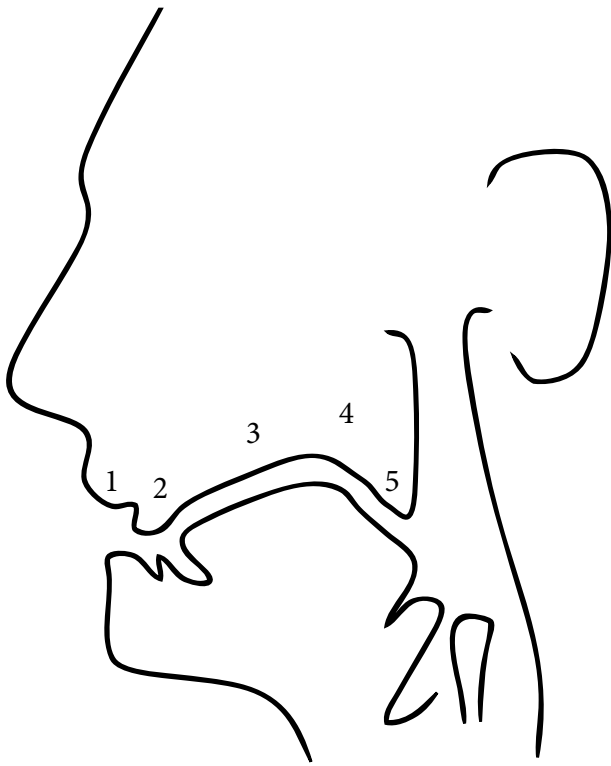


Figure 2: Location of Production for Consonants

1. *Labial: lips*
2. *Apical: tip of tongue*
3. *Laminal: middle of tongue*
4. *Velar: roof of mouth*
- 4/1. *Rounded Velar: roof of mouth & rounded lips*
5. *Uvular: back of mouth*

## 2.3 Stop Consonants

The Alutiiq language has six stop consonants: **p**, **t**, **c**, **k**, **kw**, and **q**. In pronouncing these sounds, the passage of air is blocked at some point inside the mouth, and then the pent-up air is released by opening the blockage. These sounds are called *stops* because the air stream is stopped for an instant in the mouth when they are produced. The location of production for these stop consonants is listed on the Consonant Chart on the facing page.

The five stop sounds are described in terms of the parts of the mouth where the blockage is made. If you pronounce **p**, **t**, **c**, **k**, and **q** in that order, the

point of contact will move from the lips all the way to the back of the mouth. This is the order we will examine the stops in this section.

Note the stops are *unaspirated*, or produced without a large puff of air as with many English words. For example, unlike the ‘p,’ ‘t,’ and ‘k’ in English ‘pin,’ ‘tin,’ and ‘kin,’ the Alutiiq **p**, **t**, and **k** sound more like they do in English ‘spin,’ ‘stint,’ and ‘skin.’ Practice saying these example words a number of times to hear the difference in the way they sound and feel when being produced.

**P** is produced by blocking the air passage at the lips and is accordingly called a *labial* stop (“labial” means “having to do with the lips”). Feel (or see in the mirror) the closure of the lips during the production of **p** as in the words:

pi	his things
Teplluwiyuq.	It is getting smelly.
pupik	sore; pimple
napaq	tree, spruce; pole

**T** is produced by blocking the airflow with the tip of the tongue touching the *alveolar ridge*, which is the technical term for the ridge behind the upper teeth. Feel this point of contact while you pronounce **t** in the following words:

tamarmeng	all of them
Tekitut.	They have (just) arrived.
atakuu	later
tunuka	my back

The letter **c** is produced by blocking the airflow a little farther back in the mouth than **t**. It is called an *apical* stop, referring to the apex or tip of the tongue. Try to feel the point of contact during the production of **c** in the following words:

Caqit?	What things?
callmak	patch for clothing
ciiwak	housefly; bluefly
puckaq	barrel
Caayuliciqamken. I will make you tea.	

Compare the tongue position of **c** in **Caqit?** with that of **t** in **atakuu** and you will notice that **t** is pronounced with the tip of the tongue touching behind the teeth, whereas **c** is pronounced with the blade of the tongue touching the front of the palate. The **c** sound of **Caqit?** and **ciiwak** is similar to the English sound represented by 'ch' as in 'chat,' 'church,' 'chair,' 'chime,' and so on. However, English 'ch' is released with a puff of breath, whereas Alutiiq **c** is released smoothly with no puff of breath.

An important characteristic of Alutiiq is that there are two kinds of **k**-like sounds. One is represented by **k** the other by **q** in the orthography. In the case of **k**, the back of the tongue contacts the roof of the mouth, which is technically called the hard palate. Feel the point of contact during the pronunciation of **k** in the following words:

kemek	meat
iruk	(both) legs
kinkuk	who (referring to two people)
tuknik	strength

In case of the stop **q**, the back of the tongue is raised so that it touches the uvula (#5 on the chart, the small flap of flesh that hangs at the back of the mouth). So **q** is called a *uvular stop*. Try to feel the point of contact during the pronunciation of **q** in the words:

Qaa'a?	Is that so?
Qaluten!	Dip some out!
Meqciuq.	She is plucking.
iruuq	leg
Qia'uq.	He is crying.
Qam'uq.	It (fire) is going out.

Compare **q** in **qayaq** (kayak), with the **k** in English 'kayak,' and you will notice the difference in the point of contact.

qayaq	kayak
-------	-------

The difference in the Alutiiq language between **k** and **q** is important, since replacement of one with the other often brings a difference in meaning, as we see in **iruuq** (leg) vs. **iruk** (both or two legs). This is why these two sounds in Sugt`stun are represented by different letters. See the following pairs of words:

uquq	oil	ukuk	these two
qikuq	clay	ikuk	those two over there

Note that **q** and **r** influence the preceding vowel. In particular the vowel **i** sounds similar to English short 'e' as in 'speck' before **q**, and **r**. However, one must be very careful not to confuse the **i** with an **e**. For further discussion and examples, see Section 3.3.

Iqmigtuuq.	She is chewing snoose.
Eqmertuuq.	He is doubling up (as with cramps).
kalliq	thunder
qalleq	mold
erneq	day
awarniq	pneumonia

Also, the vowel **u** sounds similar to English ‘oo’ before **q** and **r**. For further discussion of **q** and **r**’s influence on the preceding vowel, see Section 3.3.

The stop **kw** is a single letter that combines the **k** sound discussed above with the fricative **w** discussed in the next section. Both are pronounced roughly similar to the English ‘k’ and ‘w’ sounds, although the **k** is produced without a puff of air like English ‘k’. The letter **kw** is rare, and is found most easily in words using the suffix +**gkwar-** (to cause to V; to make, let, have someone V).

Sugkwarluku                      to give birth to one

Neregkwaraa.                      He fed it.

The stops **k**, **t**, and **q** can occur at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of a word. The stops **p** and **c** never occur at the end of a word. If the letter occurs at the beginning of a word, it is in an *initial* position. If it is in the middle, it is known as *medial*. If the letter appears at the end of a word, it is considered *final*.

Alutiiq stops are not released with a large puff of breath. The Alutiiq word **pin** (yours) has the same spelling as the English ‘pin,’ but the pronunciations are quite different. If you hold your palm close to your mouth while saying ‘pin’ in English, you will feel a puff of air following the release of the stop (i.e. the opening of the closed lips after **p**). In Alutiiq the pronunciation of **pin** is softer, without a noticeable puff of air, similar to the ‘pin’ in English ‘spin,’ not like the ‘pin’ of English ‘pin.’

## Stop Consonant Positions within Words

<i>Stop Consonant</i>	<i>INITIAL</i>		<i>MEDIAL</i>		<i>FINAL</i>	
<b>p</b>	panaq	spear	napaq	tree; pole	-	-
<b>t</b>	taqmak	dress	ateq	name	irut	legs
<b>c</b>	caqiq	what	macaq	sun	-	-
<b>k</b>	kina	who	akit	money	uutuk	sea urchin
<b>kw</b>	kwegluku	to lift it up (S)	sugkwaraa	she gave birth to him	-	-
<b>q</b>	quyanaa	thank you	uyaquq	neck	iruq	leg



Contributing Alutiiq Elders Florence Pestrikoff, Sophie Shepherd, and Nick Alokli sign copies of the Alutiiq Word of the Week Fifteen Year Compilation with April Laktonen Counciller at the Alutiiq Museum in 2012.

## 2.4 Fricatives

Kodiak Alutiiq has nine fricatives: **f**, **g**, **gw**, **l**, **ll**, **r**, **s**, **w**, and **y**. A fricative is a consonant produced by the forcing of breath through a constricted passage. It is a continuing sound that can be held as long as the breath lasts, while a stop (as discussed in Section 2.3) is an instantaneous sound, which cannot be continued. In pronouncing a fricative, the passage of air in the mouth is narrowed to various degrees, so that more or less audible friction is produced. With stops, the passage of air is blocked for an instant.

Fricatives can be voiced or voiceless. *Voiced* means that the vocal cords are vibrating while the sound is being produced. *Voiceless* means that the vocal cords do not vibrate. The friction of air is quite noticeable with fricatives, so that voiceless fricatives sound like hissing, hushing, or rasping sounds. Try touching your voice box while you compare the letters **l** (voiced) and **ll** (voiceless). When you pronounce **l** you will feel vibration in the voice box, but when you pronounce **ll** there is no vibration.

There are three voiced fricatives in Kodiak: **l**, **w**, and **y**<sup>6</sup>. Three fricatives are unambiguously (always) voiceless: **f**, **gw**, and **ll**. Three fricatives are non-contrastively voiceless **g**, **r**, and **s**<sup>7</sup>. Non-contrastively voiceless means that although they are categorized as voiceless, they are semi-voiced under certain circumstances, as will be discussed in Section 3.3.

Voiced fricatives tend to have less friction in the

<sup>6</sup> Phonetically, **l**, **w** and **y** (as well as **R**) are actually *sonorants*: sounds produced with a long continuous (relatively unobstructed) airflow through the vocal tract. **l** is a lateral sonorant, produced along the sides of the mouth, while **w** and **y** are approximants, produced with only a minor narrowing of airflow. These consonants, plus Russian **R** are the weakest consonants in the language. They are categorized as fricatives here due to similar categorization in related orthographies such as Yup'ik.

<sup>7</sup> In weak position, **g**, **r**, and **s** are non-distinctively semi-voiced. Weak position is when these letters occur between single vowels, as long as they are footed in a certain way, as is described in Section 3.3.

airflow than voiceless fricatives. Again, compare the pronunciation of **l** and **ll** in the following example words:

ellpet	you
elwigpet	our place to stay; our residence
Llurciqua.	I will slide.
Luuciquaqa.	It is how I am.

### Voiceless Fricatives Not Used in Kodiak

Kodiak Alutiiq does not differentiate between voiced and voiceless versions of the fricatives **g**, **gw**, and **r**, so the Kodiak Alutiiq alphabet does not include the voiced fricative versions of these letters: **gg**, **ggw**, and **rr**. The Chugach dialect and the Alaska Peninsula subdialect, do differentiate between the voiced and voiceless versions of these letters and use the **gg**, **ggw**, and **rr** in their alphabets. Kodiak's lack of distinction between voiced and voiceless **g**, **gw**, and **r** makes it somewhat unique in the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq region.

The contrast between voiced and voiceless **g**, **gw**, and **r** previously existed on Kodiak. Historical use of the voiced fricative sounds on Kodiak is evidenced in Cyrillic Alutiiq texts such as Ilia Tyzhnev's *Bukvar* (1848) and the *Gospel of St. Matthew* (1853). Further research into historical texts may show exactly when this contrast between voiced and voiceless fricatives began to disappear from Kodiak speech, but for the purposes of the orthography, it is sufficient to understand that the modern Kodiak styles of Alutiiq do not differentiate.

One result of this lack of contrast between voiced and unvoiced fricatives, is that Kodiak writers do not have to worry about *undoubling* rules (where **gg**, **ggw**, and **rr** become **g**, **gw**, and **r**), which are used in other Alutiiq dialects (See Section 2.7).

## 2.4.1 Voiced Fricatives

<i>Location of Production</i>	<i>Labial: lips (1)</i>	<i>Apical: tip of tongue (2)</i>	<i>Laminal: blade of tongue (3)</i>	<i>Velar: roof of mouth (4)</i>	<i>Rounded Velar: roof of mouth &amp; rounded lips (4, 1)</i>	<i>Uvular: back of mouth (5)</i>
<i>Consonant Type</i>						
<i>Voiced fricatives</i>		<b>l</b>	<b>y</b>		<b>w</b>	

Just as the blockage is made in different places in the mouth for the stop consonants, the narrowing is made in different places in the mouth for fricatives. In terms of the points of articulation (where the sounds are produced in the mouth), the voiced fricatives **w**, **l**, and **y** are produced at the front, middle, and back of the mouth respectively, just as the location of production moves from the front of the mouth toward the back with each of the stop consonants **p**, **t**, **c**, **k**, and **q**.

The labial fricative **w** is made by bringing the lips close together and rounding them. The Sugt`stun **w** sounds like English ‘w’ in ‘we’.

wiinaq	sealion
tawani	there
wiinga	her husband
qawani	up the bay or upriver
kawisqaq	red thing

The apical voiced fricative **l** is produced with the tongue tip touching the upper ridge behind the teeth to let the air escape through the opening by the sides of the tongue. It is similar to English ‘l’ as pronounced in the word ‘long’.

uluq	tongue
Liituq.	He is learning.
luumacirpet	our way of life; the way we are
Lintaliuq.	She is making a ribbon. (from Russian лента (lénta), “ribbon”)
laatanaq	incense (from Russian ладан (ládan), “frankincense”)

The Alutiiq **y** is produced almost at the same place as Alutiiq **c**. The Alutiiq **y** sounds like the English ‘y’ as in ‘you’.

Yaqsigtuq.	It is far away.
tuyuq	chief
puyuq	smoke
yaamaq	rock
yaasiik	box

## 2.4.2 Voiceless Fricatives

<i>Location of Production</i>	<i>Labial: lips (1)</i>	<i>Apical: tip of tongue (2)</i>	<i>Laminal: blade of tongue (3)</i>	<i>Velar: roof of mouth (4)</i>	<i>Rounded Velar: roof of mouth &amp; rounded lips (4, 1)</i>	<i>Uvular: back of mouth (5)</i>
<i>Consonant Type</i>						
<i>Voiceless fricatives</i>	<b>f</b>	<b>ll</b>	<b>s</b>	<b>g</b>	<b>gw</b>	<b>r</b>

**F** is a rare sound used in Alutiiq words borrowed from Russian and sometimes English. It is apparently not used in Prince William Sound. It is used on the Kenai Peninsula, on Kodiak, and on the Alaska Peninsula. The Alutiiq **f** sounds like English ‘f’.

fanaruq	lantern (N)	(from Russian фонарь (fonár), “lantern”)
faranaq	lantern (S)	(from Russian фонарь (fonár), “lantern”)
Futii!	Stink!	(from Russian фу ты (fu ty!), “pee-ew you,” an interjection of disgust)

The **ll** is produced by pushing the tip of the tongue behind the front teeth, leaving openings on each side of the tongue for air to escape in a hiss.

llarpet	our weather
elliin	he himself; she herself
all’ak	maybe

The Alutiiq **s** is produced with the sides of the tongue touching the sides of the teeth, leaving an opening in the front through which the air escapes. It sounds like ‘s’ as in English ‘sit’ or ‘master’.

skuurutaq	frying pan	(from Russian сковородка (skovorodka), “frying pan”)
pasaaq	bass voice; bass instrument	
sagneq	fathom (six feet); length of armspan	
Sakaartua.	I am tired; exhausted; fatigued.	
Taisgu.	Bring it here.	
Sarsagkwataakiinga.	He used to let me have tea.	



Old Harbor Alutiiq language learners and Elders.

The front *velar* fricative **g** is produced by raising the back of the tongue toward the roof of the mouth to narrow the passage of air.

gaaleq                      window

guutet                     teeth

Ag'waneq                Afognak

The fricative **g** is produced in the same location of the mouth as its corresponding stop consonant **k**. Compare the difference between **k** and **g** in the following.

kemka                    my flesh  
kemga                    his or her flesh

akitek                    your money (two people)  
Agitek!                   You (two) go! (command)

Ekaartuq.                It fell in.  
Egaartuq.<sup>8</sup>                It (blubber) has rendered.

The Sugt`stun **g** is not the same sound as English 'g'. Remember that a fricative, which the Alutiiq **g** is, is a continuing sound, while English 'g' is a stop. Compare the Alutiiq **g** in **kagin** (broom) with the 'g' in English 'again'.

The letter **gw** combines the sound of **g** with the labial fricative **w**.

gwaa'i                    right here

gwaten                    this way; thus

aqum'agwia              her sitting place

**Gw** is only used as the first sound in a syllable. For example in the word **aqum'agwia** above, the **gw** forms the first letter of the fourth syllable.

Raising the back of the tongue toward the uvula (which hangs from the soft palate) narrows the passage of air to produce the uvular fricative **r**, which is pronounced in the same place as the stop **q**. Alutiiq **r** is somewhat similar to the 'r' of French and German.

maraq                     wetland; swamp

erinaq                    voice

iruq                        leg

erneq                     day

arnaq                     woman

Since English has no uvular sounds, it has no direct equivalent for **r** or its corresponding stop consonant **q**. Compare below the minimal pairs containing the stop **q** and the fricative **r**.

uquq                      oil  
uruq                        moss

pituqa                    my food  
Pituraa.                   She is eating it.

As **k** and **q** are different sounds to be clearly distinguished in Alutiiq writing, so are **g** and **r**. Replacement of one with the other changes the meaning, as we can hear in **ag'uq** (he is going) vs. **ar'uq** (whale: KOD, except Akhiok). See also the following pairs:

Agitek!                    You two go! (command)  
aritek                      pair of mittens; gloves

agna                        that area over there  
arnaq                        woman

Igua.                        I am swallowing.  
irua                          his leg

agyaq                      star  
arya'aq                     girl

<sup>8</sup> **Egaartuq** is an older documented word that is rarely used today and recognized by few Elders in the Kodiak area.



### Voiced and Voiceless Correspondence

The voiceless fricatives **f**, **ll**, and **s** correspond to the voiced fricatives **w**, **l**, and **y**. When producing a voiceless fricative, the vocal cords do not vibrate. Only the air that escapes around the tongue makes the sound.

Compare the voiceless fricatives in the left column with the voiced fricatives in the right column by pronouncing the voiceless and voiced counterparts in quick succession:

<i>Voiceless Fricative</i>	<i>Voiced Fricatives</i>
<b>f</b>	-
<b>ll</b>	<b>l</b>
<b>s</b>	<b>y</b>
<b>g</b>	
<b>gw</b>	<b>w</b>
<b>r</b>	

Compare the pronunciation and location of production of the fricatives in the following minimal pairs:

allamek	another one
alatiq	fry bread (N) (also alaciq (S))
ugsuuteq	puchki; cow parsnip (N)
ugyuuteq	puchki; cow parsnip (S)
amarsaq	highbush cranberry (N)
amaryaq	highbush cranberry (S)
anerteqgwik	blowhole (of whale); fontanel
maqiwik	banya; bathhouse
ermigwik	washbasin
iterwik	exit place
uqgwik	alder; deciduous tree
anwik	entrance

### Undifferentiated Fricatives

The letters **s**, **g**, and **r** do not have voiced counterparts in Kodiak Alutiiq. They are usually, but not always, voiceless. In some situations, like when between single prime vowels **a**, **i**, or **u** they will sound somewhat voiced. See Section 3.3 for complete discussion of how prime vowels affect the pronunciation of adjacent consonants including these fricatives.

Asirtut.                      They are good.

Agitek!                      You two go! (command)

isuwiq                      seal

Igartuq.                      She is writing.

Notice that **g** and **r** when written in the Chugach dialect are voiced, but in Kodiak they are primarily unvoiced. Kodiak **g**, **gw**, and **r** correspond the Chugach letters gg, gw, and rr.



April Laktonen Counciller, Peter Boskofsky, and Jeff Leer working on the orthography book in 2012 at the Alutiiq Museum. Photo courtesy of the Alutiiq Museum.

## 2.5 Nasals

The last group of consonants to be introduced are nasals. Sugt`stun has three *voiced nasal* sounds **m**, **n**, and **ng**, as well as three *voiceless nasal* sounds: **hm**, **hn**, and **hng**. Remember that **ng** and **hng** are single sounds and are considered single letters.

Nasals differ from other consonants in that they are produced with air going through the nasal passage. As with stops, the air is blocked at some point in the mouth, but the fact that the nasal passage is open, allows air to pass through the nose. Nasals, like fricatives, are divided into two categories: voiced and voiceless.

### 2.5.1 Voiced Nasals

The voiced nasals **m**, **n**, and **ng** have the same sounds as English ‘m’, ‘n’, and ‘ng’ as in the words ‘sum’, ‘sun’, and ‘sung’, respectively. They correspond to **p**, **t**, and **k**, in terms of the location of production in the mouth. The letters **m** and **p** are both labial letters, produced at the lips. The stop letter **t** and

nasal **n** are apical sounds produced by putting the tip of the tongue against the ridge behind the upper teeth. Like the stop letter **k**, the nasal letter **ng** is a velar sound produced by putting the middle of the tongue against the roof of the mouth. Try pronouncing these letter pairs to feel how they are produced in the same location in the mouth.

**m**  
Matarngauq. He is naked.  
malrik twins

**n**  
Nangarngauq. It is standing.  
napataq target

**ng**  
Angayumaluta. We are all partners.  
qunguwik burial site

Nasals can occur at the beginning (initial), the middle (medial) or end of the word (final), as shown in the second chart below. However, there are no documented words in the Kodiak Alutiiq dialect that begin with **ng**.

<i>Location of Production</i>	<i>Labial: lips (1)</i>	<i>Apical: tip of tongue (2)</i>	<i>Laminal: blade of tongue (3)</i>	<i>Velar: roof of mouth (4)</i>	<i>Rounded Velar: roof of mouth &amp; rounded lips (4, 1)</i>	<i>Uvular: back of mouth (5)</i>
<i>Consonant Type</i>						
<i>Voiced nasals</i>	<b>m</b>	<b>n</b>		<b>ng</b>		

<i>Voiced Nasal Consonant</i>	<i>INITIAL</i>		<i>MEDIAL</i>		<i>FINAL</i>	
<b>m</b>	mal’uk	two	emaa	grandma	atunem	on both sides; ends
<b>n</b>	naliak	which one of them	iniwik	drying rack	naken	where from
<b>ng</b>	-	-	angaa	uncle	tamarmeng	all of them

## 2.5.2 Voiceless Nasals

<i>Location of Production</i>	<i>Labial: lips (1)</i>	<i>Apical: tip of tongue (2)</i>	<i>Laminal: blade of tongue (3)</i>	<i>Velar: roof of mouth (4)</i>	<i>Rounded Velar: roof of mouth &amp; rounded lips (4, 1)</i>	<i>Uvular: back of mouth (5)</i>
<i>Consonant Type</i>						
<i>Voiceless nasals</i>	<b>hm</b>	<b>hn</b>		<b>hng</b>		

A nasal letter with an ‘h’ at the beginning is always voiceless — the vocal cords do not vibrate when producing these sounds. The voiceless nasals are **hm**, **hn**, and **hng**. In earlier versions of the Alutiiq orthography, these letters were written as underlined m, n, and ng. Underlined characters are no longer used in the Alutiiq alphabet.

These voiceless nasals correspond naturally to voiced nasals **m**, **n**, and **ng**. As with the voiceless fricatives, the vocal cords do not vibrate when producing a voiceless nasal; the sound is made only by air that passes through the nose. When pronouncing these letters, a puff of air should be felt coming out of the nose.

Voiceless nasals only occur in the middle of a word and only at the beginning of a syllable. With the exception of where they are doubled, voiceless nasals do not occur at the end of the syllable.

### **hm**

Keghmiaqaa. He is holding it in his teeth.  
unerhmigluku to hold it under one’s arm  
Cerhmagtuq. It is making a sloshing noise.

### **hn**

arhnaq sea otter  
tangerhniinani to be ugly  
Quuhnartuq. It is sour.

### **hng**

Tuquhnguakii. He pretended to kill it.  
Kuinghnguarta. I am walking around (aimlessly).

Some voiceless nasals are no longer spelled with the ‘h’ due to the principle of *h-dropping*. As a result, a word like <sup>x</sup>pashmakiit (shoes) is now correctly spelled **pasmakiit**. H-dropping will be discussed below in Section 2.8.

## 2.6 Russian ‘R’

As the name states, **R** is found in Russian loan words. Most speakers pronounce **R** like the English ‘r’. Some older speakers “trill” or roll the **R** following another consonant. In word processing programs like Microsoft Word, the Russian **R** must first be written as a regular ‘r’, then converted to a small caps **R** using the format>font menu. Some word processing programs have shortcuts that you can program to make typing **R** easier through a special keystroke combination rather than having to go into a menu (these are sometimes referred to as “macros”). Since most email programs do not allow special characters, or will drop them in transit, if a small caps **R** is not possible, a regular caps **R** can be used.

Since it is so easy to miss the **R** and type an **r**, special care and rechecking is needed when using words containing this letter, especially if a document is forwarded to a graphic designer or other person unfamiliar with our writing system.

pitruus'kaa	pitrushki; beach loveage	(from Russian петрушка (petrúška), “parsley”)
paatriiq	battery	(from English, “battery”)
trupa	stovepipe	(from Russian труба (trubá), “pipe; chimney; smokestack”)

If the above example **trupa** was written in an email, it should be typed as: **tRupa** (using a capital **R** rather than a small caps **R**), as the formatting changes to a small caps **R** would likely be lost in transit.

## 2.7 Undoubling

In other dialects, but not Kodiak, there is a pattern called *undoubling*, in which double **gg**, **ggw**, and **rr** are written **g**, **gw**, and **r**, respectively. Undoubling works to shorten the spellings of many words by making double consonants single. Voiceless consonants are written in a shorter form when they are written next to other voiceless consonants. This helps some of their words to be equivalent in spelling Kodiak words.

Itra.	Come in. (K, C)	(not <sup>x</sup> itrra)
sapga	his hat (K, C)	(not <sup>x</sup> sapgga)
arlluk	orca; killer whale (K, C)	(not <sup>x</sup> arrlluk)
Taisgu.	Bring it here. (K, C)	(not <sup>x</sup> taisggu)

Remember, Kodiak Alutiiq does not contain **gg**, **ggw**, and **rr**, so this is not an issue which will affect Kodiak writing. However, it is useful to know this important fact about our neighboring Chugach dialect, as many of the words it affects are also used in Kodiak.

## 2.8 H-dropping

A process similar to undoubling occurs with voiceless nasal consonants in a rule called *h-dropping*. The voiceless consonants **hm**, **hn**, and **hng**

will be written without the ‘h’ (that is, they become written as **m**, **n**, or **ng**) when they appear after voiceless consonants. H-dropping occurs because it is desirable to shorten the spelling of words when this predictable pattern occurs. The following voiceless consonants that cause h-dropping are: **p**, **t**, **c**, **k**, **q**, **ll**, and **s** (Leer, 1978).

taqmak	dress	(not <sup>x</sup> taqhmak)
eqesngarluni	to sneeze	(not <sup>x</sup> eqeshngarluni)
ikna	that one	(not <sup>x</sup> ikhna)
pasmakiit	shoes	(not <sup>x</sup> pashmakiit)
qakmani	outside there	(not <sup>x</sup> qakhmani)
Angutngurtuq. He’s getting old. (not <sup>x</sup> anguthngurtuq)		

The pronunciation of the voiceless nasal consonants does not change from h-dropping. This is simply done to shorten the spelling of words in letter combinations that frequently occur.

It is important for people who are used to the old orthography to know that we have changed the undoubling and h-dropping rules so that they apply to **p**, **t**, **c**, **k**, **q**, **ll**, and now **s**. This has allowed us to get rid of such awkward spellings, as ‘shm’, ‘shn’, ‘shng’, which have now become **sm**, **sn**, **sng**. So for example, the word for snake used to be written <sup>x</sup>shmiiyaq, but now is written **smiiyaq**. The combinations ‘shm’, ‘shn’, ‘shng’ tend to be mispronounced because of English interference. We do not want people to think that the Alutiiq word for snake begins like the English word ‘shmuck’.

## 2.9 Summary: Consonants

The Kodiak Alutiiq alphabet contains 26 letters, of which 22 are consonants. They can be broken down into categories based on how (stops, fricatives, nasals) and where they are produced in the mouth (labial, uvular, velar, etc.), as shown in the Consonant Chart.

### Consonant Chart

<i>Location of Production</i> <b>Consonant Type</b>	<i>Labial:</i> lips (1)	<i>Apical:</i> tip of tongue (2)	<i>Laminal:</i> blade of tongue (3)	<i>Velar:</i> roof of mouth (4)	<i>Rounded Velar:</i> roof of mouth & rounded lips (4, 1)	<i>Uvular:</i> back of mouth (5)
<i>Stops</i>	<b>p</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>c</b>	<b>k</b>	<b>kw</b>	<b>q</b>
<i>Voiced fricatives</i>		<b>l</b>	<b>y</b>		<b>w</b>	
<i>Voiceless fricatives</i>	<b>f</b>	<b>ll</b>	<b>s</b>	<b>g</b>	<b>gw</b>	<b>r</b>
<i>Voiced nasals</i>	<b>m</b>	<b>n</b>		<b>ng</b>		
<i>Voiceless nasals</i>	<b>hm</b>	<b>hn</b>		<b>hng</b>		
<i>Russian</i>		<b>R</b>				



Members of the Nuta'at Niugnelistet (Alutiiq New Words Council) meet in 2012 to determine Alutiiq terms for artifacts from the Karluk 1 Collection. Photo courtesy of Alutiiq Museum.

# Chapter 3: VOWELS

## 3.1 Introduction

The Sugt`stun orthography has four vowels/sounds: **a**, **e**, **i**, **u**. The vowels are grouped into a) prime vowels **a**, **i**, and **u**; and b) the reduced vowel **e**. Pronounce the following words in order to understand the difference between the vowels, and try to feel in the mouth how the tongue is shaped for each vowel:

ataqa<sup>9</sup>            my father

kemek            meat

Iniki.            Hang them up. (command)

unuku            later on tonight

You will notice this from the examples above: the tongue protrudes toward the front of the mouth to produce the vowel **i** of **iniki** (hang them up). The tongue remains relatively neutral or centrally located for the vowels **a** of **ataqa** (my father) and **e** of **kemek** (meat), and retracts toward the back of the mouth for the vowel **u** of **unuku** (tonight). In addition to moving the tongue front or back, the tongue also moves up and down when producing the different vowels.

The tongue is at its highest to produce the vowels **i** and **u** but at the lowest for **a**. This is because the jaw is opened more when producing the **a**.

imaq            ocean

uqgwik            alder; deciduous tree

aana            mother

The lips are open and widened for **i** but rounded for **u**.

<sup>9</sup> Older form **ataka** is also commonly used.

## 3.2 Vowel Chart

The Alutiiq vowels can be organized, as in the chart below, according to where they are produced in the speaker's mouth:

<i>Location of Production</i>	<i>Front</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>Back</i>
<i>High</i>	<b>i</b>		<b>u</b>
<i>Mid</i>		<b>e</b>	
<i>Low</i>		<b>a</b>	

The Alutiiq **a** has the sound of English 'a' as in 'father'. The **i** has a sound much like the English long 'e' much like the 'i' in 'ski'. The **u** has a sound much like the English long 'o', or like the 'u' sound in 'blue'.

### 3.2.1 Changes in Vowel Pronunciation

If a vowel is next to **q** or **r** the sound changes slightly because the location of production of these letters is far back in the mouth. When the two letters are produced close together, the **q** or **r** pulls the location where the vowel is produced more toward the back of the mouth, creating a slight difference in pronunciation. This sound change is less noticeable with the reduced vowel **e**.

Comparing the following series of word pairs on the next page. Read each row left to right to hear how the pronunciation of vowels changes when next to **k** where the vowel sound does not change, vs. **q**, and **g** where the vowel sound does not change, vs. **r**.

You will notice that the tongue is somewhat lower and more centralized in the vowels featured in the right half of the chart. In general, all vowels are pronounced with the back of the tongue a little lowered when they precede the **q** and **r** than when followed by other consonants. This means that the **i** in **ir** or **iq** sounds similar to the English short

No Vowel Pronunciation Effect			Vowel Pronunciation Affected by r or q		
<b>ak</b>	makak	two dice	<b>aq</b>	maqaq	heat
<b>ek</b>	kemek	meat	<b>eq</b>	keneq	fire
<b>ik</b>	akik	two moneys	<b>iq</b>	akiq	money
<b>uk</b>	ukuk	these two	<b>uq</b>	uquq	oil
<b>ag</b>	agna	that area across	<b>ar</b>	arnaq	woman
<b>eg</b>	Egtaa.	He threw it.	<b>er</b>	erneq	day
<b>ig</b>	igluku	to swallow it	<b>ir</b>	irua	her leg
<b>ug</b>	uguusiq	magpie (Old Harbor)	<b>ur</b>	uruq	moss

‘e’ sound, as in ‘speck’. The **u** in **uq** and **ur** sounds somewhat similar to English ‘o’, as in ‘stoke’.

Memorize the following pairs of words, to use as a guide to the use of **iq** vs. **eq**, and **ir** vs. **er** in other words.

iqmik                snoose (chewing tobacco)  
eqmerluni        to double up (as with cramps)

Iqllugtuq.        She is lying.  
Eqrituq.           He is quick.

iraluq              moon  
erinaq              voice

ircugluni        to squint (in displeasure)  
erlluni            to dawn (the day)

This principle also works with vowel pairs next to uvular consonants. If a vowel pair occurs before an **r** or **q**, the closest vowel’s pronunciation will be pulled back towards the back of the mouth, just as with the single vowels as discussed above in this section.

Kaigtuq.           He is hungry.  
Pairtuq.           She is meeting someone.

In the contrasting pair **kaigtuq** (she is hungry), and **pairtuq** (he’s meeting with Someone.), you can hear how a vowel sound changes when a vowel pair appears next to a uvular consonant. Notice how the **i** in **pairtuq** is pronounced further back in the mouth than the **i** in **kaigtuq**, which does not appear next to a uvular consonant.

### 3.3 Vowels and Changes in Consonant Pronunciation

When certain consonants (**p, c, g, t, k, q, s**) are surrounded by single vowels, (**a, i, u, e**) they have a resulting lax pronunciation. *Lax pronunciation* is a slight voicing of the consonant. This can cause confusion for beginners as these letters may sound like letters not present in the Alutiiq alphabet, but luckily the sound changes follow a recognizable pattern, and occur for specific reasons. This softening is called lax pronunciation.

What we call lax pronunciation crucially involves voicing. The key principle is that between voiced sounds, certain consonants (**p, c, g, t, k, q, s**) take on the voicing of the surrounding letters, unless two vowels follow that consonant. In that case, the consonant is not softened, but in fact is “hardened.”

The sound of one of the following consonants will be lax only if it has a single vowel (**a, i, u, e**) before and after it.

When a **k** occurs between two vowels, it sounds more like an English ‘g’, because it is voiced. As an exercise, try pronouncing the English ‘k’ and ‘g’ sounds in rapid succession to hear how similar the letters are — they have an underlying connection because the location of production is in the same place in the mouth.

akit                      money



If **c** is surrounded by two single vowels, it produces more of an English ‘j’ sound. As an exercise, try pronouncing the English ‘ch’ and ‘j’ (as in ‘joke’) sounds in rapid succession to hear how similar the letters are — they have an underlying connection because the location of production is in the same place in the mouth.

macaq            sun

When a single vowel occurs both before and after a **t**, it sounds a bit like an English ‘d’. As an exercise, try pronouncing the English ‘t’ and ‘d’ sounds in rapid succession to hear how similar the letters are — they have an underlying connection because the location of production is in the same place in the mouth.

ataqa            my father

If **p** is surrounded by two single vowels, it sounds more like an English ‘b’. As an exercise, try pronouncing the English ‘p’ and ‘b’ sounds in rapid succession to hear how similar the letters are — they have an underlying connection because the location of production is in the same place in the mouth.

napaq            tree, spruce; pole

An Alutiiq **g** occurring between two single vowels makes a soft ‘gh’ sound halfway between an ‘h’ and a hard English ‘g’ (the normal Alutiiq **g** has less friction in its production). It is somewhat voiced.

Agi.                Go. (command)  
Igartuq.           She is writing.

In the examples below, the **q** in the first word **maqen’ituq** is affected by its position between vowels, while the following examples are not affected, because the **q** is followed in both cases by a consonant.

Maqen’ituq.      It is not running, flowing.  
Maqciquq.      It will run/flow.  
Maq’llria.        It did run, flow.

In **maqen’ituq**, the **q** is in between vowels **a** and **e**, and becomes slightly voiced as a result. In the next two examples, the **q** is followed by non-vowels **c** and **’** (voiceless **e**), so the **q** does not become slightly voiced. It is interesting to note, however, that the vowels appearing adjacent to the **q** in the above examples are also affected by their proximity to the **q**, as discussed in the previous section 3.2.1.

An **s** between two single vowels will sound more like English ‘zh’ (N) or ‘z’ (S). As an exercise, try pronouncing the Northern style **s** sound (like English ‘sh’) contrasted with the Northern style ‘zh’ (does not occur in English words), which occurs when the **s** is between single vowels. For the Southern Kodiak style, both sounds occur in English words. Try saying the English ‘s’ (as in ‘Sue’), which is the normal pronunciation of **s**, contrasted with ‘z’ (as in ‘zoo’), which occurs when the **s** is between two single vowels. In both cases when saying the sounds in rapid succession, you can hear how similar the letters are — they have an underlying connection because the location of production is in the same place in the mouth.

isumat            raisins  
Asirtuq.          It is good.

### 3.4 Prime Vowels

There are a total of three prime vowels in Sugt`stun, (**a**, **i**, and **u**). The vowel **e**, on the other hand is called a *reduced vowel* because it is short by nature and cannot be lengthened like the prime vowels. Also, **e** cannot combine with other vowels. The prime vowels can be long or short, and can occur in vowel combinations such as **au** and **iu**, as will be discussed in Section 3.6.

The three prime vowels can be long or short, and can occur in all possible combinations: double (**aa**, **ii**, **uu**) and as diphthongs (**ai**, **au**, **ia**, **iu**, **ua**, **ui**), as discussed further in Section 3.6.

<b>aa</b>	<b>ai</b>	<b>au</b>
<b>ia</b>	<b>ii</b>	<b>iu</b>
<b>ua</b>	<b>ui</b>	<b>uu</b>

### 3.5 The Reduced Vowel *e*

The vowel *e* is known as a *reduced vowel*. It cannot be lengthened, and cannot be combined with another vowel to create a vowel pair. The reduced vowel *e* only appears in the initial and/or medial position of a word — never at the end of a word.

All four vowels occur at the beginning and in the middle of a word. You may sometimes find an *a*, *i*, or *u* at the end of a word, but *e* never occurs at the end of a word. The *e* is always a short indistinct vowel, relatively close to the English sound represented by the “schwa” ‘*e*’ sound in ‘open’ or ‘ticket’. It is sometimes difficult to hear.

As noted above, the reduced vowel *e* sounds somewhat like the ‘*e*’ in English ‘ticket’. Compare the English ‘*e*’ sound in ‘ticket’ with the *e* in **ketiini** (downhill; out in the open from it). Alutiiq *e* also sounds similar to the ‘*e*’ in English ‘puppet’, as can be heard in **petgertuq** (it flew off, as in a wood chip). The sound of Alutiiq *e* can be compared to the first ‘*u*’ in the English phrase ‘just a minute’, which sounds very similar to the Alutiiq word **cestun** (how).

When *e* is used at the beginning of a word; it is always audible.

emaa                      grandma

ellpeci                  you all

erneq                    day

Ellcaallria.            He burped.

Eqtaa.                    He is squeezing it.

When *e* occurs in the middle of a word, it can either be voiced, or it can be a “silent *e*” written as an apostrophe (in regular writing, ‘, but in reference works like this one, ‘). In some older orthographies, the “silent *e*” was written as an underlined *e*, but now we use an apostrophe. Some dialects and subdialects will use a voiced *e* where other dialects use a voiceless *e* (written ‘), so it is important in these cases to remember to include the ‘ to mark the spot where the *e* would be.

Qerqautaa.            It is pinching it. (e.g., a car door pinches his hand when it closes)

arit`qa                  my mitten

Tekit`kutartuq.      He is going to arrive.

Neqengq`rtuq.        She has food.

natermi                  on the floor (N)

nat`rmi                  on the floor (S)

The vowel *e* is nearly always devoiced and written as an apostrophe in the following syllables:

**t`s**, **t`ll**, **k`g**, **q`g**, and **q`r**.

Kegkii.                  He bit it.

Alik`gkii.                He was afraid of it.

Alutiit`stun            in the Alutiiq way or language



Stella Krumrey translates a story told in Alutiiq by Elder Clyda Christiansen at the Esgarlluku Taquka`aq - Awakening Bear Celebration in 2005.

This apostrophe is a short indistinct puff of air, which is not audible to a non-speaker. However, even though it cannot be heard, we can tell it is present because of the effect it has on syllable structure and the rhythm of the words.

Sugt`stun                      in the Sugpiaq way; like Sugpiaqs; in the Sugpiaq language

Egt`staa.                      He made me throw it.

pekt`sta                      worker

Angq`rta.                      It hurts.

Tangq`gka.                      I saw it.

Tunk`gka.                      I gave it away.

Tekit`llria.                      He arrived.

In general, the vowel *e* tends to become voiceless when it has voiceless consonants on both sides of it, but this not always the case. You cannot always predict whether an *e* will be voiced or voiceless depending on the consonants next to it, unless it appears in one of the predictably devoiced syllables discussed above. Compare for example:

palat`kaa                      tent (from Russian палатка  
(palátka), “tent”)

arit`gka                      my two mittens

nateq                      floor

Anut`kutaraa.                      She is going to take it out.

tekit`gkunani                      without arriving

Qatertuq.                      It is white. (N)

Qat`rtuq.                      It is white. (S)

In this and future reference books, the “silent *e*” is written as ` (backwards apostrophe) to distinguish it from other situations where an apostrophe represents something else, such as a dropped fricative (See chapter 6). This helps provide learners with visibility into the underlying word structure. This is done in reference materials, but it is not required to differentiate between apostrophe uses in normal writing.



*Elders Phyllis Peterson (Kaguyak) and  
Dennis Knagin (Afognak).*



*Elders Nick Alokli (Akhiok) and Sophie Shepherd  
(Larsen Bay/Karluk).*

## 3.6 Vowel Pairs

Vowel pairs fall into two categories: doubled vowels and diphthongs. The prime vowels **a**, **i**, and **u** can be combined with themselves to create doubled (**aa**, **ii**, **uu**) or with each other to create diphthongs (**ai**, **au**, **ia**, **iu**, **ua**, **ui**). The purpose for using vowel pairs within a syllable of a word is to indicate emphasis (not length) in that syllable. This process will be discussed further in Chapter 4.6. The shortened vowel **e** cannot be a part of a vowel pair or a diphthong.

Below is a table containing all of the possible vowel pairs in the Alutiiq orthography, as introduced in Section 3.4.

<b>aa</b>	<b>ai</b>	<b>au</b>
<b>ia</b>	<b>ii</b>	<b>iu</b>
<b>ua</b>	<b>ui</b>	<b>uu</b>

Vowel pairs are very common in the Alutiiq writing system. Examples of words containing each of the possible vowel pairs are listed below. Diphthongs and double vowels are discussed more specifically in the two following sections.

<b>aa</b>	Aa'a.	Yes.
<b>ai</b>	aipaa	the other one
<b>au</b>	taugkuk	those two (by you)
<b>ia</b>	Qia'uq.	He is crying.
<b>ii</b>	iingalat	eyes (three or more)
<b>iu</b>	niuwaciq	language; way of speaking
<b>ua</b>	suaruaq	doll
<b>ui</b>	Suituq.	There are no people (here).
<b>uu</b>	uumatak	boiled, half-dry fish

### 3.6.1 Diphthongs

A prime vowel can combine with another (different) prime vowel. The vowels that combine this way include **au**, **ia**, **iu**, **ua**, **iu**, and **ui**. Vowel clusters, or paired vowels that are not the same are also called diphthongs. No clusters of three or more vowels occur in Sugt`stun. The vowel **e** can never be combined with a prime vowel.

Instead of each vowel sound being pronounced one after the other, in rapid succession, the sounds make up a combined sound that has the sounds of both letters. Thus, for example, in the word **aigaq** (hand), the 'a' of the cluster **ai** has almost the same pronunciation as the 'a' of **ata** (father) and **atqa** (my name) and the 'i' of the cluster **ai** has the same pronunciation as the 'i' of **imaq** (ocean). When you pronounce these two letters quickly together, though, they have a shared sound. In other words, the pronunciation of a vowel cluster is the combination of the individual sounds of the two vowels that makes up the cluster (Counciller, 2005).

The following are examples of the vowel clusters:

The diphthong **ai** sounds somewhat like the 'ay' in English word 'bay'.

aipaq                  partner

Tai-gut!              Come here. (command)

The diphthong **au** sounds somewhat like the 'ou' in English 'out'.

auk                    blood

taugna                that one

The diphthong **ia** sounds somewhat like the 'ya' in English 'yacht'.

kiak                    summer

piani                   up there

The diphthong **ua** sounds somewhat like the ‘wa’ in English ‘walk’.

atkua            her coat

Suartuq.        It surfaced.

The diphthong **iu** sounds somewhat like the English word ‘you’.

piusqaq        bossy one

Kiukii.         She answered him.

The diphthong **ui** sounds somewhat like the English word ‘we’.

Unguirtuq.     He is come to life.

Kuingtuq.      She is walking.

Notice that the vowel clusters **ai** and **au** may appear in any position of word: initial (beginning), medial (middle), or final (end), but the vowel clusters **ia**, **ua**, **iu**, and **ui** only appear in the medial or final positions.

### 3.6.2 Double Vowels

Vowel pairs that are the same letter are called double vowels. Vowels that can be doubled are the prime vowels **a**, **i**, and **u**. The short vowel **e** cannot be double.

Distinguishing between single and double vowels is probably the most difficult job for the Alutiiq writer. This will be discussed fully in Chapter 7. One generalization that can be made is that all syllables with vowel pairs (diphthongs and double vowels) are heavy, and therefore stressed. However, many syllables with single vowels are stressed according to the prosodic rules — the rules which deal with the rhythm of the word (See Chapter 7). Therefore it can be more difficult to determine when a double vowel should be used.

### 3.6.3 Syllable Weight with Vowel Pairs

A syllable that contains a doubled vowel or vowel cluster is always heavy. This means that the onset, or first letter of the syllable, is emphasized and there is more “weight” to the syllable. Heavy syllables are always stressed, but light syllables containing only one vowel can sometimes be stressed (See Section 4.6 for more information).

## 3.7 Russian Vowels: **ei** and **au**

Kodiak speakers have chosen to depict the Russian **o** sound as **au**. The Russian **e** sound is written as **ei**. These are both considered single sounds, not vowel pairs (remember the vowel **e** cannot be part of a vowel pair). As single vowel sounds, and appearing only in borrowed Russian words, they are not treated like other Alutiiq vowels. These Russian vowels **ei** and **au** have unique characteristics, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 10.

skauluq (N)	school
skuuluq (S)	school

Preirtuq. (N)	He is shaving.
Ungairtuq. (S)	He is shaving.

The **ei** is always long and stressed. It sounds much like English long ‘a’ as in ‘age’ and Alutiiq diphthong **ai**, but it is a pure vowel, not a combination of two vowel sounds. In a diphthong the lips and jaw move slightly when switching between the vowel sounds, but in a Russian vowel, there is only one sound being made and the lips and jaw do not move.

The Russian **au** is always long and stressed. It has a different sound than the identically written Alutiiq **au** vowel pair. This sounds very similar to English long ‘o’, but it differs from both English long ‘o’ and Alutiiq diphthong **au** in words by the fact that it is not a diphthong, but rather a pure vowel. The lips and jaw remain in the same place throughout the production of the vowel.

In the Chugach region, *ei* and *ou* are used for the Russian vowels. The reason for this difference between regions is that speakers and learners in Kodiak indicated that they prefer *ei* and *au* to avoid the introduction of new letters to the alphabet. This creates complications from a linguistic standpoint, but fits the needs of the community in other ways. This discussion will be elaborated in Chapter 10.

The Northern style of Kodiak Alutiiq has dozens of words containing Russian vowel sounds *ei* and *au*. Where otherwise sharing the exact same words with their Southern Kodiak friends, many Northern style speakers retain a more Russian pronunciation of borrowed words. It is important to Elders to have a way to accurately depict these pronunciations, rather than just share the same spellings between different pronunciations.

In reference materials such as this orthography the Russian *au* will be depicted in *italics* when used within a word. This is to signal the reader that the Russian pronunciation is being used, and that these sounds are to be treated as single letters rather than vowel pairs. However, when writing these words in non-reference materials, these letters do not need to be written in italics. The *ei* does not need to be written in italics in this reference work, because there are no other cases where *e* and *i* will be used together in a word, and therefore there is no fear of confusing *ei* with another Alutiiq sound.

### 3.8 Use of Apostrophe to Separate Vowels

The apostrophe can be used to indicate syllable division between consonants or vowels in the Alutiiq orthography. In order to designate when adjacent vowels are not in the same syllable, an apostrophe is needed to show how the vowels will be pronounced.

There are two situations where the apostrophe is used to separate vowels — both result in a syllable division.

Apostrophes can be used to separate single vowels from each other to show they are in separate syllables.

Cama'i!      Hello!

An apostrophe can also be used to separate a diphthong and a single vowel, or a vowel pair and a single vowel.

Aa'a.      Yes.

wau'uq      flounder

You will never find an apostrophe between two vowel clusters — only between an initial diphthong or double vowel followed by single vowel. A full discussion of this concept occurs in Section 8.2.1.

### 3.9 Summary: Vowels

This chapter has covered the sounds made by vowels and vowel combinations. The three prime vowels are *a*, which sounds like the 'a' in 'father', *i*, which sounds much like the 'e' sound in 'eager' and *u*, which sounds like the 'oo' sound in English 'too'. There is an additional short vowel *e*, which sounds like the 'e' in English 'ticket'. The sound of these vowels changes slightly when pronounced next to a uvular consonant *q*, or *r*.

Vowels (with the exception of *e*) can be combined into diphthongs, where each vowel is pronounced in rapid succession producing a single combined sound. A vowel can be doubled to show that a syllable is stressed, though sometimes syllables with single vowels can be stressed. There are two Russian vowel sounds in certain words of Russian-origin, depicted as *ei* and *au*, respectively. The next two chapters will help show how to determine syllable breaks, and which syllables in a word are stressed.

## Part II



*Kodiak Alutiiq Elders contribute and review the orthography book with Dr. Jeff Leer and Dr. April Counciller at Kodiak College in the new Alutiiq Studies Room in 2012. Photo courtesy of Kodiak College.*

# Chapter 4: SYLLABIFICATION

## 4.1 Introduction

Identifying the syllables in an Alutiiq word is the first step in pronouncing a written word, once one knows the sounds of each letter. A *syllable* is a part of a word — or sometimes a full word — that contains one *beat*. For example, the English word ‘sun’ contains one syllable, whereas the English word ‘peanut’ contains two syllables or beats. The Alutiiq word **ciiwak** (housefly; bluefly) contains two syllables. This chapter will outline the way Alutiiq words are broken into syllables. This will help in figuring out how to spell a word, or sound a word out when reading.

ciiwak            housefly; blue fly            cii / wak

In Alutiiq as in other strictly phonetic writing systems, the first step in reading or spelling a word is to break it into syllables. Then the reader or writer can determine the sounds that combine to form each syllable. The break between two syllables is called the *syllable boundary*. In this chapter we will use a slash (/) to mark syllable boundaries — thus, every portion of a word separated by a slash (/) is a separate syllable. The capitalized letter V represents a vowel, and the capitalized C represents a consonant (See Appendix III for a glossary of symbols helpful for understanding syllabification).

### 4.1.1 Syllabification Rules

The following four rules outline how to determine syllable breaks within a word.

#### Syllabification Rule 1: Between Two Consonants

Any two consonants next to each other belong to separate syllables. The first of these two consonants belongs to the same syllable as the previous vowel. The second consonant appears in the same syllable

as the following vowel. This rule is symbolized in the following way: VC/C

natmen                            to where                            nat / hmen<sup>10</sup>

Multi-character letters like **ll** and **hng** are *never* split between their characters because they are considered a single letter. Occasionally, Russian-origin words may have two or even three consonants at the beginning of the word, which are not divided by a syllable break (See Section 4.2.2).

#### Syllabification Rule 2: Before a Single Consonant (Except with Gemination)

If a consonant occurs between two vowels, it goes with the second syllable: V/CV. Normally the syllable break occurs before the consonant (that is, the consonant belongs to the same syllable as the following vowel), unless the consonant is geminated. This means that there is an exception to Syllabification Rule 2 in the case of a special rule called gemination, as described in Rule 4 (below). When not affected by automatic gemination, syllable boundaries come before a single consonant, as shown in the words below with the adjacent letters bolded to emphasize syllable breaks. This rule is symbolized as follows: V/CV

Qaku?                            When? (in the future)    qa / ku  
patuq                            lid; cover                            pa / tuq

#### Syllabification Rule 3: At an Apostrophe ‘

Any apostrophe not representing a voiceless **e** indicates a syllable break. Apostrophes can be used for a variety of purposes in the Alutiiq orthography (See Section 8.2), but always will form the boundary between two syllables, unless it represents a silent

<sup>10</sup> Notice the presence of the letter **hm** in the syllable breakdown, although the word **natmen** is written in proper form without the ‘h’, due to h-dropping (See Section 2.8). The ‘h’ is included in the syllable breakdown, as the breakdown is intended to show the phonetic pronunciation.



or quiescent **e**. Silent **e** (written in this book as **`**) counts as an **e** (a vowel) for purposes of syllabification.

nuta'aq      new one      nu / ta / aq

arya'at      girls      ar / ya / at

Cama'i.      Hello.      ca / ma / i

In the previous examples, the letters before and after the apostrophe are in separate syllables. The apostrophe is not written in the syllable breakdown, as it is not pronounced.

Note that the **`** (backwards apostrophe) representing “silent **e**” is included in syllable breakdowns unlike other versions of apostrophe, because even though it is not pronounced, it does affect the rhythm and syllable breaks in a word.

T'kituq      She is arrived.      t' / ki / tuq

qik'rtaq      island      qi / k' r / taq

These examples follow Syllabification Rule 2 (before a single consonant) and Syllabification Rule 1 (between two consonants) rather than Rule 3, because their apostrophes represent “silent **e**.”

## Syllabification Rule 4: Gemination – Regular and Automatic

*Gemination* is covered fully in the next chapter, but needs to be introduced here due to its role in syllabification. An apostrophe after a consonant and before a vowel represents a doubling of the consonant in a process called gemination (See Chapter 5). This means that the same consonant sound occurs at the end of the first syllable and the beginning of the second syllable. In cases like this, the apostrophe represents a prolonging of the consonant, so that in effect it amounts to two of the same consonant, even though the consonant is only written once. Because of this, we treat that consonant as if it fit under Syllabification Rule 1. The syllable break

actually occurs after the consonant, but the sound of the consonant occurs in both syllables. This rule is symbolized like this: VC/'V

ka'saq      priest      kas / saq

Pitun'irtua.      I don't drink (alcohol) anymore.      pi/ **tun** / nir / tua

mal'uk      two      mal / luk

In the previous examples, the third column shows the double-sounding consonant in the syllable breakdown in bold, even though the geminated consonant is represented by an apostrophe in the correctly written word.

The reason gemination requires its own syllabification rule, rather than simply fitting under Rule 3, is because gemination is not always marked with an apostrophe. Automatic gemination occurs when the geminated consonant comes at the end of the first syllable, and the second syllable contains two vowels. When this happens, the apostrophe is not used, but the geminated sound still occurs (See Section 5.2)

patua	its cover; its lid	pat / tua
iluani	inside of it	il / lua / ni
tamuuq	dried fish	tam / <b>muu</b> q

In the examples above, the syllable breakdown shows the presence of the geminated consonant sounds in both syllables affected by automatic gemination.

### 4.1.2 Other Syllable Facts

Every syllable must contain at least one vowel. A syllable may or may not *begin* with a consonant; it may or may not *end* with a consonant; but it must contain a vowel.

A consonant will never appear in the middle of a syllable, such as between two vowels, because the syllable break will occur before the consonant, as in Rule 2.

## 4.2 Open and Closed Syllables

In Alutiiq it is useful to divide syllables into two types: open and closed syllables. As we will see later in the discussion of prosodic rules (rules of rhythm, stress, and lengthening), whether a syllable is open or closed sometimes makes a big difference in the pronunciation and rhythmic pattern of the word. An *open syllable* is one that ends with a vowel. A *closed syllable* is one that ends with consonant.

### 4.2.1 Open Syllables

A syllable is open if it ends with a vowel. It can contain one or two vowels. It can be stressed or unstressed based on the rhythm and stress rules outlined in Chapter 7. In the two examples below, the first syllable is open. In the second example, both syllables are open.

maqiwik	bathroom, banya	ma / qi / wik
cali	some more; again	ca / li

#### Lengthening of Open Syllables

An open, stressed syllable ending with a prime vowel (**a**, **i**, **u**, but not **e**) is lengthened, but not if it is the last syllable of the word.

For example, in the word **qayakun** (by kayak), is broken up as follows: **qa** / **ya** / **kun**. The second syllable is stressed and open, so that the **a** of **ya** sounds long. In contrast, the word **qayatgun** (by kayaks) is syllabified as: **qa** / **yat** / **gun**. The **a** in **yat**, is stressed, but is not lengthened, because the syllable **yat** is closed. Likewise compare:

kuskaanun	to his cat	kus / kaa / nun
kuskaatnun	to their cat	kus / kaat / hnun <sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Notice the presence of the letter **hn** in the syllable breakdown, although the word **kuskaatnun** is written in proper form without the 'h', due to h-dropping (See Section 2.8). The 'h' is included in the syllable breakdown, as the breakdown is intended to show the phonetic pronunciation.

In both cases above, the second syllable is stressed because it has a vowel pair and is therefore heavy. However, the syllable **kaa** in **kuskaanun** is lengthened because it is open, whereas the syllable **kaat** in **kuskaatnun** is not lengthened because it is closed. For more on stress and lengthening in open syllables, see Chapter 6.

### 4.2.2 Closed Syllables

A syllable is closed if it ends with a consonant. It can contain one or two vowels. Following syllabification Rule 3 (Section 4.1.1), a syllabification boundary falls between two consonants, making the first syllable closed. In the examples below, the syllabification boundary falls between the two middle consonants, forming two closed syllables.

taqmak	dress	taq / hmak <sup>12</sup>
augtuq	communion	aug / tuq

If asked to pronounce the word **atpet** (our names) very slowly you would break it apart as **at** / **pet**. Thus the **t** is part of the first syllable together with the **a**, while the **p** is part of second syllable with the **e**. Both of these syllables end with a consonant, so they are both closed syllables.

<sup>12</sup> Notice the presence of the letter **hm** in the syllable breakdown for **taqmak** and **atmak** in the following example set, although these words *are* written in proper form without the 'h', due to h-dropping (See Section 2.8). The 'h' is included in the syllable breakdowns, as breakdowns are intended to show the phonetic pronunciation.

paltuuk	long coat	pal / tuuk	(from Russian пальто (pal'tó), “overcoat; topcoat”)
atmak	backpack	at / hmak	

Notice that there is no rule for syllable division between three consonants. Three consonants never occur together in the middle of a word, and so will never fall next to a syllable boundary. However, a word may begin with one, two, or rarely, three consonants, as in **skriip`kaaq**. Most words beginning with two or three consonants are Russian in origin.

skriip`kaaq	violin	skrii / p` / kaaq	(from Russian скрипка (skripka), “violin; fiddle”)
stuuluq	table	stuu / luq	(from Russian стол (stol), “table”)
trupaq	stovepipe	tru / paq	(from Russian труба (trubá), “pipe; chimney; smokestack”)

All of the above words begin with two or three consonants and are of Russian-origin. Another way to determine if a word is of Russian-origin is by the presence of an **f** or **r**. However not all words of Russian-origin contain an **f** or **r**, and the **f** and **r** are not used at all within the Prince William Sound subdialect (PWS), except in proper names. For further information on Russian loan words, see Chapter 9: Special Conventions for Russian Loan Words.

## 4.4 Syllabification with Multi-character Letters

The letters **gw**, **ll**, **ng**, **hm**, **hn**, and **hng**, all represent single sounds. They are considered single letters, and are treated as such in making syllable divisions. You cannot place a syllable break within one of these multi-character letters. The following words should be syllabified as shown in the third column.

angun	old man	a / ngun
angeq	tree pitch	a / ngeq
Ang'uq.	It is big.	ang / nguq (notice apostrophe here represents gemination)
Kuinghnguquartuq.	He is walking (for fun).	kuing / hnguar / tuq
allamek	another one; a different kind	a / lla / mek
uqgwik	alder; deciduous tree	uq / gwik

In the few cases where **n** and **g** appear next to each other as separate sounds, an apostrophe is used to separate them. In this case, the apostrophe represents the syllable boundary.

un'gani	out toward the open water	un / ga / ni
ungani	his own beard; moustache	u / nga / ni

For more on this topic, see Section 8.2.4.

## 4.5 Apostrophe between Vowels

An apostrophe is used to separate vowels that belong in separate syllables. This is done to show that the vowels are not a double vowel (such as **aa**, **ii**, **uu**) or a diphthong (such as **ai**, **au**, **iu**; **ia**, **ua**, **ui**), which occur only within a syllable. Here again, the apostrophe represents the syllable boundary. Note however, that you do not pause between the vowels. The transition from one vowel to the next is smooth.

Cali'it?	What are you doing?	ca / li / it
kula'irluku	to visit him or her	ku / la / ir / lu / ku
ika'ut	(going) over there	i / ka / ut

Compare **qawa'i** below, where the syllable break occurs between the vowels, with the word **qawaituq** (he is sleepless). In **qawaituq**, the **ai** sound is within a single syllable, but in **qawa'i**, the **a** and **i** are in separate syllables.

qawa'i	up north / up in the bay	qa / wa / i
Qawaituq.	He is sleepless. (also qagwaituq)	qa / wai / tuq

A syllable may contain one or two vowels but never three vowels. In a few cases three vowels may occur in a row without a consonant separating them, but in these cases an apostrophe goes between the second and the third vowel, separating the three vowels into two syllables. You will never see three vowels in a row without an apostrophe after the first two vowels. In such combinations, there is always only one vowel after the apostrophe.

Qia'uq.	He is crying.	qia / uq
Aa'a.	Yes.	aa / a

As you can see from the above examples, there may be one or two vowels before the apostrophe, but there is always only one vowel after the apostrophe.

For example, we could not get such a word as <sup>×</sup>qia'ua. Instead what we find is **qiagua** (I am crying). What happens here is that the consonant **g** is dropped in **qia'uq** (he is crying), but cannot be dropped in **qiagua** because there would be two vowels after the apostrophe, creating an unpronounceable Alutiiq word. See Chapter 6 for discussion of fricative dropping. Division between vowels with an apostrophe is discussed in greater depth in Section 8.2.1.

## 4.6 Light and Heavy Syllables

*Syllable weight* — that is, describing a syllable as light or heavy — is crucial to determining the rhythmic structure of a word. Syllable weight helps us determine if a syllable forms a *foot* on its own, or becomes part of a foot along with an adjoining syllable, as will be discussed in depth in Chapter 7. Describing a syllable as heavy or light does not automatically determine whether the syllable is stressed or unstressed. Heavy syllables *are* always stressed, while light syllables are *sometimes* stressed.

### 4.6.1 Heavy Syllables

A *heavy syllable* has two vowels. It is always stressed. It can be open (ending in a vowel) or closed (ending in a consonant). The initial consonant of a heavy syllable is emphasized — except when that syllable is the first syllable of a word.

iiaq	devil	ii / yaq	(first syllable emphasized)
------	-------	----------	-----------------------------

akuliitni	among them	a / ku / liit / ni	(third syllable emphasized)
-----------	------------	--------------------	-----------------------------

Note, however, that the syllable **ku** is also stressed in the above example, even though it is a light syllable. We will discuss light syllables next, and the rules of stress in Chapter 7.

### 4.6.2 Light Syllables

A syllable is *light* if it contains only one vowel. They are often unstressed. Some light syllables are stressed when the rhythmic structure of a word calls for it, as will be explained in Chapter 7. Below are examples of words made up of light syllables.

atmak	backpack	at / hmak
-------	----------	-----------

iqalluk	fish	i / qa / lluk
---------	------	---------------

ilanka	my family	i / lan / ka
--------	-----------	--------------

Aciwaqutartuq.	She is going to go down.	a / ci / wa / qu / tar / tuq
----------------	--------------------------	------------------------------

Compare the heavy and light syllables in the following words:

kuskanun	to the cats	kus / ka / nun
kuskaanun	to her cat	kus / kaa / nun

kuskat	cats	kus / kat	(from Russian кошка (kóshka), “cat”)
kuskaat	their cat	kus / kaat	

In the second example of each pair, the second syllable of **kuskaanun** and **kuskaat** are heavy, and are therefore stressed. The stressed **aa** in **kuskaanun** is also lengthened because it is open and not word-final (See Section 7.2 for explanation of lengthening).

## 4.7 Summary: Syllabification

Visually determining what parts of an Alutiiq word fall into syllables is the first step in determining the rhythm and stress pattern of its pronunciation. Syllabification Rules 1-3 help show where the syllable boundary occurs between each syllable. The four Syllabification Rules explain how a syllable breaks:

1. Between two consonants: VC/C
2. At an apostrophe: ‘
3. Before a single consonant  
(Except with gemination): V/CV
4. After gemination: VC/’V and automatic  
gemination: #(C)VC/VV

In addition to these four rules, there are several important facts about Alutiiq syllables:

- All syllables contain at least one vowel, and consonants never appear in the middle.
- Syllables are designated as open or closed depending on whether they end with a vowel (open) or a consonant (closed).

- Open syllables are lengthened when not at the end.
- Syllables are categorized as light if they contain one vowel, and heavy if they contain two vowels.
- Heavy syllables (having two vowels) are always stressed, but light syllables (having only one vowel) are stressed only when they are the head of a foot (See Chapter 7).
- Multi-character Alutiiq letters cannot be broken into separate syllables, but they can be geminated as indicated by an apostrophe.
- Apostrophes are used to break syllables between paired vowels that are neither doubled vowels nor diphthongs.
- Heavy and light syllables can be open or closed.

These categories are useful as we will discover when we determine the rhythm of the word by dividing syllables and syllable pairs into different types of feet or prosodic units (See Chapter 7).

<i>Syllable type</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Stressed?</i>	<i>Lengthened?</i>
<i>Heavy</i>	Contains two vowels	Yes, always.	If open*
<i>Light</i>	Contains one vowel	If <i>head of foot</i>	If open & stressed*
<i>Open</i>	Ends in a vowel		If stressed*
<i>Closed</i>	Ends in a consonant		never

\*If an open syllable is both stressed and not word-final, it is also lengthened. This syllable cannot end in **e**, as syllables containing **e** cannot be lengthened (See Section 7.2).



*Alutiiq Elders meet with Dr. Jeff Leer and Dr. April Counciller at Kodiak College to review the Alutiiq Orthography book draft in 2012.*

# Chapter 5: GEMINATION

## 5.1 Introduction

Gemination is when a consonant sound is lengthened, so that it is shared between two syllables.

kum'agya <b>k</b>	eagle	kum / mag / yak
mal'uk	two	mal / luk

The consonant sound in the first syllable is not released before progressing to the next syllable. If there is a release between the two consonants, they are considered to be separate consonants and are not geminated.

An example in English of a geminated consonant sound is the phrase 'night time', where the 't' at the end of 'night' and beginning of 'time' share the same lengthened 't' sound, shared between two syllables. Notice how there is no release of the 't' sound at the end of 'night', before proceeding to 'time'. If you were to pronounce the phrase 'night time' in an exaggerated fashion, as in teaching spelling, you might release the 't' in 'night' before proceeding on to the 't' in 'time'.

This is contrasted with the English phrase 'night rain', where there is no repeated consonant sound between the second syllable of 'night' and the first syllable of 'rain'. Another example of gemination in English is the word 'unnerve', where the 'n' sound occurs in both the first and second syllables. While the 'n' is doubled in 'unnerve', the Alutiiq orthography does not use doubled consonants to indicate gemination.

In the Alutiiq orthography, we have a special way of indicating geminated consonants. Rather than writing the consonant twice, gemination is usually indicated by putting an apostrophe after the consonant (C'). For example, the word **ul'uk**, (pants) contains the syllables **ul/** and **/luk**, both containing

the **l** sound. The **l** here is a geminated consonant, which means that it sounds like a long **l** rather than two separate **l** sounds<sup>13</sup>.

kuaq'arluni	to catch on fire	kua <b>q</b> / qar / lu / ni
Kal'uni	in Karluk	Kal / lu / ni
weg'et	grass (plural)	weg / <b>g</b> et

Although you can have two (or with Russian borrowings, occasionally three) non-identical consonants together in a word, a consonant is never double in Alutiiq (for example, ×mm). The only repeated letter you will see is **ll**, which represents a single consonant sound. It is not a geminated consonant. However, it should be noted that in some earlier forms of the Alutiiq orthography, geminated letters were written as double letters. This was during the time when today's multiple character consonants were written as underlined consonants (or example, when the **ll** was written as underlined **l**). During that time, the word **ul'uk** (pants) would have been written as ulluk. See Chapter 10 for more on outdated orthographic rules.

There are some very rare cases in Alutiiq where forms of a word will have non-geminated, same consonants together, which are pronounced separately. One such example is **at'tek** (their names). In order to show that there is a release between the

<sup>13</sup> Some dialects of Alutiiq differentiate between a geminated consonant and two separate instances of the same consonant. For example, in the Chugach dialect, the word **ul'uni** (to flood; overflow) sounds exactly like **ul'uni** (his own pants), but some Koniag speakers distinguish between **ul'uni** (her own pants) with a geminated consonant on one hand, and on the other hand **ul'luni** (to flood; overflow), where the two **l**'s are pronounced separately.

two instances of the same consonant in this word, we separate the t's with an apostrophe.

As we said above, normally gemination is indicated by putting an apostrophe after the geminated consonant and before the following vowel.

Although we hear the consonant at the end of the first syllable and at the beginning of the following syllable, we do not write the consonant twice, but instead use the apostrophe for this purpose.

This practice of using the apostrophe dovetails nicely with the use of the apostrophe to indicate where a weak consonant has been dropped after another consonant (See Chapter 6 on fricative dropping). For example, **ul'uk** (pants) comes from the earlier form **ulruk**, which is still found with some Alaska Peninsula speakers. In this case, the weak **r** is dropped before a single vowel as with **ul'uk**, but shows up when followed by a doubled vowel, as **ulruituq** (he has no pants). So we can think of the apostrophe in **ul'uk** as representing the dropped weak **r**, while at the same time indicating gemination.

## 5.2 Automatic Gemination

Sometimes the first syllable of a word ends with a geminated consonant, but the gemination is not indicated with an apostrophe. This is called *automatic gemination*, because under set conditions, the gemination of the consonant will always occur automatically. Automatic gemination occurs when a geminated consonant comes at the end of the first syllable, and the second syllable is heavy (i.e., has two vowels). In the case of automatic gemination, the apostrophe is left out (Leer, 1990).

atuun                  song                  at / tuun

The gemination does not need to be shown with an apostrophe, because it is always predictable. If we did include apostrophes in all cases where we experience automatic gemination, there would simply be too many apostrophes in the written language.

The rule for automatic gemination is clear-cut. If a word starts with CVCVV or VCVV (where C is a consonant and V is a vowel<sup>14</sup>), then the consonant between vowels is automatically geminated. There is no apostrophe after the geminated consonant.

ilua                  its inside                  il / lua

tamiini                  all around                  tam / mii / ni

Nepainani.                  It is silent.                  nep / pai / na / ni

By comparing different words formed from the same stem, we see how this rule works, and why it is intuitively obvious for Alutiiq speakers. Compare the examples in the chart at the top of the next page, where the first column shows there is no gemination, but the second column shows automatic gemination occurs, because a vowel pair is in the second syllable.

The reason automatic gemination is used in Alutiiq, rather than just adding apostrophes whenever you hear a geminated consonant at the end of any syllable, is that there are so many words where this occurs. Writers would be forced to use the apostrophe much too often if we did not recognize automatic gemination. Many readers of Alutiiq have internalized this rule already when sounding out Alutiiq words, but may not realize it.

<sup>14</sup> You can combine these two formulas as #(C)VCCVV where the # indicates the beginning of the word, and the (C) in parenthesis indicates an optional consonant.



No Gemination		Contains Automatic Gemination	
manik	egg	Maniun'ituq.	It is not an egg.
manika	my egg	mania	her egg
maninka	my eggs	manii	her eggs
maniten	your eggs	Maniituq.	She has no eggs.
qayaq	kayak	qayaa	his kayak
qayanka	my kayaks	qayai	his kayaks
qayaruaq	kind of a kayak	Qayaun'ituq.	It is not a kayak.
patuq	lid; cover	patua	its lid; its cover
patuluku	to cover it	patuiruku	to uncover it (take off lid)
nuna	land	nunii	his land
nunaka	my land	nunai	her lands
nunarpet	our lands	Nunaituq.	There is no land.

### 5.3 Neutralization of Gemination

Since geminated consonants only occur after stressed vowels, a normally geminated consonant will become un-geminated after an unstressed vowel. In the following examples, which both use the *postbase* -n'ir- (to stop V-ing, to no longer V), the first word retains its gemination, while the second experiences neutralization of gemination (Leer 1990, p. 48-9).

Pisun'irtua.	I stopped hunting.	pi / sun / nir / tua
Sagirsunirtua.	I stopped halibut fishing.	sa / gir / su / nir / tua
Iqallusun'irtua.	I stopped fishing.	i / qa / llu / sun / nir / tua

Because neutralization of gemination occurs due to prosodic (rhythm & stress) rules that are covered in the next chapter, the reason why the second example does not have gemination is difficult to explain here. This is discussed in more detail in Section 7.5.

### 5.4 Summary: Gemination

Gemination is the sharing of a consonant sound between two syllables. In Alutiiq it is generally marked with the use of an apostrophe, except in common predictable cases, where it is left out due to the rule of automatic gemination. Since gemination is affected by the rhythmic and stress patterns of Alutiiq words, sometimes a normally-geminated consonant will drop its gemination. This is called neutralization of gemination.

# Chapter 6: DROPPED CONSONANTS – FRICATIVE DROPPING

## 6.1 Introduction

Sometimes “weak” consonants will drop out in the middle of words at the beginning of a light syllable. This is called fricative dropping. Consonant that can drop include **g** or **r** and sometimes **y**. This type of consonant dropping always occurs before a single vowel, never before a vowel pair. When a fricative is dropped, it is then represented by an apostrophe. The apostrophe represents any dropped consonant, whether erased after a consonant or after a vowel. Use of the apostrophe to represent gemination in Alutiiq is shared in common with the Yup'ik orthography.

Uksua'urtuq.	It is getting to be fall.	uk / sua / ur / tuq
Taqua'itua.	I have no provision for the trip.	ta / qua / i / tua
ul'uk	pants	ul / luk

## 6.2 Fricative Dropping and Gemination

The voiced fricatives **g** and **r** may also be dropped at the beginning of a light syllable following a voiced consonant; that is, they lose their distinguishing features. Having no features of their own, they borrow the features of the preceding voiced consonant. In other words, the preceding voiced consonant becomes geminated:

mal'uk	two	(mal <sup>r</sup> uk)	mal / luk
Kal'unek	from Karluk	(Kal <sup>g</sup> unek)	kal / lu / nek
all'ak	maybe	(all <sup>r</sup> ak)	all / llak

The apostrophe in the above examples is used to indicate both gemination and fricative dropping. It handily represents the dropped weak **g** or **r**, and also the sharing of the geminated sound of the preceding consonant.

Taill'ia.	It came. (Some KOD)	(taill <sup>r</sup> ia)	taill / llia
-----------	---------------------	-------------------------	--------------

The example above can be pronounced and written as **Taillria**. On Kodiak, more often in the Southern style, some speakers drop the **r** after the **ll** in past tense intransitive endings. In the following examples, notice how the **r** is dropped in the second example and marked with an apostrophe. Just as with the other examples in this section, the apostrophe represents both the dropped fricative, as well as indicating gemination.

Tamuulillriit.	They made dried fish.	ta / muu / lill / riit
Tamuulill'iit.	They made dried fish.	ta / muu / lill / lliit
Qawallriaten.	You slept.	qa / wall / ria / ten
Qawall'iaten.	You slept.	qa / wall / llia / ten
Maqillriakut.	We (steam) bathed.	ma / qill / ria / kut
Maqill'iakut.	We (steam) bathed.	ma / qill / llia / kut

### 6.3 Non-dropping Conditions

Because fricative dropping only occurs before a single vowel, the consonant will reappear when before a double vowel. If the addition of a different ending or suffix changes a previously single vowel to a vowel pair, the dropped fricative will reappear before the vowel pair. In the examples below, the ending has been changed in the second word of the pair to create a vowel pair after the weak consonant. Thus, the consonant that was originally dropped is retained in this form.

Kia'illriit.	They spent the summer.	kia / ill / riit
Kiagiut.	They are spending the summer.	kia / giut
Qia'uq.	He is crying.	qia / uq
Qiagua(nga).	I am crying.	qia / gua / nga
arya'aq	maiden, young woman	ar / ya / aq
Aryagaullria.	She became a young woman.	ar / ya / gaull / ria
Iqsa'aqa.	I (just) caught it (with a hook).	iq / sa / a / qa
Iqsaraa.	He (just) caught it (with a hook).	iq / sa / raa
Uma'araa.	She is wrapping; She is swaddling it.	u / ma / a / raa
Umaraumakii.	She must have swaddled him or her.	u / ma / rau / ma / kii

The next examples fall under the same principal of non-dropping fricatives described above, even though you see no apostrophes in the first example of the pair. The reason is that the <sup>x</sup>i'a and <sup>x</sup>u'a letter combinations (along with <sup>x</sup>i'u and <sup>x</sup>u'i) are not allowed in the Alutiiq orthography (See Section 8.2.1 under "Prosthetic Y and W"). Although a **y** (after an **i**) or **w** (after a **u**) is inserted to get the letter combination "in compliance," we must still be aware of words where fricative dropping will not occur. Just as above, the second example shows the fricative being retained when it is followed by a double vowel.

Pisuwaqa.	I am hunting it.	pi / su / wa / qa
Pisuraa.	He is hunting it.	pi / su / raa
Iniyanka.	I am hanging them up.	i / ni / yan / ka
Iniraa.	She is hanging it up.	i / ni / raa

uyuwaqa	my younger sibling (S)
uyuraa	his younger sibling (S)
iluwaqa	my cross cousin; my cousin
iluraa	her cross cousin; her cousin
paniyaqa	my daughter
panigaa	his daughter
qaliyaqa	my shirt (some KOD)
qaliraa	her shirt (some KOD)
Patuwan.	You are covering it.
Patugaa.	He is covering it.



Jeff Leer poses with Elder Mary Haakanson in Old Harbor during a visit.

## Superscript Conventions for Dropped Fricatives

The fact that dropped consonants can come back with a doubled vowel shows that we must be aware of what letter is missing in common words that use fricative dropping. Some reference materials will indicate the dropped fricative with a superscript version of that letter (<sup>g, r, y</sup>) in place of the apostrophe. This is helpful when a writer needs to return the dropped fricative to a word upon addition of a suffix.

ul<sup>r</sup>uk                      pants (root ul<sup>r</sup>ur-) ul / luk

In this example, the word would normally be written as **ul'uk**, but in the reference document, the word is shown with the missing **r** so that when a suffix is added, you will know what letter will be restored before a vowel pair.

Ulruituq.                      He has no pants.    ul / rui / tuq

As you can see in this example, the **r** is added back in because the addition of the suffix **-(ng)ite-** (to not have N), causes there to be a double vowel after the dropped fricative.

## 6.4 Summary: Fricative Dropping

Fricative dropping occurs when weak consonants **g** and **r** occur at the beginning of a light syllable (containing one vowel)<sup>15</sup>. In normal writing, these cases are marked with an apostrophe. Reference materials will sometimes indicate the missing letter with a superscript version of that letter. Dropped fricatives are sometimes added back into a word when a suffix addition changes the following light syllable to a heavy syllable.

<sup>15</sup> Occasionally **y** and **w** are dropped from words at the beginning of a light syllable (containing one vowel). **Y** is only dropped before **ei**, and **w** is only dropped before **u**.

## Part III



*Alutiiq Language Club practicing Christmas songs in 2006. Photo courtesy of Alutiiq Museum.*

# Chapter 7: PROSODY – RHYTHM, STRESS AND LENGTHENING

## 7.1 Introduction

Students of language use the word *prosody* to refer to the rhythmic structure of a word or group of words. This term is best known in the context of poetry. Much poetry involves rhythmic patterning of stressed and unstressed syllables.

Alutiiq is a language where the rhythm and stress as well as length of a syllable are very important in pronouncing a word properly. Each syllable within a word can be either stressed or unstressed. Some stressed syllables are also lengthened. As many learners have experienced, a lack of awareness about which syllables to stress and lengthen in a word can result in pronunciation of a different word altogether!

aanaq	mother	AA / naq
anaq	excrement	a / NAQ

Fluent speakers of Alutiiq know the rhythmic patterns of the language subconsciously. Learners must be exposed to a lot of spoken Alutiiq and hear many examples, or they must memorize and internalize the prosodic rules of the language through academic study. Those who have not studied Alutiiq prosody may easily become confused over why all double vowels are stressed, but some single vowels are also stressed (and some are unstressed). They may also wonder why some syllables sound long, no matter whether there are one or two vowels in the syllable. The answers are to be found in the prosody (rhythm) of the words.

Rhythm in Alutiiq is divided into prosodic units called feet. A *foot* is a prosodic unit. In Alutiiq, all feet are composed of one or two syllables, with the final syllable always being stressed. Remember: all feet

contain a stressed syllable. Some unstressed syllables exist outside of a foot — we call these *stray syllables*.

Determining the foot structure of a written word will show you which syllables to stress. Knowing these rules will also help you spell a word correctly after you hear it spoken.

## 7.2 Foot Types: Iambic and Monosyllabic

There are two types of feet in Alutiiq words. They both contain a stressed syllable.

### Iambic Foot

The *iambic foot*, which is common in Alutiiq, consists of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. Within a stressed syllable it is actually the final vowel that is stressed, but for ease of description we will refer to the syllable as stressed. A common example of iambic feet occurs in the following line of poetry: “The boy stood on the burning deck.” This line can be divided into four iambic feet.

**Note:** Syllables are divided, as in the previous chapter, with a forward slash: /. Feet are identified within [brackets], with the stressed syllable of the foot shown in ALL CAPS:

The boy stood on the burning deck.  
[The / BOY] / [stood / ON] / [the / BURN] / [ing / DECK].

Notice that a foot may start in the middle of a word. Syllable breaks occur within and between feet in the example above, as iambic feet are made up of two syllables: an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable, as shown in the following example.

piturluni      to eat; drink      [pi / TUR] / [lu / NI]<sup>16</sup>

### Monosyllabic Foot

In addition to iambic feet, there are also monosyllabic feet. As the name implies, monosyllabic feet are feet made up of a single stressed syllable. Monosyllabic feet, as we will see in “Rule 0,” are mostly heavy syllables (containing two vowels).

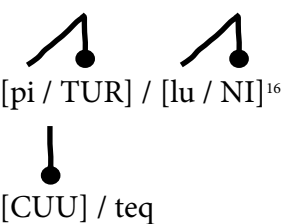
cuuteq      ear      [CUU] / teq

The syllable **teq** in **cuuteq** above is a stray syllable. A stray syllable is an unstressed syllable that does not belong to a foot.

### 7.2.1 Foot Depiction Conventions

In Leer’s publications (Leer, 1990, 1994), foot and emphasis are depicted with modified tree diagrams. When writing a foot on the whiteboard or when handwritten foot notation is possible, it is often done as such:

piturluni      to eat; drink      [pi / TUR] / [lu / NI]<sup>16</sup>



cuuteq      ear      [CUU] / teq

The dot at the end of the handwritten line indicates that the syllable underneath it is the *head of the foot*. The head is the stressed syllable of a foot. The vertical line ending in a dot depicts stress in the same way that the CAPS font is used in

<sup>16</sup> Word-final feet (both monosyllabic and iambic) tend to be “dampened,” that is to say, the stress is less apparent, and the pitch tends not to rise. This is apparent in the word **pisurluni**, which is made up of two iambic feet, but the final foot seems to be dampened. However, the stress is not dampened when the foot is no longer word-final; so if we add **-llu** to the word **pisurluni**, becoming **pisurluni-llu**, the **luni** does not become dampened. The **ni** syllable, you may notice, is also now lengthened, because it is no longer word-final, and therefore as a stressed, open syllable is lengthened.

this publication to depict stressed syllables. The “inverted V” over two syllables (with one line being vertical) depicts the unstressed and stressed syllables of an iambic foot, while the single vertical line with a dot at the end depicts a monosyllabic foot.

### 7.2.2 Lengthening Rule

If a foot ends with a vowel or vowel pair, and it is not the last syllable of the word, this vowel or vowel pair is both stressed and *lengthened*. Lengthened means that the vowel sound is drawn out. If a foot ends with a consonant, the vowel or vowel pair before the consonant is stressed but not lengthened. Also, vowels and vowel pairs are never lengthened in the last syllable of a word. Only syllables with the vowels **a**, **i**, and **u** can be lengthened. The vowel **e** can never be lengthened<sup>17</sup>. The rule for lengthening vowels applies to both monosyllabic feet and iambic feet.

In a written word, the lengthening rule above is used to determine whether to pronounce a vowel or vowel pair lengthened. When you hear a syllable with a lengthened vowel, however, you cannot determine if that vowel is single or double. All you can tell from hearing a word is that the vowel occurs in an open stressed syllable.

### 7.3 Initial Foot Rules

To determine the foot structure of a word, you need to start with the first one or two syllables of the word, using the skills from the previous chapter to first identify the syllable breaks. Since some words contain only one or two syllables, the *initial foot rules* may be all that are needed. Initial foot rules apply only to the first one or two syllables of a word. For longer words, there are additional rules that will be covered in the next section. After determining syllable breaks,

<sup>17</sup> Since **e** cannot be lengthened like other vowels, stressed syllables containing **e** cause the following consonant to receive the lengthening. This results in that consonant being geminated, as with the **ng** in this example: **naaqiste-** (reader) + **-nge-** (to get N) = **naaqisteng’ukut**.  
naa / qis / teng / ngu / kut

the next step is to use these rules starting with the beginning of a word, working left to right.

### 7.3.1 Rule 0

If the first syllable of the word is heavy (i.e., containing two vowels), then it forms a monosyllabic foot.

$\#[(C)V\bar{V}(C)] / \dots$

“Rule 0” is not just an initial foot rule — it is a universal rule that can apply anywhere in the word. In fact, notice how this exact same rule also appears in the section for non-initial foot rules (See 7.4.1). However, if a heavy syllable occurs outside the first syllable, the heavy syllable must begin with a consonant. This can be symbolized as follows:

$\dots[CV\bar{V}(C)] / \dots$

We can combine these two formulae. Both the word initial and non-initial syllables form into one formula:

$[(C)V\bar{V}(C)] / \dots$

**Note:** *C is a consonant, and V is a vowel. The forward slash / shows a syllable break, and the ellipses... symbolize the rest of the word. A letter in parenthesis ( ) indicates that it may or may not be present, depending on the word — it is optional. Brackets [ ] indicate the beginning and end of a foot. The # symbol indicates the beginning or end of a word if it applies to that particular rule. These conventions will be used throughout the chapter.*

In the general rule above, the initial consonant is optional, and the syllable may or may not end in a consonant. The only requirement for “Rule 0” to apply to the first syllable of a word is that it contains two vowels. Remember: all syllables containing two vowels are heavy. As we will see later, “Rule 0” can be used anywhere in a word, but if it is not in the first syllable, it must begin with a consonant.

**Note:** *The stressed syllable of a word is indicated throughout this chapter with CAPITAL letters.*

Here are some examples of words beginning with monosyllabic feet identified through “Rule 0.” In these examples, the single light syllable at the end of the word becomes a stray syllable. Stray syllables are syllables that do not belong to a foot after all possible feet have been identified. Rule 0 will not apply to a syllable containing e, because e cannot be part of a vowel pair.

cuuteq          ear                  [CUU] / teq

siinaq          arctic entryway [SII] / naq

aigaq          hand                  [AI] / gaq

kuiget          rivers                  [KUI] / get

Notice that in these examples the vowel pairs at the end of the first syllable are also lengthened, because they are in stressed open syllables. Remember: all non-final stressed syllables that are also open have lengthened vowel pairs. Contrast the open stressed syllables in the section above with the closed stressed syllables in the examples below:

kuigpak          big river              [KUIG] / pak

sungcarwik      hospital              [SUNG] / [car / WIK]

Kaigtuq.          He is hungry.      [KAIG] / tuq

Qiaqkwaraa.      He is making      [QIAG] / kwa / [RAA]  
her cry.

Kium'agaa.      She is                  [KIUM] / ma / [GAA]  
answering him.

In the above examples, the first syllable is heavy, and therefore as a monosyllabic foot it is stressed, but being a closed syllable, it is not lengthened.



### 7.3.2 Initial Foot Rule A

If the first syllable of the word is closed (ending in a consonant), it forms a monosyllabic foot.

This construction can be symbolized as follows:

#[(C)VC] / ...

Here again, the # symbolizes the beginning of the word. The first consonant is optional. Of course, the initial closed syllable can be heavy (it can contain two vowels), that is to say, it could be represented #[(C)VVC]/... but initial heavy syllables are already covered by “Rule 0.”

cutmen	forward	[CUT] / hmen <sup>18</sup>
atmak	backpack	[AT] / hmak
iqmik	snoose	[IQ] / hmik
ciqlluaq	sod house	[CIQ] / [LLUAQ]
qerlluk	lip	[QER] / lluk
ellpet	you	[ELL] / pet

In the first three examples, the final syllables form stray feet (they do not fit into a foot as later rules will demonstrate). In the final example, both the **i** of the first syllable and the **ua** of the second syllable are stressed, because each syllable forms a monosyllabic foot. The first syllable forms a monosyllabic foot because of “Initial Foot Rule A,” while the second forms a monosyllabic foot because of “Rule 0.”

<sup>18</sup> Notice the presence of the letter **hm** in the syllable breakdowns for **cutmen**, **atmak** and **iqmik**, in this section although the words *are* written in proper form without the ‘h’, due to h-dropping (See Section 2.8). The ‘h’ is included in the syllable breakdown, as the breakdown is intended to show the phonetic pronunciation.

### Initial Closed Syllables

All initial closed syllables are written light. Notice in the section above that all of the initial syllables in the examples for Initial Foot Rule A are *light* (containing one vowel). In Alutiiq, all initial closed syllables are written light, whether or not the underlying root is heavy. This is done because: due to Initial Foot Rule A, all initial closed syllables are stressed, and therefore you cannot tell by the stress whether or not it is light or heavy. The solution in the Alutiiq orthography is to write all initial closed syllables light. This is why you may have encountered pairs of related words, which do not match up in the vowel weight of their initial syllable, despite their obvious use of the same root.

naqluku	to read it	[NAQ] / [llu / KU]
Naaqiyuq.	He is reading.	[NAA] / [qi / YUQ]
Naaqiuq.	He is reading.	[NAA] / [QIUQ]
cutmen	to the front	[CUT] / hmen
cuungani	in front of it	[CUU] / [nga / NI]

This rule also applies to single-syllable words, whether or not they are comprised of a closed syllable.

suk	person	[SUK]
suuget	people	[SUU] / get
lla	universe	[LLA]
llaami	outside of it; outdoors	[LLAA] / mi
luk	onion	[LUK]
luuget	onions	[LUU] / get

### 7.3.3 Initial Foot Rule B

This rule is the most complex of the initial foot rules, and results in two monosyllabic feet. The rule applies when the word begins with the following letter sequence:

$\#(C_1)VC_2VV\dots$

The consonants have been numbered for the sake of clearer discussion and description. The first consonant ( $C_1$ ) is optional. Since the second consonant is followed by two vowels, it is automatically geminated. Therefore, the letter combination above will be written as follows when broken into syllables and footed:

$\#[(C_1)VC_2] / [C_2VV(C_3)]\dots$

$C_2$  is geminated (shared between two syllables), but due to the rule of automatic germination (See Section 5.2), the example words below do not have an apostrophe after  $C_2$ . This pattern results in two monosyllabic feet. The first syllable is closed, and therefore forms a monosyllabic foot because of “Rule A”, and the second syllable is heavy and therefore forms a monosyllabic foot due to “Rule 0.”

akiani	across from it	[AK] / [KIA] / ni
qukaani	in the middle of it	[QUK] / [KAA] / ni
iluani	inside of it	[IL] / [LUA] / ni
Patuituq.	It has no lid.	[PAT] / [TUI] / tuq

The previous examples repeat the geminated consonant in the syllable breakdown, even though the consonant appears only once in the written word, in order to highlight the gemination. Also notice in the above examples that the first two syllables are stressed, but only the second syllable is lengthened because in these examples the second syllable is also open (ending in a vowel) and not at the end of the word. Below are examples illustrating this rule where the second syllable is closed, and therefore not lengthened:

qukaatni	in the middle of them	[QUK] / [KAAT] / hni <sup>19</sup>
iluatni	inside them	[IL] / [LUAT] / hni
tamiini	all around it	[TAM] / [MII] / ni

### 7.3.4 Initial Foot Rule C

If the first syllable of a word ends with a single vowel, and the second syllable begins with a consonant followed by a single vowel, the two syllables will form an iambic foot. The construction looks like this:

$[(C)V/CV(C)]/\dots$

The initial consonant of the first syllable and final consonant of the second syllable are optional. The first syllable is the unstressed syllable, and the second syllable is stressed, so that together they form an iambic foot.

qayaqa	my kayak	[qa / YA] / qa
akimi	across	[a / KI] / mi
ilumi	inside	[i / LU] / mi
qayanka	my kayaks	[qa / YAN] / ka
patuq	lid; cover	[pa / TUQ]
neresta	louse	[ne / RES] / ta
cuyaq	leaf	[cu / YAQ]

Notice that the first three examples above contain a stray foot. They also have an open, stressed second syllable, so the second syllable is lengthened. Contrast these with the last two examples, where the second syllable is closed and therefore not lengthened.

<sup>19</sup> Notice the presence of the letter **hn** in the syllable breakdowns, although the words **qukaatni** and **iluatni** written in proper form without the h, due to h-dropping (See Section 2.8). The ‘h’ is included in the syllable breakdown, as the breakdown is intended to show the phonetic pronunciation.

In this section we have discussed four rules that can be used to determine feet in the first one or two syllables of a word: “Rule 0,” and Initial Foot Rules A-C. In the next section, we will cover three new rules that determine further foot assignments in words long enough to contain multiple feet.

## 7.4 Non-Initial Foot Assignment

The first rule in determining feet in words that contain more than one foot is already known. As mentioned in the previous section, “Rule 0” can be used in the initial foot of a word, but can also be used throughout. It is your first step in identifying multiple feet in a word.

### 7.4.1 Rule 0

As we know, “Rule 0” says that any heavy syllable (containing two vowels) will create a monosyllabic foot. Working left to right in a multi-foot word, you should first identify the monosyllabic feet. Recall that any heavy syllable not at the beginning of a word must begin with a consonant for Rule 0 to apply.

yaasiik	box	[YAA] / [SIK]
Piicallria.	He asked for it.	[PII] / call / [RIA]
suitaraa	his sweater	[SUI] / ta / [RAA]

The above examples each contain two monosyllabic feet, as the first and last syllables each are heavy. The second light syllable in the last two examples above forms a stray foot, under the “1-Syllable Rule” explained next. The following rules should be understood to apply immediately after a foot. This foot might be a result of an initial or non-initial foot assignment.

### 7.4.2 1-Syllable Rule (1SR)

If only one light syllable remains before a heavy syllable, or at the end of a word, it is left alone, forming a stray syllable (not in a foot).

Suituq.	There is nobody (there).	[SUI] / tuq
ciiwat	houseflies	[CII] / wat

In the above examples, the first syllable is a monosyllabic foot due to “Rule 0,” while the second syllable becomes stray (unstressed and not part of a foot) due to the “1-Syllable Rule.”

### 7.4.3 2-Syllable Rule (2SR)

If there are two light syllables before a heavy syllable or at the end of a word, they form an iambic foot.

aalukaq	namesake	[AA] / [lu / KAQ]
qaiqunaq	cave <sup>20</sup>	[QAI] / [qu / NAQ]

In **aalukaq**, the first syllable is a monosyllabic foot due to “Rule 0,” while the second and third syllables form an iambic foot due to the “2-Syllable Rule.” In the additional examples below, identify which feet are monosyllabic through “Rule 0” and which are iambic through the “2-Syllable Rule.”

Aalukaqaa.	He is her aalukaq.	[AA] / [lu / KA] / [QAA]
suitaraq	sweater	[SUI] / [ta / RAQ]
Suitaraqaa.	It is his sweater.	[SUI] / [ta / RA] / [QAA]
aakanaq	old dying fish	[AA] / [ka / NAQ]

<sup>20</sup> This word is uncommon in modern Kodiak speech, but the form **qaiqunamen** (to the cave) can be found in the Russian Christmas hymn **Puqisqat** (The Wise Men).

It should be easy to see that the feet containing two syllables are the iambic feet, explained by the “2-Syllable Rule.” The monosyllabic feet are explained by “Rule 0.”

#### 7.4.4 3-Syllable Rule (3SR)<sup>21</sup>

The two subcases of the “3-Syllable Rule” cover sequences of three light syllables. In both of these subcases, the result is a stray syllable that is followed by an iambic foot.

##### 3SR Subcase 1 – Disyllabic Light Postbases

When a *disyllabic light postbase* (a postbase made up of two light syllables) appears in a word, the postbase will form an iambic foot. Any preceding light syllable not already part of a foot will become an unstressed stray syllable. There are many disyllabic postbases in Kodiak Alutiiq that are made up of light syllables, which would fall under this rule when preceded by a light syllable. The 3SR subcase 1 can occur anywhere in a word where 3 light syllables occur after the initial foot although usually this occurs at the end of a word.

Some of these postbases are:

~kutar-	(V-V, to be going to V, about to V, immediate future)
-sinaq	(N-N, large N)
+tuliq	(N-N, one with much N)
+wakar- or +pakar-	(V-V, to V too much, so much)
+cunite-	(N-V, to smell like N)
+yatur-	(V-V, to go in order to V)

The examples below use the disyllabic light postbase ~**kutar**–<sup>22</sup> (V-V, to be going to V, about to V, immediate future).

Aciwaqutartua.                      I am going to go down.                      [a / CI] / wa / [qu / TAR] / [TUA]

In this example, the first foot is formed under “Initial Foot Rule C.” The syllables **qu** and **tar** form an iambic foot under the “3SR Subcase 1.” The preceding **wa** becomes an unstressed stray syllable. The final syllable **tua** forms a monosyllabic foot under “Rule 0.”

<sup>21</sup> Note that the 3-Syllable Rule is different between Chugach and Kodiak Alutiiq. In Chugach Alutiiq, If there are three light syllables in a row within a word, then the first syllable is skipped over creating a stray syllable, and the 2nd and 3rd syllables form an iambic foot.

<sup>22</sup> As an assimilating suffix, ~**kutar**- joins the preceding root with a **k** or a **q** depending on the end of the root. See Leer, 1990 for further discussion.

In the following examples, notice how no matter what comes before it, **~kutar-** forms an iambic foot. If there is no preceding light syllable, it will still form an iambic foot under the “2-Syllable Rule.” Only the final example fully fits the “3SR Subcase 1.”

Agkutartua. I am going to go. [AG] / [ku / TAR] / [TUA]

Iqallugsuqutartukut. We are going to go fishing. [i / QA] / [llug / SU] / [qu / TAR] / [tu / KUT]

Amitatursuqutall’ianga. I was going to (go) get weasels. [a / MI] / [ta / TUR] / su / [qu / TALL] / [llia / NGA]

When the disyllabic light postbase **~kutar-** combines with another light postbase and the result is a vowel pair, then second syllable is heavy and forms its own foot under “Rule 0.” In the example below, **~kutar-** combines with **+uma-** (V-N, non-witnessed, indicates the event or state was not witnessed first hand by the speaker) to form a heavy **tau** syllable, which is a monosyllabic foot.

Agkutaumuuq. He must be going to go. [AG] / ku / [TAU] / [MUUQ]

Another disyllabic light postbase covered by this rule is **-tuliq** (one with much N). It will form an iambic foot and leave a preceding stray syllable, unless an ending joins with the final vowel of the postbase and causes it to become heavy. In that case, the heavy stressed syllable becomes a monosyllabic foot, as with **Agkutaumuuq** (above). In the examples below, the first two fall under the “3SR Subcase 1,” while the final example does not.

qangyutuliq place of many swells or waves [QANG] / yu / [tu / LIQ]

uyaqurtuliq loon [u / YA] / qur / [tu / LIQ]

uyaqurtulia his loon [u / YA] / [qur / TU] / [LIA]

In the final example above, the possessed ending causes the final syllable to be heavy and is therefore stressed under “Rule 0.” The middle foot is formed under the “2-Syllable Rule.”



Elder Phyllis Peterson and Alutiiq language learners Teresa Schneider and Alisha Drabek, with Alisha’s son Fayd Johnson, at the start of the Alutiiq Museum’s Alutiiq Language Master-Apprentice Project in 2004. Photo courtesy of the Alutiiq Museum.



Alutiiq language learner and teacher Susan Malutin teaches Alutiiq numbers at the Dig Afognak Culture Camp. Photo courtesy of the Native Village of Afognak.

### 3SR Subcase 2 – Combined Light Word-ending Particles

The “Three-Syllable Rule Subcase 2” is a complex aspect of Kodiak Alutiiq prosody (rhythm), with significant sub-dialectal variation, and is difficult to explain in depth here. Leer’s *Prosody in Alutiiq* paper (Leer, 1985) examines the prosodic patterns of Chugach and Koniag Alutiiq including this subcase (referred to as “Accent-advancing in KA”), and is an excellent reference for further study.

Whereas “3SR Subcase 1” describes three light syllables formed by a stray syllable plus a disyllabic postbase, the “3SR Subcase 2” describes the footing of three light syllables that are confined to the end of a word. Syllable combinations that fall under the 3SR Subcase 2 can be a three-syllable word ending or an inflectional postbase plus an ending.

*Inflection* in grammar refers to parts of a word that contain grammatical information like tense (past, present, future) person (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> person), number (single, dual, plural), etc. Most postbases are non-inflectional, and the final endings or suffixes of nouns and verbs contain the inflectional information. However, there are some postbases that contain inflectional information as well, and there is a connection between these types of postbases and the 3SR. Some postbases in this category include:

-ciqe-	(V-V, future)
+(g)kaq	(N-N, future N, that which is to be N)
-lleq	(N-N, past N, former N, deceased N, that which used to be N)
+wag-; +pag-	(V-V, surely V (a lot); and then one V-ed)

In Kodiak Alutiiq, three light syllables at the end of a word (comprised of a word ending or a postbase combined with an ending) will cause a stray syllable followed by an iambic foot, due to what Leer calls *foot advancement*. Foot advancement means that the foot (and its stress) advance toward the *end* of the word, “leaving” the stray syllable behind.

The final two light particles act like the disyllabic light postbases covered in Subcase 1, forming an iambic foot in the same way. A light syllable coming before the iambic foot will become a stray syllable. In the next two examples, the postbase **+pag-** (and then) combines the ending of the root word, leaving a preceding stray syllable. As can be seen in the examples, there can be an additional stray syllable or foot after the three light syllables covered by this rule.

Aciwarpagta.	And then he went down.	[a / CI] / war / [pag / TA]
Tenglupagtanga.	And then she punched me.	[TENG] / lug / [pag / TA] / nga <sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> There is variation on Kodiak, and not all similar combinations will be footed the same. The word **tenglupagtanga** can be also footed for some speakers as such: [TENG] / [lug / PAG] / [ta / NGA].

The following examples include the postbase **-ciqe-** (V-V, future) plus an ending, which form a series of three light syllables, and fall under “3SR Subcase 2.”

Tuyuqciqaqa.	I will send it.	[tu / YUQ] / ci / [qa / QA]
Ikayurciqaqa.	I will help him.	[i / KA] / yur / [ci / QA] / qa

In addition to three light syllables being formed by a postbase plus an ending as described above, there are situations where the ending itself forms three light syllables. Following are some additional examples where three light syllables near the end of a word form an iambic foot with a preceding stray syllable.

ikayukuniki	if she helps them...	[i / KA] / yu [ku / NI] / ki
ikayuwaqamiki	whenever he helps them...	[i / KA] / yu / [wa / QA] / [mi / KI]
tuqutaqamiki	whenever he <sup>23</sup> kills them, he <sup>24</sup> ...	[tu / QU] / ta / [qa / MI] / ki
Iqllunituten. <sup>25</sup>	You are not lying.	[IQ] / llu / [ni / TU] / ten
Nallun'itaqa.	I don't know it.	[na / LLUN] / ni / [ta / QA]

## 7.5 Neutralization of Gemination

Gemination (repetition or “sharing” of a consonant sound between two syllables) is affected by the prosodic rules discussed above. Gemination can only occur if the syllable preceding it is stressed. Neutralization of gemination occurs when the rhythmic pattern of a word interferes with and “neutralizes” the gemination that might ordinarily occur. Some postbases that contain geminated consonants will become un-geminated depending on the stress patterns of the word they are attached to. An example of this neutralization of gemination occurs with the postbase **-n'ir-** (to stop V-ing<sup>26</sup>).

In the following example, gemination in the postbase is *preserved*, because according to “Initial Foot Rule C,” the second syllable is stressed, providing the stress needed to preserve the gemination. The second foot is formed according to the “2-Syllable Rule.”

Pitun'irtuq.	He stopped eating.	[pi / TUN] / [nir / TUQ]
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<sup>24</sup> The pronoun ‘he’ in this phrase refers to the same individual.

<sup>25</sup> Notice how there is no apostrophe, although this word uses the **-n'ite-** postbase, due to the fact that the postbase follows an unstressed stray foot, a pattern discussed in section 7.5.

<sup>26</sup> V here refers to a verb.

In the following examples, the syllable breaks and feet result in the syllable before the original gemination not being stressed. Therefore, the gemination is dropped. *The × before the “attempted” word shows that the word is incorrect — it cannot exist.*

Iqsanirtuq.                      She stopped fishing.                      [IQ] / sa / [nir / TUQ]  
not ×Iqsan'irtuq.

Pisuryanirtuq.                      She stopped hunting.                      [pi / SUR] / ya / [nir / TUQ]  
not ×Pisuryan'irtuq.

Pisuryatunirtuq.                      He stopped going hunting.                      [pi / SUR] / ya / [tu / NIR] / tuq /  
not ×Pisuryatun'irtuq.

The previous examples would be easy for a fluent speaker without knowledge of this rule, because if they do not hear it, they simply would not write it. Since learners expect to see the gemination due to the normally written postbase, they must be aware of situations when it disappears to ensure proper spelling.

Another postbase that is sometimes affected by neutralization of gemination is **-n'ite-** (to not V) (Sometimes **-n'te-** in (S) Kodiak). Like the examples above, however, neutralization of gemination only happens in cases where the syllable preceding the geminated postbase is unstressed.

Pektaan'ituq.                      He doesn't ever work.                      [PEK] / [TAAN] / [ni / TUQ]

Pektenituq.                      He isn't working.                      [PEK] / te / [ni / TUQ]

In the examples above, the word **pektaan'ituq** retains gemination in the **-n'ite-** postbase, because the preceding postbase **-taar-** (habitually; always) is stressed, allowing the gemination to remain. In **pektenituq**, which is made up of the root **pekte-** (to be working) and the postbase **-n'ite-**, the syllable **-ten-** preceding the postbase **-n'ite-** is unstressed, and therefore the gemination is neutralized, so that the apostrophe is dropped.

Below are additional examples where this occurs with **-n'ite-**.

Iqminituq.                      He is not chewing snoose.                      [IQ] / hmi / [ni / TUQ]<sup>27</sup>

Kuingtenituq.                      He is not walking.                      [KURING] / ten / [ni / TUQ]

The minimal pairs below show two forms of the intransitive past endings. The third person singular intransitive past is sometimes formed with the suffix **-llria**, and **-ll'ia** in other areas of the Kodiak dialect. As you see, some people pronounce the **r** after the **ll**, and others drop it, in which case the **ll** is geminated. Neutralization of gemination in both postbases and suffixes can be observed in some of the examples below. In each of the minimal pairs shown, the second example uses the shorter **-ll'ia** ending, where the fricative **r** is dropped. The geminated **ll** in **-ll'ia** and the geminated **n** in **-n'ite** (to not V) postbase will undergo neutralization of gemination

<sup>27</sup> Notice the presence of the letter **hm** in the syllable breakdown, although the word **iqminituq** is written in proper form without the 'h', due to h-dropping (See Section 2.8). The 'h' is included in the syllable breakdown, as the breakdown is intended to show the phonetic pronunciation.



whenever the preceding syllable is unstressed. Remember, gemination can only occur if the syllable preceding it is stressed. Examine the syllabification and footing of the example pairs below.

Atullria.	He sang.	[a / TULL] / ria
Atull'ia.	He sang.	[a / TULL] / lia
Atun'illria.	He stopped singing.	[a / TUN] / nill / [RIA]
Atun'illia.	He stopped singing.	[a / TUN] / ni / [LLIA]

In the first minimal pair, the second word **Atull'ia** does not experience any neutralization of gemination because the syllable preceding the **ll** is stressed. In the second minimal pair, the second example **Atun'illia** undergoes neutralization of gemination in the **-ll'ia** suffix, because the **ni** syllable is unstressed. In the final pair of examples containing the **-n'ite-** (to not V) postbase, gemination is preserved in the first example because the **yun** syllable is stressed. In the second example, the **yu** syllable is unstressed, which produces neutralization of gemination.

## 7.6 Summary: Prosody

The rules of Alutiiq prosody tell us why certain syllables are stressed or unstressed by organizing syllables into feet. There are two types of stressed feet in Alutiiq: iambic and monosyllabic. An iambic foot is an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable, and a monosyllabic foot is a single stressed syllable. Open stressed syllables that are not at the end of a word are lengthened. All initial closed syllables are light. Neutralization of gemination occurs when the syllable preceding a normally-geminated consonant is unstressed.

A series of initial foot and non-initial foot rules govern how syllables are stressed or unstressed:

### Universal Rule:

- “Rule 0” — Any heavy syllable (containing two vowels) will form a monosyllabic foot.

### Initial Foot Rules:

- “Initial Foot Rule A” — Initial closed syllables (ending in a consonant), both heavy and light, form a monosyllabic foot.
- “Initial Foot Rule B” — when the first syllable is light and ends in a consonant, and second syllable is heavy, the consonant is automatically geminated (shared between

both syllables), and the two syllables form monosyllabic feet.

- “Initial Foot Rule C” — when an initial light syllable ends in a vowel and is followed by a light syllable beginning with a consonant, the two syllables form an iambic foot.

### Non-Initial Foot Assignment:

- “1-Syllable Rule” (1SR) — if only one light syllable remains before a heavy syllable, or at the end of a word, it forms a stray (unstressed) syllable that does not belong to a foot.
- “2-Syllable Rule” (2SR) — if there are two light syllables before a heavy syllable, or at the end of a word, they form an iambic foot.
- “3-Syllable Rule” (3SR) states that when either a postbase with two light syllables follows a light syllable (3SR Subcase 1), or when three light syllables are confined to the end of a word (3SR Subcase 2), they result in a stray syllable followed by an iambic foot.

# Chapter 8: APOSTROPHE AND HYPHEN

## 8.1 Introduction

The hyphen and apostrophe were introduced in Chapter 1. They are characters used in the Alutiiq writing system that are not letters but serve a number of important functions. This chapter will outline each of the functions of these two characters.

## 8.2 Apostrophe

The apostrophe is used for a number of different purposes within Alutiiq words. These include:

1. To indicate a syllable boundary between vowels: V'V
2. Gemination: C'V
3. Representing a dropped weak consonant : V'V or C'V
4. Separating letters otherwise interpreted as a multi-character letter: C'C
5. Separating a voiced nasal from a voiceless consonant: C'C
6. Representing deleted, voiceless, or quiescent e: C'C

### Syllable Boundary

An apostrophe (') marks a boundary between two syllables. No matter what purpose it is used for, you will never find an apostrophe within a syllable unless the apostrophe is representing a deleted, voiceless, or quiescent e (indicated in this publication by the backwards apostrophe, or `).

### Special Apostrophe Conventions Used in this Book

In general writing, all of the above apostrophes are written just as a normal apostrophe. In reference materials like this one, the deleted, voiceless, or quiescent e is marked as a backwards apostrophe (`), where the hanging tail points down to the right like the tail of the absent e. This backwards apostrophe, which is different from the opening and closing apostrophes

(") generated by Microsoft Word auto-formatting, it is not done in normal writing — just in reference materials to provide extra information to readers. This character is located on most keyboards on the top left, sharing a key with the tilde (~).

### 8.2.1 To Indicate a Syllable Boundary Between Vowels

The apostrophe can be used to indicate syllable division between consonants or vowels in the Alutiiq orthography. In order to designate when adjacent vowels are not in the same syllable, an apostrophe is used to mark the syllable boundary. Apostrophes can be used to separate single vowels from each other, diphthongs and single vowels, as well as vowel pairs and single vowels. These scenarios can be generally symbolized as follows:

(V)V'V      (never ×V'VV)

This means that you can have one, or optionally two vowels before the syllable break marked by an apostrophe, but never two vowels after a syllable break. The following subsections will examine the various scenarios where an apostrophe indicates a syllable boundary between vowels.

### Syllable Separation Between Single Vowels

In five cases the apostrophe is used to indicate syllable division between two single vowels: a'a, i'i, u'u, a'i, and a'u. Below are examples of these combinations appearing within words:

a'a	
nuta'aq	new one
Ila'aqikut.	Join us (in the future).
qila'aq	roof of mouth

**i'i**

Kawi'llria.	It turned red.
Cali'it?	What are you doing?
Asi'iciquq.	It will get better.

**u'u**

u'uglluni	thawing out; melting
Aniurtu'uq.	It is snowy (on the ground).

**a'i**

Cama'i.	Hello.
kula'irluku	to visit him or her
tawa'i	there

**a'u**

Awa'uq.	It is numb.
ika'ut	that way
Qia'ut.	They are crying.

### Syllable Separation Between Diphthongs and Single Vowels

In four cases the apostrophe is used to show a syllable division between a vowel cluster (diphthong) and a single vowel: **ai'i**, **au'u**, **ia'i**, and **ia'u**. This follows the general rule that three vowels do not appear together in succession within one word. These four cases can be symbolized as follows:

$$V_1 V_2 'V$$

**ai'i**

guutai'ista	dentist
iqai'isuun	washing machine; washboard

**au'u**

wau'uq	flounder
Allau'uq.	It is a different one.

**ia'i**

kia'iwik	summer camp
pia'i	up there (restricted)

**ia'u**

Ipgia'utuq.	It is getting dull.
Qia'uq.	She is crying.

Other combinations of diphthongs and a single vowel do not occur (See later subsection: Exceptions to Apostrophe Use Between Vowels). to: (See later subsection: Prosthetic Y and W).

### Syllable Separation Between Vowel Pairs and Single Vowels

Under the same general rule for this section, a double vowel can also be separated from a single vowel with an apostrophe.

$$VV'V$$

As with all uses of the apostrophe, its use between a double and single vowel marks a syllable division. The vowel pair and single vowel can be the same or different, but only if the vowel pair is **aa**. The vowel pairs **uu** and **ii** will combine with non-same vowels without an apostrophe, as will be discussed in the next section.

Aa'a.	Yes.
Raa'ucirtuq.	He is sailing.
Mecuu'uq.	It is wet.
Aigartuu'uskii.	He shook her hand.
Cukii'itua.	I have no socks.
Ii'i!	Yuck!; How awful! (interjection)

### Prosthetic Y and W

There are some vowel combinations that are never divided by an apostrophe. Instead, these letter combinations are divided by a **w** or **y** rather than the apostrophe. Combinations that are not allowed include  $\times i'a$ ,  $\times i'u$ ,  $\times u'a$ , and  $\times u'i$ . The proper way to write these sounds is as follows: **iya**, **iyu**, **uwa**, and **uwi**. The **y** and **w** here are called "prosthetic **y**" and "prosthetic **w**." These rules can be more generally formulated in the following ways:

×(V)i'a => (V)iya

×(V)i'u => (V)iyu

×(V)u'a => (V)uwa

×(V)u'i => (V)uwi

As you can see, the **i** and **u** before the apostrophe can be on their own, but can also be part of a vowel pair ending in **i** or **u**. This rule applies also to vowel pairs and diphthongs before the apostrophe.

### iya

kangiyaq	bay (underlyingly kangi'aq)
Kagiyatuqii.	He went to sweep it.
smiiyaq	snake
taiyaq	wasp; yellow jacket; hornet

### iyu

Ekliiyugtuq.	He has a craving for something.
pikiyun	present
Taiyuq.	It is coming.
kiiyutaq	crowbar

### uwa

iluwaq	cousin
kenerkiuwat	chopped up alders
niuwacirpet	our language
Unguwauq.	He is alive.

### uwi

agayuwik	church
qunguwik	burial site
litnauwiluni	to teach
suuwin	floor rag; mop

## 8.2.2 Gemination

As discussed more completely in Chapter 5, gemination is the sharing of a consonant sound between two syllables. It is usually marked with the use of an apostrophe, except in cases where gemination is predictable, due to the rule of automatic gemination.

ul'uk                      pants                      ul / luk

Ag'ut.                      They are going.                      ag / gut

patua                      its cover; its lid                      pat / tua

In **patua** above, an apostrophe is not used due to automatic gemination, because the second syllable of the word is heavy (containing two vowels). The apostrophe is left out, but not the geminated sound. It is important to remember that the consonant **t** is still geminated — it is shared between both syllables. For more on gemination and when to use an apostrophe to mark it, refer to Chapter 5.

## 8.2.3 Representing a Dropped Weak Consonant - Fricative Dropping

Fricative dropping, as discussed in Chapter 6, is when a weak fricative (**g** or **r**) will drop at the beginning of a light syllable. In more precise linguistic terminology, we say that the underlying fricative has been replaced by *zero onset*<sup>28</sup>.

Fricative dropping will only occur before a single vowel — not a vowel pair. The dropped consonant is marked with an apostrophe. When the form of the word changes, and the dropped fricative is followed by a double vowel, it can return.

taquka'aq                      bear  
taqukaraat                      bears (plural)

arya'aq                      girl  
aryagaat                      girls (plural)

Sur'iraa.                      He tasted it (just now).  
Surwiraa.                      He tasted it (just now). *variant*

<sup>28</sup> Note to linguists unfamiliar with Eskaleut: the apostrophe never denotes glottal closure. The transition between vowels is completely smooth, with no interruption.

### 8.2.4 Separating Letters Otherwise Interpreted as a Multi-character Letter

The apostrophe is used to differentiate between the single letter **ng** and the separate letters **n** and **g** when they occasionally appear together in a word. In the case of separate letters **n** and **g** (**n'g**), each letter is pronounced separately, the **n** at the end of a syllable and the **g** at the beginning of the next syllable. The single letter **ng** is one sound, like the 'ng' in the English word 'song'.

<b>n'g</b>	un'gani	out there (in the direction of the mouth of the bay)
<b>ng</b>	ungani	his own whiskers; his own beard

<b>n'g</b>	Tun'gaa.	He is giving it to another; He is giving it away.
<b>ng</b>	tungiinun	in the direction of it

### 8.2.5 Separating a Voiced Nasal from a Preceding Voiceless Consonant

In rare cases on Kodiak, a voiced nasal appears next to a voiceless consonant. The apostrophe is used to separate the letters, because without it, the voiced nasal would be pronounced voiceless.

Qec'nguatuq.            He is running around. (some S)

The underlying form of the stem is **qecengua-**, but since the second **e** is dropped by some speakers, the apostrophe must be used to separate **c** and **ng** because **ng** is voiced. Without the apostrophe, the **ng** would be pronounced voiceless (like **hng**).

### 8.2.6 Representing Voiceless and Quiescent e

As discussed in Chapter 3: Vowels, the **e** is called a reduced vowel. There are instances where the **e** is voiceless or quiescent. Voiceless and quiescent **e** are reduced or hidden to the extent that they are not pronounced in the word, although they retain an effect on the rhythmic structure of the word. *Voiceless e* is a non-pronounced **e** that occurs between two voiceless consonants. *Quiescent e* is a non-pronounced **e** that occurs between a voiced and a voiceless consonant.

Whether the **e** is voiceless or quiescent, it is treated the same. In previous versions of this orthography, these cases were marked with an **e**, in order to preserve the **e**'s spot in the word. In this orthography, the **e** has been replaced by an apostrophe (**'**).

Marking the location with an apostrophe rather than just dropping the mark entirely from the word is important, so that the proper pronunciation or rhythm of the rest of the word can be retained, and also because the **e** can come back occasionally when certain suffixes are added. In this orthography manual, all words originally using the **e** are now written with an **'** to make it clear for the reader which apostrophes represent voiceless or quiescent **e**, and therefore must be included in determining the prosodic structure of the word. If the reader sees the **'** they will understand that there is an **e** between the consonants on each side, and this **'** must be included in counting syllables.

Sugt`stun      like an Alutiiq; in the Alutiiq language  
(not ×Sugtestun)

minq`lluku      to sew it

It`rtuq.      She (just) entered.

The two types of “dropped” or hidden **e** are called voiceless and quiescent, and are described below.

### Voiceless e

A voiceless **e** may occur between two voiceless consonants. It may be difficult to absolutely predict when it is voiceless, and it sometimes varies between (N) and (S) Kodiak styles.

Agut`kutaraa. She is going to take him along.

pisurt`hmen      to the hunter

kak`glluk      snot; nasal mucus

Sometimes speakers may pronounce an **e** where others drop it. This can vary by speaker or style.

k`siin      only  
kesiin      only

Qat`rtuq.      It is white. (S)  
Qatertuq.      It is white. (N)



*Alutiiq language learner Susie Malutin taking notes.*

### Quiescent e

A quiescent **e** occurs between a voiced consonant (**l**, **m**, **n**, **ng**, **r**) and a voiceless consonant. It is identical in its treatment to voiceless **e**.

Tang`rtuq.      She sees.

paan`kaa      can

It is important to know whether an **e** is “silent”, that is devoiced or quiescent, and when the **e** is deleted, because even though an **e** is silent, it still forms a syllable with the preceding consonant. This syllable must be counted in order to properly identify the feet in the word.

A very important general rule is that three consonants cannot occur together in the middle of a word. Whenever you hear what sounds like a sequence of three consonants, the sequence will always be broken up by inserting a voiceless **e** between them, usually between the last two consonants. For example, when you hear **pisurt`hmen** (to the hunter), you at first only hear three syllables: **pi**, **sur**, and **tmen**, but knowing that the three consonant cluster must be broken up with a voiceless **e**, it is easy to see that the ` goes between the **t** and the **hm**. On the other hand, if you take the word **mingqutmen** (to the needle), which likewise has voiceless **t** followed by voiceless **hm**, there is no consonant cluster. In this case, the ‘h’ is dropped from **hm** because it follows voiceless **t**.

The most important source of quiescent **e** is the negative postbase **-n`te-**. As you probably know, Kodiak speakers vary between **-n`ite-** (N) and **-n`te-** (S). Only the variant **-n`te-** has a quiescent **e** between the geminated **n** and the **t**. This is the reason we see two apostrophes in reference notations of **-n`te-**. The first apostrophe tells us that the **n** is geminated, while the second apostrophe tells us that it is followed by quiescent **e**. In ordinary writing, however, we use only one apostrophe.

Neren`tuq.	He is not eating. (S)	[ne / REN] / [n` / TUQ]	(standard spelling: Neren`tuq.)
Mit`llria.	It landed.	[MIT] / t`ll / [LLRIA]	(standard spelling: Mit`llria.)
Seren`tukut.	We are not sweating.	[se / REN] / n` / [tu / KUT]	(standard spelling: Seren`tukut.)
seren`llkumta	if we do not sweat...	[se / REN] / n`ll / [kum / TA]	(standard spelling: seren`llkumta.)

In the final example above, the final **te-** of **-n`te-** has changed to **ll** giving **-n`ll-**. This variant is fairly common, so you can expect to see **-n`ll-**... as well as **-n`t-**... in numerous words.

## 8.3 Hyphen ( - )

The hyphen is used for a number of purposes in the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq orthography. These include:

1. Enclitics (such as **-qaa?**, **-ruq!**, etc.)
2. Loan words (when adding Alutiiq endings, as in Benny Benson-**rem**)
3. Line breaks (when space runs out at the end of a line, placed between syllables)

Each of these uses will be examined in the next subsection.

### 8.3.1 Enclitics

One of the uses of the hyphen is to separate an *enclitic* from a base word. An enclitic is a short particle attached to a word, and pronounced as part of it. It adds or changes the meaning of a word, such as making it into a yes or no question, or adding emphasis. A hyphen is put after the word to which the enclitic is attached.

The most common enclitics are: **-llu**, **-qaa**, **-mi**, **-ruq**, **-tuq**, and **-tanem**. More than one enclitic can be attached to a word.

Pit`uten-qaa?	Did you get something (hunting)?
Llaa-llu asirpagta?	How come the weather is so nice?
Asirtuq-ruq!	It is all right. (It is good, I tell you!)
Taili-tuq.	I wish he would come.

In the first example above, the **-qaa** enclitic changes a statement into a yes or no question. The second example uses **-llu**, which means something like 'why', or 'I wonder'. The **-ruq** enclitic in the third example serves as an exclamation of emphasis. In the final example, **-tuq** serves to make the optative/imperative ending into a hope or wish. For more on enclitics, see (Leer, 1990).

### 8.3.2 Loan Words

A hyphen is used in a word to separate an ending from a foreign word, especially an English word. Compare the following:

Call-ertuq.	He is calling.
Mars-rem sug'i	the people of Mars

The first example contains the English word 'call', which should be pronounced as such, followed by the Alutiiq suffixes **-er** and **-tuq**, which designate the verb as being conducted by a singular subject

(he; she; it). The second example contains the English word Mars, which is the “possessor” of something (people). The possessor is the person or thing that owns or possesses something else, written in English followed by an apostrophe and ‘s’ (’s) such as with the phrases ‘Bob’s dog’, ‘the bear’s fur’, or ‘the priest’s book’. As the possessor, the planet Mars takes the Alutiiq suffix **-rem** which designates it as the noun in the sentence that “owns” the other noun. Here are some more examples of hyphen use for loan words:

Agkutartuq Fairbanks-men.  
He is about to leave for Fairbanks.

Town-mi ell’artukut.  
We are living in “town.”

Popcorn-nek pituryugtua.  
I would like to eat “popcorn.”

Some foreign borrowings are pronounced as Alutiiq words, and are written in the Alutiiq orthography — usually once speakers have used them for many decades. Because they are now considered Alutiiq words (*adopted* rather than *loaned*), they do not use a hyphen when adding an Alutiiq ending. For example, ‘Fairbanks’ (above) contains the letter ‘b’, which does not exist in Alutiiq, and is clearly a borrowing. Sometimes English words will be made up of letters that also exist in Alutiiq, so writers will have to rely on knowledge of the languages to determine if the word has been integrated and pronounced as an Alutiiq word. See Chapter 9 for further information on Russian loan words.

kristaaq; klistaaq	cross (from Russian крест (krest), “cross”)
Kristaaliqsiitaat.	They have not put a cross on it yet.
patreitaq	picture (N) (from Russian портрет (portret), “portrait”)
patreitasinaq	large picture (N)

### 8.3.3 Line Breaks

The final use of the hyphen is for line breaks. As in written English, a hyphen is used to separate a word at the end of a line, to be continued on the next line. This is rarely needed in modern word processing, as programs such as Microsoft Word can be set to not use hyphenated line breaks, but it is useful to know the rules if continuing a word on the next line is necessary. The basic rule is to break a word between syllables. In the following examples, we must pretend that a line break is needed due to space running out at the end of a line.

Tamamta ila’ar-	We will all join her.
ciqarpet.	

Ankutarngama ka-	When I was going to go out,
minaq qamesk`gka.	I turned off the heater.

Unuaqu agciqua	Tomorrow I will go
Kicarwig-	to Anchorage.
men.	

A word should be cut only at the syllable division, but not within a syllable. Thus the word **iqallugsuryugtaan’ituq** (he never wants to go fishing) could be cut at any one of the slashes: **i / qa / llug / sur / yug / taan / ni / tuq**, between any two syllables, but not anywhere else. For more on syllable identification, see Chapter 4, Syllabification.

## 8.4 Summary: Apostrophe and Hyphen

The apostrophe and hyphen are the only “special characters” in the Alutiiq orthography. They are not letters, but serve important functions in the writing system, as summarized in this chapter.





*April Laktonen Counciller and Peter Boskofsky discuss the Kodiak Alutiiq orthography book content and plans for final edits as they prepare to work with Dr. Jeff Leer and a group of Kodiak Alutiiq Elders in 2012. Photo courtesy of the Alutiiq Museum.*



*Children from around Kodiak Island join in two-way videoconference lessons with a group of Alutiiq language learners and Elders through a partnership between the Alutiiq Museum and Kodiak Island Borough School District. Photos courtesy of the Alutiiq Museum.*

# Chapter 9: CONVENTIONS FOR RUSSIAN LOAN WORDS

## 9.1 Introduction

The Alutiiq orthography has specific ways of dealing with loan words of Russian-origin. There are many Russian words that have been integrated into our language due to the long history of Russian settlement in our region, and the continued prevalence of Russian Orthodoxy. This section will discuss the special writing conventions for these Russian borrowings.

## 9.2 Russian Influence & Kodiak Sub-dialects

Kodiak's geography and history has caused sub-dialectal or "accent" differences between different parts of the island, which is also seen in the various Russian borrowings in the language. These differences in pronunciation or occasional vocabulary do not interfere with communication between Kodiak Alutiiq speakers. Russian loan words are used throughout Kodiak, but some are only used in certain villages.

uciitilaq	teacher	(Old Harbor, from Russian учитель (uchitel), "teacher")
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litnauwista	teacher	(rest of Kodiak)
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There are some cases where Russian borrowings are used in Northern Kodiak, while Southern Kodiak speakers use Alutiiq-origin words.

staur`kaa	curtain (N)	(from Russian штора (stóra), "curtain")
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gaalem patua	curtain	(literally: the window's cover)
--------------	---------	---------------------------------

ak'arautaq	garden (N)	(from Russian огород (ogoród), "vegetable garden")
------------	------------	--

naut`staarwik	garden	(literally: the growing ones' place)
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Many times, Russian-origin words are the same for both Kodiak styles.

piiritisaaq	pepper	(from Russian перец (pér'ets), "pepper")
-------------	--------	--

sitiin`kaa	pig	(from Russian свинья (svinya), "pig; ingot")
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trupa	stovepipe	(from Russian труба (trubá), "pipe; chimney; smokestack")
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Some of the Russian words used in Kodiak Island are of Russian or Siberian words no longer used in modern Russian.

Purkartuq.                      It is a blizzard. (N)      (from Russian буря (búrya), “blizzard”)

The Northern style of Kodiak Alutiiq, which is generally spoken in Karluk, Larsen Bay, Afognak, Port Lions, and Ouzinkie, has specific differences from other Alutiiq subdialects in the way speakers pronounce certain Russian vowels. The use of Russian vowel pronunciations will be covered in depth in Sections 9.4 and 9.5.

Rausistuaq                      Christmas (N)              (from Russian Рождество (Rozhdestvó), “Christmas”)

ARusistuaq                      Christmas (S)              (from Russian Рождество (Rozhdestvó), “Christmas”)

What is commonly called the Northern style of Kodiak Alutiiq has a greater level of influence from Russian including a higher incidence of Russian pronunciation in borrowed words. However, all Alutiiq dialects experience influence from Russian and other introduced languages.

### 9.3 Borrowing vs. Integration

As discussed in Section 8.3.2, borrowed words that retain the original loan language’s pronunciation, and have not taken on the sound system of Alutiiq, are not fully integrated into our language. These words are written in the English alphabet, and joined to Alutiiq suffixes and endings with a hyphen. This is different than words that have been “borrowed for so long that they are now ours.”

wiir`kaaq                      fork                      (integrated, from Russian вилка (vilka), “fork”)

Fairbanks-men                      to Fairbanks              (not integrated, from English “Fairbanks”)

Because most Russian borrowings have been in our language for much longer than the English borrowings, they are more likely to have taken on an “Alutiiq flavor,” or been integrated. When writing a word known to use the foreign pronunciation, endings should be added with a hyphen to show the reader they are not integrated into Alutiiq pronunciation.

Benny Benson-rem Ernera      Benny Benson’s Day      (from English)

Russian loan words are a bit more complicated, as they may retain Russian pronunciation within portions of the word, but adopt Alutiiq pronunciations or rhythmic patterns in other parts of the word. In the example below, the Russian vowel sound O, written in Kodiak Alutiiq as **au**, is retained, but the **-men** (to) ending is added without a hyphen, because the Russian word ending for school has not been retained. The Russian word for school is *shkola*, but when used in Northern Kodiak Alutiiq, it becomes **skauluq**, using the Russian vowel sound, but an Alutiiq noun ending: **q**. Because the word ending has been “Alutiicized,” the **-men** suffix can be integrated as with other Alutiiq words.

skaulumen                      to the school (N)

## 9.4 Russian *ei*

The Russian E sound is written in as **ei** in all Alutiiq. This **ei** is always long, but it may be heavy or light. It sounds much like English long ‘a’ as in ‘age’ and similar to Alutiiq **ai**, but whereas **ai** is a diphthong pronounced somewhat like the ‘ay’ in English ‘bay’, **ei** is a pure vowel, not a combination of two vowel sounds. The lips and jaw remain in the same place throughout the production of the vowel. Listen carefully to the following pair of words:

gleipaq            bread (N)

aipaq             other one of a pair

Notice with **aipaq** that you can feel the jaw and lips slightly move. In **gleipaq**, the position of the lips and jaw remains steady.

Italicization is not necessary with **ei** as it is with the Russian **au** (below), because the **ei** letter combination will only appear in Russian borrowings — there is no traditional Alutiiq counterpart.

Preirtuq.        He is shaving. (N)

kanweir`taaq envelope (N)

You will notice throughout the book it is stated that **e** cannot be combined with other vowels to form a vowel pair or diphthong. While this does not follow the rule, but because Kodiak Elders chose this letter combination for a very limited scenario (only approximately eight documented words in the Northern Kodiak style), we recognize the **ei** to exist as an exception. The **ei** is used solely to represent a single foreign vowel sound. The **ei** should not be considered a vowel cluster, but it is also not considered a new multi-character letter. It is simply a way to write the Russian E sound in a very limited selection of Russian borrowed words.

The Kenai Peninsula dialect has **ei** only in a couple of interjections and personal names, for example, Aq’alei’i (KP) (Man overboard!, or Fish jumping!)

## 9.5 Russian *au*

The Russian vowel O is written in Kodiak Alutiiq as **au**. In the Chugach dialect and the Alaska Peninsula subdialect, the Russian O is written ou<sup>29</sup>. It is always long, and can be heavy or light. In reference materials like this book, this **au** will be written in *italics* within a word to show it is of Russian-origin and retains that Russian vowel sound.

Russian **au** has a different sound than the identically-written Alutiiq **au** vowel pair. This sounds very similar to English long ‘o’, but it differs from both English long ‘o’ and Alutiiq **au** in Alutiiq-origin words by the fact that it is not a diphthong, but rather a pure vowel. In a diphthong the lips and jaw move slightly when switching between the vowel sounds, but in a Russian vowel, there is only one sound being made and the lips and jaw do not move.

laus`kaa        spoon (N)

Elautaa.        He is digging it up. (some KOD)

In other areas of the Alutiiq world, the **au** vowel sound is only found in rare cases such as in personal names.

In Kodiak Alutiiq there are Russian borrowings that in Southern Kodiak (S) have been Alutiicized to become **u(u)** or **i(i)** but in Northern Kodiak (N) have retained the Russian O pronunciation.

skauluq        school (N)

skuuluq        school (S)

<sup>29</sup> Leer explains the difference as follows: from the early days of the Tabios & Leer orthography, Russian E and O were written as **ei** and **ou** within the other Alutiiq subdialects. Although used in the Chugach dialect with regularity, this orthographic depiction was unknown to Kodiak writers. As Russian-origin pronunciations became more documented, a desire was asserted in Kodiak not to use the “new letter” ‘o’ when representing words containing these Russian sounds. A compromise was reached to use **au** (italicized in reference materials) despite the potential confusion between Alutiiq **au** and Russian **au**.

kaufiaq	coffee (N)
kuufiaq, kuugiaq	coffee (S)
karauwaq	cow (N)
kuRuwaq	cow (S)
paRagautaq	fishing boat (N)
paRag'uutaq	fishing boat (S)

## 9.6 Rhythmic Structure in Russian Borrowed Words

Russian borrowed words that are otherwise integrated into Alutiiq pronunciation will sometimes retain foreign rhythmic structures. In order to show the reader what syllables should be stressed, unstressed, and lengthened, and to avoid breaking the rules of the orthography, it is necessary to have a way of depicting the pronunciation.

Previous versions of this orthography used accent marks. Since this orthography has eliminated accent marks, a voiceless or quiescent *e* is now inserted in these words, written as an apostrophe ('). As described in previous sections on Prosody: Rhythm, Stress and Lengthening (Chapter 5), and also summarized in Section 8.2.5, the apostrophe here allows the word to be written as it actually sounds in Alutiiq (See below).

## 9.7 Summary: Conventions for Russian Loan Words

Many Russian borrowings have been integrated into the Alutiiq language, particularly on Kodiak Island, and especially in the Kodiak Island Northern style. The use of borrowed words in our language is shared with many indigenous languages that have come into contact with new items and concepts introduced by western cultures. In many cases, the borrowed words have been "Alutiicized" and given characteristics of the Alutiiq sound system, while in other cases certain vowel sounds have retained a Russian flavor. This does not make these words less legitimate as Alutiiq words. They have been part of our language for decades, if not centuries, and are simply a reflection of our complex and eventful history.



*Masters and Apprentices in the Museum's language program sing holiday songs at a potluck gathering, 2006.*

maam`kaa	my godmother	[MAA] / m' / [ KAA]	(formerly maámkaa)
truup`kaa	pipe (for smoking)	[TRUU] / p' / [ KAAQ]	(formerly trúúpkaa)
lauf`kaamen	to the store (N)	[LAU] / f' / [KAA] / men	(formerly láügkaamen)
alip`kaa	radish (N)	[a / LI] / p' / [KAAQ]	(formerly alípkaa)
priis`tanaq	dock	[PRII] / s' / [ta / NAQ]	(formerly pñistanaq)

# Chapter 10: ORTHOGRAPHY OVER TIME

## 10.1 Introduction

Alutiiq written communication in the form of pictographs existed even before contact, but it was not precisely a written language because it did not achieve a one-to-one correlation between word and symbol (Hoffman, 1882). The very first Alutiiq writing system used the Russian Cyrillic alphabet, and was developed by the late 18th Century (Black, 2001). The modern Alutiiq writing system has undergone a number of changes since it was first developed in the 1970s by Jeff Leer and Derenty Tabios in collaboration with the Yup'ik language workshop established by Irene Reed, Michael Krauss, and others.

This chapter summarizes the changes that have occurred in the writing system since the first version was developed. In many ways, the writing system has returned to being mostly the same as the original 1970s orthography. Efforts have been made to simplify the writing system and eliminate special characters, accented letters, and underlines or other special formatting which are difficult to type on a regular keyboard, or which become lost in email transit or due to human error. A chart that summarizes many of these changes, as well as the relationship of our writing system to others is available in Appendix I.



## 10.2 Changes to Letters

The letter changes described in this section refer to both the Chugach and Kodiak letters; some letters discussed are not used on Kodiak. When using older texts from the late 1970s through the 1990s, the letter equivalencies described here are useful to know.

In one of the earliest versions of the modern writing system, multi character letters like **gg**, and **rr** (in the Chugach dialect) and **ll** (in both dialects) were written with 'h' as the first letter: **hg**, **hr**, **hl**, **hng**, etc.. Later, these letters, with the exception of the nasal consonants **hm**, **hn**, and **hng** which remained the same, were changed to doubled versions like we have now: **gg**, **rr**, **ggw**, and **ll**. For a time, in what is sometimes called the "underlining orthography," the **hm**, **hn**, **hng**, and **ll** were written as m, n, ng, and l, respectively, while the **r** was written as an **h**. These letter uses roughly coincided with the advent of widespread email, and it quickly became evident that there would be problems with losing formatting like underlining in email transit. Therefore, the underlining method was dropped, and the **hm**, **hn**, **hng**, and **ll**, as well as the **r** were reinstated.

Russian **R** was at one time written as **ř** (with hacek over a roman **r**). However, since the hacek is difficult to produce on a regular keyboard, and because special characters like these are easily dropped in email, the orthography now uses a small caps **R**. The small caps **R** does require special formatting, but a regular capital **R** may be used in its place when necessary.

*Elder John "JP" Pestrikoff of Afognak and Port Lions signs books in Port Lions at a book signing of the Red Cedar of Afognak: A Driftwood Journey, featuring his stories. Photo courtesy of Native Village of Afognak and the Native Village of Port Lions.*

### 10.3 Spelling Equivalencies: gw and gu

Over time, the method of writing certain sound combinations has been refined and regularized. In certain words, the same sequence of sounds can sometimes be interpreted in two ways, so there can be two valid spellings for the same word. For example, the sequences **gwi** and **gui** (me; I) are pronounced exactly the same; so in short, there is no one “correct” way to spell the word. We have to pick one way over another, or we can allow them to coexist.

The Chugach dialect has generally chosen **gwi** over **gui**. Materials developers on Kodiak have sometimes followed suit, but have also used the **gui** spelling. As this affects only a small number of words, the authors believe individuals should choose what spellings work best for them. If a writer chooses **gui** (me; I) then it would be best if they also used the corresponding **guangkunuk** (we two; us two) and **guangkuta** (we all; us) spellings, rather than switching between **gu...** and **gw...** versions of these words.

gwi = gui	I; me
gwangkunuk = guangkunuk	we two; us two
gwangkuta = guangkuta	we all; us

While either is correct, the **gwi** spelling requires a little more work on the spellers part, because the speller must know that in order to spell words like **Gwii-mi?** (How about me?), an extra vowel must be inserted to account for the long vowel sound. In contrast, if using the **gui** spelling, the syllable is already heavy and no additional vowel needs to be added to properly depict the vowel lengthening (See Section 7.2 under “Lengthening Rule”).

### 10.4 Letter Combination ces becomes t's

In earlier versions of the Alutiiq orthography, we followed the Yup'ik practice of writing **ces** in words like Sugt`stun (old way: × Sugcestun). Since then, however, we have realized that Alutiiq speakers simply do not pronounce these sequences with a ‘ch’ sound, but rather, a plain **t** sound. Therefore, we write **-t`s-** for this sound combination.

Sugt`stun      in the Sugpiaq way or language

naut`staaq      plant

Alutiit`stun      in the Alutiiq way or language

Notice that **cestun** (how), which does contain the **ces** combination has a totally different sound than the **t's** combination used in words like Sugt`stun.

This sound combination is especially popular in the causative postbase **+t'ste-** (to make one \_\_, to cause one to \_\_).

Piturt'staqa.      I am feeding it;  
I am giving it a drink.

Atgugt'sarpenga.      You make (are making) me happy.

### 10.5 Summary: Changes Over Time

The Alutiiq orthography has changed over time, and will change in the future based on increasing literacy in the modern Alutiiq writing system. Future changes may be initiated by users intentionally or by accident, much as changes have occurred over time in the English writing system. Adhering to a single orthography as outlined in this book will help prevent the unintentional introduction of undesired changes.

# Chapter 11: PROOFREADING RULES

## 11.1 Introduction

This section summarizes, without lengthy explanation, many of the important concepts covered in previous chapters of this orthography text. For further explanation of these rules, refer back to the sections referenced.

This chapter can be used as a proofreading guide, by comparing these rules to a sample of Alutiiq text. As in previous sections of this book, words or samples that are incorrect or could not exist within the Alutiiq writing system will be marked with a superscript <sup>×</sup>.

## 11.2 Simple Rules

This section should be relatively obvious to anyone who has studied the Alutiiq orthography. The first round of proofreading for an Alutiiq language document should begin with these rules.

### Letters That Do Not Exist

Although these words may appear in English or other language borrowings, these letters do not exist in the Alutiiq alphabet. The letters ‘b’, ‘d’, ‘h’, ‘j’, ‘o’, and ‘v’ should never appear in written Alutiiq words (except ‘h’, if it is part of multi-character letters **hm**, **hn**, or **hng**). (See Chapter 1 on the Alutiiq alphabet and Chapter 9 for discussion of conventions for borrowed vs. integrated words)

### Letters That Cannot Be Doubled

Consonants cannot be doubled or repeated in Alutiiq writing. The letter **ll** is not considered doubled, as it is treated as one letter.

The reduced vowel **e** can never be doubled.

### Letters and Marks That Have Changed

There are no letters in the current orthography that contain special marks. Therefore any words written with **l**, **m**, **n**, **ng**, or **e** in the previous “underlining” orthography should be written as **ll**, **hm**, **hn**, **hng**, and ‘ respectively. The previously used Russian **R** written as an ‘r’ with a hacek ( ˇ ) over it: ř, is now written as **R** (See Chapter 10).

## 11.3 Letter Combinations

### Consecutive Consonants

There cannot be three different consonants together in a word unless they appear at the beginning. This occurs in certain Russian-origin words such as **skriip’kaa**q (violin).

### Consecutive Vowels

There can never be more than two vowels together in a word, unless the third is preceded by an apostrophe (See Section 8.2.1). An apostrophe can come after 1 or 2 vowels, but can only be followed by one vowel.

### Vowel, Apostrophe Combinations

The following vowel and apostrophe combinations do not exist: <sup>×</sup>i’a, <sup>×</sup>i’u, <sup>×</sup>u’a, and <sup>×</sup>u’i. Instead, the apostrophes are replaced with either a **y** (following **i**) or a **w** (following **u**). For further discussion, see Section 8.2.1.

## 11.4 Editing Protocol for Learners

Learners may feel overwhelmed by editing Alutiiq writing, especially if they have a limited understanding of the full writing system. There is a series of steps that can be used to reduce the number of mistakes in a writing sample. Even if the editing



project is intended to be handed over to a more experienced proofreader, the following steps will allow you to provide them a product with fewer mistakes.

1. Be sure that your **g**'s and **q**'s are not mixed up. This is a very common mistake.

2. Look up the word in the dictionary (really!). Simple words can be found in the printed or digital versions of the dictionary, so simply checking against an existing resource will help greatly. Even if a word has a different ending than in the dictionary or has had postbases or suffixes added to it, the root form can be compared to the dictionary, which can greatly aid in accuracy. Leer's 1978 dictionary in PDF form (searchable) can be downloaded from: <http://www.uaf.edu/anla/collections/dictionaries/>

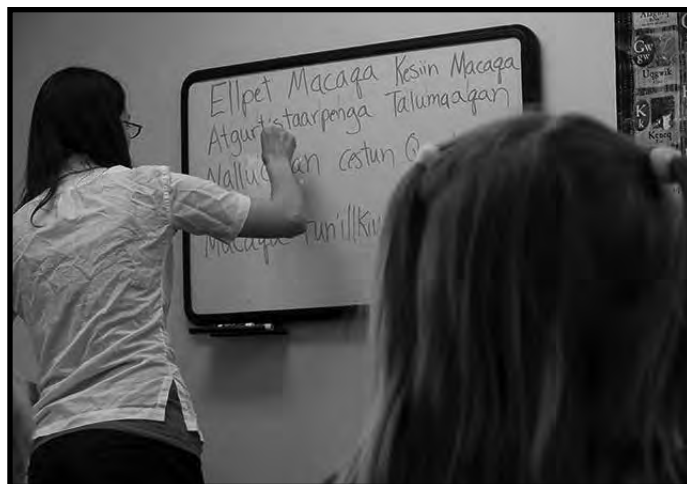
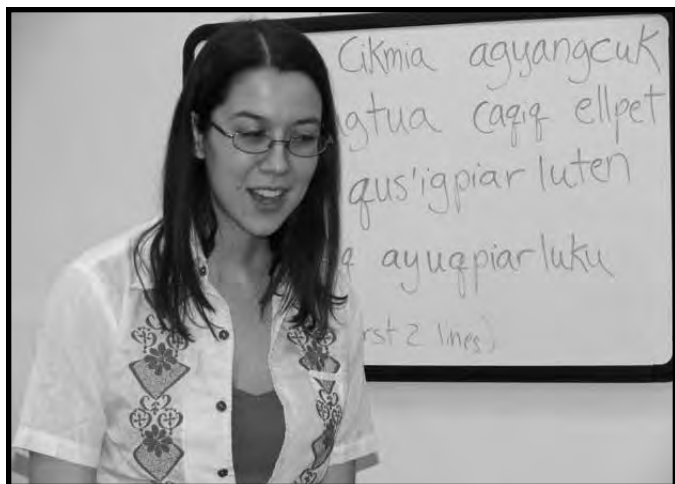
3. Within a word, word parts like the root or suffix can be checked just as in step 1. You can find a different form of the word by searching a digital file, and identifying the correct spelling of the root or of a commonly used suffix. For example, it would be easy to edit the spelling of the word **qatayasinaq** (big seagull) by looking for the root **qatayar-** (seagull) in the dictionary, and also browsing for the suffix **-sinaq** in the postbase list at the end of Leer's 1990 grammar book. Learning about the three types of endings (plus +, minus -, and assimilating ~) can also help in figuring out the proper spelling of words when suffixes are added.

4. Verb endings can also be checked against others that are in the same case. For example, the ending of **nangarngauq** (he is standing) can be compared to **inarngauq** (he is laying down) to verify that the spelling of the endings match. There are charts with the various verb endings in the back of Leer's 1990 grammar book.

5. When spellings differ in previously produced materials, rely more heavily on those that were edited by more advanced learners, or by learners aided by Jeff Leer. When sources from Leer differ, rely on those produced more recently, as these may reflect more recent documentation or modifications to spelling rules.

6. When the word, root, and any postbases or predictable endings simply do not exist in any written material, try to compare the needed word to a similar word whose spelling is known.

7. Be aware of the spell check and auto-correct features on your software or email program. It may be a good idea to turn off auto correct completely to avoid "correcting" your Alutiiq words to English ones. If you program the feature by teaching it to ignore commonly-used Alutiiq words, monitor all changes carefully.



April Laktonen Counciller teaches two Alutiiq songs "Ellpet Macaga - You Are My Sunshine" and "Cikmia, Cikmia Agyangcuk - Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" in 2009 for a rehearsal for a children's chorus Alutiiq Museum event. Photos courtesy of the Alutiiq Museum.

# Glossary

**alphabet:** Characters or symbols used to represent individual sounds in a language (See Chapter 1).

**apical:** A letter pronounced at tip or apex of tongue (See Section 2.3).

**approximants:** Sounds produced with only a minor narrowing of airflow through the vocal tract, such as the letters **w** and **y** (See Section 2.4).

**automatic gemination:** When a geminated consonant comes at the end of the first syllable, and the second syllable is heavy (i.e., has two vowels), the apostrophe is left out. This apostrophe dropping is called automatic gemination (See Chapter 4).

**alveolar ridge:** The bony ridge behind the front upper teeth, also known as the teeth ridge (See Chapter 2).

**beat:** A single rhythmic unit in language or music (See Chapter 4).

**closed syllable:** A syllable that ends with a consonant.

**diphthong:** A vowel pair that is not the same, such as **ai**, that are pronounced in quick succession to make a combined sound (See Section 1.2.5).

**disyllabic light postbase:** A postbase made up of two light syllables (See Section 7.4.4).

**enclitic:** A short particle attached to a word, and pronounced as part of it, which is joined to the word with a hyphen (-) rather than joining the word as a suffix. An example in Alutiiq is **-qaa?**, which changes the previous statement into a yes or no question (See Section 8.3).

**foot:** A prosodic (rhythmic) unit in a word. In Alutiiq, all feet are composed of one or two syllables, with the final syllable always being stressed (See Chapter 7).

**foot advancement:** When the foot (and its stress) advance toward the end of the word “leaving” a stray syllable behind; in other words, a stray syllable followed by an iambic foot (See Section 7.4.4).

**fricative consonant:** A consonant produced by the forcing of breath through a constricted passage, without totally cutting it off as with a stop (See Chapters 2 and 6).

**gemination:** When a consonant is lengthened, so that it is shared between two syllables (See Chapter 5).

**head of the foot:** The head is the stressed syllable of a foot (See Section 4.7).

**h-dropping:** The voiceless consonants **hm**, **hn**, and **hng** will be written without the ‘h’ (that is, they become written as **m**, **n**, or **ng**) when they appear after voiceless consonants, to help reduce word length (See Section 2.8).

**initial foot rules:** A series of syllable stress rules that apply only to the first one or two syllables of a word (See Chapter 7).

**inflection:** A modification to a word (in Alutiiq this is done with an ending) that expresses tense (time), person (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> person), number, or other categories like case or mood (See Section 7.4.4).

**labial:** A letter pronounced at the lips (See Section 2.3).

**laminal:** A letter pronounced at the blade (middle) of tongue (See Chapter 2).

**lax pronunciation:** A softening in pronunciation marked by the slight voicing of the consonant (See Section 3.3).

**nasal consonant:** These consonants are produced by forcing air through the nasal passages rather the mouth, such as the English letters ‘m’ and ‘n’ (See Chapter 2).

**open syllable:** A syllable that ends with a vowel.

**orthography:** A writing system for a language.

**phonetic:** A type of writing system where there is a direct correspondence between symbol and speech. Not to be confused with writing in “phonetics,” which is attempting to use another alphabet’s phonetic symbols (such as English) to approximate pronunciation sounds.

**postbase:** A particle added to the end of a root word which changes its meaning (See Chapters 5 and 7 for examples of postbases in use).

**prosodic rules:** Rules that deal with the rhythm, stress and lengthening of sounds within words. Prosody is the pattern of rhythm and sound or stress and intonation in a language (See Chapter 7).

**quiescent e:** A non-pronounced e that occurs between a voiced and a voiceless consonant, which is represented by an apostrophe ` (See Section 8.2.6).

**reduced vowel:** A vowel that is short by nature and cannot be lengthened or combined with other vowels like prime vowels (See Section 3.4).

**rounded velar:** A letter pronounced at the roof of mouth and rounded lips (See Chapter 2).

**sonorants:** Sounds produced with a long continuous (relatively unobstructed airflow through the vocal tract, such as the letter ‘l’ (See Section 2.4).

**stop consonant:** Also known as a “stop.” These consonants involve a brief stop of the outflowing breath by constricting airflow completely at various locations in the mouth or at the lips (See Chapter 2).

**stray syllable:** A syllable that is an unstressed and does not belong to a foot (See Chapter 7).

**syllabification:** The process of dividing words into syllables, either in speech or writing (See Chapter 4).

**syllable:** A part of a word — or sometimes a full word — that contains one “beat.”

**syllable boundary:** The break or boundary between two syllables (See Chapter 4).

**syllable weight:** The designation of a syllable as heavy or light depending on whether it has two or one vowel, respectively (See Chapter 7).

**unaspirated:** A letter sound produced without a puff of air being released. For example, the Alutiiq stop consonants **p**, **t**, and **k** (See Section 2.3).

**undoubling:** The voiceless letters **gg** and **rr** in the Chugach dialect are written as **g** or **r** when they occur next to another voiceless consonant, to help reduce word length (See Section 2.7).

**uvular:** A letter pronounced at the back of mouth.

**velar:** A letter pronounced at the roof of mouth.

**voiced letter:** A letter that is produced with sound (and vibration) from the vocal cords, such as English letter ‘l’ (See Section 2.4).

**voiceless letter:** A letter that is produced without sound from the vocal cords, such as English letter ‘s’ (See Section 2.4).

**voiceless e:** non-pronounced **e** that occurs between two voiceless consonants, which is represented by an apostrophe (‘) (See Section 8.2.6).

**voiced nasal:** A letter that is produced with air going through the nasal passage and vibration through the vocal cords: **m**, **n**, and **ng**.

**voiceless nasal:** A letter that is produced with air going through the nasal passage without vibration through the vocal cords: **hm**, **hn**, and **hng**.

**zero onset:** When a weak fricative (such as **g** or **r**) drops at the beginning of a light syllable, also known as fricative dropping (See Chapter 6 and Section 8.2.3).

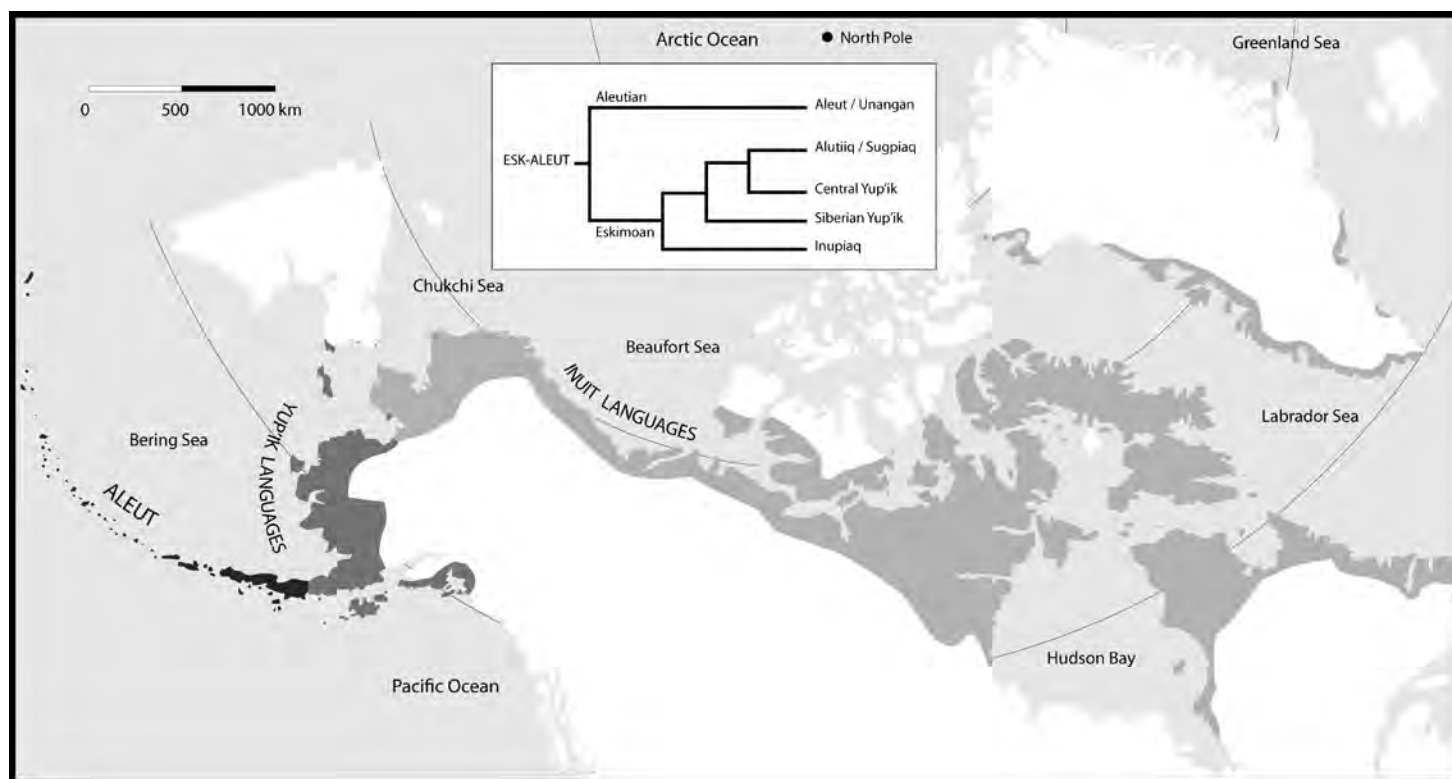
# Appendix I - Related Orthographies

The chart below illustrates how the letters correspond among various related orthographies used for Alutiiq and Yup'ik through time. It is modified from a chart that appears in Leer's (1999) paper on the Alutiiq orthography, including both Koniag and Chugach dialects.

<b><i>Cyrillic Alutiiq</i></b> (Tyzhnev 1840s, Kosbruk early 20th C.)	<b><i>Moravian</i></b> (Yup'ik, early 20th C.)	<b><i>Central Alaskan Yup'ik</i></b> (Mid 20th C. - Present)	<b><i>Leer/Tabios</i></b> (Alutiiq 1970s)	<b><i>Present Alutiiq Orthography</i></b> (21st C.)
<u>Vowels</u>				
а	а	а	а	а
и	i/e	и	и	и
у	u/o	у	у	у
ы	i/e	е	е	е
	i/e	е	е => <u>е</u>	,
<u>Stops</u>				
п	р	р	р	р
т	т	т	т	т
ч	ts	с	с	с
к	к	к	к	к
к	K => k	q	q	q
<u>Voiced Fricatives</u>				
л	л	л	л	л
г	г	г	г	г
г	р/г	р	р => h	р
й	и	у/с	у	у
у/в	в	в	в	в
р	-	-	ř	ř
<u>Voiceless Fricatives</u>				
л	tl	ll/l	hl/l => l/l	ll
ш/с	с	ss/s	с	с
х	г	gg/g	hg/g => gg/g	gg
х	р/г	rr/r	hr/r => rr/r	rr
				f
<u>Voiced Nasals</u>				
м	м	м	м	м
н	н	н	н	н
н	ng	ng	ng	ng
<u>Voiceless Nasals</u>				
м	м	м	hm/m => <u>м</u> /м	hm
н	н	п	hn/n => <u>н</u> /н	hn
н	ng	пг	hng/ng => <u>нг</u> /ng	hng
<u>Russian Loans</u>				
			ř	ř
			f	f

## Appendix II - Dialect Abbreviation Guide

C	Chugach Alutiiq dialect (also, in hypothetical example words, represents a consonant)
K	Koniag Alutiiq dialect
PWS	Prince William Sound sub-dialect of Chugach Alutiiq
KP	Kenai Peninsula sub-dialect of Chugach Alutiiq
KOD	Kodiak Island sub-dialect of Koniag Alutiiq
AP	Alaska Peninsula sub-dialect of Koniag Alutiiq
N	Northern Kodiak Island style of Koniag Alutiiq, part of KOD sub-dialect
S	Southern Kodiak Island style of Koniag Alutiiq, part of KOD sub-dialect (also, in hypothetical examples, represents a syllable)



*The Esk-Aleut world — related languages ranging from Alutiiq to Greenlandic Inuit.*

# Appendix III - Writing Conventions

## Alutiiq and English Word Conventions

Kodiak Alutiiq words and individual letters or letter clusters in discussion are in **bold**; English letters and words are in regular font surrounded a single quote. (Alutiiq **l** sounds like English 'l' as in 'light'). For clarity purposes, Chugach Alutiiq letters also appear non-bolded although they are Alutiiq letters.

English translations of Alutiiq words will appear in parenthesis, as in **amikuq** (octopus), within paragraphs, but set apart by one or more tabs when in example lists. Alutiiq words in example lists are non-bold. For example:

amikuq                      octopus

English example letter, words, or word parts will appear in single quotes (sounds like 'l' in 'light', or 'pin' in English 'spin').

English words needing a definition (such as *velar*) will appear in italics when defined (usually at or close to first occurrence within the document), then in regular font thereafter. All defined words will appear in the glossary at the end of the book.

## Symbols Used in This Book

Various symbols and special conventions are used in the later parts of the book when illustrating various spelling, rhythm, and stress rules. These symbols are compiled below for reference:

#                      The # symbol indicates a word boundary, i.e., the beginning or end of a word within an illustrative formula. This is important when a letter combination or rule applies only to the beginning or end of a word.

- /                      The forward slash / is used throughout to indicate a syllable division within a word breakdown or a rule-illustrating formula.
- ×                      A superscript × immediately before a word or letter combination is an indication that the word or spelling is incorrect, and is being used for explanation or comparative purposes.
- [ ]                      Brackets are used to indicate the beginning and end of a foot within a word breakdown or a rule-illustrating formula.
- ...                      Ellipses are used to indicate the remainder of a word in an illustrative formula when the sole section of the word where the rule applies has already been illustrated.
- C                      A capitalized C indicates a consonant within rule-illustrating formulas.
- (N)                      A capitalized (N) in parenthesis indicates that the preceding word is used within the Northern style of Kodiak Alutiiq.
- S                      A capitalized S indicates a syllable within a rule-illustrating formula, not to be confused with the (S) symbol below.
- (S)                      A capitalized (S) in parenthesis indicates that the preceding word is used within the Southern style of Kodiak Alutiiq.
- V                      A capitalized V indicates a vowel in rule-illustrating formulas, or in other cases, to refer to a verb.

(C), (V) A C or V in parenthesis can be used in rule-illustrating formulas to show that a consonant or vowel is optional within a word construction — words with or without the optional letter will still follow the rule. Similarly, within an example word (usually at the end), a letter or series of letters can be put within parenthesis to indicate that they are optional, for example, **asirtua(nga)** (I am good), where the ending **nga** is optional.

N-V, etc. when a N-N, N-V, or other combination of N (noun) and V (verb) are used with a - between when defining a postbase, these symbols show what type of word (N or V) they are added to, and what type of word they will be after adding the postbase (N or V). These symbols are not to be confused with the V (vowel) or (N) Northern style of Kodiak Alutiiq symbols.

C<sub>1</sub>, C<sub>2</sub>, etc. In cases where rules are illustrated with multiple vowels or consonants, subscript numbers may be used to differentiate them for clarity purposes. Subscript may also be used in sentence translations to clarify which subject is being referred to in each part of the sentence.

CAPS Capitalized letters within an example word indicate stress on that syllable, or the stressed syllable of a disyllabic foot.

g, r Superscript letters, usually only **g** and **r**, can be used in cases of dropped fricatives within reference texts to indicate which letter has been dropped, in case alternate endings or postbases can cause that fricative to return to the word.



*Kodiak Alutiiq Elders contribute and review the orthography book with Dr. Jeff Leer and Dr. April Counciller at Kodiak College in the new Alutiiq Studies Room in 2012. Photo courtesy of Kodiak College.*

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Gospel of St. Matthew (1848) written in Alutiiq using the Cyrillic alphabet (Alutiiq Museum collection AM414:1). Cyrillic Alutiiq writing was introduced by Tyzhnev in the late 18th Century, and was used well into the 20th Century by Alutiiq lay church readers before it faded from use. In the past few years, scholars and Elders have studied the Cyrillic Alutiiq form as a proud part of our literary history.



## About the Authors

April Laktonen Counciller, Ph.D., also known as *Isiik*, is an enrolled tribal member of the Native Village of Larsen Bay, and resides in Kodiak, Alaska. She received her B.A. in Anthropology and American Civilization from Brown University in 2002, her M.A. in Rural Development from University of Alaska Fairbanks, in 2005, and her Ph.D. in Fall 2010 from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks Interdisciplinary Program in Language Planning and Indigenous Knowledge Systems. April is an Assistant Professor of Alutiiq Language and Culture and the Activity Director for the Title III Alutiiq Studies and Student Support project at Kodiak College, a branch of the University of Alaska Anchorage. She teaches courses in Alutiiq Language and Alaska Native Studies. April also serves as the Language Program Manager at the Alutiiq Museum & Archaeological Repository. Dr. Counciller authored the *Kodiak Alutiiq Conversational Phrasebook with CD* (2006), with Jeff Leer, and the *Alutiiq Word of the Week 15-Year Compilation* (2012) with Amy Steffian.



Jeff Leer, Ph.D. is Professor Emeritus of the Alaska Native Language Center (ANLC) of the University of Alaska Fairbanks. His commitment to Alaska Native languages began at age seven when he started to study Tlingit in his hometown, Juneau. In 1973 he became a linguist and teacher at ANLC, and in 1991 he completed his Ph.D. dissertation, *The Schetic Categories of the Tlingit Verb*, at the University of Chicago. He learned to speak both Tlingit and Alutiiq, and he has done extensive linguistic work in other languages, as well as in the field of comparative Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit. Jeff has authored numerous publications on Alutiiq, Tlingit and Athabaskan languages, including the *Tlingit Bilingual Teacher's Handbook* (1975), *A Conversational Dictionary of Kodiak Alutiiq* (1978), *Nanwalegmiut Paluwigmiut-llu Nupugnerit, Conversational Alutiiq Dictionary, Kenai Peninsula Alutiiq* (1978), as well as co-authoring the *Kodiak Alutiiq Conversational Phrasebook with CD* (2006), with April Counciller, and the *Interior Tlingit Noun Dictionary* (2001), with Doug Hitch and John Ritter. His teaching and research continue since his retirement in 2011.



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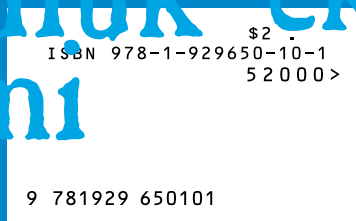
# The Kodiak Alutiiq Writing

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*words? Has the Alutiiq writing system seemed a mystery, but you think there must be a logic behind it? Check out this definitive text on all topics related to Alutiiq writing. With topics ranging from alphabet sounds to proofreading, while answering tough questions (like when to stress and lengthen syllables) in between, this book is the first to comprehensively teach the modern Alutiiq writing system. This resource is intended for anyone with a basic understanding of Kodiak Island Alutiiq, and for those who want to learn more.*



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