

Writing Inezeño:

There is no one “right” way to write the Chumash languages.

Different people have written Chumash in different ways over the years, including Spanish missionaries, early explorers and anthropologists, John P. Harrington, and more contemporary anthropologists and linguists.

These lessons present Inezeño Chumash in a form of phonetic spelling.

Some of the advantages of phonetic spelling are:

- English spelling is very inconsistent:
- With phonetic spelling, the same letter stands for the same sound across the board.
- Once you’re familiar with the phonetic symbols, you can read anything written in them, such as other books and articles on the Chumash languages.

Special Symbols: c = “ts” ĭ = “barred I” ’ = “glottal stop” h = “raised H”
 ċ = “ch” š = “sh” q = “back K” x = “raspy H”

The Five Familiar Vowels

Five of the vowels of Inezeño are familiar: a e i o u

They are pronounced very much as in Spanish.

a	pat	“nest”			pat
	takak	“quail”			 takak
e	he	“yes”			tip
	step	“flea”	step		 mimi
i	tip	“salt”			
	mimi	“finger, toe”			
o	nono	“grandfather (on mother’s side)”			
	tomol	“canoe, boat”			 tomol
u	haku	“hello		muhu	
	muhu	“horned owl”			

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The Vowel **ɨ́** — “Barred I”

This sound is called “barred I,” since it’s often written as **ɨ́** — “I” with a bar through it. It sometimes shows up as **ɨ̇** — an I with *two* dots above it.

The sound **ɨ́** is pronounced halfway between Chumash **i** (English “ee”) and **u** (English “oo”).

Listen to the progression of these three vowel sounds: **i ɨ́ u**

tɨ́ “name”

wɨ́ “deer”

nɨ́ “fire”

mɨ́k “far, far away”

tasɨ́n “to be red”



wɨ́



nɨ́



tasɨ́n

If you have trouble saying barred I as **ɨ́**, the “oo” of English “look” or “put” is a decent approximation of the Inezeño sound.

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Glottal Stop — **ʼ**

This is one of the most common sounds in the Chumash languages.

It’s called “glottal stop” because you pronounce by quickly closing the “glottis” — the vocal cords or voice box.

Glottal stop shows up in English, in words like “oh-oh” and “uh-uh,” and in some people’s pronunciation of words such as “kitten” and “lightning.”

The two most common ways to write glottal stop are:

ʼ an apostrophe or a single quote *with the curve open on the left*.

ʔ a symbol like a question mark without the dot.

These lessons use the apostrophe because it’s easier to write and type.



tuʼ

yaʼ



weʼ

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Hearing Glottal Stop

Glottal stop can show up anywhere in Inezeño words.

Glottal stop is easiest to hear when it's between vowels:

'o' – ma 'o' "water" – "the water"

'a' – ma 'a' "crow" – "the crow"

'iw̥ – ma 'iw̥ "knife" – "the knife"

'ap – ma 'ap "house" – "the house"



Inezeño words can mean different things depending on whether there's a glottal stop at the end:

he – he' "yes" – "this one"

nono – nono' "grandfather" – "a lot, very much"

ma – ma' "the" – "rabbit"

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Consonants that English and Inezeño Share — 1

Most of the consonants of Inezeño also show up in English, and they're spelled the same.

h haku "hello"



ku

t 'iti' "here"



w̥

k ku "person"

w w̥ "deer"

l wil "to be, exist"

y ya' "arrow"

m tomol "canoe, boat"



tomol



ya'

n n̥ "fire"



n̥

p 'ap "house"

s sa "tooth"




sa

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Consonants that English and Inezeño Share — 2

Three consonant sounds that occur in both Inezeño and English are written phonetically in Inezeño rather than with regular English spelling.

c = “ts”	icumu’	“to point (at/to)”		’icumu’	
	wic’	“bird”			wic’
č = “ch”	huču	“dog”		huču	
	kič	“like, as”			
š = “sh”	šoyin	“to be black, dark”		šoyin	
	miš	“to cry, weep”			miš

The two symbols with the wedge are called “C wedge” and “S wedge.”







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Inezeño Consonants that English Lacks — 1

Inezeño has two consonant sounds that don’t occur in English at all.

x This sound is a raspy “H.” It’s like the “J” in Spanish *baja* or the “CH” in German *Bach*.

The **x** sound can occur anywhere in an Inezeño word:

xus	“bear”		xus		x+p		taxama
x+p	“rock, stone”						
taxama	“skunk”						
’ixpaniš	“acorn”		’ixpaniš		’ax		t+x
’ax	“bow, weapon”						
t+x	“eye, face”						

 Remember not to pronounce Inezeño **x** like either “X” in Xerox.

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Inezeño Consonants that English Lacks — 2

The second Inezeño sound that doesn't occur in English is more unusual.

q This sound is a “K” that’s pronounced further back in the throat than regular Inezeño or English “K”

The **q** sound can occur anywhere in an Inezeño word:

qap “leaf, feather”



qap

qsi “sun, day”



qsi

'aqiwo “star”



'aqiwo

aqšan “to die, be dead”



aqšan

itaq “to hear, listen”



itaq

'eneq “woman, female”



'eneq

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The Simplest Sentences

You don't necessarily have to use a verb to create a sentence in Inezeño. It's very common to skip the verb “to be” and simply string two (or more) words together with “to be” implied.

So you don't have to know *anything* about tenses and verb conjugations in order to start speaking sentences right away.

Two of the most basic — and the most useful — of such sentences are

suk'u he'ni? “what is this?” *literally* “what [is] this?”

suk'u hek'i? “what is that?” *literally* “what [is] that?”

In normal speech — unless you're being slow and deliberate — the two words are run together.

The arrow **>** shows what the sequence of sounds becomes.

suk'u he'ni? > suk' e'ni? “what's this?”

suk'u hek'i? > suk' ek'i? “what's that?”



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Answering “what’s this?” — 1

The answer to

suk’u he’ni? or **suk’ e’ni?** “what’s this?”

is a bit more complicated than the question. Suppose you’d like to respond with “that’s a boat.”

There are a few additional things you need to know before you just string “that” and “boat” together.

First, the word **ka** introduces the noun in expressions like this.

ka huču he’ni “this is a dog” *literally* “ka dog [is] this”



huču

ka w+ hek’i “that’s a deer” *literally* “ka deer [is] that”



w+

Here **ka** has more a function than a meaning.

It shows up when you string two elements together — such as “this” and “dog” — in a statement when the verb “to be” is implied.

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Answering “what’s this?” — 2

Second, the **h** of **he’ni** and **hek’i** drops out when these words come right after another word that ends in a consonant.

So if you say “that’s a house,” the **h** of **he’ni** drops out after the **p** of **’ap**:

ka ’ap he’ni > **ka ’ap e’ni** “this is a house”

ka x+ p he’ni > **ka x+ p e’ni** “this is a rock”

ka tomol hek’i > **ka tomol ek’i** “that’s a boat”

ka ya’ hek’i > **ka ya’ ek’i** “that’s an arrow”



’ap



tomol

This sound change is frequent and regular.

If this is the *only* change that happens when you put words together, these lessons write just the end result without the **h** — in order to save space.

You’ll see just

ka ’ap ek’i “that’s a house”

instead of **ka ’ap hek’i** > **ka ’ap ek’i**.



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Practice with “what’s this?”

Point to something and ask what it is, using **suk’u** “what” plus the Inezeño forms of “this” and “that.”

Ask the question twice, once slowly and then with the words run together:

suk’u he’ni? > **suk’ e’ni?** “what’s this?”

The person answering replies with **ka** plus the Inezeño word plus **he’ni** or **hek’i**.

You fill in the blank:

ka _____ **he’ni / hek’i**

ka huču he’ni “this is a dog” *literally* “**ka** dog [is] this”

ka tomol ek’i “that’s a boat” *literally* “**ka** boat [is] that”



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Another answer to “what’s this?”

You can say **ka tomol ek’i** “that’s a boat,” but you can also say it with the word for “that” first.

The *third* thing you need to know in answering “what’s this?” is that the Inezeño words for “this” and “that” have different forms depending on whether they come at the beginning of the phrase or not.

at beginning anywhere else

“this” **ke’ni**

he’ni



ke’ni



kwek’i

“that” **kwek’i**

hek’i

So you can say

ka tomol ek’i “that’s a boat” *literally* “**ka** boat [is] that”

or **kwek’i ka tomol** “that’s a boat” *literally* “that [is] **ka** boat”

Starting with **ke’ni** or **kwek’i** is actually the neutral order; when you put **tomol** first in **ka tomol hek’i** you’re emphasizing “boat.”

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Practice with “what’s this?” — 2

Point to something and ask what it is, using **suk’u** “what” plus the Inezeño forms of “this” and “that.” Use both the careful and run-together forms.

suk’u he’ni? > suk’ e’ni? “what’s this?”

The person who answers replies with two phrases:

first with the Inezeño forms of “this” and “that” at the beginning,
then with “this” and “that” second in the phrase.

You fill in the blanks:

ke’ni / kwek’i ka _____

ka _____ **he’ni / hek’i**

For example,

ke’ni ka x+p “this is a rock”

ka x+p e’ni “this is a rock”



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“Yes/No” Questions

Besides asking what something is, you can also make a sentence without a verb into a question by adding **he**. By itself, **he** means “yes.”

You can add **he** after a noun and create a very simple yes/no question:

huču he? “is it a dog?” *literally* “dog question”

As with **he’ni** and **hek’i**, the **h** of **he** drops out after a consonant.

’o’ he? > ’o’ e? “is it water?” *literally* “water question”

x+p he? > x+p e? “is it a rock?” *literally* “rock question”

You can also add **he** to a simple sentence with “this” or “that.”

x+p he he’ni? > x+p e he’ni? “is this a rock?”

tomol he hek’i > tomol e hek’i “is that a boat?”



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Answering “Yes/No” Questions

When you ask a “yes/no” question such as

x̣p he he'ni? > x̣p e he'ni? “is this a rock?”



'ap he hek'i > 'ap e hek'i “is that a house?”

the affirmative answer is:

he, ka x̣p e'ni “yes, this is a rock”

he, ka 'ap ek'i “yes, that's a house”



“No” is **'insil**, which literally means “it is not.”

It's based on the element **'ini** “not,” which you can put at the beginning of the sentence. (**'ini** is attached to the verb when the sentence has a verb.)

So the negative answer to a yes/no question is:

'insil, 'ini ka x̣p e'ni “no, this is not a rock”

'insil, 'ini ka 'ap ek'i “no, that's not a house”



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Practice with “Yes/No” Questions

Point to something and ask if it's whatever you think the Inezeño word for it is, as in:

x̣p he he'ni? > x̣p e he'ni? “is this a rock?”

The person who answers replies with two phrases, one affirmative

he, ka x̣p e'ni “yes, this is a rock”



and the other negative

'insil, 'ini ka x̣p e'ni “no, this is not a rock”



Here is another such exchange:

Q: **'ap he hek'i? > 'ap e hek'i?** “is that a house?”

A: **he, ka 'ap ek'i** “yes, that's a house”

or **'insil, 'ini ka 'ap ek'i** “no, that's not a house”



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Some Inezeño Phrases

Here are some greetings in Inezeño. They may have combinations of sounds that are more complicated than you've learned so far, but you've been introduced to these sounds.

haku	“hello”
haku, č'ant+k	“hello, friend”
haku tikali'?	“hello, how's it going?”
pa kič ek'i	“OK” <i>literally</i> “just like that”
na tikali' hi pi'?	“and how's it going with you?”
pa kič ek'i na'ni	“OK too” <i>literally</i> “just like that too”



haku, č'ant+k



Some exclamations and interjections:

'ay	“ouch!”	šu	“hey!” — <i>calling someone's attention</i>
yi	“eek!” — <i>fright</i>	ha'á	“ah!” — <i>surprise or pleasure</i>
čř	“shoo!” “go away!”	ho	“oh!” — <i>acknowledging information</i>

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Practice with Inezeño Phrases

Take turns exchanging these pairs of phrases:

A:	haku	“hello”
B:	haku, č'ant+k	“hello, friend”
A:	haku tikali'?	“hello, how's it going?”
B:	pa kič ek'i	“OK” <i>literally</i> “just like that”
A:	na tikali' hi pi'?	“and how's it going with you?”
B:	pa kič ek'i na'ni	“OK too” <i>literally</i> “just like that too”



End

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