

Small Number is a 5 year-old boy who gets into a lot of mischief. He lives with his Grandma and Grandpa, who patiently put up with his antics, in a small settlement with 7 tipis arranged in a circle.

**Ama sahkomapii anista “Poksskaaksini.”
Aisistoiisstoyimii kii ikkattsisskiwa. Ohpokitaopiimiwa
maaahsiksi. Otsiiksiiyiiponiisakiaksi.**



One day Small Number wanders out into the woods and sees a beautiful black cat with a long white stripe down its back.



Maatakaitapisskiipa mii otsitaokiikahpiaawa. Ihkitsiikaiyi miistsii niitoyiistsi ito'takaakokiiwato'pistsi. Kiyannikai ksistsiko ama Poksskaaksini iitsitssoo iitsitsapi ami sikhpoosa. Amo ookakinni (apiko'kakini) ksikksinnatsi itsitsiikisstsipimii.

Wanting to take the cat home to show Grandma, he tries to catch it and learns that the black cat is really a skunk.



Maa sahkomapi skaistaayiskaa mahksinnimattahsi ami poosa. Akkiaahkiaapotoissatakiattsiwa mahsa ami sikohpoosa.

Smelling strongly from the skunk spray, he runs home to Grandma, who quickly takes him out to wash the smell off him. As hard as she scrubs him down, she can't quite get rid of all the bad smell.



**Skoahtokkssimimma ami apiikaayi otsskssistoiyssi,
aahkiaapoksskaasiwa. Ami maaahsa otaiyaissiistsiimokkaaya.
Oonammitsskaiikssiistsimokaayi
maatohkotahkannaiyiistapsstsiwa ami makksimo'wa.**

Grandma doesn't want Small Number spending time in their tipi until he smells better, so she decides to set him a task she thinks will take him a long time. She knows Small Number can count to 100.



**Ami mahsa oomattstaaka mahkitsipstaopissaiyi ami niitoyiss,
ikkommaikottsskimima. Sottamitsiikippaiyotahkattsiwaayi,
manistakksiisama'pisspi. Otsitaakohkannaikakoiyisspi ami
makksimoiyi. Issksinnoiyiwaayi ohkottsito'toksstakki kiipipoyi.
Itannistsiiwayi mahkokssto'sii amiistsi niitoyiistsi.**

She tells him to start at their tipi, which is right beside the entrance to the settlement at the east point of the circle, and to walk around the circle of tipis by first heading south.



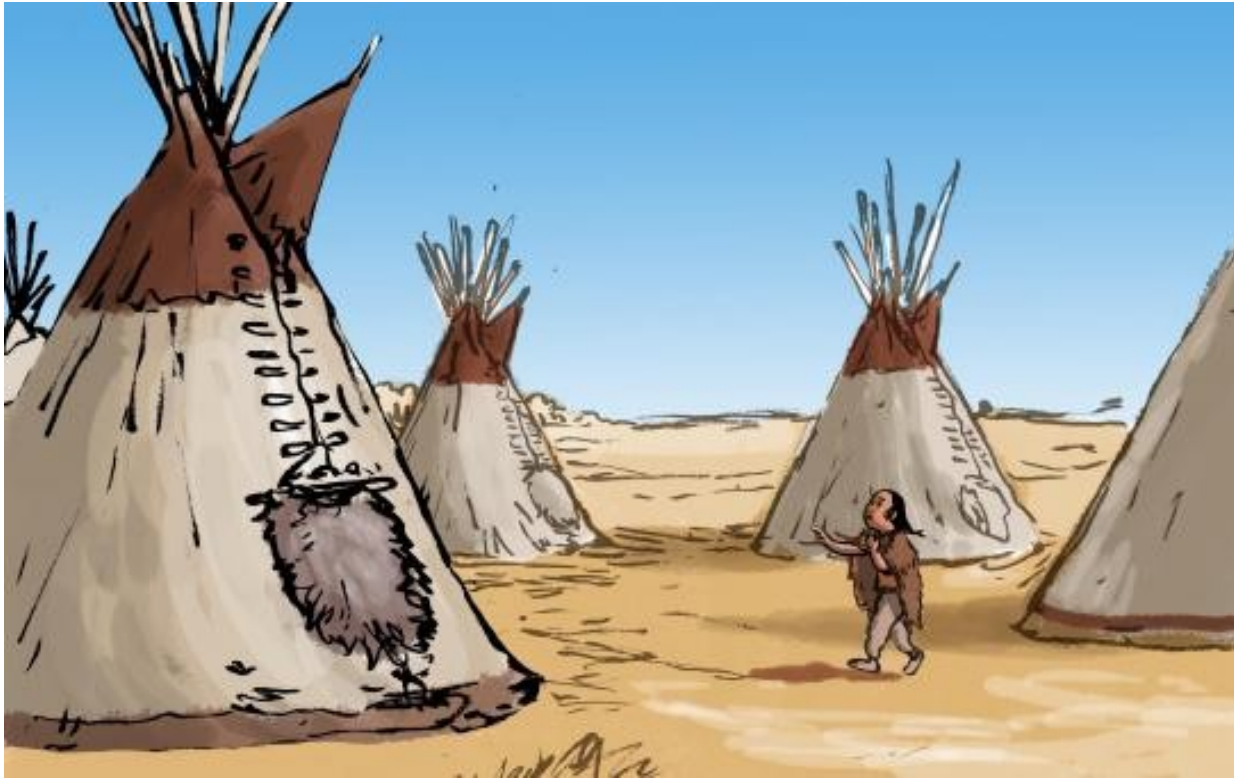
Aakohto'mattapokkstaki amii ookoowawayi, i'tsohkopiiyaawa amii pinnapohkitsimi. Okki, aakotoomoo'takkaatooma amiistsi akokaatsistsi.

His task is to count the tipis going round and round until he can tell her which tipi he gets to when he reaches 100.



**Aakanistappootakkoo amooka aamsskaapohtsi.
Aakstammatsistao'takoowa, kiasappanistsookstaakiisi kiipipo,
kiannimaiyi aakitsokaipii. Aakitannistsiwa ami maaahsa ami
niitoyis otsitsiikoksstaaksspi.**

Small Number starts walking around the circle counting. He starts at 1 at his tipi, and when he gets back there, he has counted to 8.



Ama “Poksskaaksini” itomatapai’pi. Ami ookoowaayi ihtomattapokkstahkii. Ni’to’ksa isto’matapokstaki. Otaisskito’to’hsii ami ookoowayi, naaniso akohkokstakiiwa.

When he gets to 15 and is back at his own tipi, he stops and sits down. He counts on his fingers for a while...



**Ottatsskitao'tohsii ami ookoowaayi nisitsiikoopootoowa
akatahkoksstaki; kiitaako'piiwa. Ookitsiiksi
ihtsittomatapohtokksstaakiwa.**

...and then runs in to see his Grandma and yells: “It is Auntie Rena’s tipi!” which is one tipi south of his grandparents’.



**Aaniiwa, “Naaahsa! Aniiyo’ka naa nikssista Rena ookoowaayi!”
Ami ookoowaayi ihpo’kisstsiwa oostoowaawaayi
ookoowaawaayi.**

Question: How did Small Number know that the 100th tipi is the one just south of his grandparents' tipi without actually counting them?



Q: Kippanikit

Tsa nitssksinimma ama Poksskaaksini otaakitssikoksstaaksi omi ni'toiyiss pookisstsiwa oostoowaawaayi ami ookoowaawaayi, kii maatssinnaostoom amiistsi niitoyiistsi?

About the Blackfoot language

Blackfoot is the language spoken by the Siksika, Kainai and Piikani, which they call niitsi'powahsin. Blackfoot is also a cultural unit as the three groups blended together in politics, religion and social customs. Since ancient times the oral tradition conveyed the thoughts and impressions of the people, but in the early 1970s they began experimenting with a written version of the language. Before the days of radio and television most Blackfoot people spoke their mother tongue, whereas today the language is endangered and there are fewer native speakers in each generation. Literacy in Blackfoot offers an opportunity to learn the language in a modern format because reading and writing introduces new modes of communication.

- Eldon Yellowhorn of the Piikani First Nation

