

## Shall I compare thee to an Inuktitut Month?<sup>1</sup> (1/2) 30 Points

Sarah, the marine biologist, was very excited to receive a grant to study the Bearded Seals of north-east Canada. As she researched further about the animals, she noticed that some Inuit peoples, such as the Nunavik, base some months off of the lifecycle of bearded seals, whilst others are just based off of how lovely and/or temperate the month is.

To her dismay, some potentially valuable resources were written in Inuktitut (ᐃᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐ). One of the three official languages of the Nunavut region, Inuktitut is an aboriginal Canadian language with about 30,000 native speakers of which only about 3,500 are monolingual. It is written in an abugida<sup>2</sup> invented for the language called Inuktitut Syllabics (I.S), however often transliterations into the Latin alphabet are used. She looked around for a full source detailing what each month is in Inuktitut but only found bits and pieces across the internet.

**Task 1:** Help her match up each English month with the Inuktitut months and their Latin alphabet transliterations by placing the corresponding number in the table below.

English	Inuktitut (Latin Alphabet)	Inuktitut (I.S)
January	1	ᑕᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐ
February	2	ᐃᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐ
March	Natsiat	ᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐ
April	Tirigluit	3
May	Ivlauliit	ᐃᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐ
June	Manniit	4
July	Saggirivvik	ᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐ
August	Akullirurvik	5
September	Amiraijarvik	6
October	Sikuvvik	7
November	Katagaarivvik	ᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐ
December	8	ᐃᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐ

- a) ᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐ
- b) ᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐ
- c) Aagjulirvik
- d) Avunnivik

- e) ᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐ
- f) ᐃᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐ
- g) ᐃᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐ
- h) Taqqiunarjuaq

a)	b)	c)	d)	e)	f)	g)	h)

<sup>1</sup> Created by James Brew

<sup>2</sup> Whilst an alphabet, like the Latin alphabet used in English, has a separate letter for each vowel and consonant, an abugida can have one symbol that represents multiple sounds, usually a consonant-vowel cluster such as 'ta' or 'ki'. Some abugidas (like Inuktitut Syllabics) change the preceding vowel by altering the orientation of a letter as opposed to its actual shape. An abugida can also have symbols representing individual consonants or vowels.

## Shall I compare thee to an Inuktitut Month? (2/2)

**Task 2:** Sarah found out her university had built a relationship with a Nunavik family that she'd be staying with. She wanted to learn some basic family vocabulary in Nunavik Inuktitut but found similar translation problems to those she had encountered while trying to learn the months. Help Sarah by placing the correct Inuktitut Syllabics and Latin alphabet transliterations she's missing in the table below.

Mother	Anaana	a)
Father	b)	◁ĊĊ
Older Brother	Ani	c)
Son	Irniq	d)
Girl	e)	σΔ◁Ċʹ◁ <sup>ᶜᵇ</sup>
Wife	Nuliaq	f)
Grandmother	g)	◁ḁḁĊʹ◁ <sup>ᶜᵇ</sup>

a)		e)	
b)		f)	
c)		g)	
d)			

## Explanation of Sources:

- All names of months from a 2003 series of posters designed for the Nunavut Board of Education <https://www.scribd.com/doc/35254781/Inuit-Traditional-Every-Year-Calendar-in-four-languages#>
  - o I looked at multiple different resources for months and there unfortunately didn't seem to be much consensus between sources for all of the months given the slightly different cycle of the Inuit calendars, the different dialects and different weather patterns.
- Due to this, I decided the Nunavut Government resource was the safest choice.
- Other words sourced from Wiktionary "Appendix:Eskimo-Aleut basic vocabulary". Given the lack of formalisation of Inuktitut languages and of complete sources, Community based sources are some of the only (and by far the most extensive) resources available.
  - o Crosschecked all words to find sources between
    - <http://www.labradorvirtualmuseum.ca/english-inuttut.htm> - the current manifestation of the "Asuilaak Living Dictionary" which according to the Nunavut Department of culture and heritage (DoCH), "is an initiative of the Department of Culture and Heritage that has become the most comprehensive source of information on the Inuit language. It contains 80,000 Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun terms with many English and French translations."
    - And <https://tusaalanga.ca/index.php/fr/glossary> - also developed with the Nunavut DoCH
- In General sources for Inuktitut are rarely consistent with each other due to the hundreds of different dialects and each Inuktitut speakers' own experiences with the words. There seem to be no clear sources outside of Wiktionary that differentiate Dialects consistently however some patterns do emerge.
  - o In the case of a word like "Niviatsiaq" though neither tusaalanga nor keyword google searches present any useful information on the word or any translation for "girl". being said, there is extensive documentation of "Niviarsiaq" meaning little girl in Greenlandic and other Eskimo-Aleut languages. Given the confirmed use of the -tsiaq suffix replacing -rsiaq in the case of other words like "anaanatsiaq" in Nunavik Inuktitut and the presence of the word "Niviatsiak" to mean girl in the Auilaak Living Dictionary, the Wiktionary suggestion is likely accurate.

It would be impossible to be certain in all of these words without the involvement of a fluent speaker of Nunavik Inuktitut, however to the best of my ability I have collated words from the various limited sources and used as many government-sanctioned sources as I could find.