

Error! Reference source not found.. **Tense and aspect**

A set of verb suffixes indicates the time frame of actions, events or states expressed by the verb. The basic set is past, future, ongoing and habitual, as seen in the example below:

1. *ixásunatyá* 's/he rode along' (past)
- ixásunatítá* 's/he will ride along, she is going to ride along' (future)
- ixásunatísha* 's/he is riding along' (ongoing)
- ixásunatíxa* 's/he rides along' (habitual)

The markers can be divided into those expressing *tense* and those expressing *aspect*. Past (-*a*, -*ya*, -*na*) and future (-*ta*) are tense markers. They express the time of the action, event or state in relation to some other point in time (usually the time at which the sentence was spoken). Ichishkíin tense markers situate an event in the past or future, and give information about the sequence of events.

Aspect markers -*sha* and -*xa* express how an event takes place in time or over time rather than specifying exactly when in time the event occurred or will occur. -*sha* means an action is continuous, and -*xa* indicates that it occurs habitually. These can combine with the tense markers to give meanings such as give 'past habitual' and 'future on-going'.

An additional, less common aspect marker in Ichishkíin indicates that an action has just taken place. This is the immediate past, here called present perfect aspect. It is indicated in more than one way, as will be addressed below, but often with the verb stem (and person marker, if third person), with no aspect or tense suffix following:

2. *ixásunati-Ø* 's/he has (just) ridden along'

These five tense and aspect endings are addressed individually in the sections that follow. In addition, there are four combined tense and aspect markers: *-shana*, *-shata*, *-xana*, *-xata*, covered in section **Error! Reference source not found..**

Error! Reference source not found.. Past tense

The form of the past tense suffix is *-a*, *-na* or *-ya*, depending on the verb. The form of the past tense also varies depending on whether the verb is an n-verb or zero-verb, as was discussed in **Error! Reference source not found..** Some verbs that end in *i*, *u*, or a consonant take the past tense form *-na*. This is due to remnants of a verb class system. This verb class system divides verbs into two categories. One of the sets of verbs has a final sound *n* that shows up in some places, such as before the past tense ending *-a*. This set is referred to as *n verbs*. A second set does not have this final *n* and this set is referred to as *zero verbs*. In Yakima, the effect of the verb classes is not as strong as in other Ichishkíin dialects or in sister language Nez Perce, but there are still signs of the stem classes in the tense and aspect markers. The result is that the form of the past tense is not fully predictable. For verbs ending in *i*, *u* or a consonant, the learner can make a good guess, but ultimately needs to know which past tense marker to use on a verb-by-verb basis. Some n-verbs are identified in Table 2.12.

Which suffix should be used is often predictable depending on the final sound of the verb stem.

If the verb ends in *a*, *u*, long *ii* or a diphthong the past tense is almost always *-na*:

3. *ishúkwaana* ‘s/he knew’
isápsikw ana ‘s/he taught’
itmiyúuna ‘s/he planned’

If the verb ends in a consonant, the past tense is usually *-a*:

4. *iwalptáyka* 's/he sang'
it úpa 's/he jumped'
ishlúxaapa 's/he glanced sideways'

But if the verb ends in a consonant and is an n-verb, the past tense will be *-na*:

5. *iyíkna* 's/he heard'
ikútkutna 's/he worked'
ip'úxsna 's/he kissed someone'

A zero-verb ending in *i* (short *i*) has past tense suffix *-ya*. In that case, a final unstressed *i* deletes, because of the following glide. This was discussed in **Error! Reference source not found.**

6. *iwisalátya* 's/he hunted'
itaxnúna ya 's/he matured'
itkníya 's/he wove (fishnet)'

An n-verb ending in *-i* has past tense *-na*.

7. *ip' shkwína* 's/he smiled'
il m 'ína 's/he closed her/his eyes'
ihulína 'it was windy; it blew'

The basic form of the past tense, present in all three variants, is *-a*.

The verbs *wa-* 'be' and *nuu-* 'say' have irregular past tenses. For both of these verbs, the past tense ending is *-cha*.¹ In the case of *wachá*, the final syllable is stressed.

8. *iwachá k'p s*
i-wa-chá *k'p s*
 3Sg.S-COP-PST cold
 'it was cold'

¹ Rigsby and Rude 1996 refer to Nez Perce correspondences and analyze the past tense form of the copula as *wáč-á*, with *wáč-* an allomorph of *wa-* and *-á* the past tense marker (1996: 688). In their analysis, the past tense is regular, but it does not explain why we see the same pattern for *nuu* 'say' or the stress shift.

However, with root *nuu-* the suffix does not take the stress.

9. *inúucha* ‘Ay, xay!’
i-núu-cha ‘Ay, xay!’
 3Sg.S-say-PST hello man’s.male.friend
 ‘he said, ‘hello, friend!’’

Language learners may do best to learn the full irregular forms *iwachá* ‘s/he, it was’ and *inúucha* ‘s/he, it said’ as unanalyzable chunks rather than breaking the words into pieces.

Error! Reference source not found.. **Future tense**

The suffix expressing future is *-ta*. Its form does not change.

10. *itúxta* ‘s/he will return’
iwýáninta ‘s/he will travel’
i’anáwita ‘s/he will be hungry’

Sometimes *-ta* is used to describe in general how something happens or is done or used, as in the following lines describing root gathering:

11. *ku nam wyápshatata ku iwá ánach axi nch ínch i,*
ku =nam wyá-psháta-ta ku i-wá ánach a-xi
nch ínch i
 and =2Sg while.going-gather-FUT and 3Sg.S-be again-same big.Pl
 ‘You will go along gathering, and there’s a big one,’

kwnáknam wyáyaxshata.
kwnak=nam wyá-yáxsha-ta
 that.LOC=2Sg while.going-pour -FUT
 ‘you will pour (the roots) in there.’

And the future suffix *-ta* is sometimes used in conditional or “if” clauses:

12. *Chaw nam tuun ák’inuta paysh nam xwyaká wisalátita*
chaw =nam tuun á-k’inu-ta paysh =nam xwyak-á wisaláti-ta
 NEG=2Sg what.OBJ 3O-see-FUT if =2Sg sweat-PRIV hunt-FUT
 ‘You will see nothing if you (will) hunt without sweating’

Error! Reference source not found.. **Continuous (imperfective) aspect**

The suffix *-sha* indicates ongoing or continuous action. It expresses an ongoing occurrence of the state or event indicated by the verb. It is glossed here as IMPV for ‘imperfective’, suggesting that the event indicated by the verb has not been completed. It is often compared to and translated by the English continuous with ‘*-ing*’, as in *ixásunatisha* ‘s/he is riding along’ and in example 13.

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| 13. | <i>iwánpsha</i> | ‘s/he is singing’ |
| | <i>ináxtisha</i> | ‘s/he/it is crying’ |
| | <i>i’ayíksha</i> | ‘s/he/it is sitting’ |

The suffix *-sha* is also used with verbs that express a state of being rather than an action.

In this case, the *-sha* suffix indicates present tense and that the state is lasting or ongoing.

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| 14. | <i>Aw pa’anáwisha</i> | ‘They are hungry’ |
| | <i>iwaníksha Láacha</i> | ‘he is named /his name is Láacha.’ |
| | <i>chaw nash áshukwaasha</i> | ‘I don’t know’ |

There is an exception to this. The verb *wa-* ‘be’ does not take the ending *-sha* in the present tense, but it nonetheless expresses an ongoing state.

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| 15. | <i>iwá wat’uymá</i> | ‘s/he is the oldest’ |
| | <i>iwá amáay</i> | ‘s/he/it is hidden’ |

The verb stem with the suffix *-sha* added to it is the citation form that many speakers will use when asked for an Ichishkín verb. So if we ask *Mish nam átamashwikta* ‘stand up?’ ‘how do you translate ‘stand up’, the answer would be *tútisha*, the verb stem *túti-* plus the suffix *-sha*.

Error! Reference source not found.. **Habitual aspect**

The habitual suffix *-xa* indicates that the action expressed by the verb is done habitually, usually or regularly over a period of time.

16. *pyaxí ayáyat ilatíxa*
pyaxí ayáyat i-latí-xa
 bitterroot beautiful 3Sg.S-bloom-HAB
 ‘Pyaxí blooms beautifully’
17. *ku nwím nwim pápawyak ukxa*
kú nwím nwim pápa-wyak uk -xa
 and last.year-DUP RCP-gather-HAB
 ‘and every year they gather together’
18. *panp’íwixá Nch’iwánapa*
pa-np’íwi-xá Nch’iwána-pa
 3Pl.S-dip.net-HAB Columbia.River-LOC
 ‘They fish at the Columbia River.’

There are two variants of *-xa*, *-nxa* and *-nxa*. *-nxa* is used with some verb stems that end in a consonant and *-nxa* with some stems that end in a vowel. The verb stem determines whether *-xa*, *-nxa* or *-nxa* is used, although there is some variation, as was discussed in section **Error! Reference source not found.** This is similar to the variation in past tense suffixes. From a language teaching and learning perspective, students need to learn the correct form of the habitual as they learn the verbs.

If the verb ends in a consonant, the habitual suffix will be either *-xa* or *-nxa*. Rude (1988a) analyzes *-nxa* as present for phonological reasons: if the verb root ends in a velar or uvular consonant (*k, k’, kw, kw’, , ’, w, w’, x, xw, x, xw*) *-n* precedes the habitual suffix to result in *-nxa*. However, this does not hold true throughout Yakima. Many verbs ending in consonants, especially velar and uvular consonants, take *-nxa*, but not all, and some verbs ending in consonants that are not velar or uvular take *-nxa*.

A consistent rule is that a verb stem ending in *x* will use - *nxa* for habitual:

19. *awtash awkú papatanawíix nxa*
aw=natash *awkú* *papa-tanawíix- nxa*
 now=1Pl.EXC then RCP-argue-HAB
 ‘And then we argue about it’

Many verb stems ending in velar or uvular consonants (the front and back *k* series) take the form

- *nxa*:

20. *ku pa'anwík nxana*
ku *pa-anwík- nxa-a*
 and 3Pl.S-spend.year-HAB-PST
 ‘and they would spend the winter there’

However, this is not entirely consistent, as seen in 17 above, and in the following examples:

21. *Áyatma máyts isim paxwyákxa*
áyat-ma *máyts i-sim* *pa-xwyák-xa*
 woman-Pl morning-same 3Pl.S-sweat-HAB
 ‘The women sweat only in the morning’

There are also pairs of examples in which the two suffixes - *nxa* and -*xa* are used on the same verb in the same construction by the same speaker:

22. *anakw nk pawaník nxa* “Blue Mountains”
ana-kw nk *pa-waník- nxa* *Blue Mountains*
 REL-that.aforementioned 3Pl.S-name-HAB *Blue Mountains*
 ‘the ones they call ‘Blue Mountains’
23. *anakw nk pawaníkxa Taptíil*
ana-kw nk *pa-waník-xa* *Taptíil*
 REL-that.aforementioned 3Pl.S-name-HAB Yakima.River
 ‘the one they call ‘Taptíil’

If the verb ends in a vowel, the habitual suffix will be either -*xa* or -*nxa*. This depends on the final vowel of the verb as well as whether the verb is historically an n-stem verb. (See **Error!**

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Verbs ending in *i* that are zero-stem verbs, as well as all verbs ending in *a* or *aa* take the habitual form *-xa*.

24. *iwáwyaxa myánashmaman*
i-wáwya-xa *myánash-maman*
 3Sg.S-whip-HAB child-OBJ.PI
 ‘he whips the children’

25. *pa’aníxa wapsíkiki*
pa'-aní-xa *wapsíki-ki*
 3Pl.S- make-HAB string-INST
 ‘they make them of string’

For n-stem verbs ending in *i*, *ii* and *u*, *uu* the suffix *-nxa* is used, although again, there are exceptions.

26. *chaw mish papxwínxa kunkínk*
chaw mish pa-pxwí-nxa *kunkínk*
 NEG Q 3Pl.S-think-HAB that.INST
 ‘they don’t think anything of that’ (they usually ignore it)

27. *kwaat nash pnúnxa*
kwaat =nash pnú-nxa
 sound =1Sg sleep-HAB
 ‘I sleep soundly’

28. *t áaxwshiyin páwyaych unxa*
t áaxw shiy-in *pá-wyáych u-nxa*
 all who-3>3.ERG INV-fear-HAB
 ‘everyone fears them’

Error! Reference source not found.. **Combined tense and aspect markers**

The combination of a tense marker with an aspect marker means that information about the time of the event (past or future) combines with information about the structure of the event

(ongoing or habitual) to yield the overall meaning of the suffix. There are four combined tense and aspect markers: *-shana*, *-xana*, *-shata*, *-xata*:²

29. *ixásunatishana* 's/he was riding along'
ixásunatixana 's/he used to ride along'
ixásunatishata 's/he will be riding along'
ixásunatixata 's/he will be regularly or habitually riding along'

These four combined markers are the only possible combinations of the tense and aspect suffixes. The order does not vary: the aspect markers directly follow the verb, and are followed by the tense markers. The two aspect markers never co-occur and the two tense markers never co-occur.

The past tense forms *-shana* and *-xana* are most common.

30. *Chaw íxwi itsts úupshana puuy*
Chaw íxwi itsts úupshana puuy
 NEG later 3Sg.S-melt -IMPV-PST snow
 'The snow was not yet melting'

31. *kútash winaníxana*
kú=natash winaníxana
 and=1Pl.EXC swim-HAB-PST
 'And we used to swim'

The future forms are *-shata* and *-xata*.

32. *iwyákwshtikshata*
i-wyákwshtik-sha-ta
 3Sg.S-go.wrong-IMPV-FUT
 'he will be doing wrong'
33. *ku paníchxata tkwátat*
ku pa-ních-xa-ta tkwátat
 and 3Pl.S-put.away-HAB-FUT food

² The combined endings that include habitual (*-xana* and *-xata*) follow the rules given in section **Error! Reference source not found.** for whether *-xana/-xata*, *-nxana/-nxata* or *-nxana/-nxata* will be used.

‘and they will store up food’

Error! Reference source not found.. **Conditional**

The suffix *-taxnay* is added to the verb stem to express that an event is hypothetical: possible or potential but not certain. It has a range of translations ‘could, should, would’. If the conditional suffix is used, no tense or aspect suffixes can co-occur.

34. *Aw, iwátaxnay sts’at*
aw *i-wá-taxnay* *sts’at*
 now 3Sg.S-COP-COND night
 ‘now, there should be a night’
35. *shix nash ináktkwanintaxnay*
shix =*nash* *i-náktkwanin-taxnay*
 good =1Sg 3Sg.S-care.for-COND
 ‘he would take good care of me’

It is used in polite requests.

36. *Waat nam wíiwapiitataxnay?*
Waat =*nam* *wíi-wapiita-taxnay*
 POLQ =2Sg POL-help-COND
 ‘would you help?’
37. *Mish nam twáshiinitaxnay núsux?*
Mish =*nam* *twáshi-ini-taxnay* *núsux?*
 Q =2Sg can-APPL-COND salmon
 ‘Would you can my salmon?’

It sometimes carries the meaning ‘can’ or ‘could’.

38. *kush áwiwanikanitaxnay mí man*
ku=sh *á-wi-wanik-ani-taxnay* *mí -man*

and=1Sg 3O-DIST-be.named-APPL-COND how.many-OBJ
 ‘and I could name some’

-taxnay is also used in hypothetical ‘if/then’ clauses.

39. *Paysh nash wíntaxnay Pendletonkan, kush támyataxnay shátay*
Paysh =nash wína-taxnay Pendleton-kan, ku=sh támya-taxnay
shátay
 maybe=1Sg go-COND Pendleton-ALL and =1Sg buy-COND blanket
 ‘If I were to go to Pendleton, I would buy a blanket’

Error! Reference source not found.. **Imperative**

Imperatives or commands direct the listener to do something. ‘Listen’ and ‘Sit down!’ are examples of commands in English. In Ichishkíin, special verb suffixes mark commands. In addition, speakers can use several techniques to make a command more polite or less harsh-sounding.

The suffixes *-k* (used when addressing one person) and *-tk* (used when addressing more than one person) are the basic imperative suffixes. The subject of the imperative clause is understood to be the person addressed, or ‘you’. There is no clitic indicating second person when the suffixes *-k* or *-tk* are used.

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| 40. | <i>tútik</i>
<i>túti-k</i>
stand-IMP.Sg
‘stand up’ (to one person) | <i>tútitk</i>
<i>túti-tk</i>
stand-IMP.Pl
‘stand up’ (to more than one person) |
| 41. | <i>tkw anátik</i>
<i>tkw anátik</i>
walk.along-IMP.Sg
‘walk’ (to one person) | <i>tkw anátik</i>
<i>tkw anátik</i>
walk.along-IMP.Pl
‘walk’ (to more than one person) |

If the verb stem ends in *k*, another *k* is not added for the singular command. *-tk* is still added for the plural command:

42. *tkwápwíiliuuk / tkwápwíiliuuktk*
 ‘raise your hand’

43. *ayík / ayítkk*
‘sit down’

If the verb has the directional suffix *-()m* (indicating direction towards the speaker, see **Error! Reference source not found.**), and the addressee is singular, then no imperative suffix is added. This is not the case, however, when addressing more than one. Then, the directional *-()m* plus the imperative *-tk* is used.

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| <p>44. <i>wínam</i>
<i>wína-m-∅</i>
go-CSL
‘come here’ (to one person)</p> <p><i>m ts’íxwam</i>
<i>m ts’íxwa-m-∅</i>
listen-CSL
‘listen to me’ (to one person)</p> | <p><i>wínamtk</i>
<i>wína-m-tk</i>
go-CSL-IMP.PI
‘come here’ (to more than one person)</p> <p><i>m ts’íxwamtk</i>
<i>m ts’íxwa-m-tk</i>
listen-CSL-IMP.PI
‘listen to me’ (to more than one person)</p> |
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Commands sometimes have the prefix *pá-*, which indicates that there is a second person subject and first person object. (This will be addressed further in **Error! Reference source not found.**) *pá-* is optionally used for commands with transitive verbs when the speaker is urging the listener to direct some action towards the speaker: ‘listen to me’, ‘bring that to me’, ‘show me that’.

45. *pánim*
pá-ni-m
INV-give-CSL
‘give me that’

Commands also can have the prefix *á-*. This indicates that the verb is transitive (see **Error! Reference source not found.**) and is used if the addressee is being asked to do something to or for a third person object (him/her/it).

46. *áshapnik*
á-shápni-k
3O-ask-IMP
‘ask him/her’

The future suffix *-ta* can be used for commands. When the future is used, a clitic - either *=nam* (you singular) or *=pam* (you plural) must also be used to make a complete sentence. *-ta* is always used with negative commands, as in examples 47 and 48. In affirmative commands, such as 49, it is more polite and suggestion-like than the imperative suffixes *-k* and *-tk*.

47. *chaw nam íkush kúta*
chaw =nam íkush kú-ta
 NEG =2Sg thus do-FUT
 ‘don’t do that’
48. *Chaw nam áshaxt ’ ta*
chaw =nam á-shaxt ’ -ta
 NEG =2Sg 3O-cut.open-FUT
 ‘don’t cut it open’
49. *skúulita pam*
skúuli-ta =pam
 go.to.school-FUT =2Pl
 ‘get yourself schooled’

Commands formed with *-k* and *-tk* are used in less formal situations, or when an adult is addressing a child or a teacher is addressing students. However, commands are not always appropriate; they can sound harsh, abrupt or impolite. Using the future suffix *-ta* instead of *-k* or *-tk* is more polite.

An additional way to soften a request or make it more polite is to add the verb prefix *wii-*.

This prefix has a number of meanings and will be addressed in **Error! Reference source not found., Error! Reference source not found., and Error! Reference source not found.**

50. *wí’ash m*
wí’-ash- m
 POL-enter-CSL
 ‘Please come in’

51. *wíiw npanitaam chiish*
wíi-w np-ani-ta=am chiish
 POL-take-BEN-FUT=2Sg water
 ‘Would you bring (me) some water?’

Several elders have told me that this is the way a grandmother might request something of her grandchild, and that the child feels loved and honored to be asked in a gentle and polite way. The elder may also refer to the child with the appropriate relationship term when asking the child to do something:

52. *áskawitaam xyáawnansim, ká a, chaw p xúnan*
á-skáwi-ta-am xyaaw-nan-sim ká a, chaw p xú-nan
 3O-collect-FUT-2Sg dry-OBJ-only WoDaCh³ NEG fresh-OBJ
 ‘Collect only the dry (wood) granddaughter, not the green.’

³ Kinship term abbreviations are used for relationships that do not have a single word to express them in English. They are included in the abbreviation list in Appendix A DaCh is an abbreviation for woman’s daughter’s child. Relationship terms are reciprocal; the same term is used for maternal grandmother, which would be glossed MoMo.