

TYPOGRAPHY AND CANADIAN SYLLABICS

SELECTED TOPICS

[SOME GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE SYLLABICS ORTHOGRAPHY](#) [SYLLABIC GLYPH VARIATION \(PDF\)](#) [IS SYLLABICS AN ABUGIDA?](#) [ENCODING THE W-DOT](#)

The system of writing commonly called 'Canadian Syllabics' is a writing system unique to several indigenous languages of Canada, most notably Cree, the language for which it was originally developed. For this reason it is sometimes called the 'Cree Script'.

Although Syllabics have been written for less than 200 years, there has developed a number of visual variants, traditions, and styles, as well as new scripts derived from concepts present in the original Cree version. It has proven to be a dynamic and distinctive script, though not one without political, pedagogical, and religious controversy since its inception. In some cases, such as Inuktitut, Oji-Cree, and Naskapi, the syllabics system has remained resilient to calls for its replacement by a Latin-based alternative. In others, like Dakelh and Blackfoot, syllabics seem to have been completely abandoned.

Syllabics are an important symbol of Native literacy, cultural transmission, and identity for many speakers of these languages. With recent advances in software internationalisation, it is now possible to move syllabics onto computers and the internet, continuing the tradition of this innovative writing system.

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