

Shape-Classifiers (medials/finals, 2nd position)

prepared by Jesse Bruchac and [Conor Quinn](#)

Compiled October, 2010, updated March, 2025

1. -akw-	1D object that is rigid	metal, wood
2. -tag-	1D non-rigid object	cord, string
3. -ag-/-ak-	2D non-rigid object	skin, peel, hide, cloth
4. -apsk-	3D object/lump	rock
5. -ôlag-	-D open, hollow, removed	a hole, a hollow, a valley
6. -ômk-	3D granular mass	sand, gravel, earth
7. -bag-	A liquid object	water, damp, moist, wet
8. -jag-	A soft and sticky mass	dirt, mud, clay
9. -kwôn-	3D arch shaped object	arch, arc, bend, dome
10. -kwa-	substances hold liquid, aerosol, vapor/gas	contain liquid, mist, cloud

1. -akw- 1D object that is rigid (examples: metal, wood)

alna-hl-akw iron

tas-akw-abon a chair, the rigid object one sits on

kpage-akw-ika thick deep woods

mso-akw-tegw dry wood river

mso-akw-bagw dry wood pond

adel-akw-esen it lies blocking the way, it lies across the path

adel-akw-asin someone lies across the path, someone lies blocking the way (as in a tree)

2. -tag- 1D non-rigid object (cord, string)

ahaza-tag-ia transparent material, lacey, a screen

piw-tag-a it is a stringlike thing, it is thin

piw-tag-haga someone is thin bodied, thin wasted
kwenatag-igamigw a long house
latag-eniga pull out, spin thread
msatag-ak it is coarse strong (or webbing)
skwôzon-tag-w – thread
wikw-tag-hozi pull self by rope
zow-tag-abo someone sits with legs stretched out
almesak-tag a corridor, literally a stretch of floor ahead

3. -ag/-ak- 2D non-rigid object (skin, peel, hide, cloth)

wôb-ak-s a shirt
wôb-ak-sis a little cloth
wôb-ak-s-igamigw a tent
pl-ag-na peel, skin, or scale (by hand)
pl-ag-niga peel, skin a fruit or fish
pl-ag-za peel with a knife
pkal-ag-enigan crooked knife, take off peeling by hand tool
l-ag-enigan a scraped or worked skin
wlipl-ag-igen it is well skinned (said of a cache which has been robbed)
sib-ak-higan a sail
bem-ak-si sail along
nod-ak-sid a sailor

4. -apsk- 3D object/lump (rock)

bem-apsk-wadena a rocky mountain place Mt Ascutney, VT
l-apsk-ahigan hewn stone
l-apsk-anigan a stone structure, a foundation, or a fireplace
mamad-apskw-ijoan it is a bad rocky current
nod-apsk-enigad a stone worker
wôl-apsk-a a hollow in a rock

5. -ôlag- something open, hollow, removed

w-ôlag-w a hole
nôj-ôlag-w a nostril
adeb-ôlag-w a rifle

agaskw-ôlag-w a woodchuck hole
asp-ôlag-w a hole of such a width, a wide open hole
asp-ôlag-w-don a wide open mouth
taw-ôlag-a-higan an instrument for making a hole, a drill
ms-ôlag-w-don-a someone is big mouthed
ms-ôlag-w-don-asin his mouth lies wide open
azig-ôlag-igen it is full of holes
bezeg-ôlag-ata it is a very dark hole
wad-ôlag-ezid beaver house door
baskh-ôlag-i-gwa-taha shoot someones eye out
zôb-ôlag-ezo it is bored through from end to end (as in a pipe stem)

6. -ômk- 3D granular mass (sand, gravel, earth)

ben-ômk-ahla sand falls
ben-ômk-ipoda sand falls down
pkwa-ômk-ihla sand runs down
segwesk-ômk-i-podo someone grinds something to a powder
ôdaw-ômk-a it is over a sand bank
ôgwa-ômk-wid Ogunquit, Maine, sand dunes
wôb-ômk-aik it is white sand, Point-du-lac, Quebec
wôb-ômk-ategw white sand river
sizig-ômk-i-joazid a trickle, a current like a steady trickle of tears or sand

7. -bag- liquid object (water, damp, moist, wet)

azi-bag-hi dip water to me, splash me with a paddle
ali-bag-taha pound it, ash splints
kottli-bag-enem mix by hand, stir up
azow-bag-ihla water changes directions
bada-bag-a water comes to us, tide comes in
mena-bag-i-lômsen rain a few drops with wind
mkazaw-bag-i-sibo dark water river

8. -jag- a soft and sticky mass (dirt, mud, clay)

adaw-jag-enigamek what one works dough in, a wooden pan for baking bread

agwe-jag-elja it is a dirty hand
agwed-jag-ezid it is a dirty foot
agwe-jag-igwa a dirty face
agwe-jag-ikezen a dirty shoe
agwe-jag-i-nô-gwad it appears dirty
plage-jag-igek a wound or a sore
boskwe-jag-takawa to smash all up
kedaw-jag-ihla to sink in the mud
kiz-jag-na to finish roasting something as in bread
kottle-jag-po it precipitates mixed rain and snow
le-jag-niga to make bread
nod-jag-enigad a clay worker
zelig-jag-ena someone crushes someone by hand to mush
zokwe-jag-taham someone smashes by striking
agwed-jag-a-ozo someone shits himself

9. -kwôn- an arch shaped object (arch, arc, bend, dome)

mana-kwôn a rainbow
mana-kwôn-i-lessagwôgan the rainbow bridge
asol-kwôn a hat
am-kwôn a lattle, a spoon
am-kwôn-i-noda a spoon bag
mana-kwôn-i-nôgwat it looks like a rainbow

10. -kwa- contain liquid, mist, cloud (substances hold liquid, aerosol, vapor/gas)

cha-kwa
ngwed-kwat-o-o it is one quart
mkaz-aso-kwat there are dark clouds
o-les-kwat glare ice

Combinations of Shape-Classifiers

shape-classifier with a noun:

mkazaw-bag-i-sibo black water river

shape-classifier with a body part:

agwe-jag-igwa a dirty face

Multiple shape-classifiers together:

-jag- + -bag-

agwed-jag-e-bag-a dirty water

-ag + -akw

pl-ag-akw-ada peel bark

-akw- + -tag-

ahôdaw-akw-tag a groove

shape-classifier and a sense:

agwe-jag-i-nô-gwad it appears dirty

Tri-part medial/2nd position order:

1. shape-classifiers
2. body parts-nouns
3. senses-verbs