



## Salish Root Project



*A deep dive into **-p** as base, beginning, foundation, and the point from which things hold or begin in Salish.*

*Everything begins from somewhere. **-p** helps show where.*

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## Purpose

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This document introduces and expands the Salish suffix **-p**, one of the most important structural elements for understanding how Salish organizes both **space** and **time**. Rather than treating beginning as an abstract idea, Salish shows that every beginning comes from somewhere. The suffix **-p** names that somewhere: the **base**, **foundation**, or **point from which something holds or begins**.

This document is for learners, teachers, and curious readers who want a clear, usable way to recognize **-p** across real words and real experience. It also prepares the reader to notice how vowels reshape the feel of **-p** in forms such as **-ap**, **-ep**, **-ip**, and **-up**.

## Why begin with -p?

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Many learners meet words containing **-p** without realizing what ties them together. A tree trunk, a root, a cut at the base, a sudden stop, boiling water, light appearing, snow beginning, and darkness setting in may seem like unrelated meanings when they are viewed only through English translations.

But when these words are kept together, a consistent pattern emerges. The suffix **-p** points toward a base condition: where something stands from, where a structure holds from, or where an event begins from. The meanings are different on the surface, but the underlying orientation stays connected.

*A beginning is a base in time. A base is a beginning in space.*

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## A simple way to feel -p

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Before breaking down the suffix technically, it helps to begin with experience. A tree stands because it has a trunk. A leaf has a stem where its form connects. A house has an entrance where movement into the structure begins. A cut at the base is not just any cut; it reaches the point that supports what stands above it.

That is the public doorway into **-p**. It is not only “start.” It is the **base condition** that makes a start possible. It can be a physical base, a structural foundation, a place of support, or the moment an event enters its beginning.

## How -p works

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**Core sense:** **-p** marks a base, foundation, beginning point, or entry point into a beginning.

Domain	How -p is felt	Simple example of the feel
Structure	where something holds from	trunk, stem, foundation, base
Action	where an event begins from	a cut at the base begins a larger change
State	where a condition enters or returns to a grounded point	restored, re-established, settled into a base
Voweled forms	how that base or beginning is experienced	significant, forming, resultant, self-starting

## Structure: -p as base

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The easiest way to teach **-p** is through structure. These forms are useful because the base can be imagined or seen.

Form	Working translation	What -p contributes
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<b>ničp</b>	saw/cut at the base	The cutting is located at the base point rather than anywhere on the object.
<b>sčtemp</b>	tree trunk; flower stem	The base support from which the tree, flower, or stemmed form stands.
<b>nylemp / nilemp</b>	stem of feather, branch, or leaf	The internal base line where the form connects and holds together.

In these examples, **-p** does not refer to the whole object. It points toward the support point, the foundation, or the place from which the rest of the form can stand, connect, or be acted upon.

## Event: -p as beginning

Once the spatial sense is clear, the temporal sense becomes easier. In Salish, space and time are not sharply separated in the same way English often separates them. A base in space can correspond to a beginning in time. The same structural thinking applies.

Form	Working translation	What -p contributes
<b>piŋp</b>	get established in a base state; restored	A return into a grounded or restored base condition.
<b>ničp</b>	cut/saw at the base	The base cut begins the larger change: falling, removal, or separation.
<b>łlp (łlip)</b>	stop	The entry into stillness; movement comes to a base and holds there.
<b>šlp (šlip)</b>	it lit up; daylight	The entry into light; the condition begins from a base point of change.
<b>łlip</b>	it tore, ripped apart	The entry into separation; the moment the break begins and becomes established.

This is why the phrase “everything begins from somewhere” is useful. It keeps the suffix close to physical experience. A beginning does not float by itself. It comes from a base, a foothold, a starting place, or a condition that makes the event possible.

With forms like **łlp** and **šlp**, we can feel that even something as simple as stopping or light appearing is not just a sudden event. It is an entry into a new condition that holds. The moment of beginning is also a moment of grounding.

## The voweled -p family

After **-p** is felt as base and beginning, the voweled forms can be introduced more clearly. The vowel before **-p** does not erase the base. It changes how that base or beginning is experienced.

Form	Felt sense	Teaching line
<b>-ap</b>	significant, noticeable beginning	a beginning you can feel
<b>-ep</b>	forming, becoming base	a beginning that forms
<b>-ip</b>	process arriving into result	a beginning that becomes a result
<b>-up</b>	carried availability; begins from itself	a beginning that comes from within

These forms should not be introduced as random suffixes. They are better understood as related ways of holding the same base idea. The vowel changes the experience of the beginning.

## -ap: a beginning that stands out

The form **-ap** carries the feel of a beginning or base that becomes significant, noticeable, or specialized. In teaching, this can be described as a beginning you can feel. Something changes, and it stands out.

Form	Useful translation	Why it fits -ap
ptap	it boiled	The water crosses into a noticeable changed state.
ymap / nymap	hardened; froze; solidified	The condition becomes visibly and physically set.
ǰfap	it got cool	A noticeable change in felt condition occurs.
ǰfap	caught fire and burned	A striking visible change begins and becomes hard to miss.

The public teaching line for **-ap** can be simple: *Some changes you do not miss.* That line does not replace the deeper analysis. It gives learners a first feeling for how **a** can mark a significant stative condition within the **-p** family.

## -ep: a beginning that forms

The form **-ep** carries the feel of being the beginning, base, or primal position as something takes shape. It is especially useful for words that show a forming base, an entrance, an edge where entry begins, or movement that stays in contact with a surface.

Form	Useful translation	Why it fits -ep
sɪ <sup>w</sup> x <sup>w</sup> ep	root	The root is a base forming into the ground.
snčmep	entrance side; front of house/tipi	The front is the side where entry forms.
sčmep <sup>tn</sup>	root word; foundation	The foundation point is made into a named base or means.
yǰep	slide, drag, crawl in contact	Movement forms along a surface through contact.
tqep	got dammed; blocked	A barrier forms at the point of obstruction.

The teaching line for **-ep** is: *Some beginnings form.* This keeps the learner with the lived image: a root forming into the ground, an entrance forming at the front, or sliding contact forming along a surface.

## -ip: a beginning that becomes a result

The form **-ip** is one of the most familiar and useful members of the **-p** family. It often carries an inceptive feel, but the important undertone is the process and result carried by **i**. The event begins and arrives into a held result.

Form	Useful translation	Why it fits -ip
ǰlip	stop	Movement completes into the state of being stopped.
ǰlip	it lit up; daylight appeared	The process of lighting arrives into visible light.
ǰlip	it ripped, tore, pulled apart	The separating process completes into a torn state.
tǰlip	got untied or loose	The loosening process arrives into release.
yǰlip / ilǰip	becomes enjoined; wounded/shot/pierced	The transfixing or entering process arrives into involvement.

The teaching line for **-ip** can be: *Some changes just land.* But underneath that line, the deeper feel is not merely speed. It is process reaching result: moving into stopped, dark into light, together into torn, bound into loose.

## -up: a beginning that comes from within

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The form **-up** carries the feel of a condition available to begin from itself. It is often described as inception of itself. In teaching, this is best felt as a beginning that comes from within the situation or condition rather than being directly caused from outside.

Form	Useful translation	Why it fits -up
m̄x̄ <sup>w</sup> up	it snowed	The fluffed layered condition begins naturally as snow.
čm̄up	it got dark; disappeared on its own	Darkness comes in from within the situation.
q̄w̄up	it broke	The break occurs as a self-arising event in the object or situation.
lx̄ <sup>w</sup> up	got hurt accidentally; suddenly have pain	Pain arises from the condition, often without deliberate cause.
fw̄up / aw̄up	it dripped	Dripping begins as sequential unfolding from the condition.
kt̄up	startled jump; spring up	The jump springs up from within the body or situation.

The teaching line for **-up** is: *Some things just start on their own.* This does not mean random. It means the condition carries its own availability to begin.

## A visual summary of the family

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Suffix	Simple line	Image to hold in mind
-p	where something holds or begins from	foundation, trunk, base cut
-ap	a beginning that stands out	water boiling; water freezing
-ep	a beginning that forms	root forming into ground; entry forming at a front
-ip	a beginning that arrives into result	moving then stopped; dark then light
-up	a beginning that starts from within	snow begins; darkness comes in; something breaks

*Same base. Different vowel feel.*

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## Teaching note: why the order matters

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It is tempting to begin with the voweled forms because many of them are common and memorable. But if learners have not first felt the base, the vowels can blur together. Beginning with **-p** as structure and event gives the learner a foundation. Then the voweled forms become more meaningful.

A useful teaching sequence is: first, show the base in concrete structures; second, show how a base becomes a beginning in time; third, show how the vowels change the feel of that beginning. This lets the learner recognize the pattern before needing technical language.

## Research note

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Understanding **-p** often begins with confusion. It may first appear in grammar notes as “inchoative,” a technical term meaning that something enters into a state or begins to happen. That term is useful, but it can remain too

abstract for learners. The deeper understanding emerges when many words are compared and the repeated structural contribution is allowed to show itself.

One pathway into this understanding came through words such as **ntišp**, “eat something sweet,” where the role of **-p** was not immediately obvious. That kind of difficulty can become a doorway. It raises the question: what kind of beginning or base is being marked here? Over time, comparison with forms like **ničp**, **sčtemp**, **pisp**, **łlip**, and **mč<sup>w</sup>up** helps reveal that the suffix is not only about a start in time. It is about the base that makes beginning, support, or return possible.

This movement from technical label to lived pattern is part of the research method. The goal is not only to replace one English gloss with another. The goal is to follow repeated sound, repeated function, repeated domains of use, and repeated felt orientation until a deeper coherence begins to appear.

## Closing reflection

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If **-p** is treated only as “start,” it remains smaller than it really is. When it is followed across words and experience, it opens into a larger pattern: how things hold, where they stand from, how events begin, and how those two ideas belong together.

This is one of the important worldview shifts available through Salish root and suffix analysis. The language does not only label what happened. It often shows the orientation that made it possible. In the case of **-p**, that orientation is the base: the place, condition, or beginning point from which something holds, enters, returns, or starts.

*Everything begins from somewhere. -p shows where.*

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## Continue the -p journey

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This document introduces **-p** as a foundational suffix in Salish. It can be paired with short videos that introduce the same pattern through everyday examples: base, beginning, significant change, forming, result, and self-starting emergence.

Future documents may explore how **-p** interacts with aspect, how **fs-** and continuing forms such as **-mist** reshape the event, and how the suffix family connects to broader Salish ways of organizing spatial and temporal experience.

## Go deeper in Tachini U

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**Tachini U — Learn • Explore • Support — sč<sup>w</sup>l<sup>w</sup>sečst**

This deeper-study level on Patreon is where Tachini shares extended discussion pieces, research-journey documents, teaching frameworks, and language notes grounded in Salish root word analysis. Extended documents ED006-P and ED006-U are in the members area. Support at this level helps sustain the deeper learning and research work of the Salish Root Project while giving members a closer view into how the language opens over time.

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