

## Question 14 Making a mark in Choctaw Solution

- E1.** (a) John piisatok.  
(b) Taloowalitok.  
(c) Ishtaloowah.  
(d) Sakayyah.  
(e) Hattak niyah piisatok.

- E2.** (a) Your leg is cut.  
(b) your dog  
(c) You saw my dog.  
(d) I saw your mother.  
(e) My dog bit your leg.

### Explanation

Word-order: the verb comes last.

Pronouns are unusual as the verb markings are sufficient to convey subject, object etc.

Direct object nouns are unmarked, but subject nouns take the suffix *-at* if the noun ends in a consonant or *-t* if the noun ends in a vowel.

Person and number is marked on the verb, almost always as a prefix; only first person singular is marked as a suffix

The person /number markers on the verb indicate argument roles: subject, direct object, indirect object / dative case, benefactor etc.

Any argument may appear OR if it is clear from context it is possible to leave person / number argument markers out altogether;

The person / number markers that are suffixes come first, then follow the suffixes that indicate tense / aspect etc. ;

If a verb has multiple arguments that are all marked as prefixes, the Subject prefix comes first, then the Object prefix etc.;

The person / number argument markers that are used as affixes on verb stems are also affixed on adjectives to make a predicate (complement)

The table below breaks down the person / number argument markers used in this problem: hyphens indicate whether a prefix or suffix

<b>Person:</b>	<b>Class 1 argument (like Subject / Nominative):</b>	<b>Class 2 argument (like Object / Accusative &amp; inalienable possession):</b>	<b>Class 3 argument (like Indirect Object / Dative &amp; alienable possession):</b>
I	<i>-li</i>	<i>sa-</i>	<i>am-</i> <i>sam-</i> (when preceded by subject or object prefixes)
you (singular)	<i>ish-</i> <i>-is</i> (alternative if stem or following prefix begins with a sibilant)	<i>chi-</i>	<i>chim-</i>
he/she/it	unmarked	unmarked	not used in problem.

A note on tense & aspect marking on the verb:

The verb takes the suffix *-tok* in what equates to simple past tense (e.g. “I sang”) – a completed action that is now in the past;

The verb takes suffix *-h* to indicate a predicate which implies a tense that can be translated into English as either a present perfect tense (as in “I have sung”) or a progressive present tense (as in “I am singing”) – an action that is still having an influence on the present / now, and that is taking up some time;

There is no verb “to be” (the *-h* suffix on the adjective indicates that it is used predicatively as in sentence 4, where the adjective “niya” becomes “niyah”);