THE VERB TABLE PROJECT

The "Verb Table" project, as I've come to call it, is an effort to expand on the verb entries contained in Durbin Feeling's Cherokee-English Dictionary (CED). Each table presents a verb with Stem Forms isolated and with expanded index forms, usage notes, additional example sentences, and verb root parsing. The goal is to create a table for every verb included in the CED. The process is ongoing, and it works like this:

Each table begins in my classes with JW Webster. I ask JW to parse the verb's root into its component morphemes with me and explain how the morphemes work together to produce the English meaning provided by the dictionary. Then we work together to pin down a handful of approximate literal translations of each verb root and discuss the verb's actual uses among fluent speakers.

Then, outside of class meetings, I fill out the tables with Index Forms, gather example sentences from the CED, polish the morphology and usage notes I took during our class session, and attempt to write my own original sentences with the verb.

When that is done, I review the updated table again with JW. Once my mistakes and misunderstandings are corrected, the Verb Table is finalized and posted as a pdf for download.

The tables are numbered and organized based on the order in which they appear in the CED. To help you navigate this numbering system, I have also provided a Table of Contents document. One table presents the verbs in order based on their appearance in the CED-- which is to say, they are presented in alphabetical order based on the phonetics of the main Index Form used in the CED. The other list organizes the verbs alphabetically based on the English translation of the verb.

Each Verb Table also provides references to two books—first, Durbin Feeling's *Cherokee-English Dictionary* (1975), cited as "CED;" second, JW Webster's *Cherokee Verb & the Four Stem Forms* (2024), cited as "JW."

Equivalent and Lexical Roots

I use these terms to quickly distinguish between two different types of Roots. Equivalent Roots are "equivalent" to their English counterparts—the Cherokee root, when translated literally, is very close or identical in meaning to the provided English translation. Lexical Roots, on the other hand, do not literally translate closely to their English counterpart. Instead, they have obtained a meaning more-or-less equivalent to the provided English translation via Lexicalization.

How I Selected Index Forms

I have to admit—I did not follow any consistent standard. I focus primarily on providing 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Person Singular forms for most verbs. I try to provide Set A, Set B, and Animate Object Pronouns for each wherever it is relevant (i.e., wherever it is likely you will hear or say the verb with those Pronouns). If a verb is plural, I only include plural forms. I pick and choose different verb tenses for the Index Forms based on whatever seems most likely to be useful.

The purpose of the Index Forms is not to give you the same examples for every verb. Instead, the idea is to make sure that—across the entirety of the Verb Tables—students will be provided with ample examples of different constructions, so that they will be unable to forget about all the options available when building their own verbs. When studying the CED, I frequently forgot that Set B verbs can be used in the Present Tense even on so-called Set A verbs, because it doesn't provide any examples of this in its Index Forms. For the same reason, I frequently forgot that Set A pronouns get used with Incompletive Past Tenses. That's the kind of thing I want to help you avoid.

On "Him," "Her," and "It"

I will use "him/her" as a shorthand to indicate that a Pronomial indicates an Animate Object. I'll use "it" as shorthand for an Inanimate Object. I won't be using clunky constructions like "s/he" or "he/she" or "him/her/it" in example sentences—I'll just pick one. This is to keep the example sentences easy to read—I find the "slash" constructions a bit distracting when trying to read sentences.

Just keep in mind that, to a Cherokee speaker's ear, there is no difference between "he," "she," and "it"—there is only the difference between *living* and *not living*.

What is the "Pronomial Person?"

I use the term "Pronomial Person" to refer to the Person *primarily* denoted by the Pronomial. Importantly, the Pronomial Person is *not* always the *subject* denoted by the Pronomial—it is just the specific Person *most associated* with the Prefix. In both Set A /ji^2/ and Animate Object /ji^{22}/, the Pronomial Person is the Singular First Person—"I." The Pronomial Person of Set B's /a^{21}gi^2/ is *also* the 1st Person Singular. There, the Pronomial Person is still "I" because /a^{21}gi^2/ is *primarily* associated with "I"—even though it's the Object of that Pronomial.

Knowing who the "Pronomial Person" is in any given Pronomial's Subject/Object pairing is helpful as a student because it's the easiest way to describe the unique Subject/Object roles from one Set to another. For example, I may say something like "in Set A, the Pronomial Person is the Subject, but in Set B the Pronomial Person is the Object"—and now you know what I mean when I say something like that.

On "Transitive" and "Intransitive" Verbs

Throughout this document, I sometimes categorize verbs differently in terms of Transitivity than did Durbin Feeling in the CED. Whenever I do so, I'll try to make sure and include an explanation for why I've done it in the Notes.

Different Kinds of Transitivity

I classify Transitive verbs based on what kinds of Object they are most likely to take—persons (Animate), objects (Inanimate), or both. These distinctions are purely pedagogical, designed to help students study and learn verbs more efficiently by identifying which Pronominal Sets are most likely to be heard and used with each verb. These distinctions *do not* reflect any real underlying grammatical or linguistic distinctions within the Cherokee language. The categories are as follows:

Type	Acronym	Explanation and Examples	Pronomial Patterns
Intransitive	v.i.	A verb that takes no object. In these verbs, the pronoun only serves to identify the "do-er" of the action. There is a one-to-one relationship between the Pronomial Person and the subject. $a^{21}li^0sa^2la^2di^3?a^2$ *(It is raising, lifting)* $a^{21}ga^{22}sga^2$ *(It's raining)* $ga^2li^2?e^{23}li^{32}ga^2$ *(I am happy, thankful)* $u^{21}di^{22}tle^{33}ga^2$ *(It's hot)* $a^{21}gi^2yo^{33}si^2ha^2$ *(I'm hungry)*	Pronomial choice is based on whether the verb itself is Idealized as Exoteric ("Set A" Verbs) or Esoteric ("Set B" Verbs). Exoteric (Set A) Verbs use Set A pronomials for all purposes except Esoteric Tenses: 1. All CMP Past Tenses, and 2. Infinitive Forms. So, Index Forms will show Set A in all but CMP Past and INF forms. Esoteric ("Set B") Verbs use Set B in all verb forms. Index Forms will show only Set B.

| Transitive Person-Object | v.tp-o | A transitive verb that is most likely to take an inanimate *thing* as its Direct Object.

$a^{21}su^{33}ye^2ha^2$
(He's mixing it)

$ji^2ya^2hke^{23}di^0sga^2$
(I'm peeling it)

$ga^2lo^{22}gi^3?a^2$
(He's hoeing it)

$a^{21}di^{22}ga^2le^{23}ya^3?a^2$
(He's scattering it)

This category includes *all* Classificatory verbs *except* the Animate/Living Class. | Animate Object will generally not be provided in the Index Forms. Set B will only be provided in the CMP Past and INF Forms.

Although these verbs *absolutely can* take animate objects, you are very unlikely to ever hear or say them as such due to the actual meaning of the verb.

You can obviously imagine "peeling" or "hoeing" or "chopping" an animate object. But, outside some extremely limited context (in the case of those examples, probably something like a horror story), it's unlikely you will ever hear anyone say such a thing or need to say it yourself.

For this reason, Animate Object Pronomials and Pronomial-Persons-as-Object are generally provided in the Index Forms to avoid students wasting time on low-use forms.

Where helpful, index forms with the Distributive Prefixes /de^{33}/ and/or /di^{22}/ may also be provided. |

| Transitive Person-Person | v.tp-p | A transitive verb that's most likely to take a living being as its Direct Object.

a^{21}ji^{22}hwa^{2}htv^{22}hi^{23}do^{32}ha^{2}
(He's visiting him/her)

a^{21}ji^{22}hya^{2}ni^{3}ha^{2}
(He's calling, inviting him/her)

ji^{22}ye^{3}ʔi^{2}sdi^{3}ha^{2}
(I'm waking him/her up)

a^{21}ga^{2}lo^{23}na^{32}sdi^{2}ha^{2}
(He's deceiving, tricking him/her)

a^{21}ga^{2}do^{23}li^{32}ga^{2}
(He's pitying him/her)

Note: This category also includes *all* Classificatory verbs in the Animate/Living Class. | Set A uses will generally not be shown because they indicate an Inanimate Object.

Provided Index forms will focus on Animate Object, Set B, and Person-Person forms.

You're not likely to "wake up" or "trick" an inanimate object, so Pronomials explicitly indicating an inanimate object will be excluded to avoid clutter.

Just keep in mind that, technically, there is *nothing* truly agrammatical about using these verbs with Set A Pronomials—just that the resulting verb would be strange to say or hear in verb forms.

It's worth mentioning, these verbs *are* used with Set A Pronomials in derived noun forms—but those aren't included in the Verb Tables. |

| Transitive Person-Object / Person-Person | v.tp-o/p | A transitive verb that's equally likely to take an inanimate object or a living being as its Direct Object.

$ji^2go^{22}hwa^0hti^{23}ha^2$
(I see it.)

$ji^{22}go^{22}hwa^0hti^{23}ha^2$
(I see him/her.)

$a^{21}gi^2ge^{23}yu^3ha^2$
(I love it, [or] *S/he, it loves me.)*

$ji^{22}ge^{22}yu^3?a^2$
(I love him/her.)

Note: None of the Classificatory Verbs fall into this category. | These verbs will be shown with a wide range of Pronomials in the Index Forms. These verbs are likely to be said and heard with basically every Set of Pronomials, depending on the verb's Object.

Index Forms will include Set A, Set B, Animate Object, and sometimes Person-Person Pronouns.

These verbs provide excellent opportunities for students to study Pronominal Prefixes. |

On Inconsistency

As I write this, we're still in the extremely early phases of the Verb Tables project—I think I have less than 25 Tables uploaded at this point in time (August 2025). Despite being in the early phases, I've already begun polishing and changing the way the Verb Tables are made. Things like the way Tenses are labelled and organized among the Index Forms, the way certain Tenses are translated, the kinds of information included in the Table headers and how that information is organized, and so on.

I'm sure this constant rethinking and updating of how the Verb Tables are made and organized will continue throughout the entire project. This has already resulted in some inconsistencies in the Tables—for example, my earliest Tables use "NCMP*" for what I call "Incompletive Plus" Stems. When I realized how dumb it was to call it "Incompletive Plus" and then use an asterisk instead of the "+" symbol, I changed it to "NCMP+."

That kind of minor inconsistency may not bother you—that's awesome, but it definitely bothers me. But, I realized quickly that I can't go back and correct every single published verb table every time I change my approach to something minor like that. It would stall the overall progress of the project way too much.

So if you find little inconsistencies like that, this is the explanation for why they exist. My plan is to go back, fix inconsistencies, and standardize everything as soon as the project is "finished"—i.e., once a Verb Table has been finished for every CED verb entry. Bear with me until then.

On "Four Stems" and the PRC/NCMP Distinction

I agree with JW Webster's position that there are four Stem Forms, rather than five. I consider the Present Continuous Stem as a subcategory of the Incompletive Stem, because the Present Continuous and Incompletive Stems of a given verb are frequently identical and because, by definition, a Present Continuous verb describes an *incomplete, ongoing action*. However, the Present Continuous and Incompletive Stems are not *always* identical. Beyond that, some verbs have identical Stems for the Present Continuous and the Completive—still other verbs have identical Stems for the Present Continuous, Incompletive, *and* Completive Forms.

With this in mind, I use the following acronyms to label different Stem Forms and their possible overlaps:

PRC Present Continuous. Present Continuous and Incompletive Stems are distinct.

NCMP Incompletive. Present Continuous and Incompletive Stems are distinct.

NCMP+ Incompletive Plus. **Present Continuous and Incompletive Stems are identical** to one another.

CMP Completive. Completive Stem is distinct from all other Stems.

N/CMP "Pletive." **Incompletive and Completive Stems are identical** to one another, but the **Present Continuous Stem is distinct** from both.

N/CMP+ "Pletive" Plus. Used where the **Present Continuous, Incompletive, and Completive Stems are all identical.**

IMM Immediate.

~IMM Uncommon Immediate Stem. Used to indicate when an Immediate Stem is generally unused to form commands—instead, usually the Progressive Future Tense on an NCMP Stem is used for commands. The IMM Stem is still provided for IMM Past examples, or sometimes just for reference.

INF Infinitive.