

The Alien Game

Adapted for BC First Nations Languages

This light-hearted game is an opportunity to learn descriptive words, animals, body parts, numbers and more. Leanne Hinton describes it in her book “How to Keep Your Language Alive” as a “delightful game that we learned at a teacher-training workshop”¹

Art by Anna Socha

How to Play:

1. **Do not flip to the next pages** – there are drawings the apprentice should not see yet.
2. Get a pen and paper for the apprentice to draw with.
3. Only the mentor will view the aliens listed in the book. The mentor will view the images and only use their language (no English) to describe the aliens portrayed in the book.
4. The apprentice will listen to the mentor and draw what they are describing.

Tips:

Mentors - Use lots of body language if your apprentice is a beginner. If the alien has 2 heads, show 2 on your fingers 🖐️. If you're describing a hat they're wearing, or a certain body part, you can point at your own head or body to show what you're describing.

Apprentices - Listen to your mentor and draw what they are describing. Ask questions in your language (no English). You can ask how big their legs or arms are, or what kind of eyes or hair they have. Use your language to ask them to speak slower or repeat things if necessary.

After drawing, review the original image and compare your drawing with theirs and talk about what was different and go over any misunderstandings.

Feel free to draw your own aliens, or have the mentor find aliens from somewhere else. You can google search aliens or google search for a random Pokémon generator for the mentor to use as new “aliens” and describe those.

¹ Hinton, Leanne, et al. *How to Keep Your Language Alive : A Commonsense Approach to One-On-One Language Learning*. Berkeley, Calif., Heyday Books, 2002.









