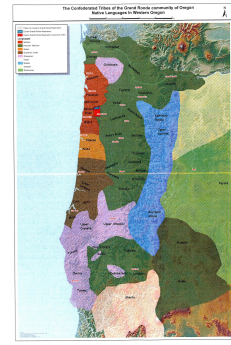


# chinuk wawa

**There were over 30 bands and tribes of people who were brought to the Grand Ronde Reservation.** Each band and tribe spoke their own language. The first common language of the reservation was not English, but a Native language called chinuk wawa. “chinuk wawa is an intertribal hybrid language indigenous to the Pacific Northwest, where it served as a regional lingua franca facilitating communication between speakers of different tribal languages as well as between tribal people and speakers of English and Canadian French.” (chinuk wawa, 2012, p.13). chinuk wawa was earlier developed by Native people along the Columbia River, to communicate with traders and foreigners. This became the first language that people on the reservation used to communicate with each other. When people got married they usually wouldn’t marry someone from their tribe. They would usually marry someone from another tribe who spoke a different language. Most often they would use chinuk wawa to communicate. This chinuk language was spoken in the home and the first language that many children would hear and learn.



**When the government forced the Native people to the reservation, they wanted the Natives to assimilate them to live like the European people.** They started forcing the Native people to send their children to boarding school. A boarding school meant that the children lived at the school and they only came home on vacations. The goal of these schools was to “civilize” the Native children. The children were made to wear clothes like the European people and eat food as they did as well. They were also not allowed to speak their Native language. In fact, they were punished if they did. Many families stopped teaching their children chinuk wawa, so they wouldn’t be punished at school for speaking it. However, chinuk wawa continued to be used with older people in the community, with the result that chinuk wawa survived far longer than the reservation boarding school era did.

**In 1954 the tribe was terminated. During termination, many Tribal members moved away to find work. The number of chinuk wawa speakers continued to decline.** After being terminated for almost 30 years, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde was restored in 1983, gaining federal recognition. In the late 1970’s and early 1980’s a few elders conducted community classes in chinuk wawa, trying to keep it alive. Also at that time, there was a scholar who came through and he recorded elders speaking the language. He also learned to speak it. In 1997 The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde hired a language specialist who organized a program to revive chinuk wawa. He began teaching community classes and getting more people to speak the language. He worked together with the scholar who had come through earlier, to create curriculum and lessons for these classes. In 2000 they helped start a preschool immersion class at Grand Ronde. An immersion Kindergarten started in 2004. Currently, the program serves K-4th graders. You can also take the class at Willamina High School. Many community classes are held in order to get as many people as possible speaking the language. There is also a chinuk wawa language app available for use using iPhones or iPads.