

Using the Raised u (ʷ)

Why is the letter *u* raised (ʷ) at the end of certain words?

When certain words are pronounced, we hear a sound at the end, as if a *u* is almost pronounced, but not quite. For example, when you listen to the word *kakʷ* pronounced, there is a sound at the end, almost a breath of air. It's for this reason that the *u* is written ʷ here and not as a regular *u*.

Examples where the raised u is used:

<i>kʷ</i>			
bear	<i>mashkʷ</i>	sea	<i>shipekʷ</i>

<i>mʷ</i>			
s/he paints	<i>peshaimʷ</i>	June	<i>uapikun-pishimʷ</i>

<i>tʷ</i>			
so much, so many...	<i>tatʷ</i>	three	<i>nishtʷ</i>

<i>shʷ</i>			
two	<i>nishʷ</i>		

How do I know when to use the raised u?

Not all *u*'s at the end of a word are raised. A raised *u* can occur when a word ends in *k*, *m*, *t* and *sh*, but not all words ending in these letters take a raised *u*: e.g., *minush*, *massishk*, *asham* and *enat*.

There is a test that can be used with words that can take grammatical endings. If you add the plural marker to a noun or a verb, you can tell whether there is a *u* between the word and the added suffix. The same thing happens if you add the diminutive suffix.

Examples (adding the plural marker):

English	kie ma	Plural	raised u
bear	<i>mashkat kie ma mashkuat</i>	<i>mashkuat</i>	<i>mashkʷ</i>
caribou	<i>atikat kie ma atikuat</i>	<i>atikuat</i>	<i>atikʷ</i>
cat	<i>minushuat kie ma minushuat</i>	<i>minushat</i>	<i>minush</i>
goose	<i>nishkat kie ma nishkuat</i>	<i>nishkat</i>	<i>nishk</i>
porcupine	<i>kakat kie ma kakuat</i>	<i>kakuat</i>	<i>kakʷ</i>
snake	<i>manitushat kie ma manitushuat</i>	<i>manitushat</i>	<i>manitush</i>
island	<i>minishtika kie ma minishtikua</i>	<i>minishtikua</i>	<i>minishtikʷ</i>

	<i>pshaikanashka kie ma pshaikanashkua</i>	<i>pshaikanashkua</i>	<i>pshaikanashk^u</i>
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Examples (adding the diminutive marker):

English	kie ma	Diminutive	raised u
bear	<i>mashkiss kie ma mashkuss</i>	<i>mashkuss</i>	<i>mashk^u</i>
caribou	<i>atikiss kie ma atikuss</i>	<i>atikuss</i>	<i>atik^u</i>
cat	<i>minushiss kie ma minushuss</i>	<i>minushiss</i>	<i>minush</i>
goose	<i>nishkiss kie ma nishkuss</i>	<i>nishkiss</i>	<i>nishk</i>
porcupine	<i>kakiss kie ma kakuss</i>	<i>kakuss</i>	<i>kak^u</i>
snake	<i>manitushiss kie ma manitushuss</i>	<i>manitushiss</i>	<i>manitush</i>
island	<i>minishtikiss kie ma minishtikuss</i>	<i>minishtikuss</i>	<i>minishtik^u</i>
	<i>pshaikanashkiss kie ma pshaikanashkuss</i>	<i>pshaikanashkuss</i>	<i>pshaikanashk^u</i>