

No Hello!

Inuit do not have a formal greeting but they use other indicators that acknowledge one another. Smiling is one good indicator. Body language is another. Gestures also indicate a person's presence or present condition. A person may not make eye contact if he/she is not in a good state. Shaking hands is acceptable everywhere.

There are no words for "**Hello**" in Inuktitut. The only form of greeting I am aware of was used in the past. We would say "**ih hi**" (ee hee) and that was the only form of greeting. Other close words are "**Aingai**" or "**Aakuluk**" (Northern Quebec and south Baffin). These words are not often used as salutation but rather used more of a reference to someone that is intimate with you such as your niece, son, daughter, uncle, aunt, etc. where affection is expressed.

It is often misunderstood when an Inuk does not say hello verbally. Quite often people think that Inuit are rude by not saying hello. In actual fact, people are being acknowledged by the other by smiling/not smiling or by using body language. Moving quickly/ slowly indicates the mood/state of the person. Eye contact/no eye contact is extremely important to watch. People may know you are present but not make eye contact if something is not right. There are other things that Inuit are misunderstood for.

For example, there are no formal words for **Good Morning, Good Afternoon** or **Good Evening**. There are no words for the word "**please**".

"**Ullaakkut**" is a substitute for good morning since there is none in Inuktitut. It however means "In the morning..." (Something will happen in the morning, but does not indicate what). **Unnusakkut** means in the afternoon...that something will happen sometime in the afternoon. **Unnukkut** means something will happen in the evening. **Ullaakkut, unnusakkut** and **unnukkut** can not stand by themselves if the language is to be used properly. They, however, are acceptable phrases today as they are commonly used by everyone. **Ullaakkut aullalaaqtunga** is acceptable. "I'll be leaving in the morning". It explains what will happen in the morning. When "**Ullaakkut, unnusakkut** and **unnukkut** " stand by themselves when spoken, the other party may wonder... What? What will happen in the morning, afternoon or evening? In Arviat, they use "**Ublaatsiaq**" to indicate how nice the morning is. This phrase is much more acceptable than "**Ullaakkut, unnusakkut** or **unnukkut** ". In Baffin region "**Ublaatsiaq**" would be "**Ullaattiaq**" or "**Ullaatsiaq**".

The word **please** does not exist in the Inuktitut language. It is perceived to be beyond passive and therefore more of a pretentious or demeaning statement. The word "**please**" is used when a person wants to be authoritative or more demanding.

Inuktitut language is unique and should be respected as such. I also want to thank those who attempt to speak Inuktitut. **People have a great deal of respect for those who try.** Keep it up!

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