Wiyot is rather highly synthetic, generally agglutinative in its technique of synthesis. The most widely used methods of expressing the relations among grammatical elements are affixation and compounding. Internal change, particularly consonantal harmony and laryngealization, plays a grammatical role in the language.

All morphological elements which are non-affixal, and which are potentially subject to derivation and inflection, are stems. By their privilege of occurrence in composition these are either initial or medial. The next larger unit in Wiyot morphology is the theme. A theme is any directly inflectable form, simple or complex, or any uninflected form which can occur as a word. It is at the theme level that word class membership becomes fully determinate. The three major classes of Wiyot are verbs, nouns, and particles. Verb themes appear in most cases with one or more of a class of verbal affixes. Noun themes may occur uninflected or with one of a small number of nominal affixes. Particle themes undergo no inflection, and most are morphologically simple, although there are also some derived particles.

Affixes in Wiyot are derivational (added to stems), inflectional (added to themes) and syntactic (added to formally complete words and sentences). Derivational affixes are numerous and diverse, in many cases uniquely occurring with a given stem. Syntactic affixes stand midway between affixes and words; they are considered as affixes in that certain types of internal sandhi operate between them and their head. Syntactic affixes form units having the syntactic function of words.

The heart of Wiyot grammar is its verbal system. A verb form contains within itself all the necessary indexing of major sentence relationships. The verb form contains a theme which is frequently composite, and up to three inflectional suffixes. It is preceded by up to four preverbal particles (preverbs) in endocentric construction with it. The preverbs serve to express a great variety of ideas, largely of a tense, modal, or aspectual nature. Verb themes are either active or stative, differing from each other both in morphology and syntax. Active verbs are intransitive or transitive; many verb stems form both intransitive and transitive themes. Intransitive themes may not be inflected for object, but certain of these have an implied object, always third person, which may or may not be syntactically expressed; these themes are called pseudo-transitive.

Inflection for subject and object in the verb are almost exclusively accomplished by suffixation. Three types of subject inflection occur: personal, impersonal, and non-personal. In personal subject inflection two separate formal systems are involved: the address system (speaker, addressee) and agentive (neither speaker nor addressee). In the agentive system are distinguished definite and indefinite actor. Also linked to the agentive system are the impersonal and non-personal subject inflections. They are accomplished with themes derived from transitive and pseudo-transitive stems, (the themes imply a third person object) and from intransitive and stative themes respectively. In object inflection of transitive themes both direct and indirect object affixes occur, the latter being called benefactive object. Agentive object themes, and intransitive
themes may also have instrumental inflection.

By their subject inflection, Wiyot verbs occur in four moods: indicative (major mood) and imperative, negative, and subjunctive (minor moods). The imperative theme has only one form, uninfl cted by construable only with a second person actor. Negative themes are not inflected on the morphological level, but are always accompanied by a preverb which also expresses negation and which is inflected for the address system. The same preverb, inflected for the agentive system, functions with an indicative verb form to supply the negative agentive forms. The inflected subjunctive theme in independent use functions as the core of an interrogation, and in independent use it also has stylistic (honoryific) uses. In constituency with an indicative verb form, the subjunctive is subordinate.

The forms of the Wiyot nominal system are largely used in anaphoric conjunction with the various categories already explicit in the verbal constructs. Wiyot noun themes are inflected for four categories: possession, subordination, location, and direct address. Affixes used are both prefixes and suffixes. The possessive uses three sets of prefixes. The first distinguishes three persons and is used with the majority of Wiyot nouns. The second is used with a class of nouns called inalienable; there are overt forms for the first and second persons, and also a prefix which forms an absolute form. The third set, also limited to the address system, only with kin terms. Subordinative themes are formed from all nouns by the addition of explicit or implicit finals, to form both definite and indefinite themes. These themes function for the agentive system as the possessive themes do for the address system. Location is expressed by two locative affixes, one a suffix, the other a prefix. A single vocative prefix occurs with kinship terms only.

All words, including syntactic affixes, which are not nouns and verbs, are particles. The basis for their subclassification is entirely syntactic. Wiyot particles are adverbs (call proverbs in predicative function), adnouns, pronouns, postpositions, and interjections. Adverbs include four syntactically free adverbs (the same may be proverbs) and syntactically bound preverbs. Also adverbs are various numerative forms. Adnouns include several preposed and postposed articles (including demonstratives), post nouns, and preposed directional, adnouns. Pronouns include personal pronoun particles and interrogaives. Postpositions are a heterogeneous class whose members follow nouns, verbs, and free or numerative adverbs. Their function is largely modal, although there are also a conjunctive particle and two particles which indicate plural number for second and third persons. The few Wiyot particles which function without syntactic restraint are interjections.

*The agentive system is not represented in the minor moods.