



Grammar

waq dal ?i gee ?ewksiknii ?elGank
How do you say that in Klamath?

You have now come to the end of the lessons with sound. None of the words and phrases that follow have accompanying sound. But do not despair! You are now ready for some practice all on your own.

Remember that it possible to pronounce accurately the Klamath words you read even without ever having heard them spoken. Learning how to do this is a major goal of these lessons.

It is therefore advised that you go back and review. Review as many times as necessary. The object is to familiarize yourself with the Klamath writing system.

Do Not Be Timid! It is best to pronounce the words loudly and repeatedly. Think about what you are doing. Make sure you understand what sound each symbol represents. Keep in mind that Klamath sounds are not necessarily the same as those of English.

If you have a Grandparent or Parent or are acquainted with an elder who knows the language, you are encouraged to talk to him or her. Try out what you have learned. See how accurately you can say the words or phrases which follow. Do not be afraid to make mistakes. Listen carefully as the elders coach you. Notice the minute distinctions in sound that they make, the ones which the casual learner of Klamath would normally miss.

It is the Indian way to respect the elders. And so let us always be sure to show consideration. Do not push them to the limits of their physical strength. Our elders are an irreplaceable link to the past. Never again will we hear Klamath spoken by people who learned it as their first language, and who learned it from others who also had learned it as their first language.

Practicing Your Klamath

Here are some words and phrases to practice: blaydal'knii = God (One from up above)

gmok'am'c = God (Old One)

blaydal = upward; Heaven

bloksip = father's father

pt'eewip = father's mother

pk'aasip = mother's father

pq'oliip = mother's mother

tGeewn'ap = man's elder brother

pk'oonip = woman's elder brother



tapy'ap = man's younger brother, woman's younger sister
tobaksip = man's sister
pt'aalip = woman's elder sister
pseeip = father's brother
bloGoo'ip = mother's brother
pGojiip = father's sister
psaaq'ip = mother's sister
dwaa dal ?i = What are you?
noo ?a ?ewksiknii = I'm Klamath
qyoqs ?a gee gi = He is a doctor.
maqlaqs = indian – also person, people
basdin = white person
bosbosl'i hiswaqs = black man
c'oc'leeks = black person
jaanmin or jaanama = Chinese person
moo ?a hoot jleek'atk = She is very pretty.
dic hoot slees gitk sn'eweets = She is a beautiful woman.
dic ?a gee hiswaqs slees gitk = He's a good looking guy.
gee ?a mi tGeewn'ap gi = This is your brother.
gee ?a mi tobaksip gi = This is your (a man's) sister
waasi ?a goLii hoot las'asdat = He (or she) went into the house.
moo blitk hoot = He (or she) is very fat.
been ?an giwapk = I'll do it again.

Grammar

In no language are words simply strung together in a random fashion. Many subtle and not so subtle principles govern the way a language is structured. These principles we call grammar.

Klamath is no exception. Learning Klamath involves much more than learning lists of words. However it is accomplished, learning Klamath as a second language means learning both vocabulary and grammar.

We therefore believe it to be beneficial, even in this beginners course, for the student to encounter a couple principles of Klamath grammar. The student is advised, however, not to become perplexed. If these examples seem confusing, remember that there is plenty of time for their mastery.



At the very least, the following is intended to demonstrate that Klamath has grammatical structure, and no less than any of the languages traditionally taught in school. This section is also intended to spark the interest of the student, to whet the curiosity especially of the more analytical ones.

Subject and Object

Words that name people, places or things are called nouns. In Klamath nouns often end in -as when they are the object in a sentence. In English it is word order that is used to make this distinction. But in Klamath word order is extremely variable. In the Klamath sentences below, that which distinguishes subject from object is not word order but the suffix -as. hiswaqs ?a siwga daaslaats = The man killed the cougar.

hiswaqs ?a siwga daaslaatsas = The man killed the cougar.

hiswaqsas ?a siwga daaslaats = The cougar killed the man.

Kinship terms generally end in a -p when they are the subject in a sentence. When they are the object they end in -a. ptisap ?a s?abiiya pk'isa = Father told mother ...
pk'isap ?a s?abiiya ptisa = Mother told father

gew ?a ptisap nis sle?a = My father saw me.

sle?a ?an gew ptisa = I saw my father.

beep ?a gew gatba = My daughter arrived.

s?cwan?a ?a hoot gew beeya maksa = He gave my daughter baskets.

?at ?a ni gatba gew beeya dola = Now I have arrived with my daughter.

Descriptive words are called adjectives. As subjects adjectives usually end in -i, and objects they generally end in -a. dic'ii ?a sn'eweets sle? domaa ?iwam = The good woman saw many huckleberries.

dic'aa ?a ?iwam sle?a domii weewan's = The many women saw the good huckleberries.

Classifiers Every language has its own special features which make it unique and interesting. Klamath is no exception. Among the interesting aspects of Klamath grammar is its system for classifying objects. This is done by a set of prefixes which attach to verbs of manipulation. There are a great many classifying prefixes, here we will only illustrate a few. One dimensional objects are classified by the prefix ?-. noos ?oyank wc'loosnoots = Please give me the broom.
dalc'i noos ?oyank = Please give me the arrow.



gen ?is heksGis ?oyi = Give me this cane!

hon ?is ?epgi ?amda = Bring me the digging stick!

Saliently two dimensional objects are classified by the prefix ne-. p'aLa noos
neyank = Please give me the basket tray.

hon ?is neyi c'oyees = Bring me that hat!

And saliently three dimensional objects by the prefix l-. hon ?is loyi qday = Give
me that rock!

hon ?is lepgi qday = Bring me that rock!

napal ?is loyank = Please give me the egg.

hon ?is loyi maksa = Give me the basket!

lilhanksam qlas noos loyank = Please give me the deerhide. (If hide is rolled up)

Massive or bulky objects are classified by c'le-. c'oleeks ?is c'leyank = Please give
me the meat.

baal'aa?as ?is c'leyank = Please give me the bread.

sl'epsas ?is c'leyank = Please give me the bread (sl'epsas is a bread made of the
cattail root flour and baked in the ashes).

Flexible, cloth-like objects are classified by sle. skodas ?is sleyank = Please give
me the blanket.

gabo ?is sleyank = Please give me the coat.

Living, animate objects are classified by ks-. m'ok'aak ?is ksoyank = Please give
me the baby.

c'waam ?is ksoyank = Please give me the mullet.

And long flexible objects are classified by km-. qnoqs ?is kmoyank = Please give
me the rope.

More Lessons Jump to lessons

on vowels, consonants, ejectives, vocabulary, grammar, and phrases. .