Grammer

waq dal ?i gee ?ewksikni ?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
TGeeewn’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
 bloGooc’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
 bosbol’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.

Grammer

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 it’s 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 -o. 

- **noos ?oyank wc’loosqnoots** = 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.