



Lingít Kayéigi

Tlingit Sounds



aax áwé
has du x'wáal'i a kaadéi
has a kooldánch
wé eeshandéin tuwateeyi káa.
—Naa Tláa

then they would let their down fall
like snow
over the person who is feeling grief.
—Jessie Dalton

lingít kayéigi



Tlingit is full of sounds that you do not hear in the English language, and some that are unique to Tlingit (x', x'w x', x'w). English is a language heavily situated towards the front of your mouth, while Tlingit exists from the tooth ridge on back. This means a lot of guttural sounds that will challenge your muscle control within your mouth. A great practice technique to warm yourself up is to look up, relax your throat, and make noises like a raven, or just make the dangly guy in back of your throat (uvula) rattle around. This may feel like you are clearing your throat, but in later lessons, you will need control this part of your body, and the best way to do that is through exercise.

After they are introduced in class, practice the sounds that are unfamiliar; pay close attention to what is going on inside your mouth, and use your hands and body language to help locate sounds and enunciate tones. Chances are, you will be using different areas than you have for much in your life, so you will have to wake them up through exercise and gain command over them to improve your pronunciation. Have patience. Sounds are introduced gradually in our lessons, more complex ones come later with explanations on how to make the sounds.

When looking at Tlingit vowels, it is important to remember two things. First, vowels can be either long or short, and this works in pairs, meaning that in some cases a word can be pronounced long or short and also verbs roots often shift from long to short with predictable frequency. More importantly, Tlingit has two tones: high and low. This can greatly affect meaning, so you need to be conscious of tone, which is marked with an accent (á) when high and not marked (a) when low. Try to use body movements, like holding your hand out when speaking and raising it when you see a tone mark. Let this be your cue to raise the pitch of your voice.

Tlingit has vowels that have sonorant endings. They end in a consonant that speakers of English are used to making at the begging of words. The examples of sonorant endings in English are “wow” and “eeew!” Exaggerate the differences between vowel sounds, length, and tone while learning them.

vowels (pairs and tones)

a ~ aa

e ~ ei

i ~ ee

u ~ oo

o (rare)

á ~ áa

é ~ éi

í ~ íe

ú ~ úo

vowels with sonorant endings

aaw

aay

eew

eey

oow

consonants & locations

labial

w m (Teslin & Carcross)

uvular

g k k' x x'

alveolar

ch ch' d dl dz j l
l' s s' sh t t' tl
tl' ts ts' y

uvular + labial (rounded)

gw kw k'w xw x'w

glottal

h

velar

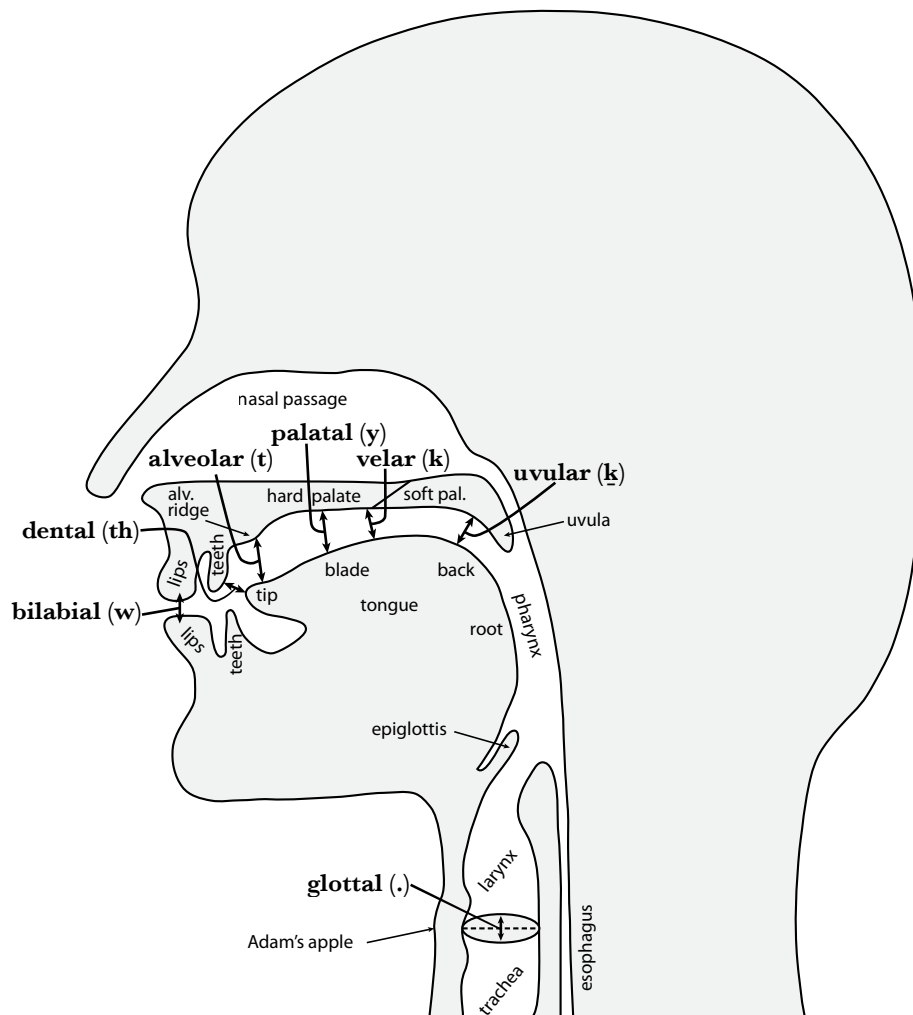
g gw k k' x x'

glottal + labial (rounded)



.w hw

velar + labial (rounded)




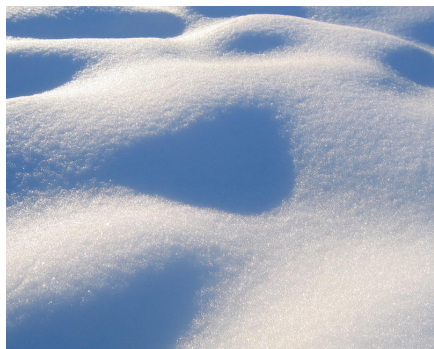



kw k'w xw x'w



Labial

<p>w</p> <p>wasóos</p> 	<p>m</p> <p>masóos</p> 
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Alveolar

<p>ch</p> <p>cheech</p> 	<p>ch'</p> <p>ch'eet</p>  <p>(murrelet)</p>	<p>d</p> <p>dáa</p> 
<p>dl</p> <p>dleit</p>  <p>(snow)</p>	<p>dz</p> <p>dzeit</p>  	<p>j</p> <p>jánwu / jínwu (Y)</p> 

Alevolar (cont'd)

<p>l</p> <p>lóol</p> 	<p>l'</p> <p>l'ook</p>  <p>(coho)</p>	<p>n</p> <p>nóoskw</p> 
<p>s</p> <p>séek</p> 	<p>s'</p> <p>s'EEK</p> 	<p>sh</p> <p>shaa</p> 
<p>t</p> <p>téeyaa</p> 	<p>t'</p> <p>t'á</p>  <p>(chinook)</p>	<p>tl</p> <p>tleilóo</p> 

Alevolar (cont'd)

tl'

tl'eex



ts

tsaa



ts'






ts'ats'ée




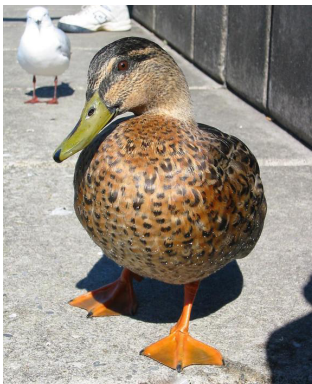



y






yaak



<p>g gooch</p> 	<p>k káast</p> 	<p>k' k'inchéiyi</p> 
<p>x xáshaa</p> 	<p>x' x'áax'</p> 	

<p>gw gwálaa</p> 	<p>kw aan kwéiyi</p> 	<p>-kw yaakw</p> 
<p>k'w k'wát'</p> 	<p>-k'w dzísk'w</p> 	<p>xw xwaasdáa</p>  <p>(canvas; tarp)</p>
<p>-xw gáaxw</p> 	<p>x'w x'wán</p> 	<p>-x'w dzéex'w</p>  <p>(baby clams)</p>




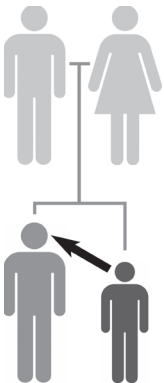
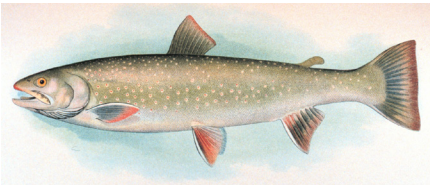

Uvular

<p><u>g</u> g<u>oo</u>ch</p> 	<p><u>k</u> k<u>á</u>kw</p> 	<p><u>k'</u> k'<u>a</u>teíl</p> 
<p><u>x</u> x<u>á</u>at</p>  <p>(salmon; fish)</p>	<p><u>x'</u> x'<u>a</u>an</p> 	


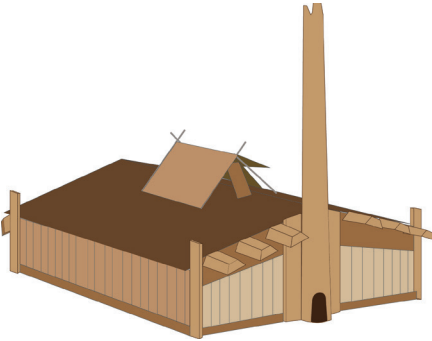
Uvular + Labial (rounded)

<p><u>gw</u> gw<u>é</u>inaa</p> 	<p><u>kw</u> -k<u>w</u>áan</p>  <p>(person or people from that place)</p>	<p>-<u>kw</u> náak<u>w</u></p> 
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Uvular + Labial (rounded)

<p>k'w k'wátl</p> 	<p>-k'w léik'w</p> 	<p>xw shanaxwáayi</p> 
<p>-xw -húnxw</p>  <p>(male's older brother)</p>	<p>x'w x'wáat'</p>  <p>(Dolly Varden trout)</p>	<p>-x'w néx'w</p>  <p>(cloudberry)</p>

Glottal

<p>.</p> <p>yaana.eit</p> 	<p>h hít</p> 
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