

Daa sáyá?
What is this?



Yee gu.aa yáx̣ x'wán.
Yee léelk'u hás x̣á yee x̣'éit has wusi.áx̣ yeedát.

Yee gu.aa yáx̣ x'wán.
G̣unéi ax̣ tu.ádi tsu.

Yee gu.aa yáx̣ x'wán.
Uháan áyá, haa léelk'u hás, has du íṭx̣ yaa ntu.át

Yee gu.aa yáx̣ x'wán.
Ldakát yeewháan.

Shgaté

Have strength and courage, all of you.
Your grandparents are really listening to you now.

Have strength and courage, all of you.
We are beginning to walk along it, too.

Have strength and courage, all of you.
It is us, our grandparents, we are the ones following them.

Have strength and courage, all of you.
Every one of you.

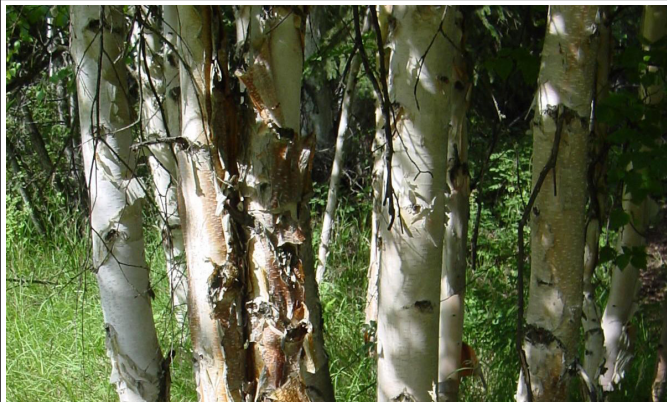
Jessie Johnnie, Chookaneidí, Neix̣.ádi Yádi

daa sáyá?



Now we will begin our first lesson. In this section, you will be introduced to a letter in the Tlingit alphabet, beginning with vowel sounds. There are two things here that are important to remember: these vowels have tone, which means the pitch of your voice helps determine meaning. High toned vowels also receive more emphasis, and they are marked with an accent (á é í ú ó). Also, vowels can be long or short—like the differences between the first vowel *amazing* and the vowel in *Saab*— and this also affects meaning. You will learn later that there are flexibilities with both tone and length of vowels, but for now, focus on exaggerating the difference between high tone and low tone, long vowel and short vowel.

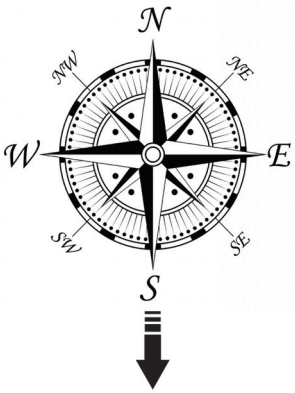

As you say the word, focus your eyes on the image because doing so is better than thinking of the English word for the same object. Our goal is to create a Tlingit way of thinking and seeing the world, and that means beginning to transition from the modern world to that of the traditional. After introducing the basic sounds of this chapter, we will practice some phrases where we can fill in the blanks with the nouns we are learning. After that, we will break down a little of the grammar. Remember to drill and repeat, practice with other speakers and learners, and to just keep trying.



a	
at daayí	birch (lit. thing's bark)



á	
tás	thread

	aa	
	áa	
	e	
	é	

shaawát

woman

áa

lake

íxde





towards
downstream;
towards south

té


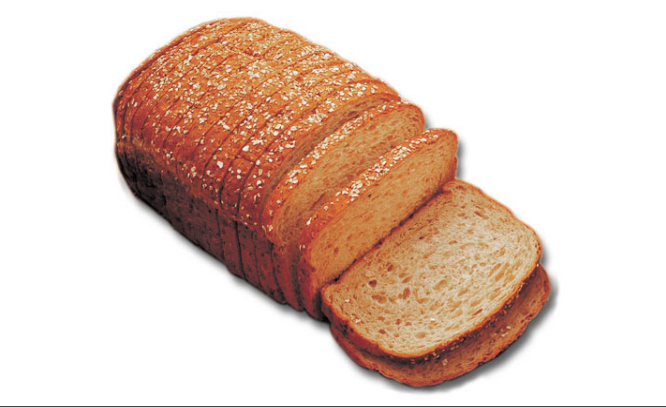


rock, stone

	ei	
	seit	necklace
	éi	
	shéiyi	spruce
	i	
	digitgiyáa	hummingbird
	í	
	hít	house

	<div>ee</div> <div>ayawditee</div> <div>windy weather; stormy weather</div>	
	<div>ée</div> <div>kées</div> <div>bracelet</div>	
	<div>u</div> <div>nukshiyáan / lukshiyáan</div> <div>mink</div>	
	<div>ú</div> <div>gút</div> <div>dime</div>	

	<div>oo</div> <div>woosh yaayí</div> <div>pair</div>	
	<div>óo</div> <div>óonaa</div> <div>rifle (lit. thing that shoots)</div>	
	<div>aay</div> <div>yáay</div> <div>whale</div>	
	<div>aaw</div> <div>yaaw</div> <div>herring</div>	

	eey	
	eew	
	oow	
	.	
	yaana.eit	wild celery; cow parsnip

	-kw	
	-kw-	
	ch	
	d	

yaakw

canoe, boat

sakwnéin

bread

cheech

porpoise

dáa

weasel

	g	
	h	
	j	
	k	

gaaw

drum; clock;
bell; time

héen





water; river;
creek

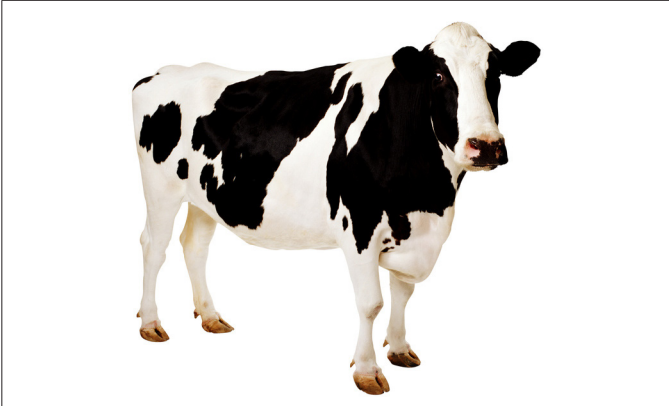

jánwu / jínwu (Y)

mountain goat

kakéin

yarn

n		
	nóoskw	wolverine
s		
	saak	eulachon; hooligan; candlefish
sh		
	shaa	mountain
t		
	téeyaa	chisel (lit. thing that chisels)

w	
	<div>wasóos</div> <div>cow</div>
y	
	<div>yaak</div> <div>mussels</div>

That covers the basic sounds of Tlingit, and in the following chapters we will drill intermediate and advanced sounds. Now we will learn some basic phrases that will help us with conversation and will also allow us to use the nouns we just covered in basic sentences. While we will be moving on with material, you must discipline yourself to drill the words above using the pictures until you have a good idea of the sounds and the meaning of the words; in doing so, challenge yourself to think of the object itself, and not the English word for it. Work with other language learners or teachers on the sounds whenever possible, and prepare to use the words in sentences in the following parts of the lesson.

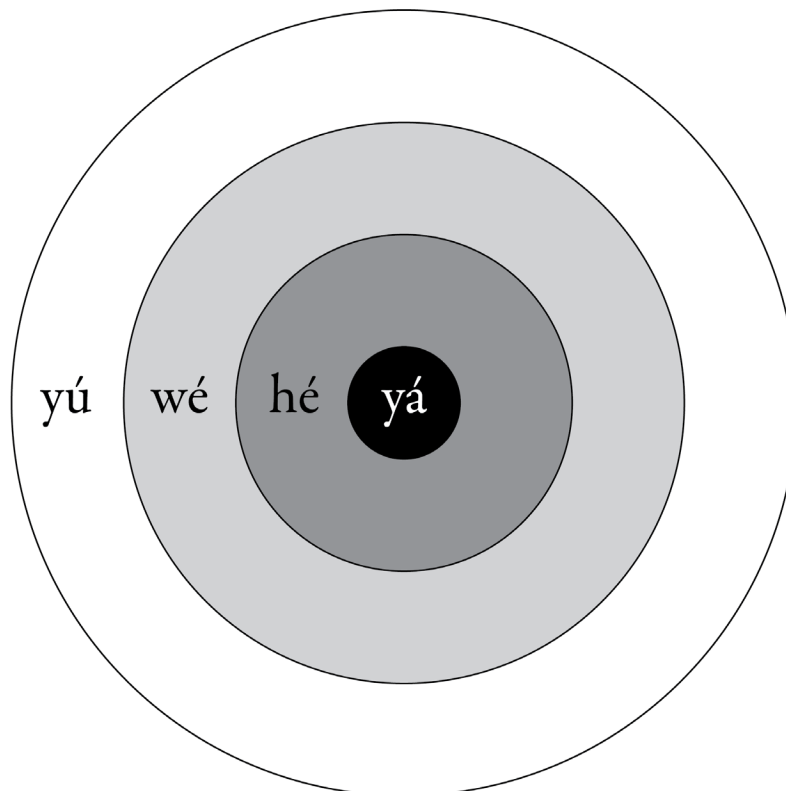
Particles & Questions

The following pages take a look at particles that combine to form basic questions and answers. It is important to keep in mind that even though particles have meaning, they do not appear on their own. Instead, they combine with other parts of speech to create communication. Whenever we break language into its smaller pieces, we have to remember that it is done to help us build up the ability to communicate in the language by learning how to use these parts. When particles combine with other parts of speech, the overall meaning and the particle itself might undergo change.

sá	say
	used with other particles to form questions, like «daa sá» “say what?” but sometimes used to form statements, like «Lingít x’éínáx sá!» “say it in Tlingit” Does not appear on its own.
á	[focus particle]
	used to draw attention to a particular word or concept within speech. can add emphasis, show what part of the utterance is important, or slightly shift meaning.

Tlingit sense of space

(determiners)





yá	this (right here)
	refers to something that is touchable or in hand
hé	this (here)
	refers to something closer to the speaker than the listener, or right behind the speaker; can also refer to a nearby but unknown location
wé	that (over there)
	refers to something out of reach but usually within the same basic space
yú	that (over yonder)
	refers to something far away, including distant areas that cannot be seen

daa sáyá?	what is this?
	Daa sá+yá asks about something that is touchable or in hand
___ áwé.	that is ___.
	á+wé refers to something out of reach but usually within the same basic space. used in oratory as a pause, like “well, um, etc.” or to signal shifts in subject or scene.
daa sáwé?	what is that?
	Daa sá+wé asks about something out of reach but usually within the same basic space
___ áyá.	this is ___.
	á+yá refers to something that is touchable or in hand

goosú ____?	where is ____?
	goo+sá+u some speakers will use «Goosú wé ____?» which refers to a known object, like “where is that drum?”
yáadu ____.	right here is ____.
	yáa+t+-ú it is touchable or in hand
héidu ____.	here is ____.
	héi+t+-ú it is closer to the speaker than the listener, or right behind the speaker; can also refer to a nearby but unknown location
wéidu ____.	there is ____.
	wéi+t+-ú it is out of reach but usually within the same basic space

yóodu ____.	there is ____.
	yóo+t+-ú it is far away, over yonder, including distant areas that cannot be seen
gé	yes/no?
	this particles turns statements into a yes or no question, and often appears with the focus particle «á» as in «ágé»
aaa	yes
	can have many variations on tone (á-aa, áa-a, a-áa, aa-á, aaa). used in oratory as a pause, like “well, um, etc.” or to signal shifts in subject or scene.
tléik’	no

___ ák.yá?	is this ___?
	<p>á+gé+yá ~ ákyá</p> <p>«gé» turns the phrase into a yes/no question. whether the answer is “yes” or “no”, follow with the phrase.</p>
aaa/tléik’, ___ áwé.	yes/no, that is ___.
	<p>For this drill, remember to use the complete answer, which includes saying what the object is, regardless of yes or no.</p>
___ ák.wé?	is that ___?
	<p>á+gé+wé ~ ákwé</p> <p>«gé» turns the phrase into a yes/no question. whether the answer is “yes” or “no”, follow with the phrase.</p>
aaa/tléik’, ___ áyá.	yes/no, this is ___.
	<p>For this drill, remember to use the complete answer, which includes saying what the object is, regardless of yes or no.</p>

	séek	belt
	dáanaa	silver; money; silver (color)
	kawóot	beads
	dís	moon; month



keishísh

alnus alder
(beach or
mountain alder)



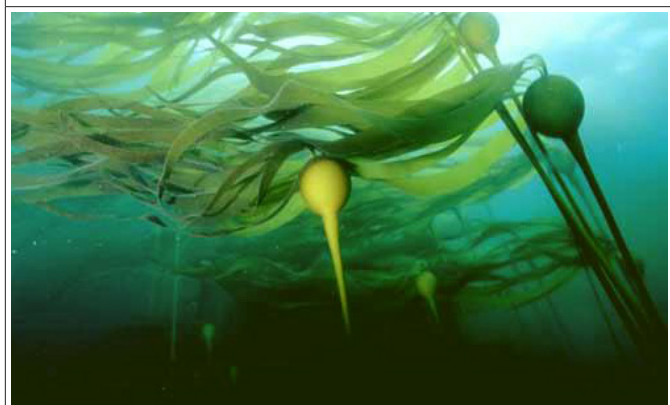
aan

town; village;
settlement;
inhabited or
owned land



neech

shoreline



geesh

bull kelp



gán

firewood; wood



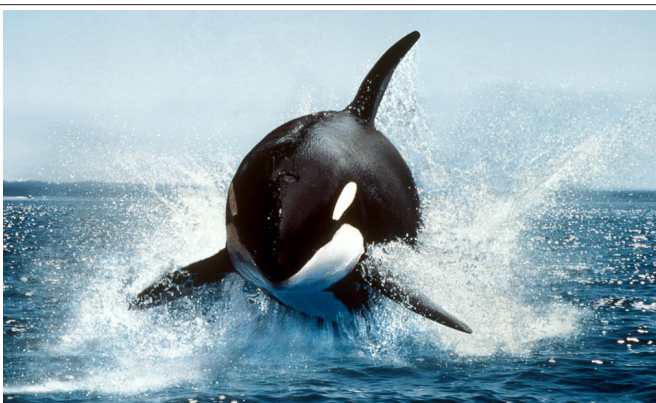
káast

barrel



shayéit

pillow
(lit. thing below
the head)



kéet

killer whale; orca



taan

sea lion



yéin

sea cucumber



gooch

hill



nadáakw

table



kóoshdaa

land otter;
river otter



dóosh

cat



kootéeyaa

totem pole
(lit. cylindrical
chiseled thing)



kanéist

cross



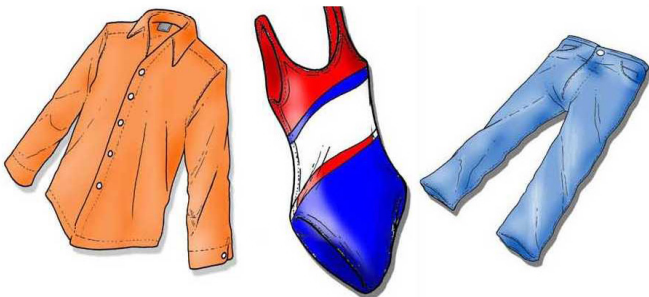
kaháakw

salmon eggs



shakee.át

headress
(lit. thing on
top of head)







naa.át

clothing
(lit. draping thing)



jáaji

snowshoes

	<p>keijín</p>	<p>five (lit. up-hand)</p>
	<p>shaaw</p>	<p>gumboot; chiton</p>
	<p>shayéinaa</p>	<p>anchor (lit. thing that anchors)</p>
	<p>tawéi</p>	<p>dall sheep; mountain sheep</p>

	tináa	copper shield
	yuka.óot' / kaa yaku.óot'i	button

Forming questions in Tlingit

The chart on the following page shows how to begin forming questions in Tlingit.

Forming Tlingit Questions

