

**The  
x̄á'isla  
Handbook**

An Introduction  
to x̄á'islakala

**ya'úć**

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## Preface

ya'uć mámíala'enc (hello, my friends) and welcome to “The xá'isla Handbook”.

This will be your companion as you get to know xá'isla<sup>1</sup>kala (the xá'isla language) or serve as a reminder if you're familiar with it. Here, you'll find some common words and phrases in a handy, small-format book that you can take along with you anywhere you go. We won't go deep into the language here as this is intended to be an introduction so it includes only the essentials.

First thing's first: since this is in printed form, we'll need to talk about the writing system so that you'll be able to read what's in this book. We'll talk about elements of the writing system and we'll look at some charts to get you familiar with how it works.

After that, you can start going through the book to find words and phrases that are often asked about. Hopefully, this will give you a good foundation that you can continue to build upon as you learn more about this amazing language.

With further ado: wísenis xá'isla<sup>1</sup>kala (let's speak xá'isla!)

## The Hybrid Orthography

You might be scratching your head right about now and asking, “what’s an orthography?” Well, it’s the letters and symbols that make up an alphabet. In English, we know “A, B, C, D, E, F” etc., and that’s kind of a simplified orthography. Sounds are associated with symbols and that’s what makes an orthography.

The next question you might ask is, “why use an orthography?” There are various reasons, but one of the most important reasons is that there are many sounds in *x̄á’isla*kála that don’t exist in English. If it doesn’t exist, then it’s hard to use those 26 letters in a way that accurately reflect the unique *x̄á’isla* sounds.

Many language specialists have worked with the *x̄á’isla* language, with Hein Vink being the first established linguist to develop a writing system in the 1970s. Next came Neville Lincoln & John Rath, publishing a *x̄á’isla*kála/*x̄enáksiala*kála dictionary in 1986 using an orthography that was different than Hein Vink’s. The last established linguist to do major work in *x̄á’isla*kála was Emmon Bach, who used yet another writing system.

Each orthography has some advantages and some disadvantages. Hein Vink’s orthographies (he used 2 altogether) are difficult to decipher and the same can be said for Lincoln & Rath’s writing system. Emmon Bach’s last orthography (he developed 2 of them) is closest to English but leaves something to be desired when it comes to what linguistically are called “lateral” symbols (more on that later).

Instead of using a single symbol to represent one lateral sound, he used a combination of consonants which often lead to misinterpretations.

We could use Bach’s orthography as it stands, but then we would have problems with those lateral sounds. So, what can we do? How about replacing those problematic consonant combinations with single symbols like the ones that Lincoln & Rath used?

Alright. Now we’ve got the ease-of-use and familiarity of Emmon Bach’s writing system, mixed with Lincoln & Rath’s linguistic “one sound, one symbol” approach to consonants. This is the best of both worlds: a hybrid orthography. Problem solved.

Not quite. Now, people will need to learn it. The fact that a lot of the symbols are so different than English

letters can be intimidating but, have no fear, it can be learned. It will take some time (read “some” as “a lot”), but you *will* be rewarded for your hard work. The ability to read a language helps a great deal in learning to speak it. If we have one standard writing system, we have consistency. This will, in turn, make it easier to share the language as there will be little room for variation (which so very often leads to misinterpretation).

This is why the “phonetic” approach, or the “spelling-it-how-it-sounds” way of writing is ineffective: there’s too much room for interpretation. How can that be a bad thing?

Well, what if I wrote “elephant” as “ella fent”, or “giraffe” as “jer aff”, or “our” as “ow er”? I can’t write it that way? But that’s how it sounds to me!

Having a standard writing system ensures two things: 1) that every sound will be *accurately* represented, and 2) that everybody will spell everything the same way. No more asking, “how does John spell it?” or “what was Mary’s spelling again?” If there’s one way of spelling, then there’s no more questions.

You may still have some doubts, but you haven’t seen the orthography in action yet. You can’t really make a fair judgement until you see how it works. Let’s do that, shall we?

## Dialects

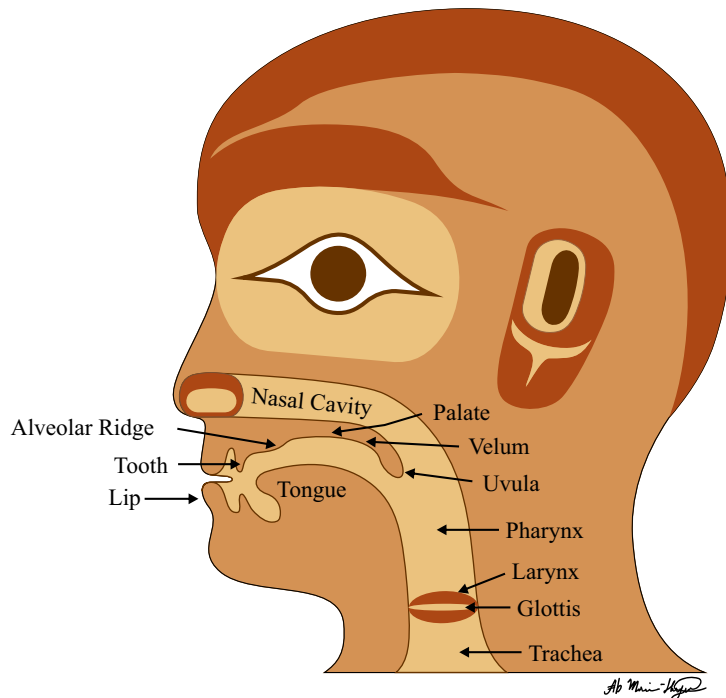
Before we go any further, it should be pointed out that there is more than one dialect spoken in Kitimat territory.  $\bar{x}\acute{a}$ ’islakála is the Kitamaat dialect,  $\bar{x}\acute{e}n\acute{a}ksialakála$  is the Kitlope-Kemano dialect. They were separate dialects until Kitamaat and Kitlope-Kemano amalgamated in 1948 and now they’re used almost interchangeably. Linguists use the abbreviation “Gm.” for “Gitamaat”, and “Gl.” for “Gitlope”.

Another interesting note is that  $\bar{x}\acute{a}$ ’islakála and  $\bar{x}\acute{e}n\acute{a}ksialakála$  are part of the North Wakashan language family. This language family consists of Kwakwála (Kwakwaka’wakw dialect), Hítzaqvłá (Bella Bella dialect), Oowekyála (Rivers Inlet dialect), and  $\bar{x}\acute{a}$ ’islakála- $\bar{x}\acute{e}n\acute{a}ksialakála$ . These dialects share some common elements, particularly in regard to sounds, word structure and grammar.

## The Vocal Tract

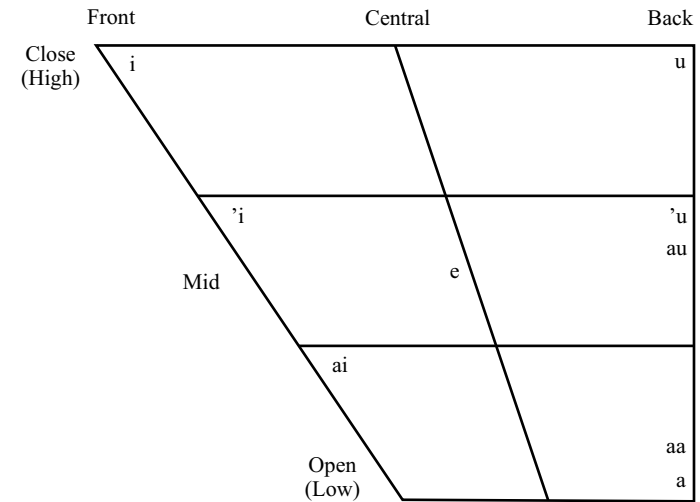
Before learning the symbols, it's helpful to learn how the sounds of a language are made. When you're speaking, there are things happening in your throat and mouth that you might not even be aware of, so learning about what's going on can be useful.

Here's a diagram showing different parts of what is known as the "vocal tract":



\* I call this guy "Hank ti" which means "called Hank". It also sounds like híxti which mean "head".

The parts that are commonly used in *xá'islakála* are the alveolar ridge, palate/velum and the glottis. The hybrid orthography is separated into vowels and consonants. Let's begin by looking at a map showing vowel placement:



' : Retracted  
See "xá'isla Retracted Vowel Flow Chart"  
for more information

This chart represents a side view of the inside of your mouth. The letter "i" makes an "ee" sound, which is a high sound coming from the front of your mouth. The letter "a" can make 3 sounds. In its main form, it sounds like the "aw" in "bawl", which is a low sound coming from the back of the mouth.

Let's begin by looking at “a” and the combinations involving “a”. First, you’ll see the vowel, then a *ǵá’isla* word with that sound in it, then the definition of that *ǵá’isla* word, and last you’ll see an English word with the vowel sound in it.

Vowel	<i>ǵá’isla</i>	Meaning	English Sound
a	’élka	stop	bat
	ǵála	know	bought
	’anís	aunt	but
aa	ǵaaǵ	raven	bother
ai	ǵai	what?	bet
au	’aup	father	boat

The double “aa” is like a regular “a” but is held a little longer. The letters “ai” together are often misinterpreted as the “ay” sound in “bay”, but it’s more like the “e” in “bet”. The “au” combination sounds like the “oa” in “boat”.

Note: the ´ symbol is called an **acute accent**. It is placed over vowels to show where you place emphasis in a word that has more than one syllable. So, for ’élka, you’d say “ULL-kyah” because the accent is on the “a” in first syllable. **Accents only go over vowels**, not consonants. Try not to confuse

accents with apostrophes, they have separate functions and are *not interchangeable*.

Let’s look at the next set of vowels:

Vowel	<i>ǵá’isla</i>	Meaning	English Sound
e	héma	eat	but
	beǵés	wild man of the woods	book
	ǵeldála	long river	bit
	cúyex <sup>w</sup>	dried	boot
i	ǵig	tooth	beet
u	dúx <sup>w</sup> a	stinging nettle	boot

The letter “e” is what is known in linguistics as a “schwa”. It doesn’t have a sound of its own, it can change depending on what's around it. In its purest form, it makes an “uh” sound like in “but”.

One unique characteristic of the letters “i” and “u” is that they have regular sounds, but they also have “retracted” sounds”. This means that if there’s a certain letter or symbol in front of it, that letter or symbol causes a change in the sound of the “i” or “u”.

Here are two examples:

Vowel	ḡá'isla	Meaning	English
'i	'íksduq <sup>w</sup> ia	eagle	bait
'u	'úḡas	big	boat

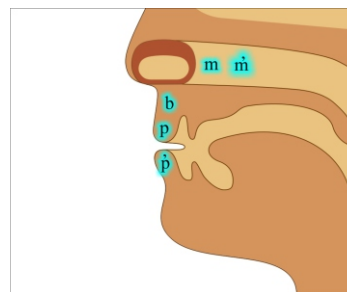
The apostrophe is only one example of a symbol that causes retraction in “i” or “u”, it’s used as an example here because it’s the most common. The full list of letters and symbols that cause retraction are:

ḡ, h, p̣ (only with “i”), q, q̣, t, ṭ, ḡ, ’

Note: **ḡá'isla words never start with vowels**, so you’ll always see an apostrophe in front of a vowel if it’s at the start of a word (Ex: 'úḡas, not úḡas). The apostrophe has many functions; at the start of a word, it’s standing in as a consonant in front of a vowel.

## Consonants

Vowels are open sounds, whereas consonants involve some kind of closure of the vocal tract. It’s best to organize them, not in alphabetical order, but in groups according to how they’re made. The first group of consonants that we’ll look at are what are called “labial sounds”.

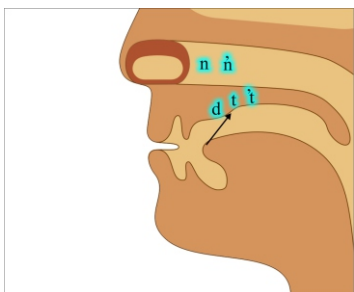


**Labial sounds** are made by closing your lips and releasing the sound. “m” and “ṃ” are resonant sounds, meaning that most of the air comes out through nasal cavity.

Consonant	ḡá'isla	Meaning
b	babá'u	grandfather
p	pú'es	hungry
p̣	p̣ála	work
m	mamá'u	grandmother
ṃ	ṃáṃiała	friends

An apostrophe over a consonant shows that it’s a “glottalized” consonant, meaning that you close your glottis (the opening between the vocal cords) before making the sound.

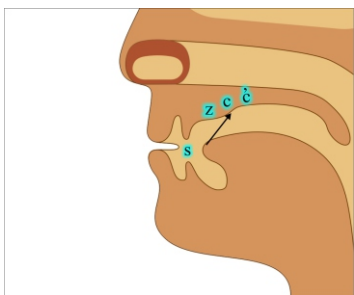
The effect that an apostrophe has over a consonant depends on what kind of consonant it is. Over a “p”, an apostrophe makes it “ejective”, meaning you say it with more force. Over an “m”, an apostrophe creates a pause. It’s hard to hear at the beginning of a word because it’s a resonant sound. In “ṃáṃiała”, there’s a brief, audible pause before the second “m”.



**Alveolar sounds** are made by pressing the tip of your tongue against your alveolar ridge (bump behind your upper front teeth). “n”, and “ṅ” are resonant sounds where air mostly comes out through the

nasal cavity.

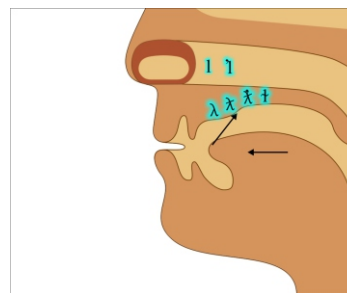
Consonant	ḫá’isla	Meaning
d	dútiḭ	message
t	teq <sup>w</sup> á	octopus
ṭ	ṭibám	fern root
n	núg <sup>w</sup> a	I, me
ṅ	ṅánaq <sup>w</sup> a	early morning, dawn



**Affricate sounds**, much like alveolar sounds, are made by pressing the tip of your tongue against your alveolar ridge. These sounds start off abruptly (as a “glottal stop”), then end in kind of a hissing sound (as a “fricative”). The “s” is

purely a fricative sound that doesn’t start with a glottal stop.

Consonant	ḫá’isla	Meaning
z	záx <sup>w</sup> en	oolichan
c	cíx <sup>w</sup> a	crabapple
č	čimáuča	Snag Beach
s	sásem	children



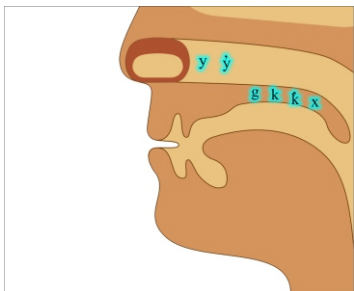
**Lateral sounds** are made by pressing the tip of your tongue against your alveolar ridge and blowing air out around the sides of your tongue. “l” and “ḭ” are resonants, which don’t involve blowing air out.

Consonant	ḫá’isla	Meaning
λ	λeksáam	silverweed
λ̄	λáka	to paddle
λ̇	λáti	oolichan grease
ḭ	ḭaux <sup>w</sup>	strong
l	lalag <sup>w</sup> edái	butterfly
ḭ	ḭileqá	to dry berries

The “λ” symbol is called a Lambda and makes a “dl” sound like in the English word “paddle” (not “gl” like “glue”). “λ̄” is a Barred Lambda and makes a “tl” sound like in “rattle” (not “cl” like “clam”). “λ̇” is an

Ejective Barred Lambda and is like “λ” but is a more forceful sound. It sounds like “tl” but with more of a clicking sound at the start. “l̃” is a Tilded L; it’s an L with a ~ (tilde) going through the middle of it. It sounds like the “lth” in “wealth”, but with more of a hissing sound made by air going around the sides of the tongue.

Since these are such unique sounds, it’s difficult to represent them with English letters when the sounds don’t exist in that language. The λ λ̃ λ̄ l̃ symbols were used by Hein Vink later in his career and by Lincoln & Rath in their published dictionary.



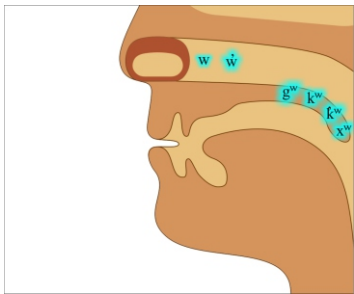
**Palatal-Velar sounds** are also very unique. The “palate” refers to the hard palate at roof of the mouth, the “velum” is the soft palate behind it. The first sound is followed by a “yah” sound; gyah, kyah, etc.

You can think of it like this: imagine that each palatal-velar consonant is followed by a <sup>y</sup> symbol. So when you see gadá, think g<sup>y</sup>adá (GYAH-dah). When you see kúta, think k<sup>y</sup>úta (KYO-tah). This is not the way

that it’s written, but this is an example that is used for visual guidance.

Consonant	ḡá’isla	Meaning
g	gáda	here, close
	gux <sup>w</sup>	house
k	kaa	really?
	kúta	think
k̄	kádáyu	pencil
	kúu	no
x	xáka	rib
y	xúk <sup>wem</sup>	wild rice
ỵ	yálek <sup>wa</sup>	to get hurt
	yáyakawá	junk, refuse

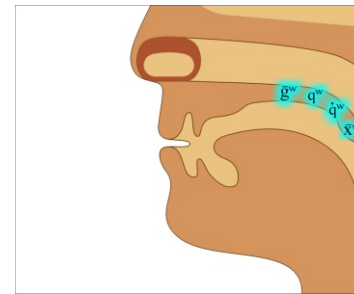
In ḡá’islaḡala, the letter “x” does not sound like it does in the English word “axe”, it sounds more like an “h”. So “xúk<sup>wem</sup>” sounds more like “HYOO-kwum”. An “x” always sounds like this in ḡá’islaḡala, never like “ks” or “z” as it often does in English. This is a sound that is commonly misunderstood, it helps to not think about how English works because it operates under totally different principles than ḡá’islaḡala does.



**Rounded Velar sounds**, are similar to the previous group of sounds, but they are followed by a <sup>w</sup> and they include “w” and “w̥” instead of “y” and “y̥”.

Consonant	ḫá'isla	Meaning
g <sup>w</sup>	g <sup>w</sup> asáu	pig
k <sup>w</sup>	k <sup>w</sup> ánalas	yellow cedar
ḳ <sup>w</sup>	ḳ <sup>w</sup> á'iṭ	to sit down
x <sup>w</sup>	x <sup>w</sup> éлта	fire, burn
w	wísenis	let's...
w̥	w̥íwíiała	parents

These are called “rounded” sounds because you are rounding your lips while you’re making them. The reason a <sup>w</sup> is used instead of a regular-sized “w” is because it’s part of the sound that’s in front of it. So “x<sup>w</sup>” sounds like “hwah”, almost like you’re whistling but without making any noise.

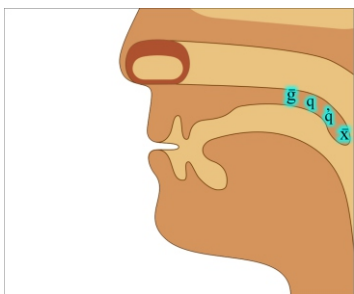


**Rounded Uvular sounds** come from the back of the mouth where your uvula is located. The uvula is a small piece of skin that hangs down from the back of your throat.

These are also “rounded” sounds, meaning that each letter is followed by a <sup>w</sup>.

Consonant	ḫá'isla	Meaning
g̃ <sup>w</sup>	g̃ <sup>w</sup> adém	huckleberry
q <sup>w</sup>	q <sup>w</sup> ísdén	rattle
q̣ <sup>w</sup>	q̣ <sup>w</sup> aselá	forest
x̣ <sup>w</sup>	x̣ <sup>w</sup> enúx <sup>w</sup>	child

Pay close attention and listen for rounded sounds as they are often missed. It helps if you watch a fluent speaker’s mouth while they are speaking because if you see them round their lips, then you know it’s a rounded consonant that they’re pronouncing.

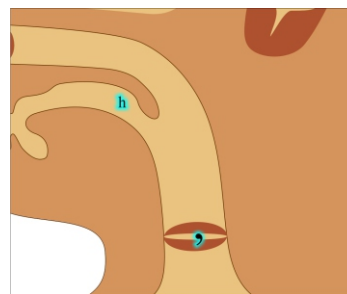


**Uvular sounds** are like the previous group of sounds but they're not rounded. One common characteristic of these sounds is that they all cause "i" and "u" to become retracted.

Consonant	ᖃ́'isla	Meaning
ᖃ̄	ᖃ́isdem	cow parsnip
q	qábés	spring salmon
ᖃ̇	ᖃ́ínem	much, many
ᖃ̄	ᖃ̄aaᖃ̄	bone

The word ᖃ́ínem is pronounced "KAY-num" because the "ᖃ̇" causes the "i" to become retracted. So the "i" no longer sounds like "ee", it says "ay" like "bay" because it follows a "back sound" (see next section).

The word ᖃ́isdem is pronounced "GAHee-stum" because the "ᖃ̄" causes retraction in the "i" but it also causes the sound to become deeper. That's the true pronunciation, but "GAY-stum" is also acceptable. It usually best to try and pronounce words as accurately as possible. This can be difficult at first but it gets easier the more you practice. Also, if you know the sounds, you have the option to soften them later.



**Laryngeal sounds** come from the deepest part of the vocal tract. These sounds come directly from the larynx, or the voice box. Much like uvular sounds, laryngeal sounds cause retraction in "i" and "u".

Consonant	ᖃ́'isla	Meaning
'	'á'ent	herring eggs
h	hímas	chief

Uvulars and laryngeals are often called "back sounds" because they come from the back of the vocal tract. These sounds, plus "ᖃ̇", "t", "ᖃ̇", and the apostrophe, cause retraction in the letters "i" and "u". This is one benefit of grouping letters according to their sounds; if you remember all of the "back sounds" when you read ᖃ́'islaᖃ̇kala, then you'll know immediately that it will cause retraction if it's followed by an "i" or a "u".

When you know how to read ᖃ́'islaᖃ̇kala, you can predict how a word will sound, even if you've never seen or heard it before. That's the power of the orthography.

<b>ᖃ́á'isla Months</b>		
láisdels	January	“to move back from its zenith (sun)”
ᖃ́ík <sup>w</sup> eliᖃ	February	“time people are out of food and clean out everything”
ᖃ́iᖃ́áuyala	March	“a bit of north wind comes every morning”
záx <sup>w</sup> ilaqus	April	“oolichan month”
ᖃ́ <sup>w</sup> áᖃ́ilaqus	April	“growing month”
qápilaqus	May	“spring salmon month”
hísilaqus	June	“sockeye start coming in”
ᖃ́ápilaqus	July	“humpback salmon month”
ᖃ́ <sup>w</sup> áᖃ́ilaqus	August	“month when dog salmon spawn”
zex <sup>w</sup> iláqus	September	“coho salmon month”
ᖃ́ <sup>w</sup> ális	October	“ready (finished) on the beach”
ᖃ́úᖃ́ <sup>w</sup> elisa	November	“(rotten fish) washes away on beaches”
ᖃ́u'énᖃ́'id	December	“to become winter”

<b>ᖃ́á'isla Days of the Week</b>	
helilás	Sunday
ᖃ́áx <sup>w</sup> ᖃ́pens	Monday
maᖃ́ᖃ́pens	Tuesday
yúdex <sup>w</sup> ᖃ́pens	Wednesday
múᖃ́ᖃ́pens	Thursday
sekáᖃ́ᖃ́pens	Friday
qákᖃ́si'ud (or qeᖃ́láᖃ́pens)	Saturday

Do you notice something similar between the names of the first ten numbers and the names of the weekdays? (Numbers 1-100 are listed near the back of the handbook).

<b>ḡá'isla Clans</b>	
gecáuq <sup>w</sup>	Beaver clan
hélḡ'iniḡ <sup>w</sup>	Blackfish/Killer Whale clan
'íksduq <sup>wi</sup> 'iniḡ <sup>w</sup>	Eagle clan
miáiniḡ <sup>w</sup>	Fish/Salmon clan
ḡáqiniḡ <sup>w</sup>	Raven clan

<b>máyiniḡ<sup>as</sup>: What clan do you belong to?</b>	
gecáuq <sup>w</sup> enug <sup>wa</sup>	I am in the Beaver clan
hélḡ'iniḡ <sup>w</sup> enug <sup>wa</sup>	I am in the Blackfish/Killer Whale clan
'íksduq <sup>wi</sup> 'iniḡ <sup>w</sup> enug <sup>wa</sup>	I am in the Eagle clan
miáiniḡ <sup>w</sup> enug <sup>wa</sup>	I am in the Fish clan
ḡáqiniḡ <sup>w</sup> enug <sup>wa</sup>	I am in the Raven clan

You can also place an “-en” at the end of the clan name. Ex: gecáuq<sup>w</sup>en (I am in the Beaver clan), hélḡ'iniḡ<sup>w</sup>en (I am in the Blackfish clan), etc.

<b>ḡá'isla Chief Terms</b>		
<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>	<b>English</b>
hímás	himás (hi'emás)	male hereditary chief
múziḡ	músmeziḡ	woman of high rank

*Helpful hint:* Sometimes, moving the accent pluralizes a word, but most of the time a process called “reduplication” is used. This is when the first syllable of a word is repeated and put in front of the word but changed slightly. In músmeziḡ, you can think of it as “muz-muz-iḡ” but the first “z” is changed to an “s” and the second “u” is changed to an “e”. So it becomes “mus-mez-iḡ”.

Introducing Yourself	
ya'uc̣	Hello.
_____ kelásu nug <sup>wá</sup> *	I am called _____.
gáiqelan c̣imáuc̣ix̣i **	I originate from Snag Beach/Kitamaat Village
gáiqelan c̣imáuc̣igaḡ	I originate from Snag Beach/Kitamaat Village,
_____ du	_____ and
_____ ẉíẉialenc	_____ are my parents (away).
wa (or ẉásḡemil)	The end.

Or, if you refer to one parent:	
_____ 'ebúk <sup>wenc</sup>	_____ is my mother (away).
_____ 'áupenc	_____ is my father (away).

\* This is one way you can introduce yourself. You could say “Ab kelásu núg<sup>wá</sup>” (I am called Ab), or “Ab ḡa núg<sup>wá</sup>”, or “nux<sup>w</sup> Ab ti”.

\*\* How you refer to c̣imáuc̣a depends on where you are when you are speaking. “-[i]aḡi” means “away” so

you'd say “c̣imáuc̣ix̣i” if you're not in Kitamaat Village. “-gaḡ” means “here” so you'd say “c̣imáuc̣igaḡ” if you are in the village while introducing yourself.

ḡá'isla Food Blessing	
híṃac 'ik 'éṃyaḡelas	God bless this food
ga hémsa gaḡ dásu gánux <sup>w</sup>	which we now take
qen hémsas ga bek <sup>wái</sup>	and feed our souls
gánux <sup>w</sup>	
qen zíses (or bek <sup>wēḡdí</sup> ) sa	for Jesus sake
*	
'imáin (or wa) **	Amen

\* “zíses” is “Jesus” converted into the hybrid orthography. You can replace “God” or “Jesus” with “bek<sup>wēḡdí</sup>” which means “god, sacred being.”

\*\* “'imáin” is “amen” converted into the hybrid orthography. You can replace it with “wa” which means “okay” or “the end”.

<b>ḡá'isla colours</b>	
ḡáq <sup>w</sup> sdu	red
gizuásdu	yellow
k <sup>w</sup> a'iláqsdu	blue
'uzuáisdu	light blue
tíqsdu	yellow, green
nek <sup>w</sup> ełdu (or nek <sup>w</sup> ełdu)	purple
ḡ <sup>w</sup> ełtsdu	orange
lúmasdu	brown, orange
kápisdu	pink
tegeńsdu	grey (clay-coloured)
múq <sup>w</sup> sdu	white
'íksdu	white (bright)
ćúłdu	black (dark)
záqsdu	something dark in colour

*Helpful hint:* ḡ<sup>w</sup>ísdu means colour. “-[s]du” is a suffix that means “colour” or “appearance”. So if “k<sup>w</sup>a'iláqs” means “Steller’s Jay”, then “k<sup>w</sup>a'iláqsdu” literally means “appearance of a Steller’s Jay” which can then be taken to mean “blue”.

<b>Salmon Species</b>	
qábes	spring salmon
hísen	sockeye salmon
kápi	humpback salmon
ḡ <sup>w</sup> áḡenis	dog salmon
zu'én	coho salmon

Do you notice something that the names of the salmon have in common with the names of the middle months of the year?

**náq<sup>w</sup>elagila** is the name of a purifying ritual that was carried out before hunting. Did you know that it's a ḡenáksiala word? The ḡá'isla word for it is **ḡawásila**. You can use either word (people tend to say náq<sup>w</sup>elagila more often) but just be aware that there is a different word for it in each of our two dialects.

Place Names		
ĉimáuča	“place of snags”	Kitamaat Village
ḡá’isla	“downstream dwellers”	Kitamaat Village
cimáninux <sup>w</sup>	“place with small clams”	Kemano
yamácisa	“fine beach” (outside Kemano bay)	Kemano
ḡesduáx <sup>w</sup>	“steep sides”	Kitlope Valley
léx <sup>w</sup> ex <sup>w</sup>	“boulder mountain”	Mt. Elizabeth
láḡákas	“clear water”	Hirsch Creek
zeḡ’ís	“bay”	Minette Bay
zák <sup>w</sup> elisela	“new moon, crescent moon”	MK Bay
geldála	“long river”	Kildala
géltais	“long inlet”	Giltoyes
ḡasuḡá		Jesse Lake
gélwánux <sup>w</sup>	“canoe mountain”	Mountain south of Rio Tinto
’áq <sup>w</sup> en	“sand hill”	Sand hill near Rio Tinto

ḡá’isla territory is separated into 2 main categories:

**wáwáís**: mountain, territory (trapline, passed down through clan, permission needed to harvest)

**bák<sup>w</sup>elas** (bag<sup>w</sup>aiyás?): place where meat and salmon is gathered (open to ḡá’isla members)

Family/Relations		
Singular	Plural	English
’uíśda		family
’aup	’í’aup	father
’ebúx <sup>w</sup>	’ibúx <sup>w</sup>	mother
wíwíala		parents
babá’u		grandfather
mamá’u		grandmother
ḡáḡap (ḡaḡáp)	ḡa’eḡáp	grandparent
ménáísut	míménáísut, or míménisut	sibling of same gender
wáq <sup>w</sup> á	wíwáq <sup>w</sup> á, or wáwéq <sup>w</sup> á	sibling of opposite gender
’enís	’i’enis	aunt
ḡ <sup>w</sup> eḡáab	ḡ <sup>w</sup> iḡ <sup>w</sup> eḡáab	uncle
bibí’u		uncle (pet name)
lú’el	lílú’el, or lulá’el	nephew, niece, cousin
híḡaqa	háḡaḡaqa	cousin
wísem	wí’esem	man
ḡeném	ḡiḡeném, ḡeḡeném	woman
gúk <sup>w</sup> elut		fellow villagers
máyaḡa	mámíala, or mímíyaḡa	friend

ǎá'isla Greetings	
ya'uc̣	hello
'iks n̄aq̣wa	good morning
'iks ḡánuł	good night
'iks ḡwáilas	goodbye (said by the one who is leaving), singular
'iks ḡwiḡwáilas	goodbye (said by the one who is leaving), plural
'engwás	who are you?
'engwálas	what are you called?
'anáłzax <sup>w</sup> (núḡułla)	(I) thank you
ses wáila	is anything wrong (with you)?
si 'ix ḡwailásusa	are you good (yes or no)?
si 'ix ḡwailása'eq <sup>sa</sup>	are you good (yes or no)?
'enna 'ix ḡwailásgenc	yes, I'm good
k̄uu k̄un 'ix	no, I'm not good
'ikáiqelas lauyás	Happy Birthday
'ikáiqelas nik <sup>w</sup> alilás	Merry Christmas (Eve) (also Happy New Year's Eve)
ławínáinuk <sup>w</sup> nug <sup>w</sup> us	I love you

Happy Birthday To You	
'ikáiqelas lauyás	happy birthday
'ikáiqelas lauyás	happy birthday
'ikáiqelas lauyás	happy birthday
m̄ayałagenc	my friend (here)
'ikáiqelas lauyás	happy birthday

“'ikáiqela” means “happy”, and “-s” is short for “his” which means “by, of, about”. So 'ikáiqelas lauyás means “a birthday that is happy”.

“m̄ayała” means “friend”, “-genc” means that the person is your friend and they're closeby. When you sing this to someone, you can remove “m̄ayałagenc” and replace it with that person's name. Ex: 'ikáiqelas lauyás Jonathan.

“lauyás” comes from “láuya” which means “to come out”, so “lauyás” refers to the action of birth. “'ikáiqelas lauyás” essentially means “happy coming out day”.

## ḫá'isla Numbers

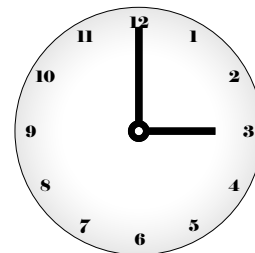
- 1 ḥaux<sup>w</sup>
- 2 má'elau<sup>w</sup>
- 3 yúdex<sup>w</sup>
- 4 mux<sup>w</sup>
- 5 sekáux<sup>w</sup>
- 6 qeḷáux<sup>w</sup>
- 7 maḷáus
- 8 yudex<sup>w</sup>áus
- 9 mux<sup>w</sup>áus
- 10 qápu**
- 11 ḥáx<sup>w</sup>egiu
- 12 maḷegiú
- 13 yúdex<sup>w</sup>egiu
- 14 muwágiu
- 15 sekágiu
- 16 qeḷágiu
- 17 maḷausegiu
- 18 yudex<sup>w</sup>ausegiu
- 19 mux<sup>w</sup>ausegiu
- 20 méncex<sup>w</sup>**
- 21 méncex<sup>w</sup> gi ḥáx<sup>w</sup>egiu
- 22 méncex<sup>w</sup> gi maḷegiú
- 23 méncex<sup>w</sup> gi yúdex<sup>w</sup>egiu
- 24 méncex<sup>w</sup> gi muwágiu
- 25 méncex<sup>w</sup> gi sekágiu
- 26 méncex<sup>w</sup> gi qeḷágiu
- 27 méncex<sup>w</sup> gi maḷausegiu
- 28 méncex<sup>w</sup> gi yudex<sup>w</sup>ausegiu

- 29 méncex<sup>w</sup> gi mux<sup>w</sup>ausegiu
- 30 yúdex<sup>w</sup>ḥpena**
- 31 yúdex<sup>w</sup>ḥpena gi ḥáx<sup>w</sup>egiu
- 32 yúdex<sup>w</sup>ḥpena gi maḷegiú
- 33 yúdex<sup>w</sup>ḥpena gi yúdex<sup>w</sup>egiu
- 34 yúdex<sup>w</sup>ḥpena gi muwágiu
- 35 yúdex<sup>w</sup>ḥpena gi sekágiu
- 36 yúdex<sup>w</sup>ḥpena gi qeḷágiu
- 37 yúdex<sup>w</sup>ḥpena gi maḷausegiu
- 38 yúdex<sup>w</sup>ḥpena gi yudex<sup>w</sup>ausegiu
- 39 yúdex<sup>w</sup>ḥpena gi mux<sup>w</sup>ausegiu
- 40 múḥpena**
- 41 múḥpena gi ḥáx<sup>w</sup>egiu
- 42 múḥpena gi maḷegiú
- 43 múḥpena gi yúdex<sup>w</sup>egiu
- 44 múḥpena gi muwágiu
- 45 múḥpena gi sekágiu
- 46 múḥpena gi qeḷágiu
- 47 múḥpena gi maḷausegiu
- 48 múḥpena gi yudex<sup>w</sup>ausegiu
- 49 múḥpena gi mux<sup>w</sup>ausegiu
- 50 sekáḥpena**
- 51 sekáḥpena gi ḥáx<sup>w</sup>egiu
- 52 sekáḥpena gi maḷegiú
- 53 sekáḥpena gi yúdex<sup>w</sup>egiu
- 54 sekáḥpena gi muwágiu
- 55 sekáḥpena gi sekágiu
- 56 sekáḥpena gi qeḷágiu
- 57 sekáḥpena gi maḷausegiu

- 58 sekáꝛena gi yudex<sup>w</sup>áusegiu
- 59 sekáꝛena gi mux<sup>w</sup>áusegiu
- 60 qełáꝛena**
- 61 qełáꝛena gi náx<sup>w</sup>egiu
- 62 qełáꝛena gi małegiú
- 63 qełáꝛena gi yúdex<sup>w</sup>egiu
- 64 qełáꝛena gi muwágiu
- 65 qełáꝛena gi sekágiu
- 66 qełáꝛena gi qełágiu
- 67 qełáꝛena gi małáusegiu
- 68 qełáꝛena gi yudex<sup>w</sup>áusegiu
- 69 qełáꝛena gi mux<sup>w</sup>áusegiu
- 70 małáusꝛena**
- 71 małáusꝛena gi náx<sup>w</sup>egiu
- 72 małáusꝛena gi małegiú
- 73 małáusꝛena gi yúdex<sup>w</sup>egiu
- 74 małáusꝛena gi muwágiu
- 75 małáusꝛena gi sekágiu
- 76 małáusꝛena gi qełágiu
- 77 małáusꝛena gi małáusegiu
- 78 małáusꝛena gi yudex<sup>w</sup>áusegiu
- 79 małáusꝛena gi mux<sup>w</sup>áusegiu
- 80 yúdex<sup>w</sup>ꝛenkaus**
- 81 yúdex<sup>w</sup>ꝛenkaus gi náx<sup>w</sup>egiu
- 82 yúdex<sup>w</sup>ꝛenkaus gi małegiú
- 83 yúdex<sup>w</sup>ꝛenkaus gi yúdex<sup>w</sup>egiu
- 84 yúdex<sup>w</sup>ꝛenkaus gi muwágiu
- 85 yúdex<sup>w</sup>ꝛenkaus gi sekágiu
- 86 yúdex<sup>w</sup>ꝛenkaus gi qełágiu

- 87 yúdex<sup>w</sup>ꝛenkaus gi małáusegiu
- 88 yúdex<sup>w</sup>ꝛenkaus gi yudex<sup>w</sup>áusegiu
- 89 yúdex<sup>w</sup>ꝛenkaus gi mux<sup>w</sup>áusegiu
- 90 múꝛenkaus**
- 91 múꝛenkaus gi náx<sup>w</sup>egiu
- 92 múꝛenkaus gi małegiú
- 93 múꝛenkaus gi yúdex<sup>w</sup>egiu
- 94 múꝛenkaus gi muwágiu
- 95 múꝛenkaus gi sekágiu
- 96 múꝛenkaus gi qełágiu
- 97 múꝛenkaus gi małáusegiu
- 98 múꝛenkaus gi yudex<sup>w</sup>áusegiu
- 99 múꝛenkaus gi mux<sup>w</sup>áusegiu
- 100 náx<sup>w</sup>ꝛena**

After 20, the numbers start to repeat. If you want to remember the numbers, memorize the pattern. Each tenth number is bolded, learn each one and then add “gi” and any number from 11-19 to the end of it. For example: “míncex<sup>w</sup> gi náx<sup>w</sup>egiu” is 21, “yúdex<sup>w</sup>ꝛena gi náx<sup>w</sup>egiu” is 31, etc. Only the first word changes.



**Practice:** try looking at a clock and counting from 1-12. Once you feel comfortable with that, try counting backwards.

## Glossary

**acute accent:** a very attractive accent

**affricates:** sounds that start as glottal stops and end as fricatives

**alveolar ridge:** the bump behind your upper front teeth

**alveolars:** sounds made by pressing the tip of the tongue against the alveolar ridge

**apostrophe:** used primarily as a glottal stop but serves other functions; appears over some consonants and before or between some vowels

**Barred Lambda:** a Lambda with a bar going through the middle of it:  $\lambda$ ; makes a “tl” sound (there is no English equivalent)

**consonant:** a sharper sound in a language that involves either partial or total closure of some part of the vocal tract

**dialect:** a subgroup of a language

**ejective:** a forceful or explosive sound caused by a glottal stop in front of a sound

**Ejective Barred Lambda:** a Barred Lambda with an apostrophe over it:  $\lambda$ ; makes a sound like “tl” but with more of a clicking sound

**fricative:** a sound that’s produced by air moving through partially-closed teeth, resulting in a hissing sound

**glottal stop:** the closure of the vocal cords, often produces a pause or makes a sound sharper or more forceful; represented by (’) in  $\bar{x}\acute{a}$ ’islakala; in other languages, it can appear as a “ʔ” or a “ʕ”

**glottis:** the opening between the vocal cords

**labials:** sounds that are formed primarily by closing the lips and then releasing a sound

**Lambda:** a letter in the Greek alphabet:  $\lambda$ ; makes a “dl” sound like in the word “madly”

**laryngeals:** the deepest sounds in  $\bar{x}\acute{a}$ ’islakala, sounds that come from the larynx

**larynx:** the voice box

**laterals:** sounds made by pressing the tip of the tongue against the alveolar ridge and blowing air out around the sides of the tongue; lateral means “from the sides”

**orthography:** a set of letters and symbols that make an alphabet (the hybrid orthography is a combination of Emmon Bach’s and Lincoln & Rath’s writing systems)

**palatal-velars:** sounds made by the top of the tongue coming up close to the roof of the mouth: “g” sounds like “gyah”, “k” sounds like “kyah”, etc.

**palate:** the hard palate located in the middle of the roof of your mouth

**reduplication:** the process of taking the first syllable of a word, copying it and placing it in front of that

word; often used in *xá'islakala* as a means of pluralizing a word or saying “a lot of” or “really”; *beg<sup>w</sup>ánem* (person), *bíbeg<sup>w</sup>anem* (people); *náq<sup>w</sup>a* (morning), *nánaq<sup>w</sup>a* (really early morning/dawn)

**resonant:** a sound that is made primarily by air moving through the nasal cavity, causing it to resonate

**retracted vowel:** alternate sounds made by “i” and “u” caused by lower tongue position; “ee” becomes “ay”, “oo” becomes “oh”; retracted means “taken back” which describes tongue movement in a retracted state compared to its position when in a regular state

**rounded uvulars:** sounds that come from the uvular region and are followed by a <sup>w</sup> symbol, causing it to be rounded

**rounded velars:** sounds that come from the velar region and are followed by a <sup>w</sup> symbol, causing it to be rounded

**schwa (shwa):** a symbol that is shaped by the sounds around it, in linguistics it appears as “ə” but in *xá'islakala* it is represented by “e”

**Tilded L:** a symbol that combines a lowercase L with a tilde (~) resulting in ł: it is equivalent to the barred L (Ł, ł) and the looped (or belted) L (ł); sounds like the “lth” in “wealth” but with more of a “hissing” sound

**uvula:** the piece of skin hanging down from the back of your throat

**uvulars:** sounds that come from the uvular region of the vocal tract

**velum:** the soft palate located directly between the hard palate in the roof of your mouth and the uvula

**vocal tract:** the parts of the mouth and throat that are used to form sounds in a language

**vowel:** an open sound in a language that is formed mostly through tongue position

**Wakashan:** a group of indigenous Northwest Coast dialects that share similarities (*xá'islakala* is a member of the Northern Wakashan language family)

**xá'islakala:** the Haisla language

**xenáksialakala:** the Kitlope/Kemano language

**wa**

**'iks ḡ<sup>w</sup>áilas**

The x̄á'isla Handbook:  
An Introduction to x̄á'islakála

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