

Fictional Languages

RMS — WOULD ACTUALLY RATHER WORSHIP SUNE AND OGHMA

Drow

So you want to learn the Drow language, spoken by the noble dark elves of the Underdark. With them being Chaotic Evil in original canon, you might profit from this skill, and have rightly chosen a both beautiful and simple language to step into the world of fictional languages.

The thing to remember is: The structure of Drow society depends completely on the region you are in and the deity that is worshiped there. Most probably, you will find that this position is held by Lolth, the Queen of Spiders, who encourages inducing order through chaos and intrigue. These regions are governed by a strongly hierarchical matriarchy. However, should you find yourself in a city where Eilistraee, the goddess of song, the moon and beauty is the deity of choice, the gender roles and in fact also alignment are very much inverted. As a human or a surface elf, the latter company might be the

only one to willingly accept you even as a passing traveler.

Drow grammar is incredibly similar to Common and as such should not constitute a large obstacle to the inclined reader: basic Subject-Predicate-Object order is preserved and most sentences can be built with simple syntactic replacement.

I worship the goddess at midnight.
Usstan onhir I' quar'valsharess a alantha.

Pronunciation is also blissfully related to Common: the apostrophe indicates a glottal stop (refer to the exclamation "Uh-Oh!", where it is represented by a hyphen), and all letters can be pronounced as if Latin, or indeed German. Try it out! Below you find some phrases which you might find useful.

Hello	Vendui
Goodbye	Vedaust
Human	rivvil
What is your name?	Vel'bol zhah dosst kaas?
My name is [Imoen].	Ussta Kaas zhah [Imoen].
I am from [Candlekeep].	Usstan tlun dal [Candlekeep].
I love you!	Usstan che dos!
Do you want to sleep with me? (as in "just sleep")	Xun dos ssinssrin ulu v'dri xuil uns'aa?
Do you want to sleep with me? (as in copulation)	Xun dos ssinssrin ulu vith?
Would you like to see my Turing machine?	Orn'la dos saph ulu kyori ussta Turing vantua?

For further reading including a Common-Drow-Common dictionary and a grammar cheat sheet, consult the Chosen of Eilistraee at [1]. I wish you good luck on your travels. Aluve!

Klingon

(For typographical convenience, we have used here the transliteration into Latin script of all Klingon phrases.)

Much more than for Drow, we know about the roots of the Klingon language (“tlhIngan Hol” in Klingon): While in *Star Trek: The Original Series* (running from 1966 to 1969), Klingons spoke English to the general benefit of the viewer, *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979) introduced the general sound of the language through a few sparse words invented by James Doohan, the actor portraying “Scotty”. Later, American linguist Marc Okrand was hired to flesh out the language, and from then on was involved in language coaching for the many actors, and as consultant right up to the 2009 feature film *Star Trek* (don’t even get me started on the naming problems).

The principle underlying the language design is the maximization of foreignness to the

ears of the English-speaking audience. This means that to all speakers of German (or even Swiss German), Klingon might offer less resistance than you might have previously thought! Guttural and fricative sounds, strange rules of capitalization, and the distinct impression that even “I love you” would sound like a declaration of war; what’s not to love!

Without a doubt, at this point you are going to ask yourself about the practical use of this fictional language. Fear not! You have not wasted your time reading through this tutorial. In fact, you might one day count yourself to the few lucky people on this earth who have become fluent enough to enjoy ‘u’, the first opera completely in Klingon, which premiered in September 2010 and has enjoyed repeat performances since then.

If this has motivated you into further studies, I will gladly refer you to the wikibook on Klingon, which has served as base for this tutorial, but has a far bigger scope (and fascinatingly enough, claims to be written completely in a variant of English called E-Prime). It can be found at [2]. You can also find hints and more phrases at the Klingon Language institute at [3].



Where is the bathroom?	nuqDaq 'oH puchpa'e'
What time is it?	'arlogh Qoylu'pu'?
Today is a good day to die.	Heghlu'meH QaQ jajvam
Your mother has a smooth forehead!	Hab SoSIH' Quch!

References

[1] <http://www.eilistraee.com/chosen/language.php>

[2] <http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Klingon>

[3] <http://www.kli.org/>