

Fiat Lingua

Title: Klingon Alphasyllabary

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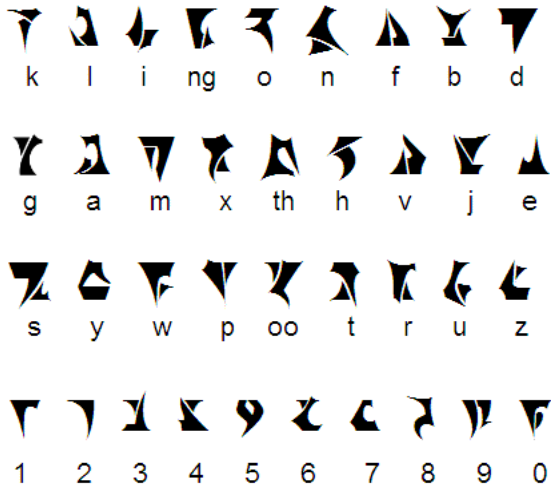
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Introduction and Background

This script was inspired by research conducted in preparation for the [Kopikon Conlang Conference](#) held on September 23rd, 2023. During the development of my presentation on ‘How to make a good script’ I was studying the [Ithkuil script](#) made by John Quijada. During this study, I began to notice the possibility of it being used as an alphasyllabary for the Klingon conlang, both due to its aesthetics, as well as the formation of the shapes and how they might fit together in a Hangul-like script. What follows is the subsequent script.

Serendipitously, and with some irony, John Quijada, during his presentation at Kopikon (after I had begun work on this project), mentioned that the aesthetic origins of his initial script for Ithkuil were based on the Klinzhai script from earlier in Trek lore.

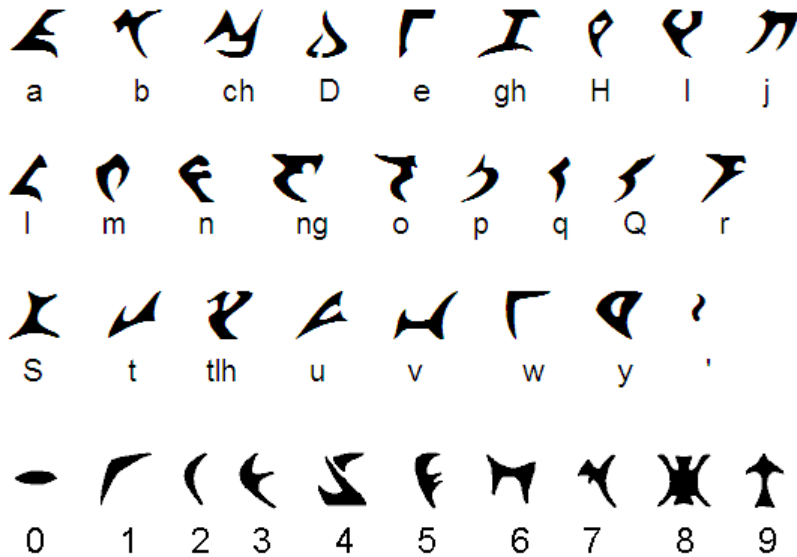


The Klinzhai alphabet as seen in the **U.S.S Enterprise Officer's Manual**, published in 1980.

This script and its creation were endorsed and authorized by Klingon creator Marc Okrand, as well as John Quijada, the creator of Ithkuil. Contributions were made by David J. Peterson, Barry Garcia, Brian Bourque, and Nicolás Campi.

Purpose and Inspiration

The function of this script aligns far more closely to the strict CVC formation of nearly all Klingon syllables than any alphabetic system can. The *pIqaD* alphabet, while aesthetically appropriate for the Klingons throughout the 60+ years of *Star Trek* lacks a depth of linguistic creativity that I think suits it, most especially with how much the language has taken on a life outside of the franchise.



As can be seen in this chart of *pIqaD*, it is 26 letters and 10 digits. A bit too neatly aligned with a very human keyboard to truly be thought of as sufficiently “alien.”

What follows is a humble bid to capture a linguistically reasonable approximation of a viable script for Klingon based on its grammar and phonology, as well as an attempt to represent an aesthetically accurate portrayal of a Klingon-esque writing system.

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Klingon Alphasyllabary

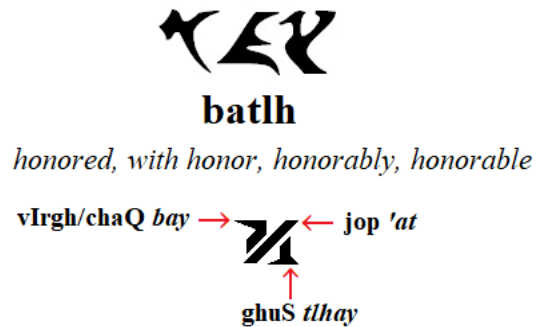
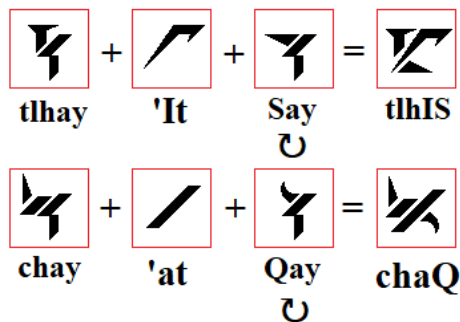
A working Klingon script – alphasyllabary, inspired by the aesthetic of **Klinzhai**, using elements of the **Ithkuil** script. The working name is *'InDogh ngoghmeY* (syllable blocks). Based on Klingon phonotactics described on [this](#) page, there are 2657 possible monosyllables. This system is designed to write each of those syllables uniquely.

Script Variations

The [Clerical script](#) is usually written vertically, and makes use of all characters, to include the [Special Characters](#), and numerical digits; the [Common script](#) has simplified variations for a few consonants, doesn't use the [Special Characters](#), and is written from left-to-right.

Anatomy of a syllable glyph

Each syllable glyph consists of a primary vowel element, and at least one consonant mark. Unique elements are used for the semivowels /w/ and /j/, as well as the glottal stop /ʔ/, referred to as *qaghwl'* in the Klingon language.





















The above examples show the vowel in the middle, the syllable onset is put in the upper-left quadrant, and the coda is rotated 180° and placed in the lower-right quadrant. This means that each phonemic element fits into a compact syllable glyph, similar in function to Hangul.

Example 1: **tlhIS** [tʰɪʂ] v. to spit out





Example 1: **chaQ** [tʰɑqχ] v. to thrust upward with end of *bat'leth*

Consonants

The onset and coda (initial and final) consonants in Standard Federation ‘alphabetical order’. A few of the consonants have variations used only in the [Common](#) script.

								
bay	chay	Day	ghay	Hay	jay	lay	may	nay
								
ngay	pay	qay	Qay	ray	Say	tay	tlhay	vay


Common Script Variations

			
bay	lay	ray	tlhay

Glottal Stop (qaghwI’)

				
‘a-	‘e-	‘I-	‘o-	‘u-


When the **qaghwI’** begins a syllable a unique vowel carrier is used.

				
-a’	-e’	-I’	-o’	-u’


When the **qaghwI’** ends a syllable these vowel carriers are rotated 180°. The /ʔo/ and /ʔu/ are not completely rotated as the /ʔo/ slice must point up, and the /ʔu/ slice must point downward.

Common Script Variation

The **qaghwI’** can be written as a consonant in the [Common Script](#) variation.







qaghwI’ (‘ay) <i>common variant</i>

Special Endings

		
targh	chaw'	Qoy'
n. <i>type of animal</i>	n. <i>permit</i>	v. <i>to spill</i>



These unique glyphs mark the three biconsonantal codas: /-w' -y' -rgh/. They do not occur in the onset position. Keep in mind that **-ow'** and **-uw'** do not end any canon syllables.

Vowels

				
-a-	-e-	-I-	-o-	-u-

The plain vowels, or primary nuclei, are never rotated.






Semivowels (Approximants)

				
wa-	we-	wI-	wo-	wu-

				
ya-	ye-	yI-	yo-	yu-






The semivowels, **way** and **yay**, /w/ and /j/ respectively, have unique forms that can be rotated 180° depending on whether they serve as the onset, or coda of a syllable. Keep in mind that **-ow** and **-uw** do not end any canon syllables.

Null Coda

				
-a	-e	-I	-o	-u

The null coda (or no final consonant) vowel carriers, like other vowel marks can be rotated 180° to mark syllables with no onset. The /ʔo/ and /ʔu/ are not completely rotated as the /ʔo/ slice must point up, and the /ʔu/ must point downward, for the sake of distinction.








Common Script Variation

				
-a	-e	-I	-o	-u

The “null coda” marker does not occur in the initial position.

Special Characters

There are a few special glyphs that either fall outside of the almost ubiquitous CVC syllable structure or mark particular words and phrases. These can in some ways be thought of as punctuation, or determiner glyphs. These special characters are only used in official documents, literature, and technical instructions, usually only for the sake of clarity or tradition.

						
Daq	ml'	-oy	pong	raq (SaS)	rev	veH
<i>n. place</i>	<i>n. number</i>	<i>endearment suffix</i>	<i>n. name</i>	<i>v. be repetitive</i>	<i>v. quote</i>	<i>n. boundary</i>

Daq – marks the following as a place name (“place”)

ml' – marks the following as a number or digit (“number”)

-oy – endearment ending [Type 1 noun suffix]

pong – marks the following as a name (“name”)

raq – marks the onset and coda are the same (“repetition glyph”)

rev – marks the following phrase as a quote (“quote”)

veH – a word boundary marker used in official or important texts (“boundary; barrier”)



pong ghawran
Gowron



Daq Qo'noS
Kronos








vavoy
“daddy”

Numerals

Digits






The digits 0-9, used in place of numeric vocabulary for math, technical instructions, and cryptography.

				
pagh	wa'	cha'	wej	loS
zero; 0	one; 1	two; 2	three; 3	four; 4






				
vagh	jav	Soch	chorgh	Hut
five; 5	six; 6	seven; 7	eight; 8	nine; 9

Numeric Vocabulary

What follows is the representation of numbers via syllables rendered in the [common script](#). In official and formal writing, when used, these syllables are always preceded by the [number marker](#) **mI'**.

				
pagh	wa'	cha'	wej	loS
zero; 0	one; 1	two; 2	three; 3	four; 4

				
vagh	jav	Soch	chorgh	Hut
five; 5	six; 6	seven; 7	eight; 8	nine; 9

				
maH	vatlh	SaD (SanID)	netlh	bIp
ten	hundred	thousand	10K	100K

Higher numbers

Each of the below examples demonstrates the numerical digits followed by the common script version of the number words.

A sequence of four Klingon digits: 5, 3, 4, and 7.A sequence of Klingon words: vaghSaD, wejvatlh, loSmaH, Soch.

5,347 vaghSaD wejvatlh loSmaH Soch or vaghSanID wejvatlh loSmaH Soch

A sequence of three Klingon digits: 6, 0, and 4.A sequence of Klingon words: javvatlh, loS.

604 javvatlh loS

A sequence of two Klingon digits: 3 and 1.A sequence of Klingon words: wejmaH, wa'.

31 wejmaH wa'

Examples

There are two primary variations of the Klingon Alphasyllabary. The Clerical, and the Common.

Clerical Script

The Clerical Script is noteworthy as it is most often written from top-to-bottom, lacks the use of the **veH**, and the glyphs can be written as a single unit, rather than a composition of the phonemic marks, but this is a stylistic choice, not obligatory.



jIyajbe'.
I don't understand.



tlhIngan Hol Dajath'a'?
Do you speak Klingon?



Heghlu'meH QaQ jajvam.
Today is a good day to die.

Common Script

The Common Script, as the name implies, is widely read and understood. This version uses the **veH** but none of the other special characters. Official documents, technical materials, and even books for children use the Common Script.



jIyajbe'.
I don't understand.



tlhIngan Hol Dajath'a'?
Do you speak Klingon?



Heghlu'meH QaQ jajvam.
Today is a good day to die.

Comparison

KAWLCA'WEPHYX QESYGF' PFX EPFA
 ZGDQGLDSDHTZ GAVYAL SFX QAS
 ZYTWUWY' WYVW ZL Z

Suvlu'taHvIS yapbe' HoS neH.

fight-INDEF.SUBJ-CONT-while be.enough-NEG strength only
Brute strength is not the most important asset in a fight.

(the above shows comparison between [pIQaD](#), [Klinzhai](#), and *InDogh ngoghmey*)

Pangram

IENAESSESFQGLYDYZ' YER DAKAMIEP METIFDY' 'YU
 ZUZU'ZYFZ' YI LQZY'YRZ'

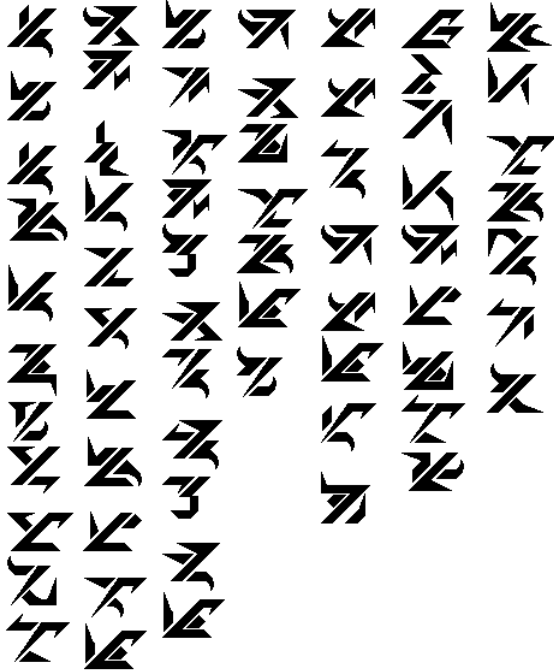
qajunpaQHeylljmo' batlh DuSuvqang charchwI' 'It.

Because of your apparent audacity the depressed conqueror is willing to fight you.

(the above shows a pangram developed by [Agnieszka Solska](#))

Hamlet Excerpt

Rendered in the Clerical Script without phonemic element merging.



taH pagh taHbe'. DaH mu'tlheghvam vIqelnIS.
quv'a', yabDaq San vaQ cha, pu' je SIQDI'?

pagh, Seng bIQ'a'Hey SuvmeH nuHmey SuqDI',
'ej, Suvmo', rInmoHDI'? Hegh.

Qong --- Qong neH --- 'ej QongDI', tIq 'oy',
wa'SanID Daw''e' je cho'nISbogh
porghDaj rInmoHlaH net Har.

*"To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them. To die—to sleep,
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation..."*

General Examples

A line of Klingon script in a Clerical style, consisting of 11 characters.

A line of Klingon script in a Common style, consisting of 11 characters.

bortaS bIr jablu'DI' reH QaQqu' nay'.
Revenge is a dish best served cold.
(lit: When cold revenge is served, the dish is always very good)

The top example in the above omits the veH and uses the Clerical version of the script.

A line of Klingon script in a Common style, consisting of 11 characters.

tIqIpqu' 'ej nom tIqIp.
Hit them hard and hit them fast.

The above is rendered in the Common Script.

Two lines of Klingon script in a Common style. The first line has 11 characters and the second line has 6 characters.









cha''uy' chorghbIp wejnetlh javSaD wejmaH wa'
two million eight hundred thirty six thousand and thirty one









The above is rendered in the Common Script followed by the same amount in digits.









A short line of Klingon script in a Common style, consisting of 5 characters.









rep wa'maH wa' wejmaH
11:30AM (11:30)

Select Word List









							
baj	chuD	DeS	ghIt	Hol	jargh	loD	ml'
v. earn	n. people; kin	n. arm	v. flow	n. language	n. forehead	n. man; male	n. number

							
naQ	ngeb	puy	qech	QIp	reH	Saw'	tagh
v. be full; whole	v. be fake	v. wreck	n. idea	v. be stupid	adv. always	v. have a depth of	n. lung

							
tlhoy'	vem	wew	yan	'Iv	bong	chIrgH	Duq
n. wall	v. wake up	v. glow	n. sword	n. altitude	adv. accidentally	n. temple	n. bowl

							
ghar	Huthh	ja'	leQ	-moH	nan	nguq	peggH
n. diplomacy	v. lack	v. tell	n. switch	vs. causative	v. gouge	v. be arrogant	n. secret

							
qIt	Quj	ray'	Seng	tor	tlhIl	vuD	wep
v. be possible	n. game	n. targets	n. trouble	v. kneel	v. mine	n. opinion	n. jacket

							
yaS	'or	balth	chev	Don	ghob	Hat	jey'
n. officer	v. pilot	n. honor	v. separate	v. be parallel	n. ethics	v. be illegal	n. tin

Glossary

bI'reS	beginning
botlh	center, middle, median
chaQ	thrust upward with end of <i>betlheH</i>
chu'	be new
ghIth	write, mark (upon), engrave, incise
ghuS	lower (spear) to horizontal to attack
Hutlh	lack; be without; not have
jop	lunge; thrust
lan	place; location
-mey	general plural
nap	be simple
ngutlh	letter, written character
quH	slice, carve
pong	name; call
raq	be repetitive; redundant
rev	a quote
Sa'Hut	ending
SIr	be unique
veH	boundary; barrier
vIrgh	rip (up), slash, tear (up), gash
wab naQ	vowel
wab poD	consonant
'InDogh	syllable

Resources and References

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Klingon_scripts

klingonska.org/

hol.kag.org/

klingon.wiki/En/PIqaD

klingon.wiki/En/LovePoetry

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ithkuil.place/mirror/2004-en-alt/ithkuil-ch11-script.html