

Ktunaxa Pronunciation- Quick Guide

The Following is a list of Special Characters in the Ktunaxa Alphabet and a description of their Pronunciations. (Referenced from the Blue Book).

Ktunaxa Character	Description
Consonants	
ʔ	Glottal-stop - can be made by momentarily squeezing or closing the back of the throat near the uvula.
ɬ	Cent sign - Sounds like 'ts'. Example- The 'ts' sound in ' <u>cats</u> '. (<i>softer sounding than the hard ɬ</i>)
ɬ́	Glottalized or Hard Cent Sign - sounds like 'ts', but with a stronger emphasis and forceful air movement.
h	Sounds like the English 'H'.
k	Sounds like a "soft" English 'K'.
ḱ	Glottalized or Hard 'K' - sounds like the English 'K', but with a stronger emphasis and forceful air movement.
l	Sounds like the English 'L'. Please Note: This is not a native Ktunaxa sound and occurs only in words borrowed from other languages, such as "Kulilu" (word for butterfly), which is borrowed from the Salish.
ɬ̥	Double-barred 'L' - Place the tip of your tongue behind your top front teeth and force air out the sides (almost sounds like a cat "hissing").
m	Sounds like the English 'M'.
ḿ	Glottalized or Hard 'M' - sounds like the English 'M', but with stronger emphasis.

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n	Sounds like the English 'N'.
ḥ	Glottalized or Hard 'N' - Sounds like the English 'N', but with stronger emphasis.
p	Sounds like the English 'P'.
ḑ	Glottalized or Hard 'P' - sounds like the English 'P', but with stronger emphasis (almost sounds like a strong quick popping sound).
q	'Q' in the Ktunaxa Language has no equivalent sound in English (it does <u>not</u> make a 'qwah' sound). It is like the English 'K', but is made further in the back of the throat.
ḑ	Glottalized or Hard 'Q' - It is like the English 'K', but is made further in the back of the throat and with a much stronger emphasis (almost sounds like a strong quick "popping" sound).
s	Sounds like the English 'S'.
t	Sounds like the English 'T'.
ḥ	Glottalized or Hard 'T' - Sounds like the English 'T', but with a stronger emphasis and forceful air movement.
w	Sounds like the English 'W'.
x	'X' in the Ktunaxa Language has no equivalent sound in English (it does <u>not</u> make a 'ks' sound). It is made further in the back of the throat. To make this sound try and tighten, but do not fully close the back of your throat and blow air through (almost like you are trying to clear your air way).

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y

Sounds like the English 'Y'.

Vowels

Ktunaxa has three short vowels and three long vowels. The long vowels are written with a raised dot (·) following the letter.

a

Sounds like 'aw', such as in the English word "Father".

a·

Long 'a' or 'a-dot'- Sounds like a drawn out 'aw'.

i

The sound can vary depending on where it occurs in a word. Between consonants, it sounds like 'i' in the English word 'sit'. When it is at the end of a word, it sounds like 'ee' in the English word 'see', but much shorter and crisp sounding. *The exact sound of the Ktunaxa 'i' at the end of a word somewhat depends on the nature of the consonant that it follows.*

i·

Long 'i' or 'i-dot'- Sounds like 'ee' in the English word 'see', but is more drawn out.

u

Sounds like 'oo' like in the English word 'boo'; in some words it can also sound like 'oo' in the English word 'book'.

u·

Long 'u' or 'u-dot'- Has a drawn out 'oo' sound, like the English word "boo", but a bit longer.

Other Sounds

Diphthongs- are vowel-like sounds made up of a vowel and a "glide", but are pronounced as a single unit (glides in Ktunaxa are 'y' and 'w').

ay

Pronounced like the English words "my", "buy" & "high".

aw

Pronounced like the English words "cow", "how" & "bow".

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uy

There is no English equivalent, but it sounds somewhat like the sound in “Boy”, but with the back of the tongue slightly higher and lips more rounded.

These Diphthong combinations are usually pronounced as above when they are at the end of a word or followed by another consonant. When they are followed by a vowel they are usually pronounced as separate sounds, with the glide belonging to the next syllable.

Examples: ʔayw (twenty) vs. ʔumayitnamu (springtime)

Kʔawʔa (Grizzly Bear) vs. ʔawiyʔa (Huckleberry)

ʔaʔw (Pigeon) vs. ʔawu (gun)

ʔa·quyʔkaknam (fist or knuckles) vs. ʔinuya (mink)

Double Consonants

In English, double consonants are sometimes written even though only one sound is pronounced. In Ktunaxa, when consonants such as ‘m’, ‘n’ ‘s’ or ‘ʔ’ are doubled, they are pronounced as long consonants. *Sometimes extra length of the double consonant can make the difference between one word and another.*

Examples: ʔa·knnis (your nose) vs. ʔa·knis (saddle)

ʔaʔʔa (black tree moss) vs. ʔaʔa (woman’s friend)