

Unit 1

Simple Sentences

1.1 Subjects and Predicates

We will start our journey into Haida by looking at a few very simple sentences.

Charlie gatáagang.

Charlie is eating.

Jenny k'ajúugang.

Jenny is singing.

Pat náanggang.

Pat is playing.

By comparing the Haida sentences and their English translations, we can quickly start to figure out a few things about sentences in Haida work.

Each of these sentences describes a person doing an action. There are two words: one for the person, and one for the action. The word naming the person comes first, followed by the word naming the action. These are two different kinds of words, called **NOUNS** and **VERBS**.

Nouns are words which refer to people, animals, plants, places, things or ideas. One of the simplest kinds of nouns are people's names, and that's what we will be using here in the first few lessons.

A verb is a word that refers to some action or event, such as *eat*, *talk*, *dance*, *sing* or *work*. Verbs in Haida change their form to express different shades of meaning. By adding different endings, we can describe actions that are happening now, have already happened in the past, or will happen sometime in the future. With other endings, we can describe actions that happen on a regular basis, or actions that never happen at all.

In each of our three example sentences, the noun (**Charlie**, **Jenny** or **Pat**) is filling the role of **SUBJECT**. The Subject is the one who carries out the action in the sentence. On

the other hand, the verbs in each sentence (**gatáagang**, **k'ajúugang** and **náanggang**) are filling the role of **PREDICATE**. The Predicate is that part of the sentence that describes what action the Subject is carrying out.

If we put all of that together, we get a pattern that looks like this:

SIMPLE SENTENCE	
SUBJECT	PREDICATE
Noun	Verb

When we look at sentence patterns, like the one above, we will show the Subject in green, and the Predicate in purple. Here are our three example sentences again, this time with their proper color-coding.

SUBJECT	PREDICATE	
Charlie	gatáagang.	Charlie is eating.
Jenny	k'ajúugang.	Jenny is singing.
Pat	náanggang.	Pat is playing.

At this point, we've learned more English terms – Noun, Verb, Subject, Predicate – than we have Haida terms. But as we go along, we will see how important these concepts are in helping us to express ourselves clearly and correctly in Haida.

1.2 Verb Frames

When we learn a new verb in Haida, there are a couple of things we need to know. The first is the **BASIC FORM** of the verb. This is the form that we will find in the dictionary, and it's the form that conveys the simplest, most basic meaning of the verb.

The second thing we need to know is the **VERB FRAME**. The Verb Frame tells us what other elements must be present in the sentence when we use this verb. With some

exceptions, verbs cannot be used by themselves in Haida – they need to occur with other words in the sentence, such as a Subject. These other words are part of the Verb Frame.

Here are the three verbs we've seen in our examples so far:

[S_A] gatáa	for S to eat
[S_A] k'ajúu	for S to sing
[S_A] náang	for S to play

Let's look at the first of these verbs. The Basic form of the verb is **gatáa**, which is the part that means 'eat'. The Verb Frame is **[S_A]**, which is the abbreviation we will use for an **ACTIVE SUBJECT**. This tells us that when we use the verb **gatáa** in a sentence, we also need to have a Subject in the sentence as well.

(We will see later on that there are several types of subjects in Haida, including Active Subjects and Passive Subjects. For now, we don't need to worry about that distinction.)

1.3 Simple Present Form

Once we know the Basic form of the verb, the next most important form to learn is the **SIMPLE PRESENT FORM**. Here is an example of the Basic form and Simple Present form of the verb that means 'eat'.

BASIC FORM:	gatáa	to eat
PRESENT TENSE FORM:	gatáagang	is eating

As its name suggests, the Simple Present form of the verb refers to an action that is going on in the present time. For most verbs in Haida, the Simple Present form is created by simply adding the ending **-gang** onto the Basic form of that verb.

Here are ten common verbs which all take **-gang** to make their Simple Present form.

[S _A] gúusuu	for S to talk	[S _A] gatáa	for S to eat
[S _A] gáadang	for S to bathe	[S _A] k'usáang	for S to cough
[S _A] kúugaa	for S to cook	[S _A] káajuu	for S to hunt
[S _A] k'ajúu	for S to sing	[S _A] náang	for S to play
[S _A] xáw	for S to fish	[S _A] k'áahluu	for S to get up

Once we know a few verbs, we can start using them to make sentences. We can do this by taking a noun, such as a person's name, and putting it in front of the Simple Present form of the verb. Here are ten simple sentences we can make using our new verbs.

SUBJECT	PREDICATE	
Kim	gúusuugang.	Kim is talking.
Alice	gáadanggang.	Alice is bathing.
Mark	kúugaangang.	Mark is cooking.
Steve	k'ajúugang.	Steve is singing.
Jenny	xáwgang.	Jenny is fishing.
Verna	gatáangang.	Verna is eating.
Doris	k'usáanggang.	Doris is coughing.
Delbert	káajuugang.	Delbert is hunting.
Starla	náanggang.	Starla is playing.
Patrick	k'áahluugang.	Patrick is getting up.

In some cases, a single verb in Haida can take the place of a whole phrase in English. Here are a few examples of this kind of verb.

[S _A] giidáang	for S to gather bark
[S _A] skáadaang	for S to pick berries
[S _A] k'iigaang	for S to tell stories
[S _A] stláandlan	for S to wash one's hands
[S _A] ts'áanuu	for S to build a fire
[S _A] sgíwdaang	for S to gather seaweed

Notice how with each of these verbs, we need to use several words in English to express what is conveyed in just a single word in Haida.

Just like the first set of verbs, all of these verbs make their Simple Present form by adding the ending **-gang**. Here are some examples of simple sentences with these new verbs.

SUBJECT	PREDICATE	
Larry	giidáanggang.	Larry is gathering bark.
Cara	k'iigaanggang.	Cara is telling stories.
Tommy	ts'áanuugang.	Tommy is building a fire.
Wayne	skáadaanggang.	Wayne is picking berries.
Noah	stláandlan-gang.	Noah is washing his hands.
Sarah	sgíwdaanggang.	Sarah is gathering seaweed.

Notice how we don't have to use a separate word that means "bark" or "stories" or "seaweed" – all of those meanings are built right into the verb, allowing us to just use that one word to describe the whole situation.

1.4 Two-Word Verbs

There are some verbs in Haida that are composed of two individual words. The two

parts of the verb work together to express the whole meaning. The two parts of the verb have to occur next to one another – they cannot be separated from one another. Here are a few common two-word verbs.

[S _A] stl'a kingáang	for S to play guitar
[S _A] k'u xajáang	for S to smoke
[S _A] ki skáawnang	for S to shoot pool
[S _A] gu chándaal	for S to sled
[S _A] sgi skáajuu	for S to play baseball
[S _A] gyáa 'láanuu	for S to swear, curse

Notice again that there is no need to use a separate word for “guitar” or “pool” or “baseball” with these verbs. Here are some sentence examples.

SUBJECT	PREDICATE	
Jimmy	stl'a kingáanggang.	Jimmy is playing guitar.
Lisa	ki skáawnanggang.	Lisa is shooting pool.
Bob	sgi skáajuugang.	Bob is playing baseball.
Cindy	k'u xajáanggang.	Cindy is smoking.
Dave	gu chándaalgang.	Dave is sledding.
Alex	gyáa 'láanuugang.	Alex is swearing.

Notice that all of these verbs still use the ending **-gang** to create their Simple Present form.

A common set of two-word verbs all use the little word **ta**. These verbs all describe some action that is carried out in a general, non-specific sort of way.

[S _A] ta hlk'yáawdaal	for S to sweep, do some sweeping
[S _A] ta tl'ii	for S to sew, do some sewing
[S _A] ta k'áalang	for S to write, do some writing
[S _A] ta k'udlán	for S to paint, do some painting
[S _A] ta xáy	for S to weave, do some weaving

For example:

SUBJECT	PREDICATE	
Timmy	ta hlk'yáawdaalgang.	Timmy is doing some sweeping.
Wendy	ta tl'iigang.	Wendy is doing some sewing.
Charlie	ta k'áalanggang.	Charlie is doing some writing.
Mary	ta k'udlán-gang.	Mary is doing some painting.
Eliasica	ta xáygang.	Eliasica is doing some weaving.

1.5 Short-A Verbs

While most verbs add **-gang** to create their Simple Present form, this doesn't hold true for all verbs in Haida. One group of verbs that doesn't follow this pattern are the **SHORT-A VERBS**. These are verbs which end with a short **-a-** in their Basic form, such as **táwk'a** "to garden". When we want to make the Simple Present form of a Short-A verb, we change the short **-a-** into a long **-aa-**, and then add **-ng**.

[S _A] táwk'a	→ táwk'aang	for S to garden
[S _A] k'áwa	→ k'áwaang	for S to be sitting
[S _A] gyaahlánda	→ gyaahlándaang	for S to tell a story
[S _A] hlǵánggula	→ hlǵánggulaang	for S to work
[S _A] kánga	→ kángaang	for S to dream

Even though these verbs create their Simple Present forms in a different way, we can still use them to create simple sentences just like with all the other verbs we've seen before.

Andy táwk'aang.	Andy is gardening.
Elaine k'áwaang.	Elaine is sitting.
George gyaahlándaang.	George is telling a story.
Francine hlǵánggulaang.	Francine is working.
Debra kángaang.	Debra is dreaming.

Some Short-A verbs have no accent in their Basic form. For these verbs, the accent will appear on the **-áang** ending in the Simple Present. Here are four verbs of this kind.

[S_A] káts'a	→ káts'áang	for S to come in, enter
[S_A] sgadäga	→ sgadägáang	for S to whisper
[S_A] aada	→ aadáang	for S to seine
[S_A] skamda	→ skamdáang	for S to set traps

Here are some simple sentences using these verbs. Be sure to notice the accented ending **-áang**.

Sandy káts'áang.	Sandy is coming in.
Bobby sgadägáang.	Bobby is whispering.
Beth aadáang.	Beth is seining.
Nora skamdáang.	Nora is setting traps.

1.6 Verbs with Complex Changes

For other verbs, there are more complex changes that take place between the Basic form and the Simple Present form. Notice the changes that take place with the following group of verbs.

[S _A] ta t'áns ^g ad	→ ta t'áns ^g iidang	for S to do some laundry
[S _A] hlkúnst'as	→ hlkúnst'iijang	for S to blow one's nose
[S _A] xyáahl	→ xyáalgang	for S to dance
[S _A] ǵaniihl	→ ǵaniłgang	for S to drink some water
[S _A] ta k'id	→ ta k'iidang	for S to do some carving

Notice that no matter what other changes take place, the Simple Present form of the verb always ends in the sound **-ng**. This is true for every verb in the language.

Here are some sentence examples with these Complex Change verbs.

Cherilyn ta t'áns^giidang.	Cherilyn is doing some laundry.
Ben hlkúnst'iijang.	Ben is blowing his nose.
Molly xyáalgang.	Molly is dancing.
Tony ǵaniłgang.	Tony is drinking water.
John ta k'iidang.	John is carving.

Although these changes may look very complicated now, they are in fact very regular. Take, for instance, verbs that end in **-ad** in their Basic form, such as **ta t'áns^gad** “to do some laundry”. It turns out that every verb that ends in **-ad** in its Basic form will end in **-iidang** in its Simple Present form, just like **ta t'áns^gad** does. So, once we know how one verb works, we can apply that same pattern to any new **-ad** verb that we come across.

At this point, we won't worry about trying to identify all the different possible patterns and memorizing a sample verb for each one. What is important for now is to know that for some verbs there can be these complex changes that happen in the Simple Present form, and so we should be alert to those changes as we learn new verbs.

1.7 Active Subject Pronouns

Besides people's names, we can also use **PRONOUNS** as Subjects in Haida sentences.

Pronouns are words which stand in for a noun in a sentence. There are several different kinds of pronouns in Haida, and it is very important to use the right kind of pronoun for a particular sentence.

The choice of which kind of pronoun to use depends on the Verb Frame. All of the verbs that we have learned so far have a Verb Frame that requires an Active Subject. A verb that requires an Active Subject is called an **ACTIVE VERB**. If we want to use a pronoun as the subject of an Active verb, we have to choose from the set of **ACTIVE SUBJECT PRONOUNS**. Here they are.

HI	I	t'aláng	we
dáng	you	daláng	you folks
hal	he, she	hal	they

Here are some important things to know about these pronouns.

The pronoun **HI** is always written with a capital **H**, no matter where it occurs in the sentence, just like how we write the pronoun "I" with a capital letter in English. The reason for doing this is not to be like English, but rather to distinguish the pronoun **HI** from the command marker **hi**, which we will learn about later on.

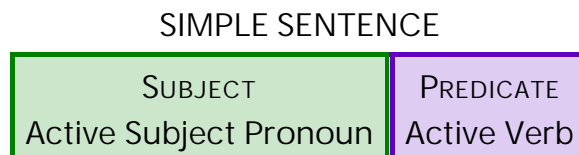
In English, the pronoun 'YOU' can be used whether we are talking to just one person, or to a group of people. In Haida, we always keep those two possibilities distinct. The pronoun **dáng** means 'YOU' when talking just to one person. The pronoun **daláng** means 'YOU' when talking to two or more people. In order to help us keep these two pronouns straight, we will translate **daláng** as "you folks", so that we remember that **daláng** is always used when talking to a group of two or more.

In English, we pay close attention to the gender of people and animals, and refer to them with either the pronoun "he" (if they are male) or the pronoun "she" (if they are female). In Haida, gender makes no difference. The pronoun **hal** can be used for either "he" or "she". This pronoun, in fact, has several different pronunciations, depending on the speaker. Some say **hal**, some say 'll, some say 'la and some say **nn**. We will use

the spelling **hal** here in this book, but you should be aware of these other pronunciations, and know that they are all correct.

In fact, as the table above shows, **hal** can also be used to mean “they” in certain contexts. We will learn more about that use of **hal** later on.

We can use our new Active Subject pronouns just like people’s names, and put them in front of the verb to make a simple sentence.



Here are some examples.

SUBJECT	PREDICATE	
HI	giidáanggang.	I am gathering bark.
Dáng	ta xáygang.	You are doing some weaving.
Hal	ƙats’áang.	She is coming in.
Hal	híkúnst’iijang.	He is blowing his nose.
T’aláng	ta ƙ’iidang.	We are doing some carving.
Daláng	ƙ’usáanggang.	You folks are coughing.

1.8 ‘And’

If we want to talk about two people doing an action together, we can use the word **isgyáan** “and”. Just like in English, we can put this word in between two people’s names:

Anna isgyáan Bill	Anna and Bill
Jim isgyáan Sarah	Jim and Sarah
Phil isgyáan Dan	Phil and Dan

Then we can take this new noun phrase and use it as the Subject in a sentence.

Dave isgyáan Mark ta t'ánsgiidang.	Dave and Mark are doing laundry.
Lisa isgyáan Marie xyáalgang.	Lisa and Marie are dancing.
Val isgyáan Tom k'u xajáanggang.	Val and Tom are smoking.

Although we can combine two names using **isgyáan**, different patterns are used if we want to link together two pronouns, or a name and a pronoun. We will learn about those patterns later on.

1.9 Singular Verbs and Plural Verbs

So far, we've seen two ways that we can talk about a group of people doing an action – either by using a plural pronoun, such as **t'aláng** or **daláng**, or by using two names linked by **isgyáan**. An interesting fact about Haida is that some verbs change their form depending on whether just one person is doing the action, or if a group of people is doing the action.

Here are a couple of examples using verbs we already know, **k'áwa** and **kats'a**.

Vera k'áwaang.	Vera is sitting.
Vera isgyáan Ted k'áwaanggang.	Vera and Ted are sitting.
Hi kats'áang.	I am coming in.
T'aláng ists'áang.	We are coming in.

When one person is sitting, the verb we use is **k'áwa**. However, if two or more people are sitting, then we use a different verb, **k'áwaang**.

It turns out that there are quite a few pairs of verbs like this in Haida.

[S_A SG] dladáal	for S (sg) to walk slowly, stroll
[S_A PL] xadáal	to S (pl) walk slowly, stroll
[S_A SG] k'adíi	for S (sg) to go to sleep
[S_A PL] k'asdla	for S (pl) to go to sleep
[S_A SG] sgáyhla	for S (sg) to cry
[S_A PL] sgáyga	for S (pl) to cry
[S_A SG] skína	for S (sg) to wake up
[S_A PL] skináng	for S (pl) to wake up

As these examples show, the relationship between singular verbs and the plural verbs is very complex. In some cases, like **dladáal** and **xadáal** or **kats'a** and **ists'a**, the two verbs start differently but end the same. In other cases, like **k'adíi** and **k'asdla** or **skína** and **skináng**, the two verbs start the same but end differently.

Here are some examples that contrast the singular and plural verbs.

Mark dladáalgang.	Mark is walking along slowly.
Mark isgyáan Joe xadáalgang.	Mark and Joe are walking along slowly.
Pam sgáyhlaang.	Pam is crying.
Pam isgyáan Sam sgáygaang.	Pam and Sam are crying.
Hi k'adiigang.	I am going to sleep.
T'aláng k'asdláang.	We are going to sleep.
Dáng skínaang.	You are waking up.
Daláng skinánggang.	You folks are waking up.

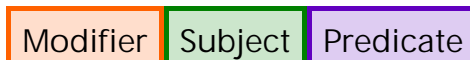
Fortunately for us, most verbs in Haida can be used with either a singular subject or a plural subject, with no change in form. But as we go along and learn more vocabulary, we will need to pay close attention to those verbs which are specifically for singular subjects, and those verbs which are specifically for plural subjects.

1.10 Aspectual Adverbs

All of the sentences we have seen so far have been made up of just two parts, a Subject and a Predicate. Another part of the sentence is the **MODIFIER**.

The Modifier slot will usually come first in the sentence.

SIMPLE SENTENCE



There are a variety of different types of words which can go into the Modifier slot in a Haida sentence. The first kind that we'll look at are a small group of words called **ASPECTUAL ADVERBS**. These words tell us how the action is unfolding.

Here are a few common Aspectual adverbs.

hawáan	still
háwsan	again
tláan	stop, not anymore

Here are some simple example sentences to show how these Aspectual adverbs work.

MODIFIER	SUBJECT	PREDICATE	
Hawáan	hal	hlǵáנגgulaang.	He is still working.
Háwsan	hal	hlǵáנגgulaang.	He is working again.
Tláan	hal	hlǵáנגgulaang.	He has stopped working.

Hawáan indicates that the action is still on-going. Some Alaskan speakers drop the **-h-** at the beginning of the word and say **awáan**.

Hawáan Joe náanggang.	Joe is still playing.
Hawáan Hl gatáagang.	I am still eating.
Hawáan Ann isgyáan Ben k'áwaanggang.	Ann and Ben are still sitting.

Háwsan indicates that the action happened at least once before, and then happened again. A shorter version, **háws**, is also common. Some speakers also say **húusan** or **húus**.

Háwsan hal k'usáanggang.	She is coughing again.
Háwsan Dana xyáalgang.	Dana is dancing again.
Háwsan t'aláng k'asdláang.	We are going to sleep again.

Tláan indicates that the action began at some time in the past, but has now stopped.

Tláan t'aláng scáygaang.	We have stopped crying.
Tláan dǵng ta k'íidang.	You have stopped carving.
Tláan June kúugaagang.	June has stopped cooking.

1.11 Words for People

One of the more surprising facts about Haida is that there are no simple terms for man, woman, boy, girl or other types of people. Instead, we use phrases that describe properties that the person has. Let's start by looking at some words for women:

nang jáadaa	a female, a woman, a girl
nang jáadaa k'ayáa	an old woman
nang jáadaa xajúu	a young girl
nang jáadaa dláay 'láa	an adolescent girl

These phrases all begin with the little word **nang**, which means 'someone'. They are then followed by the word **jáadaa**, which is a verb meaning 'to be female'. So, the first phrase, **nang jáadaa**, literally means 'someone female'. This is the most common term for referring to a female, either a woman or a girl, regardless of her age.

If that's not specific enough, we can add other words onto the end of the phrase. For instance, **k'ayáa** 'to be old', **xajúu** 'to be small', or **dláay 'láa** 'to be adolescent'.

There is a parallel set of terms for describing males, but which use the verb **íihlangaa** 'to be male' in place of **jáadaa**.

nang íihlangaa	a male, a man, a boy
nang íihlangáa k'ayáa	an old man
nang íihlangáa xajúu	a small boy
nang íihlangaa dláay 'láa	an adolescent boy

Very often in conversation, these phrases are used with an **-s** on the end of the last word. This **-s** has the effect of making the phrase refer to a definite and specific individual. Compare:

nang jáadaa	a female, a woman, a girl
nang jáadaas	the female, the woman, the girl
nang íihlangaa	a male, a man, a boy
nang íihlangáas	the male, the man, the boy

We can use these phrases – either with or without the **-s** on the end – as Subjects in simple sentences. Here are a few examples.

Nang jáadaa k'ajúugang.	A woman is singing.
Hawáan nang íihlangaas káajuugang.	The man is still hunting.
Tláan nang jáadaa k'ayáas ta tl'íigang.	The old woman has stopped sewing.