

Gateway B1 Unit 3

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Reading comprehension - Learning to speak Klingon

Read the text here or from the page 37 of your SB and do the exercises below the text:

LEARNING TO SPEAK KLINGON

The Klingons are an alien race. They first appeared in the science fiction TV series Star Trek. The Klingons love violence and war. And they have their own language.

The inventor of the Klingon language was Mark Okrand. Okrand has a PhD in linguistics. He began working on Star Trek in 1982. A friend of a friend told him that they were looking for a linguist to write a short dialogue in Vulcan (the language of the famous character Mr Spock). Okrand wrote the dialogue and enjoyed it. Two years later they asked him to write a few words for some scenes in Klingon. This time he didn't just write words, he invented a complete grammar. This grammar has some familiar and some unfamiliar elements. One unusual thing is the word order.

Over 300,000 people bought The Klingon Dictionary, written by Okrand. But there are probably only 2,000 people in the world who can speak Klingon. Many of these people



only know a word or two. But some invent poems and stories or write translations, including translations of Shakespeares.

But it's one thing to write Klingon, and it's another thing to speak it. There are only 20 or 30 people who can have a conversation in Klingon. There is an annual Klingon conference and it is one of the few places where people can have these conversations. I went to one of their conferences in 2007.

On the first afternoon of the conference, I saw a small group of people around a table. They were talking in Klingon, slowly, and using dictionaries a lot, but they were communicating. I sat and listened. I was happy when, at last, I understood my first spoken Klingon sentence: 'Ha'DibaHviSopbe' ('Animal I it eat not' = I'm a vegetarian).

Later at the conference, I met two people who were chatting in Klingon. They were Captain Krankor and his girlfriend Agnieszka. When he is wearing his Klingon costume, Krankor only speaks Klingon. He travels with a guitar and sings Klingon translations of The Beatles and The Rolling Stones!

Anika Okrent

Match the parts of the phrases.

Link the beginning of a phrase with its end.

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| The Klingons are | the inventor of the Klingon language. |
| The Klingons first appeared in | who can have a conversation in Klingon. |
| The professor Mark Okrand is | the science fiction TV series Star Trek. |
| Over 300.000 people bought | stories or write translations to Klingon. |
| There are only 20 or 30 people | the Klingon Dictionary. |
| Some people invent poems and | an alien race. |

What do the Klingons love?

- a violence b war c art d commerce

Who invented the Klingon language?

- a Captain Kranker b Mr Spock c Mark Okrand

How many people in the world can speak Klingon?

- a 300.000 b 2.000 c 20 or 30 d 2007

Write the questions for these answers.

Professor Mark Okrand

In 1982.

Only 20 or 30.

Find some facts about Star Trek in your student book (page 37) and on the internet .Write your answer (about 5-7 sentences)