# **GIVEN NAMES AND LINENAMES**

Klingons have a given name and, if they belong to a line (see below), a linename. A child’s given name can begin with any letter. At maturity (10 years) the first initial changes, depending on the career path chosen. Navy names begin with *K*, Marine with *M*, and the civilian services (academic and bureaucratic) with *A*.

Names are often shortened, and nicknames are at least as common as among humans. There is apparently sex differentiation, but what sounds feminine or masculine in *Klingonaase* is not often apparent to human ears, and no hard rule can be established.

The linenames bear a prefix indicating personal status. In ascending order these are:

No prefix - A youth who has yet to do anything noteworthy.

*tai*

*vestai*

*sutai*

*zantai*

*epetai*

Any serving ship’s officer would be *tai*, or perhaps *vestai* if highly placed. A captain would be *sutai*, possibly *zantai* if he had done something very famous or distinguished. An admiral would be *zantai*, certainly. *Epetai* is very rare, and would never be applied (except as mockery) to anyone under the age of 50. The full name is thus written as Kang *zantai*-Dvistrill or as Koranth *tai*-Lassenti, who may have been known, respectively, as Vang Dvistrill and Loanth Lassenti in childhood.

Lineless children have the number of their House (orphanage) as a surname until maturity. After that they have no surname.

The Klingon lines are more than just families, less than the great dynasties of Earth’s history. They are perhaps best thought of as networks of mutual obligation and support. Klingon society is not easy to survive in, and loners stand very little chance.

Lines do not normally feud, though it is not unheard of, but a war between lines usually weakens both to the point of destruction. Rather, they act to secure positive advantages for their members, within the (shifty and unpredictable) limits set by Klingon society as a whole.

Lines tend to expand, through births and occasional adoptions. There is a point at which the line is so large that one’s obligations bring a diminished return—especially if one’s parent had many offspring with more-or-less equal claim on his favors. At such a time, one or more members will become line-founders, changing their linenames and striking out on their own. Many, perhaps most, founders fail, because one’s first act is usually something foolishly bold to establish the name in the Empire’s eye. Still, the potential founder is respected, even by the line he leaves.

*An Informal Guide to the Klingon Empire*, by J. Ford and E. Tagore