



All Ireland Linguistics Olympiad

<https://ailo.adaptcentre.ie/>



Taighde Éireann
Research Ireland



Test your mind...

against the world's
toughest puzzles
in logic, language
and linguistics



Run by



Supported by



An Roinn Cultúir,
Cumarsáide agus Spóirt
Department of Culture,
Communications and Sport

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Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin



Ollscoil Chathair
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University

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Maynooth University
Ollscoil Meánstráice na hÉireann
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Maynooth University
Ollscoil Meánstráice na hÉireann
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An Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath
Prínceas Seánach na hÉireann



University of Dublin
Ollscoil na hÉireann
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Could you be Ireland's top young problem solver?

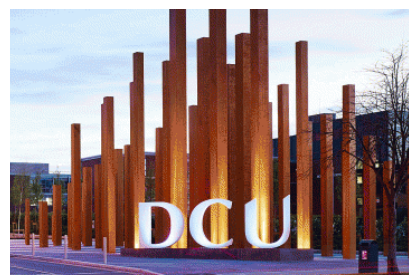
Do you think you have a knack for logic, lateral thinking and languages? Could you decipher an ancient script, or decode the logical patterns of Swahili?

The All Ireland Linguistics Olympiad (AILO) is the problem solvers' challenge. The national contest sees secondary school students develop their own strategies for solving complex problems in unfamiliar languages from around the globe.

No prior knowledge of linguistics or foreign languages is required. Even the hardest problems require only logical ability, patient work and a willingness to think around corners.

AILO introduces students to the application of logic and linguistics (i.e. the study of human language) to problems of language understanding and translation. The goal is to develop students' language awareness and problem-solving skills and to inspire them to consider the fascinating range of careers at the intersection of computing, language and linguistics.

AILO is run by ADAPT, the world-leading Research Ireland Centre for AI Driven Digital Content Technology, which brings leading academics, researchers and industry partners together to deliver excellent science, engage the public, develop novel solutions for business across all sectors and enhance Ireland's international reputation. Coordinated by Trinity College Dublin and co-hosted by Dublin City University, ADAPT's partner institutions include University College Dublin, Technological University Dublin, Maynooth University, Munster Technological University, Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest, and the University of Galway.



50,000+
Contestants Since 2009

**Compete to represent
Ireland in Romania 2026**



Who is eligible?

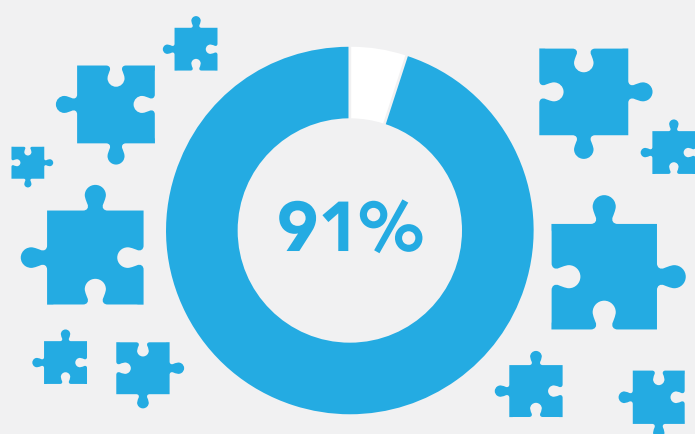
All second-level students from schools on the island of Ireland are eligible. There are Junior (under 16) and Senior (16 and over) categories, so students can participate at any stage in their second-level studies. Both Junior and Senior Category students take the same puzzles and are marked in the same way. However, we award prizes and trophies for the winners of each category. The overall top four students will be invited to represent Ireland at the International Linguistics Olympiad. Students may only participate in one national linguistics Olympiad (at any level) in a school year.

Why take the challenge?

- Most importantly, because it's great fun! You'll enjoy solving the challenging puzzles while learning about the languages of the world.
- AILO's learning outcomes are closely linked with the curriculum and the OECD PISA (2014/7) creative and collaborative problem-solving competencies. The example below shows the links with the Junior Certificate curriculum, key skills and statements of learning. See full details at <https://ailo.adaptcentre.ie>.
- Sharpen your problem-solving skills in our free problem-solving regional workshops. This will benefit you whatever career path you take, but will be particularly useful if you are thinking of a career in Computing, Linguistics, Languages, Engineering, Maths, Science or a combination of these disciplines.
- Enhance your CV or university application form by showing you have a logical mind and an ability to think outside the box.
- Win the chance to represent Ireland at the International Linguistics Olympiad 2026 in Romania.

Overview of AILO Learning Outcomes linked to Junior Cert (JC) Curricula, JC Key Skills & Statements of Learning (SoL) and the PISA Problem Solving Competencies (2014/7)

Students learn about	JC Key Skills	JC Modern Foreign Languages	JC Coding	JC Maths	JC SoL	PISA	Students should be able to:
Developing a positive disposition towards investigating, reasoning and problem-solving	✓		✓	✓		✓	1. Discuss the importance of problem-solving skills as a key component in a STEM career.
Seeing patterns and trends in language	✓	✓		✓	SoL 15	✓	2. Recognise patterns in language that make a language rule e.g. the 'code' of the language.
Tackling linguistics puzzles in unfamiliar languages	✓	✓		✓	SoL 2,15,16	✓	3. Complete logic & AILO puzzles
Problem solving strategies for each of the 6 types of AILO puzzle	✓	✓	✓	✓	SoL 17	✓	4. Understand when and how to use tables and charts to decipher data for each problem type (number systems, semantics, writing systems, phonetics, syntax, morphology.)
Gathering, interpreting and representing data	✓	✓	✓	✓	SoL 1,18	✓	5. Describe the observations they made about the language with concise and complete rules.
Expressing ideas clearly and accurately	✓	✓		✓	SoL 1	✓	6. Monitor and reflect on language and how it affects their own language learning.
Collaborative problem-solving techniques (National Final, IOL)				✓	SoL 17	✓	7. Work as a team and reflect on their role in the team (National Final, IOL)

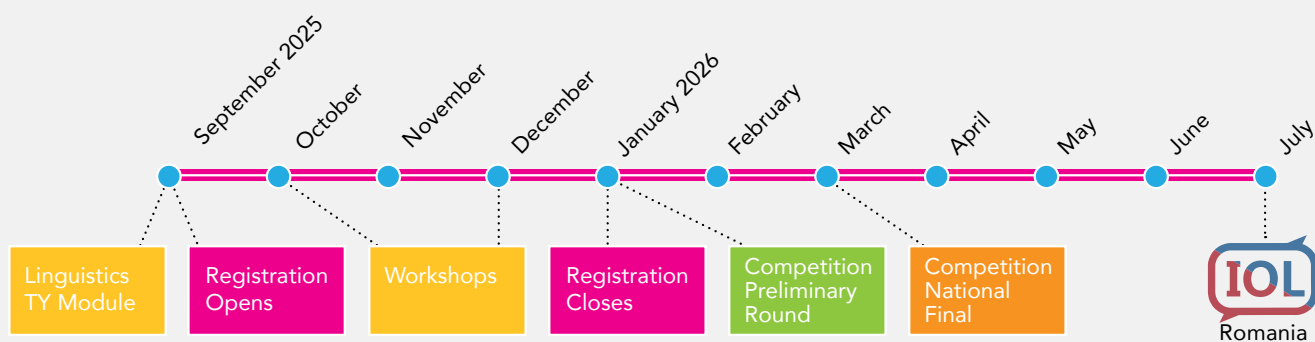


of AILO participants reported that they now have more effective strategies for solving complex problems*

What Past Contestants Say

"Being involved with AILO helped teach me some of the necessary problem-solving skills used in software programming. Some of the AILO questions were even used by my lecturers [at DCU] to demonstrate how to approach problems you have never seen before."
Robert Devereux, Amazon Web Services

"I first got involved with the AILO and the IOL last year when I heard about it in my school. It was recommended to me by former IOL contestant Luke Gardiner. I quickly developed a love for this form of problem solving. I enjoyed the experience and so was eager to participate in AILO again, despite having a Leaving Cert to study for!"
Padraig Sheehy, Theoretical Physics, TCD.



AILO Timeline

The AILO season runs from September to March. Registration closes on 23rd January 2026. It is important to register as early as possible to receive monthly training materials and for information on accessing our regional linguistics problem solving workshops. These free workshops will take place between September 2025 and January 2026.

The Preliminary Round of competition will be held in your own school the week of Monday 26th January 2026. Online sample tests are available at <https://ailo.adaptcentre.ie/puzzles/>. The top 100 students from the Preliminary Round will qualify to compete at the National Final in Dublin in March 2026 in individual and team competitions. This year, based on feedback, there will be no regional teams. Students will be randomly allocated to a team. The team round is a fun competition where students will have the opportunity to meet other students from all over the island.

The top four students from the individual contest will win the opportunity to represent Ireland at the International Linguistics Olympiad (IOL) in July 2026 in Romania.

International Linguistics Olympiad

Romania has been selected to host the International Linguistics Olympiad 2026 (IOL 2026). IOL 2026 will bring together 220 of the world's top young problem solvers from 42 territories to pit their wits against the languages of the world. Students will compete in individual and team contests. The fun-packed week also includes sightseeing, parties and cultural experiences.

For more, see <http://www.ioling.org>

Linguistics Transition Year Module

We are continuing the linguistics Transition Year module this September. The module, developed with thanks to funding from Post-Primary Languages Ireland (PPLI) and with AILO teachers, is designed as teacher-led online resources, hosted at <https://ppli.ie/transition-year-linguistics-module/>. To register your interest in the module for September 2025, please go to: **<https://ailo.adaptcentre.ie/tylinguisticsmodule>**

All secondary schools and students on the island can take part.

Register Now!

Teachers and individuals can register online at <https://ailo.adaptcentre.ie/>



Try out this sample puzzle for yourself!

Hawaiian is a Polynesian language, spoken fluently by about 2000 people.

The following Hawaiian sentences, with their English translations, are about a girl named Mele and a boy named Keone:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. He has seven elder brothers. | Ehiku ona kaikuaana. |
| 2. Mele has one brother. | Ekahi o Mele kaikunane. |
| 3. Keone has one younger brother. | Ekahi o Keone kaikaina. |
| 4. Mele has no elder sisters. | Aohe o Mele kaikuaana. |
| 5. Keone has no sisters. | Aohe o Keone kaikuahine. |
| 6. I have one canoe. | Ekahi ou waa. |
| 7. Mele has no younger sisters. | Aohe o Mele kaikaina. |

There are two possible English translations for the following Hawaiian sentence. What are they?

Aohe ou kaikuaana. _____

Translate the following sentence into English and indicate who is speaking, Mele or Keone:

Aohe ou kaikuahine. _____

The following English sentences would be difficult to translate directly into Hawaiian. Explain why this is true.

Keone has one brother.

Mele has one younger brother. _____

To view the solution
to this problem,
and to try out more puzzles,
visit [https://ailo.adaptcentre.ie/
samples/](https://ailo.adaptcentre.ie/samples/)



Have you got what it takes to represent Ireland at the International Linguistics Olympiad 2026?

Could you be Ireland's top young problem solver?

Enter the search for Ireland's top language decoder at <https://ailo.adaptcentre.ie/>

Win the opportunity to represent Ireland at the International Linguistics Olympiad!

The International Linguistics Olympiad 2026 will take place in Romania. There, the top 4 Irish problem-solvers will test their wits against talented language sleuths from around the world during a week packed with puzzles and social and cultural experiences. For details, see www.ioling.org

The All Ireland Linguistics Olympiad (AILO) is run by:

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Web: <https://ailo.adaptcentre.ie/>

"AILO provides an unparalleled training in scientific thinking. The puzzles have never failed to challenge and amuse me.

After taking part in and learning from AILO for many years, I was delighted to win a bronze medal as part of the Irish team at the 2021 International Linguistics Olympiad. "

**Oscar Despard, Bronze Medalist,
International Linguistics Olympiad 2021**

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**Problem-
Solving
Initiative**



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