



All Ireland Linguistics Olympiad
The Problem Solvers' Challenge

Preliminary Round

January 2026

2 Hours

Plus ½ hour for data entry if working online

QUESTION BOOK

Answer as many of the questions as you can.

Note that questions are worth different points totals.

Please write your answers in the answer books provided and then submit a copy of your answers into the online submission link

Questions

A.	Orkhon place names	Harold Somers	15 points
B.	Hausa	Harold Somers	15 points
C.	Kipsigis	P. M. Arkadyev	20 points
D.	Warlpiri	Harold Somers	20 points
E.	Yoruba	Haenaem Oh	30 points

HOST INSTITUTIONS



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



PARTNER INSTITUTIONS



Maynooth University
National University of Ireland Maynooth



Technological University of the Shannon
Atlantic Technological University



University College Dublin
An Coláiste Oilecole, Baile Átha Cliath
Ireland's Global University



OLLSCOIL NA GALWAY
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Question A: Orkhon place names

(15 points)

The Old Turkic script (also known variously as Göktürk script, Orkhon script, Turkic runes) was the writing system used from the 8th to 10th centuries CE to write the Old Turkic language, spoken around East Turkistan and Mongolia. The script is named after the Orkhon valley in Mongolia, where 8th-century inscriptions were discovered in an 1889 expedition, and deciphered by the Danish philologist Vilhelm Thomsen in 1893.

Given below are eleven place-names around the area where this script was used, in Orkhon and transliterated, though in a jumbled order.



A	ᠰᠤᠶ᠋ᠠᠨᠠᠭᠤᠨ	1	Ölgii
B	ᠲᠤᠯᠤᠪᠤ	2	Tolbo
C	ᠤᠯᠠᠭᠤᠨᠠᠶᠤᠨ	3	Ulaangom
D	ᠲᠡᠰᠡ	4	Tes
E	ᠴᠠᠷᠬᠠᠯᠠᠨᠲᠤ	5	Çarkhalant
F	ᠤᠷᠦᠮᠴᠢ	6	Ürümçi
G	ᠰᠢᠯᠢ	7	Sieli
H	ᠲᠣᠭᠮᠣᠭ	8	Tokmok
I	ᠰᠢᠮᠭᠡᠨᠲᠤ	9	Şimkent
J	ᠣᠷᠬᠤᠨ	10	Orkhon
K	ᠰᠠᠷᠳᠠᠷᠠ	11	Şardara

1. Match up the names A-K with their transliterated versions 1-11.
2. Provide a transliteration for the following names:

(a) ᠰᠤᠶ᠋ᠠᠨᠠᠭᠤᠨ (b) ᠴᠠᠷᠬᠠᠯᠠᠨᠲᠤ (c) ᠤᠯᠠᠭᠤᠨᠠᠶᠤᠨ

Note that ş and ç are consonants, pronounced respectively like ‘sh’ in ‘ship’ and ‘ch’ in ‘church’; ‘kh’ and ‘ng’ represent single consonant sounds; ü is a vowel pronounced like ‘ü’ in German, or ‘u’ in French, i.e. like the vowel in ‘eat’ but with rounded lips (IPA [y]). The language also has a vowel pronounced like ‘oo’ but with spread lips (IPA [ɯ]), though it does not feature here; ö is a vowel pronounced like ‘ö’ in German or ‘eu’ in French, (IPA [œ]) somewhat like the ‘er’ sound in English (but without the ‘r’, and with rounded lips). Other vowels and consonants are more or less as in English.

Pictured is the Erdene Zuu monastery, Mongolia, part of the Orkhon Valley Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site, photographed by Bernard Gagnon

Question B: Hausa

(15 points)

Below are five Hausa sentences and their English translations. Kande is a personal name.

Yarinyar tana sauraren kawunta. The girl listened to her uncle.

Kawun matashi yana jiran innarna. The young uncle waited for his aunt.

Kande tana kallon diyarsu. Kande gazed at their daughter.

Diyarku tana kallon danku dogon. Your daughter gazed at your tall son.

Tsohuwa tana jiran diyarta wayo. The old woman waited for her clever daughter.

1. Translate the following sentences into English.

- (a) **Kande tana jiran danta.**
- (b) **Diyarsu dogon tana kallon innarku.**
- (c) **Kawun wayo yana sauraren danna.**

2. Translate the following sentences into Hausa.

- (a) The tall girl waited for her aunt.
- (b) Your clever son gazed at his uncle.
- (c) The tall old woman listened to Kande.



Hausa is a member of the Afroasiatic language family and is the most widely spoken language within the Chadic branch of that family. It is spoken in west central Africa as a first language by some 58 million people and as a second language by another 36 million. It is a tone language, but tones are not normally shown in the orthography. It also has ejective and implosive consonants, but apart from *ts* (ejective *s*) none of them happen to appear in the data here.

Picture: www.101lasttribes.com

Question C: Kipsigis

(20 points)

There follow some sentences in the Kipsigis language (in an adapted orthography) and their translations into English:

koämwaa älä koit lagok

I said that the children had arrived.

koomwaaän olë koruuya tuga

You (sg) told me that the cows were sleeping.

koämwaači älä koiamišye

I told them that you (pl) ate.

komwaaun kölä koäruuya

They told you (pl) that I was sleeping.

kokimwaawoog kilë koë viig tuga

We told you (sg) that the cows drank the water.

**kokimwaači kilënji kokiöön
ndaarët**

We told them that we really drove away the snake.

koämwaaun äläñjin koit lagok

I told you (pl) that the children really came.

komwaaweeč köläñjeeč

They told us that you (sg) were really sleeping.

kooruuya

1. Translate into English:

(a) **koimwaa ilë koamišye lagok**

(b) **komwaaän kölënjän koië viig**

2. Translate into Kipsigis:

(a) They said that I drank the water.

(b) You (pl) told me that they really drove away the cows.

(c) I told you (sg) that the cows had really arrived.

The Kipsigis language belongs to the Nilotic language family and is spoken by approximately 2 million people in Kenya. The Kipsigis today live predominantly in their historical tribal territory on the Western Highlands of Kenya at an altitude of 1500m to 2000m.

Problem source 1st Moscow Traditional Olympiad in Linguistics, Round 2

Picture 101lasttribes.com



Question D: Warlpiri

(20 points)

Below are eight Warlpiri sentences and their English translations.

(a) **Kurdu ka wangkami.**

The child speaks.

(b) **Kurdungku ka maliki puraja.**

The child chased the dog.

(c) **Kirda ka wangkaja.**

The father spoke.

(d) **Karnta kulaka parnkaja.**

The woman didn't run.

(e) **Kirdangu kapi kurdu purami.**

The father will chase the child.

(f) **Ngaya ka wantimi.**

The cat falls.

(g) **Warnangu ka kurdu purraja.**

The snake bit the child.

1. Translate the following into English.

(a) **Maliki kapi parnkami.**

(b) **Karntangu kulaka kirda puraja.**

(c) **Kurdu ka wantija.**

2. Translate the following into Warlpiri.

(a) The dog didn't bite the snake.

(b) The woman chased the child.

(c) The dog bites.



Warlpiri is an Australian Aboriginal language spoken by close to 3,000 people from the Tanami Desert, northwest of Alice Springs, Central Australia.

Source: Based on question from Japanese Linguistics Olympiad 2023. Picture ioa.factsanddetails.com

Question E: Yoruba

(30 points)

Yoruba belongs to the Atlantic/Congo language family of Volta, Congolese, and Nigerien languages. It is spoken by approximately 40 million people in West Africa, including Nigeria, Benin, and Togo.

ṣ is a consonant. **a, e, ẹ, i, o, ọ, and u** are vowels.

An **n** following a vowel symbol indicates a nasal vowel.

In Yoruba, the pitch of a sound (tone) creates differences in meaning and is indicated by a diacritic symbol above the vowel. For example, **á** represents a high tone, **à** represents a low tone, and **a** (with no diacritic) represents a middle tone.

The following are some sentences in Yoruba and their English translations.

Articles ('the', 'a', etc.) and possessive pronouns ('my', 'his', etc.) are not explicitly expressed.



gòkè é ta iṣu àti ẹja lónìí.

Today, Goke sold yams and fish.

tolú ú fọ aṣọ dúdú u iyá.

Tolu washed his mother's black clothes.

ìwé é gòkè ni tolú wò lónìí.

It was Goke's book that Tolu saw today.

ẹja dídùn un gòkè ni bàbá rà.

It was Goke's delicious fish that his father bought.

kẹmì í mọ bàbá a olè.

Kemi knew the thief's father.

tolú ú wo ológbò o ore lánàá.

Tolu saw his friend's cat yesterday.

olè é ta ìwé e kẹmì.

The thief sold Kemi's book.

isu ni iyá a kẹmì fọ.

It was the yams that Kemi's mother washed.

Yam is a crop similar to a sweet potato. Goke, Kemi, and Tolu are personal (boys') names. Yoruba is normally written with capitalization as in English, but for ease of submitting solutions, this has been simplified.

1. Translate the following into English.

(a) **gòkè é ra iṣu dídùn lónìí.**

(b) **ológbò dúdú ni bàbá wò.**

(c) **bàbá àti iyá á ta ẹja lánàá.**

(d) **aṣọ ọ bàbá ni tolú fọ.**

2. Translate the following into Yoruba.

(a) Tolu sold his father's delicious yams yesterday.

(b) His mother's friend knew the thief.

(c) It was the cat's fish that father saw.

(d) It was mother's black book that the thief sold.

Source: Adapted from Korean National Olympiad 2025. Picture miro.medium.com