

# AILO 2019 Team question - solution

## Part 1.

**Task 1.1.** Match up the escutcheons A-L with their blazon descriptions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
F	D	K	I	L	J	A	G	B	E	H	C

**Task 1.2.** Write the blazon descriptions of these two escutcheons:

(a) Argent two chevrons Sable between three roses [two one] Gules  
 or: (a') Argent two chevrons Sable in chief two roses Gules in base a rose  
 Gules

(b) Gules a chevron Sable between two annulets Azure impaling Azure  
 three crosses crosslet Argent one one one  
 or: (b') Per pale Gules a chevron Sable between two annulets Azure (and)  
 Azure three crosses crosslet Argent one one one

**Task 1.3.** Draw the escutcheons described by the following blazons:



(c)



(d)

## Part 2.

**Task 2.1.** Match up the escutcheons M-X with their blazon descriptions 13-24. Unfortunately, two of them contain mistakes. What are they, and what should be written instead?

13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
U	W	O	Q	V	S	X	R	N	D	M	T

The mistakes:

In 16 (Q) the mullets (stars) are white (Argent) but are described as yellow (Or)

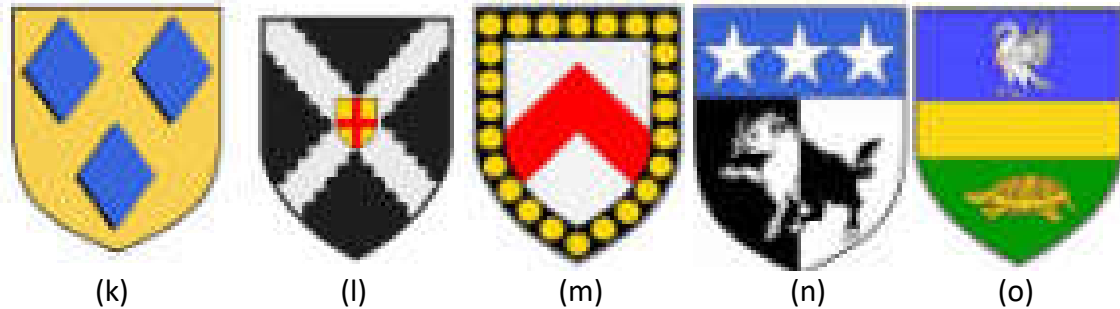
In 19 (X) the descriptions of the quarters 1st & 4th and 2nd & 3rd are transposed

**Task 2.2.** Write the blazon descriptions of these six escutcheons:

- (e) Argent a cross Gules with five frets Or one three one
- (f) Or a fess chequy Argent and Azure overall a bend Azure
- (g) Quarterly 1st & 4th Or a chief indented Azure 2nd & 3rd Gules three goblets Or two one
- (h) Ermine per fess Gules three wolf's heads Azure two one
- (i) Per pale Azure and Or overall a castle counterchanged in chief undy Or and Azure a greyhound courant counterchanged [Longford]
- (j) Per chevron Gules two garbs Or in chief a rose Argent and Or a dexter hand erect aupaumee and couped at the wrist Gules [Derry]

**Task 2.3.** Draw the escutcheons described by the following blazons:

Answers:



### Task 3 (the most important one)

Explain the rules of the language of blazon. Include a glossary of the terms used. Extra credit will be given for a good organization of this information, e.g. listing all the colours together.

Begin with the background, as follows:

(just name the colour) for a plain background, otherwise it might be divided ...

*Per pale* (in vertical halves) – this can also be described by *impaling* between the two descriptions; describe the left-hand side (from viewer's viewpoint – see below) first

*Per fess* (horizontal halves); describe the top one first

*Per fess tierced* (three horizontal sections); describe the middle one first then use *between* to introduce the *in chief* and *in base* descriptions, unless they can be combined

*Quarterly* (four quarters); number the quarters starting top left, left-to-right, ending bottom right.

*Per chevron* - an inverted V shape; describe the top part first  
*Per bend* - with a diagonal left-to-right; describe the top right first  
*Per bend sinister* – with a diagonal right-to-left; describe the top left first  
*Per saltire* – an X

All of the above can also describe a feature dividing the shield, and will be mentioned next followed by its own description (without the *per*, which is short for *party per* meaning 'divided by')

These features can be *embattled* (with square teeth), *indented* (sawtooth) or *undy* (wavy)

Anything across the top or bottom respectively is *in chief* or *in base*, with right and left *sinister* and *dexter* respectively. For those who know Latin, it should be understood that right and left is from the bearer's, not viewer's perspective, hence *sinister* ('left') is the viewer's right. There is also a *canton*, a square in the top left.

Something appearing in the middle is described as *overall*

And finally if there is a border add *a bordure* followed by its description at the end.

The arrangement of multiple objects is given row by row from the top if it is not obvious. For example three objects in the bottom section of a *chevron* would be expected to be arranged *one two*, so it would not be necessary to mention this. Objects in a border would be evenly spaced.

Colours are: *Gules* (red), *Or* (yellow), *Azure* (blue), *Vert* (green), *Sable* (black), *Argent* (white) and are written with an initial capital. There is also *Ermine*. *Proper* describes an object in its natural colours (eg the stag in R). Colours and other descriptions always follow the thing being described.

Patterns include *chequy* (chequered), *barry* (striped), *dancetty* (like a backgammon board) and *counterchanged* when an object features over a split background, it takes the opposing colours to the background.

Objects, some of which can be filled (*charged*), are as follows:

A *cross*, which can be *crosslet* (as in E) or *crosslet fitchy* (as in V). A *fret* is a kind of knotted device (as in U)

Others seen here are a *goutte* (droplet), *roundel* (a solid circle), *annulet* (a ring or open circle), *lozenge* (diamond), *escutcheon* (shield), *ermine spot*, *mullet* (a five-pointed star).

We see some natural objects such as a *rose*, a *castle*, a *harp*, a *boat*, a *crown*, a *garb* (wheatsheaf), an *escallop* (shell) and so on, which can be more or less specific (eg a *Celtic harp*), or further described (eg *a dexter hand erect aupaumee and couped at the wrist* – ie a right hand facing upwards, palm forward cut off at the wrist), ...

and finally animals which can be *rampant* (stood on hindlegs in a boxing pose), *statant* (standing), *passant* (walking), *couchant* (lying) or *courant* (running) – you had to guess those last two).

A notable feature is the lack of punctuation.

That exhausts pretty much everything you saw here, though it only scratches the surface of what is possible in blazon!

In case the French connection interests you, here are the modern French words corresponding to the Blazon terms seen here:

Blazon – *blazon* (OFr) ‘shield’ – from which we get our word ‘blazer’, a jacket with a badge on it

Pale – *pieu* (stake) as in pailing (what a wooden fence is made of, also as in ‘impaled’)

Fess – *fesse* (band) though beware, in modern French *fesse* means ‘buttock’)

Tierced – *tiercé*

Chief/Base – *chef* ‘chief, head’ / *bas*

Bend – *bande*

Sinister – *sinistre* (OFr) ‘left’

Saltire – *sautoir* (OFr) ‘stirrup’

Party per – *partie par*

Undy – *ondé* ‘wavy’

Canton – (OFr) ‘corner’

Bordure – *bordure*

Gules – *geules* ‘throats’, also the word for a kind of cravat, usually fur dyed red

Or – ‘gold’

Azure – an OFr word referring to a blue dye, from Persian *lāzward* ‘lapis lazuli’, a blue gemstone

Vert – ‘green’

Sable – from the colour of the fur of the animal of that name, a kind of weasel

Argent – ‘silver’

Barry – *barré*

Dancetty – *denté* ‘toothed’

Charged – *chargé* ‘filled’

Fitchy – *fiché* ‘attached’

Fret – *frette* ‘collar’

Goutte – ‘drop’

Roundel – *rondelle* ‘washer’ (as in nuts and bolts)

Mullet – *molette*, part of a spur

Garb – *gerbe* ‘wheatsheaf’

Escallop – OFr ‘mollusc’

Couped – *coupé* ‘cut’

Rampant – OFr ‘crawling’

Passant – ‘walking past’

Couchant – ‘lying’

Courant – ‘running’