Question 25: What’s the time in Tallinn Solution

D1.
(a) Twenty-five past nine
(b) Quarter past three
(c) Half past two
(d) Quarter to twelve
(e) Twenty-five to seven

D2.
(a) Kolmveerand üheksa
(b) Veerand viis
(c) Pool kaksteist
(d) Viis minutit seitse läbi
(e) Pool üks

Comments
This was a problem that required you to work methodically and think logically, and above all not make too many assumptions. Here is one way to arrive at the solutions:
The first two clocks tell you that Kell on probably means ‘o’clock’ (actually it just means ‘It is’ but that does not affect the solution) and that üks is 1 and kaks is 2. The third and fifth clocks give you ‘quarter to/past’ as veerand and kolmveerand. Notice that 1:15 involves the word for 2 … a clue to further solutions. ‘Half past’ is pool, but given that 1:15 is veerand 2, we can’t yet be sure what number neli represents. The final clock face suggests that viis is 5 and that ‘minutes past X’ is minutit X läbi.

Now let’s look at the problems. 1a is a ‘minutes past’ problem, so we have to figure out what kakskümmend and üheksa are. Neither of these words has been already seen, but kaks is 2 and kümme is 10, so 2x10=20 is a reasonable guess. What about üheksa? This does require a bit of ingenuity: look at the word for 8, kaheksa. It’s a bit like üheksa, and it’s also a bit like kaks (2). If we present it as follows, maybe you can see where the answer comes from: kaks (2) is to ka-heksa (8) as WHAT is to ü-heksa? Answer üks (1) so if -heksa means ‘away from 10’ then üheksa is 10-1=9.

1b is ‘quarter past’ something … we’re still not sure what neli is. And 1c is ‘half past’ something, depending on what kolm is. We’ve seen kolm in kolmveerand, which may be related to veerand. Yes, it turns out that veerand means ‘quarter’, and kolmveerand is ‘three quarters’, so kolm is 3. So is pool kolm 3:30? No, we’ve seen that 3:30 is pool neli. The answer is that in Estonian, the :15, :30 and :45 times are all expressed as fractions to the next hour. So veerand kaks is ‘quarter of the way to 2′, kolmveerand üksteist ‘¾ to 11′, and pool neli is ‘half to 4′. Neli is 4! 1c is ‘half to 3’ i.e. ‘half past two’. By the way, notice that the question asks you to write your answers in words!

1d should be easy now. Kolmveerand is ‘quarter to’. We don’t know what kaksteist is, but we’ve seen üks (1), üksteist (11) and kaks (2), so it’s not hard to guess that kaksteist is 12. And we now have all the information we need for the rest of the problems, though we should mention that for 1e, some people wrote ‘thirty five minutes past six’ which I have never heard anyone say, even in this digital age!