



## Welsh

-Anand Natarajan

Below are given some sentences in the Welsh language<sup>1</sup> along with their translations in English. Using these sentences, complete the assignments below. Remember to show your work.

- |                                    |                                  |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Mae e'n siarad Cymraeg.         | <i>He speaks Welsh.</i>          |
| 2. Oes cyfrifiadur gyda ti?        | <i>Do you have a computer?</i>   |
| 3. Mae hi wedi clywed yr araith.   | <i>She has heard the speech.</i> |
| 4. Dw i'n dysgu Sbaeneg            | <i>I am learning Spanish.</i>    |
| 5. Mae car newydd gyda hi.         | <i>She has a new car.</i>        |
| 6. Wyt ti wedi clywed y newyddion? | <i>Have you heard the news?</i>  |
| 7. Mae Owain ar siarad.            | <i>Owain is about to speak.</i>  |
| 8. Wyt ti'n astudio ffiseg.        | <i>You are studying physics.</i> |
| 9. Yw e'n bywta caws?              | <i>Is he eating cheese?</i>      |
| 10. Dw i heb siarad.               | <i>I haven't spoken.</i>         |

**Assignment 1:** Translate the following sentences into Welsh:

1. Are you learning Welsh?
2. He has not studied Spanish.
3. She is listening to the news.

**Assignment 2:** How are verb tenses expressed in Welsh?

**Assignment 3 (Extra credit):** What do you think the word “gyda” might mean?

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<sup>1</sup> The Welsh language is a member of the Celtic branch of the Indo-European family. It is spoken by about 744,000 people in the United Kingdom and 25,000 in Argentina.



## Welsh (solutions)

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**Assignment 1:** Translate the following sentences into Welsh:

- Are you learning Welsh?
  - Wyt ti'n dysgu Cymraeg?*
- He has not studied Spanish.
  - Mae e heb astudio Sbaeneg.*
- She is listening to the news.
  - Mae hi'n clywed y newyddion.*

**Assignment 2:** How are verb tenses expressed in Welsh?

In the given sentences, verb tenses are expressed not through endings on the verbs but through words called “tense markers” placed before the verb. Each of the given Welsh sentences has the following word order: *Auxiliary Pronoun Tense Verb Object*. The auxiliary verb and pronoun express the person and gender of the subject. The forms are:

*Dw i* – 1<sup>st</sup> person singular

*Wyt ti* – 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular

*Mae e* – 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular masculine

*Mae hi* – 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular feminine

The auxiliary also has a special form in the third person for questions – *yw*.

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# World Language Club

The tense markers are *n* – present progressive (“I am doing”), *wedi* – perfect tense (“I have done”), *ar* – future tense (“I am about to do”), *heb* – negation of *wedi* (“I have not done”)

**Assignment 3 (Extra credit):** What do you think the word “gyda” might mean?

The word *gyda* literally means “with.” Thus, the sentence *Mae car newydd gyda hi* literally means “There exists a new car with her.” In this case, the auxiliary verb *mae* literally means “it exists.” In this meaning, it has a special form used in questions – *oes*. This type of construction to express “have” is fairly common among the world’s languages.

## Tamil spelling

The Tamil script is used for writing Tamil, a language native to South India which has a written tradition dating back at least 2,000 years. Tamil is spoken by about 60 million speakers worldwide. The script derives from the ancient Indian script Brahmi (as do most modern Indian scripts). The modern script has changed in relatively minor ways during the last thousand years. The early Tamil script was exported and then modified to create Burmese and other scripts still used in South-East Asia.

**Important hint:** Like English, Tamil spelling represents some sounds using combinations of letters in certain positions. For example, English often represents the single "long I" sound using the letter "i" in the middle of the word/syllable and the letter "e" at the end of the word/syllable, as in the word "bite". The letter "e" is not actually pronounced, but indicates that the letter "i" is pronounced differently from the "i" in "bit." Unlike English, Tamil spelling is completely consistent.

The symbols "᳚" and "᳛" represent sounds for which there is no English or Latin letter. Knowing the actual pronunciation of these letters is not necessary for solving the puzzle.

*Read the following words:*

|         |         |                          |        |         |           |
|---------|---------|--------------------------|--------|---------|-----------|
| விதம்   | vitam   | "destruction<br>of evil" | பற     | para    | "to fly"  |
| பொங்கல் | ponkal  | "boiled rice"            | வந்தது | vantatu | "it came" |
| காற்று  | kaarru  | "wind"                   | அவன்   | avan    | "he"      |
| அப்போது | appootu | "then"                   | பேய்   | peey    | "demon"   |

*Now that you can read Tamil, write the following words in the Tamil script:*

vaayillaa "dumb, mute"

konreen "I killed"

Puzzle by Eric Pederson, UofO Linguistics

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*Now that you can read Tamil, write the following words in the Tamil script:*

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| வாயில்லா | vaayillaa | "dumb, mute" |
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# Maasai

by Doris L. Payne

Maasai is a language spoken by about 800,000 people in East Africa, mostly in Kenya and Tanzania.

As with many languages in East Africa, "tone" is very important in Maasai. The different tones are written as marks above some letters. For example, the letters á, í and ó are all pronounced with high tone. The letters à, ì and ò are all pronounced with low tone. If there is no mark over a letter, it is pronounced with "mid tone," half way in between high and low.

There are also some letters in the Maasai alphabet that are not used in English. For example, "ɔ" is a sound like the English word "awe." "ɛ" is similar to the vowel sound in "let," "ɔ" is like the vowel sound in "hood" and "ɪ" is like the vowel sound in "lit." You don't need to be able to pronounce these words in order to solve the problem, however, you should pay very close attention to the letters and the tone marks.

The following are some sentences in Maasai, and the English translations in random order. Indicate which translation goes with each Maasai sentence by placing the letter of the correct translation in the space provided:

- |                                    | <b>English translations in <i>random order</i></b> |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. éósh ɔlmɔraní ɔlásuráì _____    |  |
| 2. áadól ɔlásurái _____            | A. 'The warrior cuts me.'                          |
| 3. áaósh ɔlmɔraní _____            | B. 'The warrior cuts the tree for me.'             |
| 4. ídól ɔlmɔránì _____             | C. 'The warrior cuts it.'                          |
| 5. íóshokí ɔlmɔránì ɔlásuráì _____ | D. 'I cut the tree for the warrior.'               |
| 6. ádúŋokí ɔlmɔránì ɔlcetá _____   | E. 'The warrior hits me.'                          |
| 7. ádúŋ ɔlcetá _____               | F. 'You see the warrior.'                          |
| 8. áaduŋokí ɔlmɔraní ɔlcetá _____  | G. 'The warrior hits the snake.'                   |
| 9. áadúŋ ɔlmɔraní _____            | H. 'The snake sees me.'                            |
| 10. édúŋ ɔlmɔraní _____            | I. You hit the snake for the warrior.'             |
|                                    | J. 'I cut the tree.'                               |

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|------------------------------|-------|--|
| 1. éósh ɔlmurání ɔlásurái    | _G___ | <b>English translations in <i>random order</i></b> |
| 2. áadól ɔlásurái            | _H___ | A. 'The warrior cuts me.'                          |
| 3. áaósh ɔlmurání            | _E___ | B. 'The warrior cuts the tree for me.'             |
| 4. ídól ɔlmurání             | _F___ | C. 'The warrior cuts it.'                          |
| 5. íóshokí ɔlmurání ɔlásurái | _I___ | D. 'I cut the tree for the warrior.'               |
| 6. ádúŋokí ɔlmurání ɔlcetá   | _D___ | E. 'The warrior hits me.'                          |
| 7. ádúŋ ɔlcetá               | _J___ | F. 'You see the warrior.'                          |
| 8. áaduŋokí ɔlmurání ɔlcetá  | _B___ | G. 'The warrior hits the snake.'                   |
| 9. áadúŋ ɔlmurání            | _A___ | H. 'The snake sees me.'                            |
| 10. édúŋ ɔlmurání            | _C___ | I. 'You hit the snake for the warrior.'            |
|                              |       | J. 'I cut the tree.'                               |