

The UK Linguistics Olympiad 2019

Round 1



Solution and marking.

Scoring (max 17)

- Q.1: 2 points per correct English sentence, 1 with one error. (max 8)
- Q.2: 2 per correct sentence, 1 with one error. (max 8)
 - Wrong word order is an error.
- Q.3: This is a bad question, so just 1 for a reasonable attempt. (max 1)
 - Accept either the sentence's number or the whole sentence.
 - Insist on an explanation, not just a sentence.
 - Accept any explanation for ambiguity, including:
 - Uncertainty about person: u- can mean either 'you' or 'he/she' (or second or third person).
 - Uncertainty about aspect: any present verb can translate as either present simple or present progressive.

Q.1.	a) Yes, they want to see.	b) How does the boy learn to sew? (accept <i>How is the boy learning to sew?</i>)
	c) Where are we?	d) I am cooking (the) tea. (accept <i>I cook (the) tea.</i>)
Q.2.	a) Unjani umntwana?	b) Sifunda ukupheka angithi?
	c) Yebo, bayakhuluma.	d) Bafuna ukubona ubaba na?
Q.3.	Any sentence + an explanation as explained above.	

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Commentary

Ndebele verbs have prefixes to mark the subject:

- ngi-** - 1st person singular
- u-** - 2nd person singular *or* 3rd person singular
- si-** - 1st person plural
- ba-** - 3rd person plural

There is also the prefix **uku-**, marking the infinitive, and the infix **-ya-**, which marks a verb with no “following” word, either an object or an adverb. It is still used when the verb is followed by the question particles **na** or **angithi** (marking a “tag” question).

The question-word adverbs **njani** and **ngaphi** can also act as verbs (“Where is she?” = “She wheres?”), in which case they take the subject prefixes above.

The Ndebele nouns given here are marked by the prefix **um-** in the singular and **aba-** in the plural.

Source: <http://northernndebele.blogspot.com/p/lessons.html>