



United Kingdom Linguistics Olympiad 2026

Round 1 Paper - Intermediate Level

Welcome to UKLO, the examination of wondrous languages. Every year we give out a new challenge to students to test their language and problem-solving skills. Can you figure out how these languages work?

There are four problems in the Intermediate competition:

- Q4: **Finnish** – *Masha Konoshenko*
- Q5: **Romanian** – *Vlad A. Neacșu*
- Q6: **Thaana** – *Michael Salter*
- Q7: **Warembori** – *Babette Verhoeven*

Instructions:

Please make sure you have the following materials:

- 1x Cover Sheet (this sheet); 1x Examination Paper (Questions 4 – 7);
- 1x Answer Sheet (2 pages);
- 2-3 blank sheets for rough working.

Once the examination is over, **return all sheets to your teacher**, including any sheets with your answers on. You are not permitted to remove any materials from your classroom.

Please **write your full name** on the top of every page of the Answer Sheet. If you make a mistake, put a line through your whole answer (e.g. ~~wrong answer~~).

If you need more blank paper for working, it must be provided. If you need to write some of your answers on blank paper instead of the provided Answer Sheet, indicate this **clearly** on the Answer Sheet and on the sheet with your answers on.

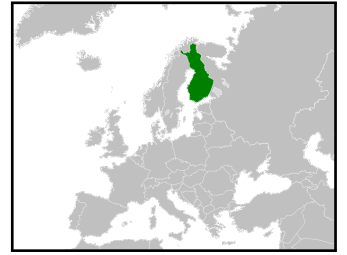
We hope you enjoy exploring the fascinating world of language. Remember that if you don't immediately see a way into a problem, it's because you're looking in the wrong place. Keep looking at it from different angles, and you'll get there.

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Problem 4. Finnish (10 marks)

Finnish is the majority language of Finland, and the native language of around 5 million people around the world. It is a Uralic language, meaning that it is related to languages like Hungarian and Estonian, but not to English or most other European languages.

Here are some sentences in spoken Finnish and their English translations:



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| 1. Sä otit kupin. | <i>You took the cup.</i> |
| 2. Mä söin salaatin. | <i>I ate the salad.</i> |
| 3. Me ostettiin viulu. | <i>We bought the violin.</i> |
| 4. Sä joit kahvin. | <i>You drank the coffee.</i> |
| 5. Me myytiin lamppu. | <i>We sold the lamp.</i> |
| 6. Mä ostin sellon. | <i>I bought the cello.</i> |
| 7. Sä söit tomaatin. | <i>You ate the tomato.</i> |
| 8. Mä maksoin pianon. | <i>I paid for the piano.</i> |
| 9. Mä toin huilun. | <i>I brought the flute.</i> |
| 10. Me syötiin salaatti. | <i>We ate the salad.</i> |
| 11. Sä myit talon. | <i>You sold the house.</i> |
| 12. Me saatiin kuppi. | <i>We got the cup.</i> |
| 13. Sä otit kuitin. | <i>You took the receipt.</i> |
| 14. Me paistettiin liha. | <i>We fried the meat.</i> |
| 15. Sä maksoit kakun. | <i>You paid for the cake.</i> |
| 16. Mä paistoin kalan ja kanan. | <i>I fried the fish and the chicken.</i> |

Q 4.1 Translate into English:

17. **Me otettiin kakku.**
18. **Sä sait viulun.**
19. **Mä myin pianon.**
20. **Me tuotiin kala ja kuitti.**

Q 4.2 Translate into Finnish:

21. *You brought the lamp.*
22. *We drank the coffee.*
23. *I took the meat.*
24. *We paid for the cake and the tomato.*

Problem 5. Romanian (15 marks)

Romanian is the official and main language of Romania and Moldova. Romanian is part of the Eastern Romance sub-branch of Romance languages. It is also spoken as a minority language by stable communities in the countries surrounding Romania (Bulgaria, Hungary, Serbia, and Ukraine), and by the large Romanian diaspora. In total, it is spoken by 25 million people as a first language.

Here are some phrases in Romanian and their English translations. **ă** = *ea* in *pearl*, **â** ≈ *u* in *but*, **ș** = *sh* in *shop*, **ț** = *ts* in *cats*. The letter **i** in the end of words is not a full vowel, but it marks the palatalisation of the previous sound.



albină	<i>bee</i>
un an	<i>1 year</i>
o pâine	<i>1 loaf of bread</i>
un actor	<i>1 actor</i>
o capră	<i>1 goat</i>
două nopți	<i>2 nights</i>
zece ani	<i>10 years</i>
o mie patruzeci de lupi	<i>1040 wolves</i>
o mie două sute nouăsprezece gândaci	<i>1219 cockroaches</i>
două sute una plăceri	<i>201 pleasures</i>
două mii optzeci și una de case	<i>2081 houses</i>
douăzeci și trei de pâini	<i>23 loaves of bread</i>
două mii patru sute șase ore	<i>2406 hours</i>
treizeci și unu de ani	<i>31 years</i>
trei sute optzeci și doi de lupi	<i>382 wolves</i>
patru mii trei case	<i>4003 houses</i>
patru sute cincizeci și una de capre	<i>451 goats</i>
patru mii șapte sute nouăzeci și unu de englezi	<i>4791 Englishmen</i>
cinci sute doisprezece actori	<i>512 actors</i>
cinci sute douăzeci de capre	<i>520 goats</i>
șase mii cincizeci și cinci de salate	<i>6055 salads</i>
șase sute cincizeci și patru de minuni	<i>654 wonders</i>
șaptezeci și două de pâini	<i>72 loaves of bread</i>
opt mii trei sute cincisprezece albine	<i>8315 bees</i>
nouăzeci și doi de gândaci	<i>92 cockroaches</i>
nouă mii șase sute treizeci și două de albine	<i>9632 bees</i>
nouă sute șaptezeci de actori	<i>970 actors</i>

[This problem continues on the next page.]

Q 5.1 Translate into English:

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| 1. șase capre | 3. șapte sute de actori |
| 2. treizeci și opt de salate | 4. șase mii una minuni |

Q 5.2 Translate into Romanian:

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| 5. <i>1 house</i> | 8. <i>218 hours</i> |
| 6. <i>17 years</i> | 9. <i>3601 bees</i> |
| 7. <i>152 Englishmen</i> | 10. <i>5127 salads</i> |

Q 5.3 Here are two more plural nouns in Romanian. For each of them, write the singular form. If you think multiple options are possible, provide them all.

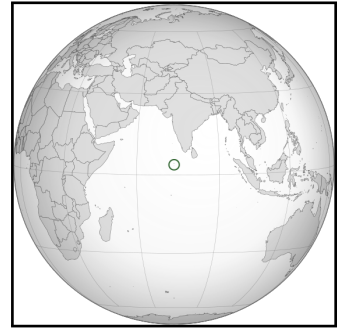
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| 11. pilote (<i>duvets</i>) | 12. pitici (<i>dwarfs</i>) |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|

Q 5.4 The Romanian title of the famous *One Thousand and One Nights* is **O mie și una de nopți**. However, this title is not grammatically correct. What would the correct form be?

Problem 6. Thaana (15 marks)

Dhivehi, the official language of the Maldives (an island nation in the Indian Ocean, circled in the map), has been written with its own writing systems for over 2000 years. Today, it is written using the Thaana script. The Thaana script has very unusual origins – the first 9 letters are derived from the Arabic numerals, and the next 9 are derived from the Brahmic numerals!

Below are twelve words in Dhivehi written in Thaana, with by their equivalents in the Latin alphabet given in random order. Their English translations are also given, but are not relevant to the problem. Note that the symbol $\bar{\text{~}}$ over a vowel indicates a long vowel; **!** and **§** are specific Dhivehi consonants.



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| 1. اَ شَرْدُ شَر | a. abaduves (<i>always</i>) |
| 2. اَ شَرْدُ شَر | b. assērifaṣ (<i>coast</i>) |
| 3. اَ شَرْدُ شَر | c. buḷā (<i>cat</i>) |
| 4. اَ شَرْدُ شَر | d. enmen (<i>everyone</i>) |
| 5. اَ شَرْدُ شَر | e. fenverun (<i>shower</i>) |
| 6. اَ شَرْدُ شَر | f. haqqu (<i>right</i>) |
| 7. اَ شَرْدُ شَر | g. irugeali (<i>sunshine</i>) |
| 8. اَ شَرْدُ شَر | h. menduru (<i>afternoon</i>) |
| 9. اَ شَرْدُ شَر | i. namādeve (<i>prayer</i>) |
| 10. اَ شَرْدُ شَر | j. salāmdinun (<i>greet</i>) |
| 11. اَ شَرْدُ شَر | k. vārē (<i>rain</i>) |
| 12. اَ شَرْدُ شَر | l. vikkanī (<i>for sale</i>) |

Q 6.1 Determine the correct correspondences.

Q 6.2 Write the following words in the Dhivehi script:

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| 13. māddā (<i>substance</i>) | 15. kemikal (<i>chemical</i>) |
| 14. haḷēllevun (<i>shout</i>) | 16. ufāveri (<i>merry</i>) |

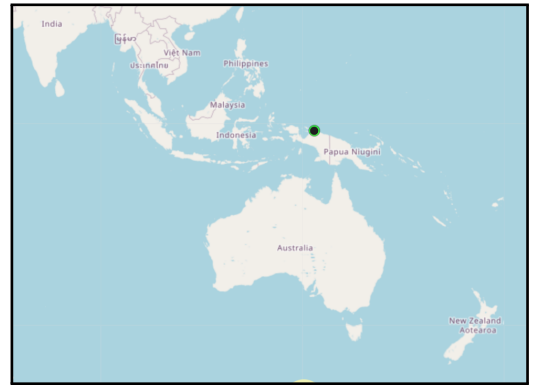
Q 6.3 The word اَ شَرْدُ شَر , meaning *to/for them*, is not written in the way Dhivehi script would be expected to write this word.

- How would this word be written using the Latin alphabet?
- How would you expect this word to be written in the Dhivehi script, based on the words above?

Problem 7. Warembori (20 marks)

Warembori is a language threatened with extinction, as it is only spoken by about 600 people. Most Warembori speakers are older adults living in three villages on the north-west coast of the island of New Guinea (indicated on the map).

Below are some sentences in Warembori, with their English translations given in a random order. Note that a *cassowary* is a large flightless bird, a little smaller than an ostrich. When feeling threatened they are known to attack humans and dogs. In this problem, *bow* always refers to the noun (as in *bow and arrows*).



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|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Butun. | a. <i>It is the two snakes.</i> |
| 2. Emena tire suando. | b. <i>This mother saw your dog.</i> |
| 3. Mando. | c. <i>The dog fell.</i> |
| 4. Ondave nata ekuero. | d. <i>Bow.</i> |
| 5. Naini tire amenaro. | e. <i>A mother heard a dog.</i> |
| 6. Naitiyave bayane menayave. | f. <i>This cassowary bit my dog.</i> |
| 7. Kuekaindu tu suandave. | g. <i>It is a man.</i> |
| 8. Onkaindu. | h. <i>Elder sister searches for a bow.</i> |
| 9. Nairo nata menaro. | i. <i>My dog saw a cassowary.</i> |
| 10. Totairo bayane butundo. | j. <i>The mothers search for the dogs.</i> |
| 11. Suani pa'me emenaro. | k. <i>The two chickens and the cassowary.</i> |
| 12. Menadave dapen. | l. <i>The snake heard my chicken.</i> |

Q 7.1 Determine the correct correspondences.

Here are two new Warembori words: **keva** = eye and **bin** = woman.

Q 7.2 Translate into Warembori:

13. *The chicken bit the two women.*
14. *This eye.*
15. *It is an eye.*
16. *Your elder sister saw my bow.*

Q 7.3 Write a short sentence to explain why a Warembori speaker might be surprised when you say **enaikaindu**.