

Linguistics Olympiad: Try this!

Swahili is the mother tongue of about 5 million people, and is the common language of trade and political communication along the east coast of Africa. Here are six dates in Swahili. Match them with their English translations, given in random order on the right.

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|---|---------------------------------------|
| ___ <i>tarehe tatu Disemba jumamosi</i> | a. Monday, October 5 th |
| ___ <i>tarehe pili Aprili jumanne</i> | b. Wednesday, October 5 th |
| ___ <i>tarehe nne Aprili jumanne</i> | c. Sunday, October 5 th |
| ___ <i>tarehe tano Oktoba jumapili</i> | d. Tuesday, April 2 nd |
| ___ <i>tarehe tano Oktoba Jumatatu</i> | e. Tuesday, April 4 th |
| ___ <i>tarehe tano Oktoba Jumatano</i> | f. Saturday, December 3 rd |







There are 3,344,720 speakers of **Tajik** in Tajikistan (one of the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union) and another million speakers in surrounding countries.

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|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| дуусти хуби ҳамсоай сумо | a good friend of your neighbor |
| ҳамсоай дуусти хуби сумо | a neighbor of your good friend |
| ҳамсоай хуби дуусти сумо | a good neighbor of your friend |

Above are three phrases in Tajik with their English translations. Your task is to give the English translations of all four Tajik words. The possibilities are simply "good," "friend," "neighbor," and "your." The order of the words – which is not the same order as in English! – does the rest.

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|---------|--|
| дуусти | |
| ҳамсоай | |
| хуби | |
| сумо | |

The following are inscriptions in hieroglyphic **Luvian**, an ancient Anatolian language related to (and once thought to be) Hittite. These writings were totally incomprehensible until one scholar discovered the key: many of the words were names of regions, cities, and kings.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1.  | 4.  |
| 2.  | 5.  |
| 3.  | 6.  |

Above are six inscriptions that correspond to the names of two regions (*Khamatu, Palaa*), two cities (*Kurkuma, Tuvarnava*), and two kings (*Varpalava, Tarkumuva*). Your job is to match each inscription with the name that it represents. The process you use to solve this puzzle is very similar to what archeological linguists actually do when they discover writings and inscriptions in unknown languages.

Curious? Solutions and more information at mcgill.ca/linguistics/events/olympiad
Training Session with Free Pizza at McGill: January 19
Olympiad Contest: Feb 2 (Registration Deadline: Feb 1)