**Sample Puzzles from NACLO**

www.naclo.cs.cmu.edu

---

**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Swahili Date</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__ tarehe tatu Disemba jumamosi</td>
<td>a. Monday, October 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__ tarehe pili Aprili jumanne</td>
<td>b. Wednesday, October 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__ tarehe nne Aprili jumanne</td>
<td>c. Sunday, October 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__ tarehe tano Oktoba jumapili</td>
<td>d. Tuesday, April 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__ tarehe tano Oktoba jumatatu</td>
<td>e. Tuesday, April 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__ tarehe tano Oktoba jumatano</td>
<td>f. Saturday, December 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Tajik is spoken by approximately 3,344,720 people in Tajikistan (one of the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union) and another million speakers in surrounding countries.

---

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.

---

**дүүсті хуби хамсоой сумо** a good friend of your neighbor

**хамсоой дүүсті хуби сумо** a neighbor of your good friend

**хамсоой хуби дүүсті 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.

---

The following are 17 arithmetic equations in **Indonesian**. Knowing that satu means “one”, can you work out the rest? Beware: one of the statements contains an intentional error!

- Satu ditambah satu menjadi dua.
- Dua ditambah dua menjadi empat.
- Satu ditambah dua menjadi tiga.
- Dua dikalikan tiga menjadi tiga.
- Dua dikalikan dua menjadi empat.
- Enam dikurangi tiga menjadi tiga.
- Sepuluh dikurangi enam menjadi empat.
- Dua dikalikan tiga menjadi lima.
- Sepuluh dibagi dua menjadi lima.
- Tiga dikalikan enam menjadi delapan belas.
- Delapan belas dikurangi satu menjadi tujuh belas.
- Tiga ditambah empat menjadi ________.
- Tiga dikalikan tiga menjadi sembilan.
- Sepuluh ditambah sembilan menjadi ________.
- Dua puluh dibagi dua menjadi ________.
- Tiga puluh dibagi lima menjadi enam.
- Tujuh puluh dibagi dua menjadi ________.
- Enam belas dibagi dua puluh empat menjadi dua per tiga.

Now write out these numbers (and one fraction) in Indonesian:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Indonesian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¾</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rewrite the incorrect statement so that it’s correct:

---

**Problem by Adriana Solovyova.**

---

**English versions Copyright © 1998-2008, Department of Linguistics, University of Oregon**
**Yaqui** is an American Indian language currently spoken by about 16,400 people in Northern Mexico and southern Arizona.

The following are eight emphatic sentences in the Yaqui language. Your task is to match the correct English translations, given below in random order, to each Yaqui sentence.

- _Inepo siika._
- _Empo nee aniak._
- _Inepo apo’ik aniak._
- _Inepo apo’ik vichak._
- _Inepo enchi vichak._
- _Inepo enchi aniak._
- _Empo ye’ek._
- _Aapo enchi vichak._

a. You helped me.
b. You danced.
c. I saw you.
d. I saw him.
e. I helped you.
f. I helped him.
g. He saw you.
h. I left.

Problem by Tom Payne.

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.


**Hawaiian** is a Polynesian language, spoken fluently by about 2000 people. The following Hawaiian sentences, with their English translations, are about a girl named Mele and a boy named Keone:

- Ehiku ona kaikuaana.
- Ekahi o Mele kaikunane.
- Ekahi o Keone kaikaina.
- Aohe o Mele kaikuahine.
- Aohe o Keone kaikuahine.
- Aohe o Mele kaikaina.
- Aohe o Mele waa.

He has seven elder brothers.
Mele has one brother.
Keone has one younger brother.
Mele has no elder sisters.
Keone has no sisters.
I have one canoe.
Mele has no younger sisters.

1. There are two possible English translations for the following Hawaiian sentence: “Aohe ou kaikuahine.” What are they?

2. Translate the following sentence into English and indicate who is speaking, Mele or Keone: “Aohe ou kaikuahine.”

3. The English sentences “Keone has one brother” and “Mele has one younger brother” would be difficult to translate directly into Hawaiian. Explain why this is true.

Original Problem by V. Belikov. English adaptation by Valentin Vydrin and Thomas Payne

---

**English versions Copyright © 1998-2008, Department of Linguistics, University of Oregon**