

மேரிலாண்ட் தமிழ்க் கல்விக்கழகம்
தமிழ்க் கலை மற்றும் இலக்கியப் போட்டிகளின் விதிகள்
(2026)

Maryland Tamil Academy-Tamil Arts and Literary Competitions Rules (2026)

The last day to register for the event is Saturday, Jan 31st, 2026.

- Preliminary rounds may be held for some competitions.
- Topics are grouped based on the class level and age for convenience.
- Evaluation will be done at each age/class level and not across the group mentioned.

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General rules

1. Few competitions may have preliminary rounds conducted before the final event. The date and time of preliminary events will be published ahead of time. The participants selected in the preliminary round only will be allowed to attend the final round.
2. This event is for the students, so we request parents to let the student do their best for the performance during the event. Please do not prompt or help your kids while they are performing during the event.
3. Please pay attention to the topics. They are given based on the class level in MTA and/or age based groups.
4. **Participants are strictly not allowed to read from the paper or mobile devices or refer to any form of notes during the competition.**

கலை சார்ந்த போட்டிகள்/Art Competitions

Art# 1: பாட்டுப் பாட வா (Vocal)

-
- This is a solo competition
- The time limit is 4 minutes for each participant
- The song should be a Tamil song; should not be mixed with words from other languages
- The song can be a genre of "Folk" or "Tamil Isai ("தமிழ் இசை")
- There will be a virtual recorded preliminary for this event. The participants will be requested to upload one minute recording of the preparation.
- Only the participants selected from the preliminary round will be allowed to attend the final round.
- **Some Tamil movie songs matching the following topics/themes may be allowed.**
- **Focus on Tamil rural culture and emphasis on traditional values will be an added advantage**
- **Focus on the pronunciation of words, expression, and pace of singing in the allocated time**
- **Students are required to memorize the song and not to read from the paper or screen**
- **Songs should be secular. Songs referencing any religion or deity won't be considered for the competition.**

Theme
தமிழ் மரபு/கலை/கலாச்சாரம்,சார்ந்த பாடல்
சமூக அக்கறை, தமிழ் உணர்வு, தமிழ் மண்ணின் பெருமை சார்ந்த தமிழிசைப் பாடல்கள்
தமிழர் விழாக்கள், தமிழர் விவசாயம், அறுவடை, பாரம்பரிய தொழில்கள் சார்ந்த தமிழிசை / நாட்டுப்புற / திரைப்படப் பாடல்கள்

Art# 2: ஓவியப்போட்டி / Drawing Competition

- The drawing should illustrate the meaning of the given topic for each age group.
- Crayons/Color Pencil/Oil Pastel are allowed.
- Paint usage NOT allowed.
- Watercolors are NOT allowed.
- Stencil usage is NOT allowed for drawing.
- MTA would provide the drawing sheet in A4 size.
- There is no preliminary round for this competition.
- The duration of the competition is 75 minutes (1 Hour and 15 Minutes).

Some of the Criteria for evaluation:

- Interpretation of the theme
- Use of Elements & Principles of Art
- Creativity and detail

Age	Theme
4, 5 & 6	1. எனக்குப் பிடித்த விலங்கு/பறவை / செல்லப் பிராணி
7, 8 & 9	1. தமிழ் நாட்டுப்புறக் கலைகள் – நம் மரபின் உயிர் - கரகாட்டம், மயிலாட்டம், ஓயிலாட்டம், தெருக்கூத்து, பொய்க்கால் குதிரையாட்டம், வில்லுப்பாட்டு, etc., (or) 2. பிறர்க்கின்னா முற்பகல் செய்யின் தமக்குஇன்னா பிற்பகல் தாமே வரும்
10, 11 & 12	1. பயன்மரம் உள்ளூர்ப் பழுத்தற்றால் செல்வம் நயனுடை யான்கண் படின (or) 2. வருமுன்னர்க் காவாதான் வாழ்க்கை எரிமுன்னர் வைத்தூறு போலக் கெடும் (or) 3. எனது கற்பனை உலகம்
13 & older	1. வறியார்க்கொன்று ஈவதே ஈகைமற் றெல்லாம் குறியெதிர்ப்பை நீர துடைத்து (or) 2. இடிப்பாரை இல்லாத ஏமரா மன்னன் கெடுப்பா ரிலானுங் கெடும் (or) 3. 2075 – எதிர்காலத்தில் என் உலகம்

விளையாட்டுப் போட்டிகள் - I /Games

Game # 1: ஆடு புலி ஆட்டம் / Adu Puli Attam

- This is a solo game; played between 2 players one against another.
- This is a strategic two-player game that is played in southern India Tamil Nadu (ஆடு புலி ஆட்டம்), Karnataka (Huli gatta) and Andhra Pradesh (Puli Joodam or Puli - Meka).
- The game is asymmetric in that one player controls three tigers while the other controls up to 15 lambs/goats.
- The tigers 'hunt' the goats while the goats attempt to block the tiger's movements.
- Two sets are played (each play takes a turn for a tiger and goats in each set). If needed, a third set will be included. There will be a fixed time for each set.
- This competition is not open to all ages. (Age 7 and above)

❖ Things Needed to Play:

- Board with the game chart or Chart drawn on a floor (See Picture for chart)
- 2 or more players
- 3 Puli's & 15 Aadu's

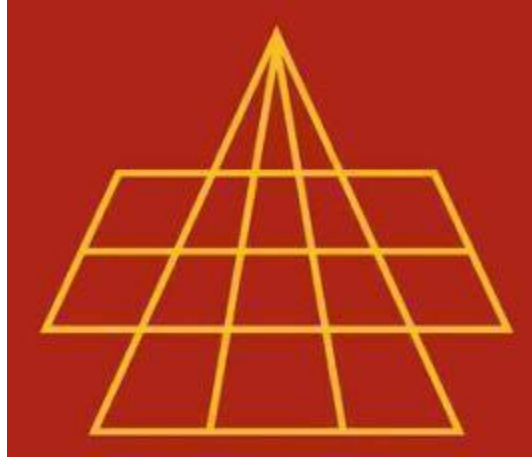


Fig. Board (game) chart

❖ How to play:

- Draw the chart as in the picture on a paper or on the ground with chalk powder
- Start the game with 3 Pulis (tigers) one placed on the apex, and 2 in the inner place closest to the apex. All aadus (goats) start off the board.
- The pieces must be put at the intersections of the board lines and moves should follow these lines.

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- The player controls the aadu's moves first by placing an aadu onto a free intersection on the board.
- Then it is the puli's turn. One puli is then moved to an adjacent position along the lines indicating valid moves. Moves alternate between players.
- A puli captures an aadu by jumping over it to an adjacent free position (as in checkers). Aadus cannot move until all 15 have been put on the board.

❖ Rules

The pulis must move according to these rules:

- They can start capturing aadus any moment after the match has started.
- They can capture only one aadu at a time.
- They can jump over a goat in any direction, but it must be to an adjacent intersection following any of the lines drawn on the board.
- A Puli cannot jump over another Puli.

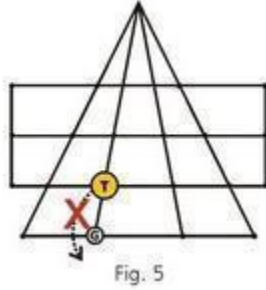


Fig. 5

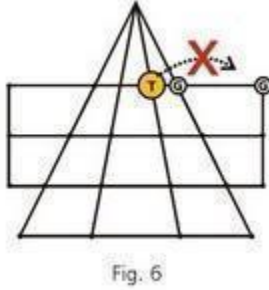


Fig. 6

The Aadus must move according to these rules:

- They must leave the board when captured.
- They cannot jump over the Pulis or other aadus.
- They can only move after all 15 have been put on the board.

❖ The objective of the Game:

- Aadu's objective is to encircle the Pulis so that none of the Pulis can move. Puli's objective is to kill 5 Aadus.
- Puli wins if all the aadus are captured and Aadu wins if all Pulis are blocked from movement.

❖ Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5Le3eDZv6k>

Game # 2: ஐந்து கல் / Five stones

- The game of 5 stones is believed to have originated in Ancient Asia.
- “Five stones” is played by 2 or more players, using 5 small stones in multiple levels.
- There will be a fixed time for each level.
- This competition is not open to all ages (Ages 7 & above).
- A participant who completes all the levels in less time is the winner.

The game of 5 stones is believed to have originated in Ancient Asia, during the Siege of Troy in 1184 B.C., Five stones is played by 2 or more players, using 5 small stones. The object is to complete a set of eight steps. This game increases eyesight, and memory power and builds concentration and aiming skills. This game is also called in various names like Kallangal, and Anchangal in villages of Tamil Nadu.



❖ Things you need (Will be provided at the time of the event)

- 5 stones of similar size
- 2 or more Players

❖ How to play

Lvl 1

- Throw all five stones
- Whilst throwing a stone, pick one stone on the ground
- Do this for all the stones on the ground

Lvl 2

- Throw all five stones
- Whilst throwing a stone, pick two stones at a time
- Do this for the other two also

Lvl 3

- Throw all five stones
- Whilst throwing a stone, pick a combination of 3 & 1 Stones

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Lvl 4

- Throw all five stones
- Whilst throwing a stone, pick all 4 Stones

Lvl 5

- Whilst throwing one stone place four stones on the ground
- Throw one stone again and catch it whilst picking all four stones on the ground

Lvl 6

- Throw all five stones
- Pick two stones and whilst throwing a stone, exchange the stone in hand with one on the ground
- Do for all the 3 stones

Lvl 7

- Throw all five stones
- Pick two stones and whilst throwing two stones, pick one on the ground and catch two falling stones with each hand
- Do for all the 3 stones

Lvl 8

- Throw all five stones
- Opponent chooses 1 stone
- Throw the stone in the air and seep up the remaining stones
- Do for all the 3 stones

❖ Rules

- The winner of the game is the one who completes all 8 steps.
- A player loses his/her turn if he/she fails to complete a step or touches another stone when picking up a stone.
- All the picked stones should remain in hand when the next stone is picked up.
- When it comes to the final round 3 winners will be selected based on the timing of completion.

❖ Losing chances:

- When a stone falls out of hand or can't catch the fallen stone.
- When the player touches the other stone while picking the stones.
- Not dropping the selected stone.

❖ Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-myxw3QaR8&feature=youtu.be>

விளையாட்டுப் போட்டிகள் - II /Fun Games

Fun Game # 1: பாண்டி / Pandi

- It is a solo **fun** game played in multiple levels.
- Pandi is a very funny hopping game played in many rural villages of Tamil Nadu.
- This competition is not open to all ages – (Ages 6 & above)
- It is also known as Tokkudu Billa/Tangidi Billa in Andhra Pradesh and Kunte Bille in Karnataka.
- It is played by both boys and girls in many villages, even today.
- There will be a fixed time for each round.
- **Registration will take place during the main event day (Saturday, 15-Feb-2026)**
- **There is no prize for this fun game.**

Pandi aims to capture a maximum number of squares in the grid by hopping and jumping through the court in a specific pattern without the feet touching the lines and without putting a hand down to gain balance. A small and flat concrete area or a sandy ground would be ideal to play this game. The grid is drawn on the ground or the floor and numbered as shown above the semicircle on the top with number 9 is Home.

❖ Things you need (Will be provided at the time of event)

- A coin or a small slate stone
- Chalk piece or chalk powder
- Flat Ground

❖ How to play

Round 1:

- Stand outside of the grid, near square 1
- Throw the stone in square 1
- Starting from square 1 hop over the stone on your way to 'Home' (square 9) and turn back and hop back to square 2 bend and pick up the stone in square 1
- Throw the stone in square 2
- Starting from square 1 hop over the stone on your way to 'Home' (square 9) and turn back and hop back to square 3 bend and pick up the stone in square 2
- Repeat the above process by throwing the stone in 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8

Round 2:

- Place the stone in the palm-opened
- Hop, starting from 1 to 8
- Throw the coin out of the grid (not too far) and jump on it in the hopping position
- Repeat the process with the coin in the palm inverted

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Round 3:

- Ask the other players for “kaaya” or “pazhama”
- If the other players choose Kaai, sit down facing the grid and throw the coin so that it may fall in any of the squares.
- If the players choose pazham, then stand up with back facing the grid and throw the coin so that it may fall into any of the squares
- Hop into the grid, and pick up the coin as in the previous steps
- Draw a cross in the box in which you picked up the stone. (In this box, you can rest both of your legs)
- Hop out the grid with the stone. Now this indicates that you have captured a box.

Round 4:

- Go through all the above phases to capture the other boxes. You can rest both of your legs in boxes 4 and 5 and in the boxes that you have captured.

❖ **Rules**

A player loses her chance at any stage if

- He/She lands on a box that is captured by the opponent
- The coin is thrown on crossed squares
- The coin falls out of the grid
- The coin falls on the lines of the grid
- The coin slips down off the palm

❖ **Video link:** <https://youtu.be/inwuR30JOY0>

Fun Game # 2: உறியடி / Uriyadi

- This is a fun solo game.
- This competition is not open to all ages – (only for Age 9 & above)
- A pot (or equivalent object) will be hung on the top at a height of 10-15 feet from the ground and the height of the pot will be altered up and down by pulling the rope.
- Participants would be blindfolded and should start from 15-20 meters away from the pot.
- Participants will be offered the long stick to hit the pot.
- Participants cannot use the stick to locate the pot and hit.
- Participants cannot adjust or touch the blindfold.
- Spectators may misdirect the participant from reaching the pot.
- Participants will have one chance to hit the pot.
- Participants should be given a maximum of 3 minutes to hit the pot otherwise considered eliminated.
- Participants who hit the pot will be moved on to the next level, otherwise eliminated from the game.
- **Registration will take place during the main event day (Saturday, 15-Feb-2026).**
- **There is no prize for this fun game.**

இலக்கியப் போட்டிகள் /Literary Competitions

Literary# 1: திருக்குறள் ஒப்புவித்தல் / Thirukkural Recital

- This is a solo competition and is based on the student's class level in MTA.
- The max time limit and number of minimum and maximum Thirukkural to recite per class level is given below on the table
- Participants are required to memorize and recite the Thirukkural
- There is no preliminary round for this competition.
- **Please note for “Nilai 3 & Nilai 4”, meaning for each recited Thirukkural is required.**
- **Focus on the pronunciation of Thirukkural, expression, the pace of the recital and the number of Thirukurals in the allocated time**
- **Participants reciting more than the maximum limit allowed for that level will not earn additional points.**
- **Participants are strictly not allowed to read from the paper or mobile devices**

Class Level	Time Limit	Minimum number of Thirukkural
Pre-Mazhalai	1 Minute	At least 2 Thirukkural - 5 Kurals max limit திருக்குறள் ஒப்புவித்தல்
Mazhalai	1 Minute	At least 2 Thirukkural - 8 Kurals max limit திருக்குறள் ஒப்புவித்தல்
Nilai 1	2 Minutes	At least 3 Thirukkural - 10 Kurals max limit திருக்குறள் ஒப்புவித்தல்
Nilai 2	2 Minutes	At least 5 Thirukkural - 15 Kurals max limit. திருக்குறள் ஒப்புவித்தல்
Nilai 3	4 Minutes	At Least 5 Thirukkural - 10 Kurals max limit திருக்குறள் ஒப்புவித்தல் & பொருள் கூறல்
Nilai 4	4 Minutes	At Least 5 Thirukkural - 12 Kurals max limit திருக்குறள் ஒப்புவித்தல் & பொருள் கூறல்

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Literary# 2: தமிழ்ப் பேச்சுப் போட்டி / Tamil Speech

- This is a solo competition for MTA level 3 and above.
- Please choose one of the topics for your level from the table below.
- This competition is not open to all levels.
- There will be a virtual recorded preliminary for this event. The participants will be requested to upload one minute recording of the preparation.
- Only the participants selected from the preliminary round will be allowed to attend the final round.
- Focus of the competition will be on oral communication, gestures, pronunciation, speed, topic relevance and content.
- Each student will be given up to 5 minutes for the speech. Students will be signaled (like ringing a bell) between the 3rd and 5th minute to indicate the end of the time slot.
- **Participants are strictly not allowed to read from the paper or mobile devices.**
- **Limiting the usage of non-Tamil words will be an added advantage.**

Speech	High Level (MTA Class levels 8,9,10)	Middle Level (MTA Class levels 6,7)	Lower Level (MTA Class levels 3, 4,5)
Topic -1	நான் காண விரும்பும் மாற்றம் (எ.கா . தொழில்நுட்ப உலகத்தில் வளர்ந்து வரும் நான், உலகத்தை மேலும் முன்னேற்ற நான் செய்யும்/செய்ய விரும்பும் 5 மாற்றங்கள்)	என்னை மாற்றிய ஒரு நிகழ்வு	நான் போற்றும் தமிழ்நாட்டு தலைவர்!
Topic -2	பெண் சுதந்திரத்தின் அடையாளம்	பிச்சைப் புகினும் கற்கை நன்றே	ஆரோக்கியமான உணவு பழக்கம்
Topic -3	தமிழ் எங்கள் உயிருக்கு நேர்	செம்மொழியான தமிழ் மொழியாம்	என் தமிழ்ப் பள்ளி

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Literary# 3: தமிழ் எழுத்துப் போட்டி / Tamil Writing

- This is a solo competition for MTA level 5 and above.
- The students will write an essay on one of the topics listed below on the day of the competition
- Participants are expected to bring a pen/pencils/ruler/eraser for the competition. Paper will be given at the time of the competition
- There is no preliminary round for this competition.
- The time limit for the competition is 45 Minutes.

Writing	MTA Levels (8,9,10)	MTA Levels (5, 6,7)
Topic -1	பூமி என்னிடம் ஒரு நாள் பேசினால்?	ஒரு மழை நாள்
Topic -2	என் மொழி! என் அடையாளம்!	உடம்பை வளர்த்தேன், உயிர் வளர்த்தேனே!

Literary# 4: தமிழ்ப் பட்டிமன்றம் /Tamil Debate

- This is a team event for students.
- This event is for the students from MTA class levels 3 to 10.
- Each team will have a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 team members.
- The team will emulate a debate by identifying the roles of Plaintiff (வாதி), Defendant (பிரதிவாதி), and Judge (நீதிபதி) within the team.
- Each team member can take a maximum of 3 minutes to present their statement.
- Parents help to form/build a team of students and coordinate and train for the debate.
- Teams will be judged based on content, presentation, and debate skills.
- There will be a preliminary readiness check for this competition. Only the participants selected in the preliminary round will be allowed to attend the final round.
- **Focus on the pronunciation of words, expressions, and relevant arguments/counter-arguments to support the chosen topic.**
- **Limiting the usage of non-Tamil words will be an added advantage.**

Speech	High Level (MTA Class levels 8,9,10)	Middle Level (MTA Class levels 6,7)	Lower Level (MTA Class levels 3, 4,5)
Topic -1	இன்றைய பிள்ளைகளை நெறிப்படுத்த தேவை, கண்டிப்பா இல்லை அரவணைப்பா?	இன்றைய வாழ்க்கை முறையில் மேலோங்கி இருப்பது, சுயநலமா அல்லது பொதுநலமா?	எனக்கு பிடித்தது வீட்டு சாப்பாடே.. எனக்கு பிடித்தது கடை சாப்பாடே..
Topic -2	மதிப்பெண் முறைத்தேர்வுகள், அவசியமா? அவசியம் இல்லையா?	நடுநிலைப் பள்ளி மாணவர்களுக்கு கைபேசி வரமா, சாபமா?	தமிழ் கற்பதற்கு பெற்றோரின் ஆர்வம் முக்கியமா? குழந்தைகளின் விருப்பம் முக்கியமா ?

Literary# 5: கண்ணோடு காண்பதெல்லாம்/ What do you see?

- This is a solo event and not for all levels
- Pictures will be shared with the registered student email address ahead of time for the competition
- This is for levels Pre-Mazhalai, Mazhalai, Level 1, and Level 2
- Judges will not prompt or provide any hints during the event
- Parents can print out the picture(s) or share them from the screen during the event
- kids should
 - Identify the picture
 - Describe the picture briefly
 - If possible prepare students to recite in the format of story telling
- The winner will be decided based on the usage of Tamil words, fluency and creativity
- The maximum time limit is
 - 1 minute for Pre-Mazhalai and Mazhalai participants
 - 2 minutes for Level 1 and Level 2 participants
- Participants should elaborate based on the picture given by MTA for each level.
- Participant's answers should not be mixed with words from other languages.
- Parents or anyone, should not give any off-stage assistance (i.e. prompting) during competition. Participants who receive any such help or assistance during the competition will result in negative scores or be disqualified.

Sample picture



Literary#6: தமிழ் சொல்லெழுத்துப் போட்டி / Spelling Bee

- This is a solo competition for MTA grade level 4 and above.
- There is no preliminary round for this competition.
- The judge will pronounce a Tamil word clearly
- The participant must write the pronounced word clearly in Tamil; Spelling must be completely accurate
- The participant may ask for the word to be repeated once
- Approximately, 10–15 seconds will be given per word, within that timeline, the participants should complete writing the word, so that they can be ready for the next word.
- A pre-set of word list will be shared with the registered student's email address ahead of time for the competition
- If the competition gets tied with the given pre-set words then the pronouncer/team will ask/pick words outside of the list to break the tie as needed.
- No books, notes, or electronic devices allowed.
- No assistance from the audience or parents.
- Judges' decision is final,
- Pronunciation will be based on standard Tamil usage.
- **Students will be competing within the categories based on MTA grade levels. Some categories may have more than one grade level.**