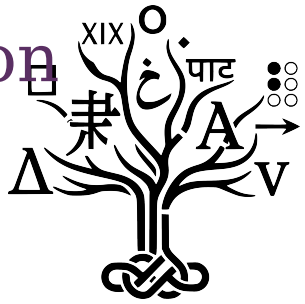
Pre-Final Round Information



Congratulations on advancing past the Qualification Round! The Pre-Final Round awaits with harder challenges and more rewarding problems. This guide covers everything you need to know.

1 Problems and Points **2**

2 Pre-Final Round Process **3**

3 Registration Details **5**

4 Supervision Details **6**

4.1 Option A: Supervision with Teacher (recommended) 6

4.2 Option B: Supervision without Teacher 8

5 Preparation and Support **11**

1 Problems and Points

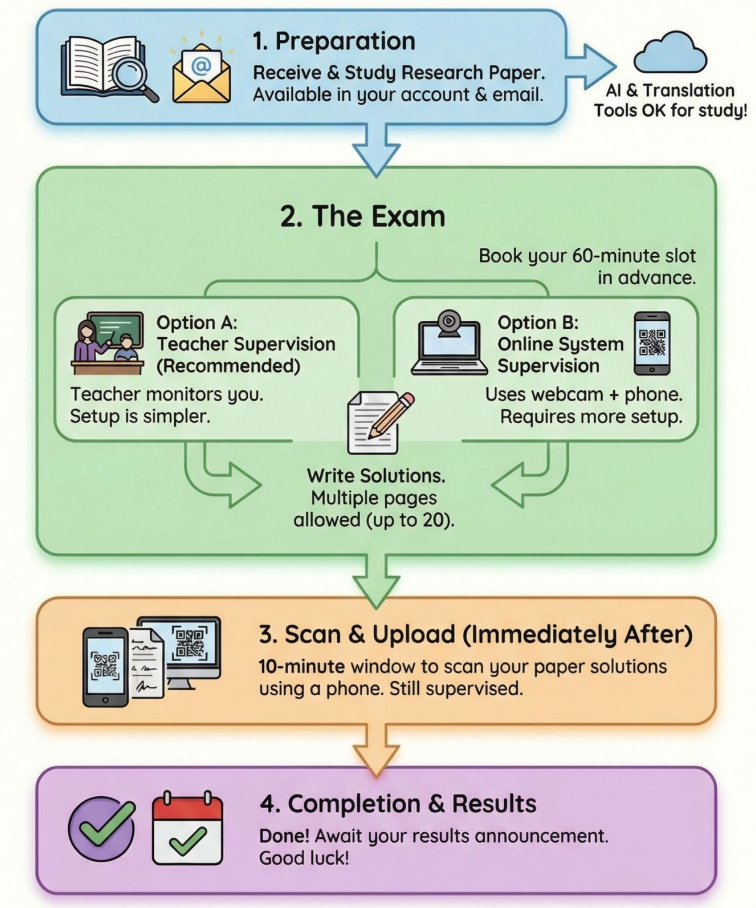
The exam lasts 60 minutes, is supervised, and contains three problems. The problems typically build to some degree on concepts from the Qualification Round. One problem is based on a research paper you study before the exam.

- **A: 1x Foundational Problem (4 Points)**
  One problem that is comparable to the difficulty level encountered in the Qualification Round.
- **B: 1x Advanced Problem (6 Points)**
  One problem that requires more complex analysis and linguistic understanding.
- **C: 1x Research Problem (8 Points)**
  One problem based on a scholarly paper you receive before the exam. Topics may include syntax, semantics, phonetics, or sociolinguistics.

Qualification Requirements

It is possible to reach up to 18 points in total. Participants need to score at least 6/8/10 points to qualify for the Final Round. Clearly explaining your thinking and approach is essential for all problems and significantly affects your score.

2 Pre-Final Round Process



Information Video

Watch the Information Video: https://youtu.be/PNfN85an9WU (7 Minutes)

Phase 1: Preparation

On **Friday, 26 February 2027**, we release the research paper. All qualified and registered participants (see Section *3 Registration Details*) receive the paper via email and through their participant account. The paper is in English. You may use translation tools and AI to help you understand it.

Phase 2: Pre-Final Round Exam

The exam window is from **Sunday, 28 February 2027**, 00:01 UTC+0 to **Tuesday, 2 March 2027**, 23:59 UTC+0. You may take the 60-minute exam at any point during

this window using a computer, laptop, or phone. The exam must be supervised by a teacher (recommended) or by ILC using our online supervision system (see Section *4 Supervision Details*).

Log in at `https://lingchallenge.org/exam` with your ILC account. After a few setup steps, the exam begins. Problems appear on screen only at this point.

You have 60 minutes from the moment you start. All problems are shown on one page. You may answer them in any order and move between questions freely.

You write your solution on paper. You may bring blank paper (maximum twenty sheets) and pens (maximum three) for notes and solutions. Use a new sheet for each problem and write the problem number at the top of each page. You may not bring your own copy of the research paper. The paper is available in the exam interface.

Phase 3: Answer Scan

After the exam ends, you have 10 minutes to scan and upload your handwritten solutions using your phone. This step is still supervised. A QR code on the exam screen takes you to the upload interface. If you use a phone for the exam, you need a second phone for scanning. We recommend using a laptop or computer for the exam.

Phase 4: Exam Completion

After uploading your solutions, you are done. You will receive follow-up information about the research paper to learn more about the covered topic in the following week.

Result Announcement

The results of the Pre-Final Round will be announced on **Monday, 15 March 2027**.

3 Registration Details

After passing the Qualification Round, you may register for the Pre-Final Round through your participant account.

Pre-Final Round Registration Deadline

The registration deadline for the Pre-Final Round is **Tuesday, 23 February 2027**.

Running the competition involves costs for human resources, infrastructure, and materials. Sponsors cover some expenses, but participants must pay a registration cost of 27 EUR. There are no other costs for participants for the rest of the competition.

The costs covers evaluation, infrastructure, and administration. For details on how registration costs are used, see our information flyer: `Registration Costs Flyer 2026`

To register, log into your participant account.

Financial Aid Program

We offer a limited number of financial aid packages and reductions for participants facing financial hardship. These are subject to sponsorship availability and may be allocated to specific regions or groups.

For more information: `https://lingchallenge.org/financialaid`

4 Supervision Details

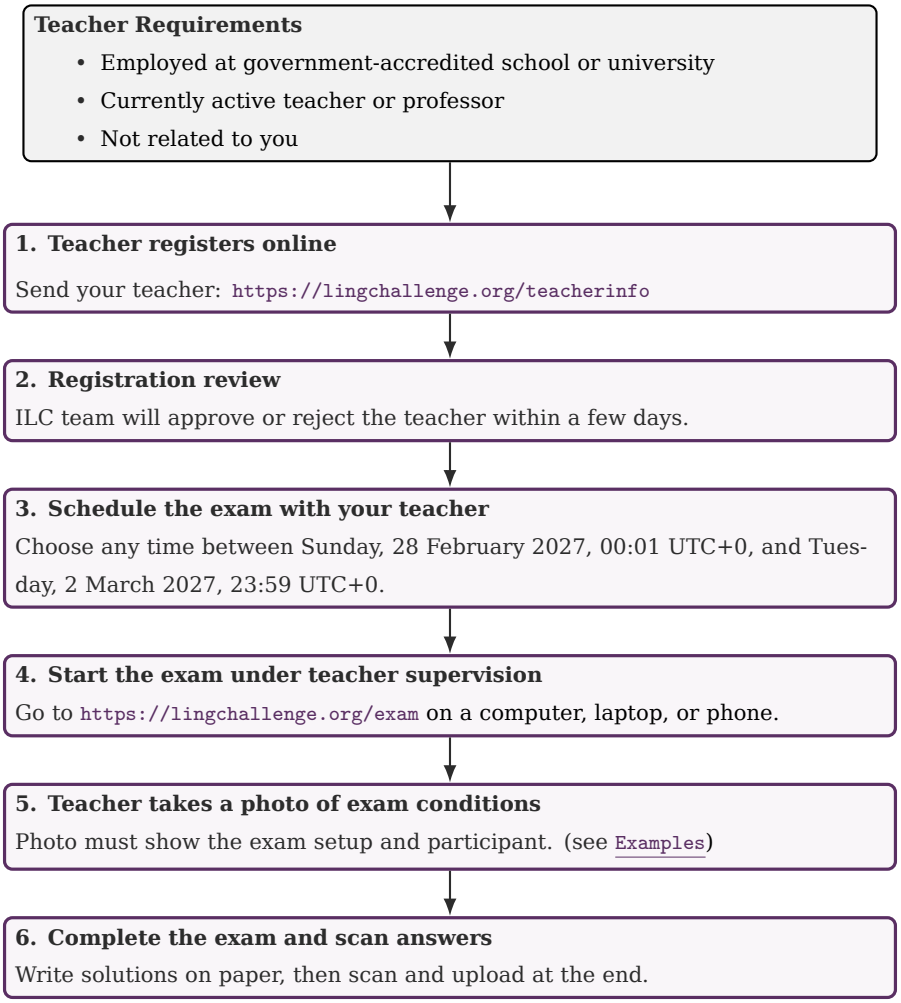
The exam must be supervised by either:

- (Option A) a teacher, or
- (Option B) ILC using an online supervision system.

Teacher supervision is preferred because the online system requires more setup.

4.1 Option A: Supervision with Teacher (recommended)

The diagram below summarizes the process:



Your supervising teacher must meet these criteria:

- Employed at a government-accredited school or university (no private tutors).
- Currently active (no retired teachers).

- Not related to you (no family members).

One teacher may supervise multiple participants at the same time. Steps:

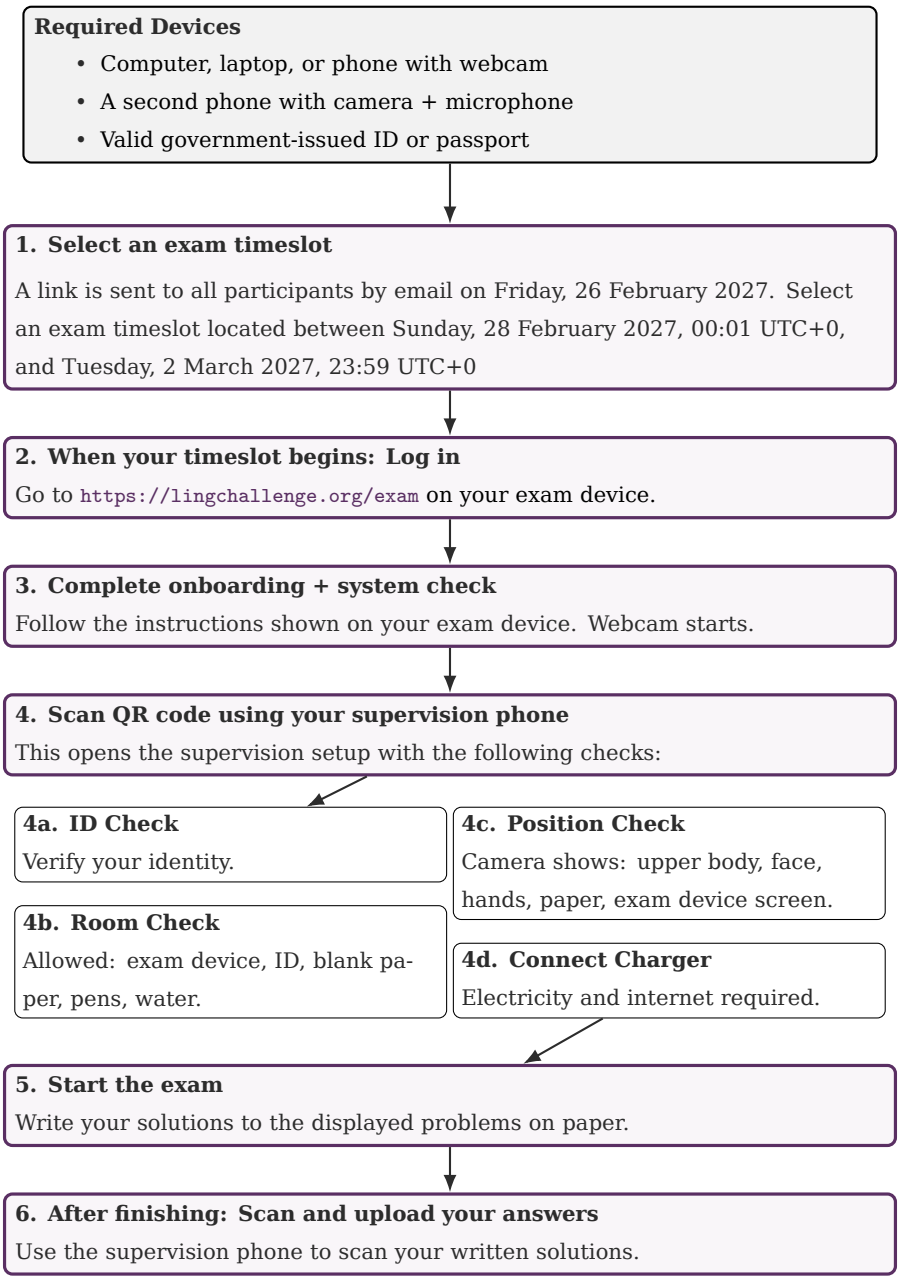
1. Teacher registers online: https://lingchallenge.org/teacherinfo
2. We review and approve or reject within a few days.
3. After approval, teacher may supervise at any time between Sunday, 28 February 2027, 00:01 UTC+0 and Tuesday, 2 March 2027, 23:59 UTC+0.
4. Start the exam at https://lingchallenge.org/exam on a computer, laptop, or phone.
5. Teacher takes a photo of the exam setup (see Examples).

You may use a school computer or personal device. The teacher must ensure you do not cheat. The following are considered cheating:

- Using other electronic devices (phones, calculators, AI tools).
- Using external information (internet, notes, books).
- Opening other browser tabs or windows.
- Receiving help from anyone.

4.2 Option B: Supervision without Teacher

If no teacher is available, you may use the online supervision system. The diagram below summarizes the process:



You will need:

- Computer, laptop, or phone with webcam (*exam device*)
- A phone with camera and microphone (*supervision phone*)
- Government-issued ID or passport

All devices must be connected to the internet. If you use a phone as your exam device, you need a second phone for supervision.

Steps:

1. Select a timeslot between Sunday, 28 February 2027, 00:01 UTC+0 and Tuesday, 2 March 2027, 23:59 UTC+0.
   How?: You receive a link to select a timeslot via email and your participant account on Friday, 26 February 2027. Timeslots are available every 60 minutes. Each timeslot can hold up to 50 participants on a first-come basis. We recommend choosing early.
2. At your scheduled time, log in at `https://lingchallenge.org/exam` with your ILC account.
3. Complete the onboarding and system check. Your webcam starts during this step.
4. Scan the QR code on your exam device to set up the supervision phone. This includes:
   (a) ID and face check.
   (b) Room check.
   (see below for **Requirements for the Exam Environment**)
   (c) Position check.
   (see below for **Requirements for the Supervision Phone Position**)
   (d) Connect the supervision phone to a charger.
   Note: You are responsible for maintaining a stable internet connection throughout the exam.
5. After setup, start the exam (see Section *2 Pre-Final Round Process*).
6. After finishing, scan your answers with the supervision phone.

Requirements for the Exam Environment:

- Allowed: exam device, ID, blank paper, pens, and a drink.
- Door must be closed.
- No notes, posters, or materials in your field of view.
- No other phones, monitors, or electronic devices.
- No other person in the room.
- Quiet environment.
- No headphones.

You may not leave the room during the exam or before uploading your answers. Restroom breaks are not permitted.

Requirements for the Supervision Phone Position:

Place the phone to your left or right, slightly behind you. The camera must capture:

1. Your upper body and partial face.
2. Your hands and paper.
3. The exam device screen.

See examples here: `Examples`. Test your setup beforehand. You may use stands or other materials to position the phone.

Data Privacy Notice: Data collected during the exam is used only for supervision and deleted after evaluation.

5 Preparation and Support

Extensive preparation is not required, but reviewing linguistic concepts is helpful.

- **Review Topics:**
  Morphology, syntax, phonology, semantics, historical linguistics, language typology, discourse analysis.
- **Practice Reading Research:**
  One problem involves a research paper. Practice reading and summarizing academic texts, such as from linguistics journals or similar.
- **Study the Research Paper:**
  Once you receive the research paper of the Pre-Final Round, read the paper carefully and try to understand its content and the logic behind it. You do not need to remember every detail or fact mentioned in the paper as you will have access to the paper during the exam, however, you want to make sure that you are familiar with the paper and understand its core points.

Training Resources

Past problems and resources: https://lingchallenge.org/training

See our FAQ for common questions: https://lingchallenge.org/en/#faq

Questions?

Contact us at submission@ilc.info.

Can I participate only in the Qualification Round?

Yes. You receive a certificate but do not advance to later rounds or finalist awards.