



International English Olympiad
“Formula of Unity” / “The Third Millennium”
Year 2023/2024. Qualifying round
Tasks for grades R10–R11



The last day to send your answers is **November 13**.

All the information about the Olympiad and the instruction for participants: <https://www.formulo.org/ru/olymp/2023-lang-ru/>
and <https://www.formulo.org/en/olymp/2023-lang-en/>

In the answer field you need to enter each item from the answer options separated by a semicolon, in the form “1A;2B;3C”

1. Fill in the gaps with one of the given words.

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| 1) The climber was equipped _____ a rope and a rucksack. | |
| 2) My article was included _____ two scientific magazines. | A) during |
| 3) Give up reading these _____. They are full of absolutely silly articles about celebrities. | B) in |
| 4) I'd like to read a piece of scientific information. I'd rather buy some _____. | C) broadsheets |
| 5) I've been doing this exercise _____ 2 days. I'm weary. | D) yourselves |
| 6) I was a little bit scared _____ my flight. | E) yourself |
| 7) I'm happy that you wasn't involved in that accident and now you are safe and _____. | F) with |
| 8) You suggested watching a new movie. It _____ good! Let's do it! | G) sound |
| 9) Help _____! You and your husband may feel freely. | H) tabloids |
| 10) Don't forget about _____. You are the most important person, Nick. | I) for |
| | J) sounds |

2. Answer the questions about an article «Why do people, like, say, 'like' so much?» by Sam Wolfson.

Saying the word 'like' has long been seen as a sign of laziness and stupidity. But its use is actually richly nuanced, goes back to Shakespearean times, and is an indicator of, like, intelligence

I'm listening to BBC Radio 1, where they are interviewing the 26-year-old actor and singer Dove Cameron about her globally successful hit, Boyfriend. The DJ, Melvin Odoom, asks her, “Do you think that your acting career has helped you with, kind of, like, your music career?”

“For me they're, like, the same energy,” replies Cameron. “Which is, like, when people are, like, ‘You have to choose,’ I'm like, ‘They feel the same!’”

It's the most predictable celebrity interview exchange ever uttered, remarkable only for one word that repeats and repeats.

“It's a really funny one,” says Fiona Hanlon, who has worked at the station for more than 10 years, including producing Nick Grimshaw's breakfast show and Maya Jama's weekend show. “If a guest says 'like' too much, we'd get texts from the listeners. If a DJ says it too much, sometimes a boss might pop in and mention it ... It's just seen as a bit lazy, a bit dumb. I was always very aware of it.”

Why do people have such a problem with “like”? Is it because it simply won't go away? In 1992, Malcolm Gladwell wrote a robust defence of the word and the way it carries “a rich emotional nuance”, responding to what had already been a decade of criticism. This did nothing to settle the debate. Linguists agree that usage of the word has increased every year since then, to the point where in one five-minute exchange on Love Island in 2017, the word was uttered 76 times, once every four seconds.

By the time I was at secondary school in the early 2000s, “like” was just a natural part of speech. Transcribing the interviews I did for this piece, I say it constantly. When I do, I find it a friendly crutch, signalling to the person I'm talking to that we're having a spontaneous and unrehearsed conversation, that I'm listening and thinking. But despite its long history and widespread use, for many it remains enraging.

Politicians, educators and business leaders have complained it makes speakers sound stupid. When Michael Gove was education secretary in 2014, he used an update to the national curriculum to require students to speak in “standard English”, even in informal settings, in all British schools. This reinforced the idea that there was only one right way to speak English. By 2019, one primary school head in Bradford, Christabel Shepherd, said she banned the word because, “When children are giving you an answer and they say, ‘Is it, like, when you're, like...’ they haven't actually made a sentence at all. They use the word all the time and we are trying to get rid of it.” Nick Gibb, then schools minister, praised the decision and said others should follow suit.

Scores of recruitment specialists and public-speaking coaches have publicly bemoaned the word's rise and say those who use it prevent themselves from getting opportunities. One law firm in America sent a memo to just its female employees and told them: “Learn hard words,” and “Stop saying 'like'.” Peter Mertens, an associate at PR

firm Burson Cohn & Wolfe, has said: “There is nothing that will [lead you to being] dismissed more quickly than a few too many ‘likes’ during a meeting or on a call.” There’s even an app, LikeSo, recommended by businesses, which listens to your speech and promises it can stop you using the word.

In the UK, this chorus is made louder by a group of mostly old and white celebrities and Spectator columnists who crusade against its use. In 2010, Emma Thompson complained to the Radio Times that she “went to give a talk at my old school and the girls were all doing their ‘likes’ and ‘innits?’ which drives me insane. . . I told them ‘Just don’t do it. Because it makes you sound stupid.’” Gyles Brandreth, writing in the Oldie (where else?), complained that “like” was “the lazy linguistic filler of our times” and “very very irritating”.

Why is it so detested? “Well, humans have an innate tendency to judge. People who are very liberal in other aspects of things, who would never judge someone based on race or sexual orientation or whatever, still have this thing about language,” says Carmen Fought, professor of linguistics at Pitzer College. “They want to freeze it and they want to judge it. I absolutely guarantee you that in Shakespeare’s time, there was some schoolmaster walking around saying, ‘Don’t say “soothe” Portia, that sounds so tacky, say “For soothe.”’”

There’s certainly an element of sexism here and the detractors of “like” say it makes you sound girlish and stupid, arguing that this is a newish tic said mostly by women and that it’s a meaningless “filler” word that doesn’t add anything to a sentence’s meaning. But they are, in fact, wrong on every count.

The first point is that “like” isn’t just a filler word. It’s actually an incredibly versatile and dynamic word. The linguist Alexandra D’Arcy, who wrote a book on the word, outlined its many uses. There are its traditional uses as a verb, “I like the smell of what’s cooking” and a preposition, “This tastes like it was made in a restaurant”. Then there are the ones that are the subject of scorn. The first of these is the quotative “like”: “He cooked a spag bol for me last night, I was like, that’s delicious.” It allows you to tell a story without promising complete accuracy. Indeed, one of the most enjoyable things about this kind of “like” is that you can tell an anecdote that makes you sound wittier and more erudite than you actually are because you’re not promising exactly what was said but the feeling of what was said.

The other hated “likes” are as a discourse marker, “What did I do last night? Like, had dinner, hung out”; an adverb to mean approximately, “It was super quick to cook, like 30 minutes”, and what’s known as a discourse particle, which goes in the middle of a phrase, rather than at the end of it, “This dinner is like the best I’ve eaten.” But there are more uses than that, for example the Geordie tradition of finishing sentences with a like. “He cooked dinner for me, like,” and increasingly “like” is also used as a noun because of Facebook and Instagram, “I gave it a like.”

Many of these uses often overlap in a way that is incredibly rich. If you say, “He was like, seething about the pasta sauce,” you are quoting someone’s reaction, but at the same time highlighting you are approximating their response, while pausing to highlight that you are thinking meaningfully about this reaction in real time. That one word is doing all those jobs, all the while creating a sense of familiarity between you and the person you’re talking to.

The word’s incredible flexibility is nothing new either. Most people think the word “like” dates back to the 80s, as typified by the Frank Zappa song Valley Girl, in which his daughter, Moon Zappa, impersonates a California bimbo, ad-libbing that: “I, like, love going into, like, clothing stores and stuff, I, like, buy the neatest miniskirts and stuff.” But it goes much further back. In Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night, written at the start of the 17th century, Valentine says to Cesario, “If the Duke continue these favours towards you, Cesario, you are like to be much advanced.” The linguist Anatoly Liberman says that this version of “like” was being used as a shorthand for likely, and may be the beginnings of our contemporary usage.

“Consider the following,” he writes. “‘All these three, belike, went together’ (1741, OED). Take away be-, and you will get a charming modern sentence: ‘All these three, like, went together.’” Belike meant “in all likelihood”.

It’s easy to imagine how this use of “like” could transform into like being used more generally as a way to break up speech. Perhaps it was aided by the Irish, Liverpudlian and Geordie use of the word to mean roughly “or thereabouts”. Or by the beat poets of 1950s, who would often start the sentences with “Like” (interestingly, fewer people now complain that these more masculine uses sound stupid, despite the fact they could also be described as filler words).

It’s true that young women in the 1980s probably invented the quotative “like”, but they are far from the only group to use it now. And research suggests that the discourse particle “like”, the one that comes in like the midpoint of a sentence, is used more by men than women. But the biggest lie about “like” is that it’s stupid; that it adds nothing to the meaning of a sentence. “People say language is random. But language is almost never random. You can’t just stick that like in anywhere,” says Fought. “So for example, if I say, ‘Oh look at that boy over there. He’s wearing a top hat. And he’s like, 10.’ That makes perfect sense. But if you say ‘How old is your brother?’ And I say ‘He’s like, 10’ that’s a little more unusual. Or if I said, ‘My, like, grandma died.’ That’d be a very strange context to hear it. So there’s patterns. There’s ways to do it more grammatically.”

More than being internally logical, it is also a way of signalling. “It helps with what we call focus. I’m showing you this is the important part, this is the part that connects, it can be for interpersonal connection, it’s checking in that you and I are connecting. It’s an incredibly useful part of speech. If it really were meaningless and had no purpose in a sentence, it would be much easier for us to leave it out.”

This is what I think when I listen to Radio 1 or watch vlogs by young women like the TikTok star Emma Chamberlain or Billie Eilish, both of whom are heavy “like” users. They have this almost instinctual way of using language not just to convey meaning but to convey a moment around that meaning. It’s almost, like, magic.

Fought adds that although the debate around “like” can be fun, when it comes to teachers punishing children for saying the word there are more serious impacts. “There’s nothing more non-conducive to learning and contrary to the purpose of education than constantly shutting kids down because of how they talk. If you want to teach a kid to practise having different language styles, that’s fine. But to demean and criticise the way someone speaks in any situation is very, very harmful.”

So if linguists are largely agreed that “like” is, at least in some contexts, no bad thing, why does society still bristle at it? Katherine D Kinzler, the author of *How You Say It*, a book about linguistic bias – which she argues is one of the most persistent prejudices in our society – says that taking someone to task for the way they speak is one of the last societally accepted ways to exercise our prejudices. “Most people aren’t even aware this is something they might do. For example if you’re interviewing candidates for a job, it’s easy to think you’re not being biased, racist or sexist, that you’re just looking for a good communicator. But so many of our perceptions of who is a good communicator can be infused by other forms of biases that we’re not aware of.”

Kinzler says that “like” is a good example of a word where young women are chastised for talking a certain way even though that isn’t borne out in the linguistic data. “‘Young and female’ is often the group that is associated with a lot of these vocal features, but actually you find lots of people in the population speak this way. It’s a similar thing with uptalk, ending your sentence by going up, like it’s a question? It’s also assumed that it’s a Valley girl way of speaking when in fact it occurs with lots of different groups.”

In 2014, a mother wrote to the advice columnist in this magazine with a dilemma. “My adult daughter is clever, pretty and confident. However, she cannot stop saying ‘like’ about six times in every sentence. . . I know it is not the end of the world, but it makes her sound stupid and uneducated, which she most definitely is not, and when she wants to return to the real world I worry this will be held against her.”

I hope she would take some comfort in knowing that the best linguistic studies today suggest people who say “like” may actually be more intelligent than those that don’t. One, published in the *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, which examined 263 conversational transcripts, found that “conscientious people” and those who are more “thoughtful and aware of themselves and their surroundings” are the most likely to use discourse markers such as “like”.

As Fought says, “I’m 55, I have a PhD, many people would consider that to be a sign of intelligence, and I’m a ‘like’ user. So this judgy thing, it’s natural, but it’s really not helpful.”

- 1) All modern linguists support Malcolm Gladwell’s positive opinion about the word like.
A) True B) False C) Not stated
- 2) Using the word like has only one purpose.
A) True B) False C) Not stated
- 3) The usage of like dates back to Shakespeare’s times.
A) True B) False C) Not stated
- 4) The author suggests that stupidity of the word like is a cliché.
A) True B) False C) Not stated
- 5) The author advises using this word more often.
A) True B) False C) Not stated

3. Unscramble the words and write them. All of them are connected with education. You can use every letter only ONE time.

- 1) yrilaetc
- 2) yluroscpmo
- 3) ihlcasoshpr
- 4) entsamisgn
- 5) crauxreiruaterl

4. There are 10 beginnings of small dialogues. Complete them. Choose the best answer for each situation from the list.

- 1) — Look at that skater! He has broken his finger but he continues participating!

- His trainer said that he's _____ .
- 2) — Going sightseeing in Paris is a must.
— _____ that it's true. You know, I believe you.
- 3) — Congratulation on your new position!
— Thanks! I'm going to _____ today and celebrate this event.
- 4) — What's your opinion about your project group?
— Everyone is okay except for Amy. She's _____ . She's really unique.
- 5) — I've sent you an advertisement. Did you see? I want to buy this house in Miami.
— Darling, you are trying to _____ . It's just a dream.
- 6) — Are you sure you want to spend all your money on this bag?
— Don't worry. I've earned 200 \$ this week, I'm _____ .
- 7) — Any ideas about the party?
— I'd like to buy a lot of trivia: souvenirs, decorations and _____ .
- 8) — Have you got new duties?
— Yep, I'm working with trainees now. I'm supposed to _____ .
- 9) — I know nothing! I can even anticipate my failure!
— _____ ! You'll succeed.
- 10) — Amy has broken up with David!
— Stop it! I don't want to listen to this. This news is _____ .
- A) A different kettle of fish
B) Show everyone the ropes
C) Bet your bottom dollar
D) A hard nut to crack
E) Keep your chin up
F) In the black
G) Pony up
H) All that jazz
I) Chase shadows
J) For the birds

5. Complete the sentences with ONE missing word.

- 1) I was praised, _____ contrast to my brother who was scolded.
2) You're too worried about the meeting. _____ it easy!
3) I deny _____ participated in that fight.
4) If you are not able to cope _____ stress join our psychological club. We'll teach you.
5) Did you hear about this game before? «Never have I _____ » is fun.

6. You have to reflect on the quotation and give your opinion about it (250–300 words, articles and contractions are counted as ONE word each).

«The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why». (Mark Twain)

Don't forget to write:

- your explanation of the idea,
- arguments,
- examples (2-3),
- your personal opinion.