CAN YOU TRANSLATE ESPERANTO?

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Esperanto is a language that was created in 1887 by Ludovic Lazarus Zamenhof, a Polish polyglot who sought to facilitate communication among the many nations of the world by creating a new language made up of bits and pieces of several existing (mostly European) languages. Though the use of Esperanto never became as widespread as Zamenhof had hoped, more than ten million people around the world speak and understand it, and thousands of books, newspapers, and magazines have been (and continue to be) published in it.

Since English has borrowed so many words from each of the languages Zamenhof used in the creation of Esperanto, it follows that users of English should have some skill in deciphering the meanings of Esperanto words. Below are 40 English words and 40 Esperanto words. Match as many as you can, drawing on intuition, recognition of phonological similarities, and paying attention to relationships of meaning. Some knowledge of various Romance and Germanic languages will come in handy, but even people who have no such knowledge typically recognize about 30 of the words. The correct answers can be found in Answers and Solutions.

1. dummy 21. pencil kvincendro maralga
2. handbag 22. knight idiotimuna velizo
3. first aid 23. foolproof liberfolia kolbasbulko
4. knuckle 24. pecan melon-capelo kavalire
5. dive 25. tight gasakvo hermetika
6. life-size 26. conjure mansaketo unua helpo
7. mineral water 27. suitcase fiancamiko strikta
8. nickel 28. best man dramisto angulmezurilo
9. pentagon 29. backhand karbo kserografio
10. mah-jongg 30. loose-leaf taringo prestidigitita
11. long-winded 31. not at all plongi naturgranda
12. loath 32. xerox obtuza manekeno
13. eraser 33. dull malkonciza kvinangulo
14. highfalutin 34. untrue hikorio malvera
15. hot dog 35. punctual arlekeno markadeto
16. airtight 36. coal mandorsa taglumo
17. bowler 37. seaweed akurata vendisto
18. midshipman 38. seaweed akurata magango
19. dealer 39. playwright malinklina taglumo
20. daylight 40. protractor bombasta vendisto

THE "A"