Tamil Theni FeTNA Competition Rules 2027

Last updated on Sep 30, 2026

Changes since 2026 competition

- Pronunciation
- T1 tie breaker format changes (1.3)
- T2 additional rule for sentence formation (2.7)
- T5 guidance words clarified (5.9)

Words & Questions

Published Words

For each year, a set of words for each competition format (Theni 1, 2, 3, 4) will be published. These are meant to provide the base for refreshing and improving vocabulary skills. These words will also provide a reference to the categories and difficult levels expected in the competition.

All Words

A broader list of words (used in previous years) will also be made available. Words from these may be used for tie-breaker questions and in advanced rounds.

Questions

Regional competition questions will be from the Published word list, except for tiebreaker questions.

Zonal and Final competition will have questions from outside the published list as well.

Words and related questions will increase in difficulty moving from Regional, Zonal, Semi to Finals.

Easy Questions

Words commonly used in US households and taught in US Tamil schools.

Regular Tamil speaking, reading and writing should prepare contestants for these questions.

Medium Questions

Words commonly used in Tamil TV programs, recent movies, US Tamil Sangam stage speeches.

Contestants will need to be readers of short Tamil stories, avid watchers of Tamil movies, entertainment shows, understands written grammar and able to follow formal Tamil speeches.

Hard Questions

Words commonly referenced in Tamil News, media, interviews, story books, popular literature works, words common with elders in the household.

Preparing using published words and related words in those categories should help prepare for these questions. Discussing uncommon words in Tamil with friends and family will help improve vocab for this level. Frequent listening to formal news, interviews and some literary books will provide familiarity to these difficult words.

Very Hard Questions

Words referenced in modern technical Tamil usage and from old literature and poems.

Curiosity to find / form Tamil words for both new age English words and Sangam words will be required to perform well.

Scoring Criteria

A. Common Rules

a. Pronunciation will be evaluated.

- Required (example only, not a full list):
  - ட → த: படம் must not be pronounced as பதம்.
  - ர → ல: ரதம் must not be pronounced as லதம்.
  - ழ → ல: பழம் must not be pronounced as பலம்.
- Not required (example only, not a full list):
  - ல, ள
  - ன, ண
  - ர, ற

Judges will evaluate and make the final decision.

1. THENI – 1 அரும்பு

Look at the picture and listen to the corresponding English word (as said by the conductor) and say the equivalent Tamil word.

1.1. Points will be awarded if all below conditions are met

1.1.1. Answer was given within the allotted time

1.1.2. At least one of the team contestant gave the correct answer

1.1.3. Answer conveys the meaning of the English word

1.2. Colloquial and local variations of the words will be permitted

1.3. In tie-breaker rounds, for additional points, question may be asked to check the knowledge of the letters, word

1.3.1. மயங்கொலிகள் - ல,ள,ழ ன,ண ற,ர
Say the correct letter to be used in the answered Tamil word

1.3.2. திணை அறிதல்
Is the word உயர்திணை or அஃறிணை

1.3.3. பால் அறிதல்
Identify the பால் - ஆண்பால் / பெண்பால் / பலர் பால்

1.3.4. வல்லினம் / மெல்லினம் / இடையினம்
For a given letter, identify the letter family

1.3.5. பெயர்ச்சொல் வகை
Identify if the word is பொருட்பெயர், இடப்பெயர், தொழிற்பெயர்

1.3.6. Judges may select any one of these for a given answer

2. THENI – 2 மலர்கள்

Look at the pictures and listen to the corresponding English words (as said by the conductor) and form a Tamil sentence that contains all the pictures.

2.1. Points will be awarded if all below conditions are met

2.1.1. Answer was given within the allotted time

2.1.2. At least one of the team contestant gave the correct answer

2.1.3. All English words are properly translated

2.2. Colloquial and local variations of the words will be permitted

2.3. The sentence must not contain any English words

2.4. Sentence need not be fully formed
For 'earrings and ear' - **தோடு காதுல இருக்கு** will be accepted

2.5. Grammar will not be strictly evaluated as long as the sentence can be understood and the pictures are represented in the translation

2.6. Repetitive sentence formation conveying lack of understanding of the word may not be awarded points
E.g. Multiple use of '**பிடிக்கும்**' for questions with fruits, '**நிறத்தில் இருக்கும்**' for questions with colors

2.7. Sentences should meaningfully connect the given words relating the property/ behavior/ usage/ references of the words.

2.7.1. Acceptable:

2.7.1.1. பூனை பாலைக் குடித்தது, Cat drank milk
Reason: 'Drank' conveys a common and natural behavior of a cat interacting with milk.

2.7.1.2. பூனை பாலைப்போல் வெளியாக இருக்கிறது, Cat was as white as the milk
Reason: 'White' highlights an inherent, descriptive color connection between the cat and milk.

2.7.1.3. பூனை பால் பாத்திரத்தை தட்டிவிட்டது, Cat tipped over the bowl of milk
Reason: 'Tipped over the bowl' reflects an expected, characteristic playful or accidental behavior of a cat around a milk pot.

2.7.1.4. யானைகள் ஆற்றில் தண்ணீர் குடித்துக் கொண்டிருந்தன, Elephants were drinking at the river
Reason: 'Drinking at the river' describes a natural, realistic scene commonly observed and exhibited by elephants in their habitat.

2.7.1.5. யானைகளால் ஆற்றில் நீந்த முடியுமா?, Can elephants swim in the river?
Reason: 'Swim' represents an expected, natural curiosity and wonder when observing elephants near a body of water.

2.7.1.6. யானைகள் ஆற்றில் நீந்துவதை நான் பார்த்தேன், I saw elephants swimming in the river
Reason: 'Swimming in the river' links the natural capability and observed behavior of elephants directly to the river environment.

2.7.2. Not Acceptable

2.7.2.1. நான் ஒரு பூனையையும் பால் புட்டியையும் வரைந்தேன், I drew a cat and a milk bottle
Reason: 'Drew' merely pairs two arbitrary items; drawing a cat and a milk bottle is no different than drawing any two unrelated objects, showing no intrinsic connection between them.

2.7.2.2. நான் பூனையையும் பால் புட்டியையும் பார்த்தேன், I saw cat and milk bottle
Reason: 'Saw' is an external observation that simply places two entities side by side without demonstrating any interaction or inherent relationship between the cat and the bottle.

2.7.2.3. என்னால் பூனை மற்றும் பால் என்ற சொற்களை எழுத்துக் கூட்ட முடியும், I can spell cat and milk
Reason: 'Spell' is purely a linguistic exercise; spelling these two words is no different than spelling any random pair of words, lacking any semantic or contextual link.

2.7.2.4. நான் ஆற்றின் அருகே யானையைப் பார்த்தேன், I saw elephant near river
Reason: 'Saw' merely notes passive physical proximity without describing any dynamic, meaningful interaction or natural relationship between the elephant and the river.

2.7.2.5. நான் யானை மற்றும் ஆற்றைப் பற்றிப் படித்தேன், I read about elephant and river
Reason: 'Read' simply groups two separate subjects together in study; reading about an elephant and a river shows no intrinsic functional or contextual bond between them.

2.7.3. Judges will look for some property of the given words that was used to connect them together, or a common occurrence that connects the words, thereby showing that the words were learned and understood and kids can relate them in the real world.

3. THENI – 3 கனிகள்

Translate the given English sentence to Tamil.

3.1. Points will be awarded if all below conditions are met

3.1.1. Answer was given within the allotted time

3.1.2. Only one of the team member gave the full translation

Team members may consult, but only one person should say the answer. Only complete translation (not partial words) will be accepted. If more than one translation was attempted, only the last translation will be accepted (not any partial words after the sentence).

3.2. Colloquial translation will be considered

3.3. Team members may consult, but only one person must say the full sentence

3.4. For published words, exact translation is required

If the published word list includes **மண்டபம்** ( ), **அரங்கம்** ( ), **மேடை** ( ), then exact translation is expected

3.5. For unpublished words, translations that convey common understanding may be accepted; Judges' decision will be final

If it is not a published word, for e.g., "Entrance", then either **வாசல்** (or) **நுழைவாயில்** may be considered by the judges.

Irrespective of choice of word, the translated sentence should convey the correct meaning of the English sentence. For e.g., Dog jumped into the pond - **நாய் குளத்தில்** (**குட்டையில்**) **குதித்தது**.

3.6. Shortened translation will be accommodated as long as the meaning is understood in a normal household practice

E.g., **எனக்குப் பால் வேண்டும்** Vs. **பால் வேணும்** conveys the same implied meaning

3.7. Simple Grammar (ex Tense) will be strictly evaluated

For 'Will go to India', **இந்தியாவுக்குப் போவேன்** and **இந்தியாவுக்குப் போனேன்** are not the same.

3.8. Vetrumai Urubu (**வேற்றுமை உருபு**) will be evaluated

E.g., In 'Don't trust her' - **அவளை** is expected and not just **அவள்**

For 'He read his book', **அவன் புத்தகம் படித்தான்** is incorrect, **அவன் அவனுடைய புத்தகத்தைப் படித்தான்** is the correct translation

Reference: Judging rules for வேற்றுமை உருபு
https://tamiltheni.org/resources/

4. THENI – 4 விதைகள்

Translate and write the given English sentence in Tamil.

4.1. Points will be awarded if all below conditions are met

4.1.1. Answer was written and shown to the judge within the allotted time

4.1.2. Tamil letters are clear (including dots for consonants)

4.1.3. Only one of answer was shown to the judge

Team members may consult and write separately, but only one final answer must be shown. Only complete translation (not partial words) will be accepted. If some part of the sentence (words) are written out of line but a clear arrow shows where it should go, and some words are clearly stricken out, Judges may use discretion to understand the intent and context in their evaluation.

4.2. Colloquial translation will be considered as long as

4.2.1. Key words are translated accurately

4.2.2. Meaning clearly reflects the intent of the English sentence

4.3. Simple Grammar (ex Tense) will be strictly evaluated

For 'Will go to India', இந்தியாவுக்குப் போவேன் and இந்தியாவுக்குப் போனேன் are not the same.

4.4. Vetrumai Urubu (வேற்றுமை உருபு) will be evaluated

E.g., In 'Don't trust her' - அவளை is expected and not just அவள்

For 'He read his book', அவன் புத்தகம் படித்தான் is incorrect, அவன் அவனுடைய புத்தகத்தைப் படித்தான் is the correct translation

Reference: Judging rules for வேற்றுமை உருபு
https://tamiltheni.org/resources/

4.5. Ottrezhththu (ஒற்றெழுத்து/மெய்யெழுத்து) will not be strictly evaluated

The rules for this are complex, and younger students are not likely to be taught this in their early grades. Hence, we will not be strictly evaluating this. However, the correct answer and Judge's explanation can be provided as a learning opportunity for the participants.

4.6. The answers could be implicitly translated

For e.g.,

- 'He wanted to buy'
  - **வாங்க நினைத்தான்**
  - **(அவன்) வாங்க நினைத்தான்**
- 'He came down'
  - **(அவன்) கீழே இறங்கி வந்தான்**
  - **இறங்கி வந்தான்**
  - **கீழே வந்தான்**
- 'He came down the stairs'
  - **(அவன்) படிக்கட்டுகளில் இருந்து இறங்கினான்**
  - **(அவன்) படிக்கட்டுகளில் இருந்து (கீழே) இறங்கி வந்தான்**
  - **(அவன்) படிக்கட்டுகளில் இருந்து கீழே வந்தான்**

5. THENI – 5 செடிகள்

Identify the given key word using clue words.

5.1. Points will be awarded if all below conditions are met

5.1.1. The reference to the word being identified (typically a number between 1 and 5) was called out before attempting to identify the word

5.1.2. No more than 3 clue words were given for a keyword

5.1.3. Exact word was identified within the allotted time

5.1.4. Clue words meet all conditions, including number of clue words

5.1.5. Was able to provide meaning (by forming a sentence) of the key word and clue words if asked

5.1.6. No other Tamil words were said by either contestant other than the clue words and the key word

5.1.7. No hand/body gestures were used by the contestants

5.2. Identified key words must be exact as published

தங்கச்சி not accepted for **தங்கை**

5.3. Judges may randomly test a team for their understanding of the clue word or key word and how the clues relate to the key word

It is important that contestants are able to explain the meaning of the clue and key words

5.4. Pronunciation of the key word must be proper (especially **ழ**)

Contestants are encouraged to practice pronunciation of the published words to make sure there is no confusion on the identified word

E.g., Must be properly pronounced

- **பழம்** vs. **பலம்**

E.g., May be accepted

- **பள்ளி** / **பல்லி**
- **அவல்** / **அவள்**

5.5. Contestants can use simple English cue words to exchange key information; judges will warn / disqualify if they sense misuse

E.g., Correct, Next, Skip, Word 1, Word 2, Go back – can be used by the contestants to communicate the game intent to their partner

5.6. New clue can only be given after the other contestant says something (a cue or key word)

5.7. Team can skip to next word without completing all allotted clues and return back to that key word to continue with remaining clues

While judges will keep count of the clues given for a given word, it is contestants responsibility to keep to ensure no additional clue words are given. Judges will not warn / prompt the teams during their allotted time.

5.8. Clue words - Allowed

5.8.1. Must be commonly used words or from the reference dictionary

5.8.2. Must be related to the key word

It is also important for contestants to know how the clue word is related to the key word. For E.g. **குறும்பு** for **குரங்கு** is because Monkeys are commonly referenced in Tamil stories as mischievous.

Explanation context must be relatable to a broader Tamil speaking audience in North America. For E.g., using popular Harry Potter / Witch reference, **மந்திரம்** + **பறந்தான்** can be used for **துடைப்பம்** because common witch stories do convey brooms as magical and also used to fly. However, **திருமணம்** + **பாடகர்** for **கப்பல்** because a famous singer the contestants (and their regional group) knew about had their wedding in a ship, is not acceptable.

5.8.3. Synonym (**தந்தை** for **அப்பா**)

5.8.4. Antonym (**அத்தை** for **மாமா**)

5.8.5. Action verbs (**ஓடு** for **அவசரம்**)

5.8.6. Common similes (**குரங்கு** for **குறும்பு**) can be given as clues

5.8.7. Proper Single, Non-colloquial Tamil words

5.8.8. Proper nouns may be rarely used and must be commonly associated with the key word

E.g., **சிவாஜி** for **நடிப்பு** is allowed, but **மாலதி** for **நடிப்பு** is not allowed

Use of more than 2 proper names in a round (typically 25 words) will be disqualified. Minimize proper nouns and only use them if it helps students enrich understanding of the key word when they use it in public speaking.

5.9. Guidance Clue Words

Words used to GUIDE the team member will be allowed. These are the only exceptions for words that don't need to be related to the given word. However, these must be meant to guide the answer without giving away the Word itself. Judges will make the decision if they deem a word is allowed in this category.
These words will count towards the allowed clue count.
E.g. **வேறு**, **நெடில்**, **ஒருமை**, **கூட்டமாக**, **நடந்தால்**

5.10. Guidance Clue Words

Words used to GUIDE the team member will be allowed. These are the only exceptions for words that don't need to be related to the given word. However, these must be meant to guide the

answer without giving away the Word itself. Judges will make the decision if they deem a word is allowed in this category.
These words will count towards the allowed clue count.
E.g. வேறு, நெடில், ஒருமை, கூட்டமாக, நடந்தால்.

5.11. Clue words - Not Allowed

5.11.1. Part of the key word that on its own has a meaning

பெரியப்பா as a clue for பெரியம்மா is not allowed

5.11.2. Singular/plural (மலர் for மலர்கள் not allowed)

5.11.3. Rhyming words that don't meet the definition of an allowed word (கட்டி for முட்டி) is not allowed. **Note:** only synonyms or acronyms are allowed.

5.11.4. Multiple words as clue – If given, will be treated as multiple clues, that goes towards total clue count

5.11.5. Word should be simple/single word, no compound word

Change History

Date	Version	Change
Oct 22, 2026	1.1	Added rule for ‘pronunciation’ - A.a