

# Translation Game

Try your translation skills with the Nalca language of Western New Guinea!

- I. Read these sentences and their translations.  
(Or for older students: mix them up and try to MATCH the sentences to their translations!)

## NALCA LANGUAGE

## ENGLISH

- |                             |                           |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Samuel pam obla.         | Samuel hit a pig.         |
| 2. Samuel wining obla.      | Samuel hit a bird.        |
| 3. Gelma nauba wining obla. | A girl hit a big bird.    |
| 4. Samuel nauba pam obla.   | Samuel hit a big pig.     |
| 5. Nara gwaneng eibna.      | I saw a sweet potato.     |
| 6. Nara gwaneng demna.      | I ate a sweet potato.     |
| 7. Pam gwaneng demla.       | A pig ate a sweet potato. |
| 8. Samuel gam eibla.        | Samuel saw a dog.         |
| 9. Nara gam eibna.          | I saw a dog.              |
| 10. Anda gam eiblam.        | You saw a dog.            |

- II. Now try to translate the following sentences (if you struggle with this, try answering the questions in Section IV first):

1. Gelma gam obla. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Samuel nauba gwaneng demla. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Nara wining eibna. \_\_\_\_\_

III. Translate from English into the Nalca language:

1. I saw a pig. \_\_\_\_\_
2. A girl ate a sweet potato. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Jeremy hit a big bird. \_\_\_\_\_

IV. Try answering the following questions:

1. Where does the subject appear in the sentence? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Where does the verb appear in the sentence? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Circle one: An adjective comes (before) (after) the noun it modifies.

4. Compare the verb forms in these two sentences:

I saw a dog.

Samuel saw a dog.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Does there seem to be a word in the Nalca language for the English word “a” or “an”?

\_\_\_\_\_

Good job!!! You might be helping in Bible translation some day!!!

These exercises were created by Roger Doriot. He is a missionary in the town of Sentani of Irian Jaya/Paupa, Indonesia. If you enjoyed these pages, please drop him a line at [rogerdoriot@yahoo.com](mailto:rogerdoriot@yahoo.com). You may also find him and his family at [www.rogerdoriot.com](http://www.rogerdoriot.com).

## TRANSLATION GAME ANSWERS

### Section II:

1. A girl hit a dog.
2. Samuel ate a big sweet potato.
3. I saw a bird.

### Section III:

1. Nara pam eibna.
2. Gelma gwaneng demla.
3. Jeremy nauba wining obla.

### Section IV:

1. The subject appears at the beginning of the sentence.
2. The verb appears after the direct object.
3. An adjective comes (before) the noun it modifies.
4. "I saw..." uses "eibna", and "Samuel saw..." uses "eibla":  
The verb ending for the first person singular ("I") is "-na".  
The verb ending for the third person singular ("he", "she", or "it") is "-la".  
The verb ending for the second person singular ("you") is "-lam".  
These endings are added to the verb roots: "ob-", "eib-", and "dem-".
5. No, there is not a word in the Nalca language for the English word "a" or "an".