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# APPLICATION GUIDELINES

MATHS BEYOND LIMITS BALKANS 2023

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## QUALIFYING QUIZ

Qualifying Quiz (QQ) is the major part of the application. We ask you to think about a subset of the presented problems. We ask you to solve **three** out of five *olympic* problems (i.e. problems 1-5) and **three** *exploratory* ones (i.e. problems 6-8). Only the **three best solutions of the olympic problems and all solutions of the exploratory ones** will be taken into account. If you solve three olympic problems and want to call it a day, that's okay. If you want to attempt and submit the remaining two, that's also okay. If you're only able to solve one or two problems, that's fine too! Do not hesitate to submit partial solutions. We want to see how you think, and the process itself is more important to us than the final solution. This applies especially to problems 6-8, which are meant to help us understand your mathematical maturity.

**We accept solutions only in pdf format.** They can either be scans of handwriting (provided it is legible!) or typed in L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X or some other system.

**Do not get upset if you find the problems difficult as they are meant to be demanding, thought-provoking, and getting the best out of you.**

You can use books or the Internet to look up definitions or formulas, but do not try to look for the problems themselves! In case the problem statement is unclear to you even after getting help from the aforementioned sources, please contact us. You may not consult or get help from anyone else. Violation of any of these rules may permanently disqualify you from attending any Maths Beyond Limits camp.

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## APPLICANT QUESTIONNAIRE

Applicant Questionnaire (AQ) consists of a Google Form to fill out and a **personal data processing consent form you have to attach**. After submitting the form, you are still able to edit it, until (and including) **1 February 2023 (23:59 CET)**, which is the deadline.

**You do not have to fill it out all at once — if you want to take a break, you can submit it and still edit it later. It will probably be the most useful for you to submit it at the very beginning, after filling out just the mandatory fields. After the end of the application process, you will receive an e-mail containing everything that you have sent in your application. You will need a google account to fill out the AQ form, but it is not required to have a gmail address to do so.**

Personal Statement is essentially an essay allowing us to get to know you a little bit and understand your mathematical background and interests. You are given a degree of freedom in what you write in there, but below we provided you with questions that you may find useful.

- Why do you want to participate in MBL-B? What do you hope to gain?
- When and why you became interested in mathematics?
- Are there any people that influenced you largely on your mathematical journey, or in your life in general? What did they do to make you admire them?
- Who is the most intriguing person you have met so far while pursuing maths? This could be a fellow competitor, teacher, or maths enthusiast just like you...
- What branches of mathematics do you like the most? Why? What branches or topics are your weak spots?
- Have you read any mathematical books or blogs, watched videos on math topics you find exceptionally intriguing? Which ones?

- What is the most beautiful problem you've ever solved?
- Have you ever come up with a maths problem yourself? Did you know the solution right away, but needed help solving it, is it even solved by now? Did you ever organize a maths competition for your peers? What problems did you face and how did you solve them?
- Do you have any other hobbies? Could you tell us a little about it ? (e.g. skating, boxing, baking, playing instruments, playing chess...)

## EVENING ACTIVITIES

Applicant Questionnaire allows you to propose up to three Evening Activities (EAs), which are non-mathematical activities happening every evening, for about 60-120 minutes each. Most of them are run by the participants themselves. Proposing them is not obligatory, but it is definitely very beneficial, as we do take the proposals into account a lot! We want the camp to be filled with super-cool events and you can be one of the people contributing to that!

**Below you can see some of the ways to make a good EA**, together with some examples from the previous editions of MBL.

- Make it an introduction into some not-so-popular thing that you are interested in.  
e.g.: *Chinese Language, Improvisation Workshops, Singing Workshops, Karate*
- Make it a really random and funny thing.  
e.g.: *Recognition of Old Mobile Phones Quiz, Spelunky Tournament, Pique Turns, Maths in Simpsons, Make a Postcard!*
- Make some interesting vintage thing.  
e.g.: *Donnie Darko: Movie + Discussion, Introduction to Swedish Cinematography, Crêpes Artistiques, Xiangqui*
- Make it some classic group integrating thing.  
e.g.: *Karaoke, Vast Range of Quizzes*

To get more good ideas, do check out MBL 2021 [camp brochure](#).

## There are also things you should avoid when proposing an EA:

- Avoid giving proposals that are somewhat trivial and do not require any preparation (in particular, just some specific board/card game).  
e.g.: *Card Games, Board Games, FIFA, MAO, SET, Mafia*  
Note: some way to make such proposals better is to do them in the form of a tournament or workshops (where you actually teach some techniques) and make them more specific and creative.  
e.g.: *Contract Bridge Workshops, How to play Mafia perfectly*
- Avoid activities that will certainly not take 60 minutes.  
e.g.: *"Kalambury", Puzzle, Ninja*
- Avoid activities that are organised as Special Events.  
e.g.: *Mountain Trip, Campfire*
- Be aware of the restrictions that the accommodation might have. If you want to propose something that has special requirements feel free to ask us if it is a good idea.  
e.g.: *Making Cookies, Creating a spaceship*
- Do not propose just sports as they are to be organised anyway. If you want to propose a sport-connected activity, make it somewhat more involved.  
e.g.: *Frisbee, Sports, Football*
- Do not propose just film screenings. If you want to propose a movie-connected activity, make it somewhat more involved.  
e.g.: *Flatland Watching, Movie Night*
- Do give a good description of your proposal, not some vague title.  
e.g.: *Ice-breakers, Circle Activities*

A good EA proposal can look like this:

*IMPROVISATION WORKSHOPS — being a member of a youth theatre I would like to give the other participants a feel of what doing theatrical improvisation is like. I want to do a few fun exercises to increase the body-awareness, creativity in imagining unexpected turns of random situations and confidence in improvising. Most of them will be group activities so it should help the participants to integrate. It would be great if I could be provided with speakers and a big room.*

Also, in previous years, we had some EAs group proposals. If you are applying together with some friends, you can propose an EA together! However, we require the groups to be no bigger than three people. In order to do so, all of you should put an identical proposal and make a note saying which persons are in your group.

**Note:** Be aware that proposing an EA means you are willing to organise it when accepted (but does not mean we will definitely ask you to do so).

## CAMPER TALKS

Camper Talks are 25-minute-long presentations given by campers. They should tell about some mathematical or maths-connected phenomenon in a swift and light way. Again, they are not mandatory but can serve you a big favour when your application is assessed.

To get more good ideas, do check out the [MBL 2021 camp brochure](#).

Here is an example of a description of a Camper Talk:

*RANDOM WALKS ON GRAPHS — In the talk, we try to calculate the average time it would take to walk (randomly) from a given vertex  $A$  to another given vertex  $B$  on various graphs and then derive the general formula.*

**Note:** Be aware that proposing a Camper Talk means you are willing to give it when accepted (but that does not mean we will for sure ask you to do so).

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## SEMITUTORS

Being a semitutor at MBL means running at least one full time (three-day-long, 80 minutes each day) Mathematical Class (MC) by yourself. You will be asked to prepare handouts well before the camp and also to practise your class with an experienced mentor. We ask you to give some classes proposals in the last form — if we choose any of them, you will become a semitutor.

As a part of the application process, we are going to have a short (about 20 minutes long) interview with you through which we should be able to get to know you and the topic of your proposed class better. If you do not get accepted as a semitutor, you will still have a (unchanged) chance to be a regular participant.

Again, we encourage you to take a look at the MCs from MBL 2021 in the [camp brochure](#). It is also there that you can find some handouts from the classes — they should give you more insight into how MCs are run.

When thinking about a good MCs proposal, you should consider these factors:

- Think about topics you understand. It can be fun to learn new things and then tell others about them, but on the other hand, it is unpleasant for the audience when the lecturer is trying to figure out a proof on the fly. You cannot properly teach what you have not understood yet.
- Choose something you are passionate about. Everybody likes seeing people talking about things they are truly keen on.

A good Mathematical Class proposal can look like this:

*COMBINATORIAL GEOMETRY — Combinatorial geometry is a mixture of interesting mathematical areas such as geometry, topology, combinatorics and algebra. Most of the problems are easy to understand but the solutions require some clever ideas. For example, a typical question would look like this. Can you always cut a cake into six parts, such that each part has the same amount of candles on it? What if you can only use your knife three times? We will work through some problems to understand the basic definitions and ideas, and I will also talk about the active research areas in this field. The class requires just a basic understanding of Euclidean geometry.*

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What about COVID-19?

At the moment, we are not planning to have any COVID-19-specific policies regarding the camp. We will encourage all participants to be vaccinated with a WHO-approved vaccine but it is not mandatory to be vaccinated to attend the camp. If the situation changes we withhold the right to change the camp's COVID-19 policies following the recommendations of local health authorities.

Is it safe to travel to Bosnia?

Yes, it is. We guarantee the safety of all our participants during the camp and their travel to the campsite. Before the camp, we will send all participants detailed guidelines on how to reach Konjic from all the nearest airports in the region.

Is it possible to participate remotely? Are you going to stream classes?

No, we are only planning to organize an in-person camp. We do not plan to stream classes or offer any virtual activities.

Do I have to fill out AQ in one sitting?

No! After submitting, you will receive an edit link, valid until the application deadline. Hence, if you want to take a break, just submit the form and edit it later.

How much does the camp cost?

The camp is FREE for all participants! We cover accommodation, food, participation in trips and all activities, as well as transportation in Konjic. We only ask families to cover the costs of travel. If you would like to come but are unable to afford to travel to and from Bosnia, talk to us. We may be able to give you a travel grant or help you find a source of funding.

I am from country X. Can I apply?

Yes! People from all over the world can apply!

I am 14 or 20 years old. Can I apply?

The camp is aimed at students aged 15–19. The most important requirement is that when applying, you **must** be a middle/high school student. We can make some exceptions for younger and older students only if they satisfy this condition.

There is school in March. . .

We are aware that in many countries the school year is in full swing in March and April during MBL Balkans. In previous years, we wrote formal letters asking for permission for school absence to the headmasters or class counselors and only one of the applicants (ever) couldn't come because of school. We will do as much as we can to assure that there are no problems this year either.

I have another question.

Maybe you can find the answer in one of the previous years' vlogs, on our [website](#) or [Facebook fanpage](#). We will post some videos with advice regarding the application process on our [MBL Balkans Instagram page](#) and [MBL Balkans Facebook page](#). If this doesn't help, feel free to email us at [mathsbeyondlimits.balkan@gmail.com](mailto:mathsbeyondlimits.balkan@gmail.com)!