
APPLICATION GUIDELINES

MATHS BEYOND LIMITS 2023

QUALIFYING QUIZ

Qualifying Quiz (QQ) is the major part of the application. It consists of five olympic problems (1-5) and three exploratory ones (6-8), and we ask you to think about a subset of them.

Only the **three best solutions** from olympic problems will be taken into account. If you solve three problems and want to call it a day, that's okay. If you want to attempt the remaining two, that's also okay. If you're only able to solve one or two problems, and even if only partially, that's fine too!

All exploratory problems are taken into account, and we consider them 1.5x more important than the olympic ones. They are also intended to be much harder and longer than them, so don't feel discouraged when you don't make as much progress as you want – submitting solutions that are far from full can also be hugely beneficial to the application. We want to see how you think, and the process itself is more important to us than the final solution.

We accept solutions only in pdf format. They can either be scans of handwriting (provided it is legible!) or typed in \LaTeX 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 these rules may permanently disqualify you from attending Maths Beyond Limits.

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) **6 May 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 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

The Personal Statement is essentially an essay allowing us to get to know you a little bit, understand your mathematical background and interests. Feel free to write there whatever you want, but below we provided you with some example questions of things that we would find interesting to read about.

- Why do you want to participate in MBL? What do you hope to gain?
- How do you develop your passion for mathematics?
- What do you like about your school and community mathematical resources, and what would you change?

We also want to get you to know you, and understand who you are – what you’re interested in, what you like doing, etc. Here are examples of things you can tell us about (you don’t need to answer all of these questions):

- How did it happen that you became interested in mathematics?
- Are there any people that influenced you on your mathematical journey, or in your life in general?
- What branches of mathematics do you like the most? Why?
- Have you read any mathematical books you find exceptionally intriguing? Which ones?
- What is the most beautiful problem you’ve ever solved?
- Is there any particular problem (not some well-known hypothesis), whose statement you understand, but which you cannot solve?
- Do you have any other hobbies? Could you tell us a little about it?
- What do you like doing in your free time?

If you have been to MBL before...

As we already know you, we would like you to mostly focus on what’s new – so please don’t repeat what you already told us in your previous application. We’re interested in what’s happened since the last time you were on MBL, so you can tell us:

- What have you learned since then?
- Has the participation in MBL affected you in some way? E.g. changed what you focused on in terms of studying or plans for the future.
- What were the highlights of your time at MBL? What do you remember most vividly?
- What are you looking forward to at this year’s MBL?

EVENING ACTIVITIES

Applicant Questionnaire allows you to propose up to three Evening Activities (EAs), which are non-mathematical activities happening every evening, for about 90-120 minutes each. Most of them are run by the participants themselves. Proposing them is not obligatory, but it is definitely 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, Handstands and More, Singing Workshops, Karate, Tango Session*
- Make it a really random and funny thing.
e.g.: *Recognition of Old Mobile Phones Quiz, Spelunky Tournament, Kebab Making, Pique Turns, Make a Postcard!*
- Make some interesting vintage thing.
e.g.: *Donnie Darko: Movie + Discussion, Introduction to Swedish Cinematography, Crêpes Artistiques, Nordic Folk/Metal, Xiangqi*
- Make it some classic group integrating thing.
e.g.: *Karaoke, Vast Range of Quizzes*

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

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*

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*

— Avoid activities that will certainly not take 60 minutes.

e.g.: *“Kalambury”, Puzzle, Ninja*

— Avoid activities that are organised as Special Events (look it up in [camp brochure](#)).

e.g.: *Mountain Trip, Campfire*

— Be aware of the restrictions that the accommodation has. We do not have any ovens, lakes, old abandoned uranium mines etc. We do have a projector, lots of cardboard, a tourist cooker and a forest nearby. If you want to propose something that has special requirements, either ask us if it is a good idea or be prepared to provide the materials you need.

e.g.: *Making Cookies, Table Tennis Tournament*

— 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 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 increasing the body-awareness, creativity in imagining unexpected turns of random situations and the 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 some 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 persons. 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 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 average time it would take to walk (randomly) from 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 does not mean we will for sure ask you to do so).

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. If you do not get accepted as a semitutor, we will consider your application as a regular participant.

Again, we encourage you to take a look at the MCs 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 the basic understanding of euclidean geometry.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What about Covid-19?

We are aware that many people are still concerned about Covid-19, but we are not planning to impose any restrictions this year. We are monitoring the situation closely and will follow guidelines set forth by WHO and governments. In (hopefully unlikely) case of new dangerous variants or outbreaks, we may require vaccines, masking, and testing.

What about the war in Ukraine? It is safe to travel to Poland?

At the moment, Poland remains completely safe and there are no travel disruptions. Safety of participants is our priority, and if the situation changes, we may cancel the camp, change its location or make it online. However, it seems extremely unlikely that this will happen.

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 at one sitting?

No! After submitting, you will receive an edit link, valid until 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, local transportation, participation in trips and all activities. We only ask families to cover the costs of travel. If you would like to come, but are unable to afford travelling to and from Poland, 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 for 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 September. . .

We are aware that in many countries school starts during or before MBL. In the previous years we wrote formal letters asking for permission for school absence to the headmasters or class counsellors 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](#). If not, feel free to email us at mathsbeyondlimits@gmail.com!