



# Milton Keynes Dyslexia Policy

Guidance on the assessment of dyslexia  
and other reading and spelling  
difficulties

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**Educational Psychology Service**

and

**Special Educational Needs and Disability  
Inclusion Service (SENDIS)**



**MILTON KEYNES  
COUNCIL**



# **Contents:**

## **Introduction**

### **The Assessment of Dyslexia**

1. Key features in defining dyslexia
2. How to assess key features of dyslexia
  - Assessment of reading accuracy
  - Assessment of reading fluency
  - Assessment of spelling
  - Reading and/or spelling difficulties are priority areas of need
  - Measuring severity of difficulties
  - Evaluating persistence
  - The provision of appropriate learning opportunities
  - The role of support services
  - Parental involvement
  - Pupil involvement

### **The Assessment of other Literacy Difficulties**

- Comprehension
- Handwriting

### **Appendix 1: Assessing Reading and Spelling**

### **Appendix 2: Resources**

### **References**



## **Introduction**

*This guidance has been prepared to assist schools in developing their assessments of pupils with literacy difficulties. It has been developed in response to requests for advice on the use of standardised assessment for diagnostic purposes, target setting and programme planning. It should be read in conjunction with the range of guidance on curriculum entitlement for children with special educational needs.*

When planning for children with special educational needs, teachers need to ensure that they set suitable learning objectives by tracking back through the National Curriculum Framework, including the PNS Renewed Framework for teaching literacy. Guidance on this process is provided in *Including all children in the literacy hour and daily mathematics lesson* (DfES 2002).

The SEN Code of Practice specifies that schools have a duty to identify children's needs and make appropriate provision. The role of the SENCo is to *'take the lead in (the) assessment of the child's particular strengths and weaknesses; in planning future support for the child in discussion with colleagues; and in monitoring and subsequently reviewing the action taken'*. (COP 4.16) This includes the assessment of children who have significant difficulties in the areas of literacy, some of whom may have dyslexia.

This guidance assists schools in carrying out detailed literacy assessments for children with dyslexia and other literacy difficulties. It considers the use of National Curriculum and other curriculum-based assessments and when standardised tests may be appropriate. It also addresses the issue of selecting relevant and valid measures to supplement other curriculum-based assessments.

The guidance on assessment supplements Milton Keynes Dyslexia Policy (2003) and Dyslexia: Information for Parents (2004). Milton Keynes Dyslexia Policy was developed to clarify the role of schools in assessing children with significant difficulties in literacy that may be classified as dyslexia.

## **The Assessment of Dyslexia**

*Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. This focuses on literacy learning at the 'word level' and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities. It provides the basis of a staged process of assessment through teaching.*

*Milton Keynes Dyslexia Policy, 2003 and British Psychological Society, 1999*

## 1. Key features in defining dyslexia

- The child has difficulties in **reading accuracy and fluency**.
- The child has difficulties in **spelling accuracy**.
- Difficulties in word reading and/or spelling are **priority needs**.
- The difficulties are **severe**. Milton Keynes Dyslexia Policy uses the criterion of at least School Action.
- The difficulties are **persistent** and the child has received effective additional provision.
- The child has received **appropriate learning opportunities**.
- Staff would have consulted with **support services** regarding the child's needs, including SENDIS and the Educational Psychology Service.
- **Parent support** and involvement would have been sought.
- **The pupil** is involved.

## 2. How to assess key features of dyslexia:

### • **Assessment of reading accuracy**

At word level, NLS lists are useful for assessing accuracy, as are lists of the vocabulary needed for particular subjects or personal interests. Standardised tests of word reading provide measures of attainment in addition to diagnostic information. However, it should be noted that some reading tests that purport to measure reading accuracy are measures of text reading rather than word reading, as the child is able to use contextual cues, e.g. *Neale Analysis of Reading Ability-Revised*.

Non-word reading tests are particularly useful as they give insights into phonic knowledge and pinpoint decoding skills.

### • **Assessment of reading fluency**

Reading fluency can be calculated informally using a stopwatch and counting the number of words read in a certain period. Fluent reading gives an indication of secure word knowledge. Measures of text level reading can yield information not only about reading accuracy but also about fluency. A few word reading tests include measures of fluency.

### • **Assessment of spelling**

Informal assessment of spelling can be made using NLS word lists. To supplement this information, standardised assessment using a single word spelling test should be carried out.

### • **Reading and/or spelling difficulties are priority areas of need.**

The school needs to have considered the following areas before using the term dyslexia:

- Absence from school
- Changes of school
- Changes of staff
- Sensory impairment
- English as an additional language
- Medical conditions
- Behavioural difficulties
- Engagement and motivation

It is recognised that some children have additional difficulties that may accompany dyslexia. In particular, it is common for children with dyslexia to have a history of speech and language difficulties. A common underlying factor in dyslexia is poor phonological processing.

- **Measuring severity of difficulties**

The child would be receiving provision in school at School Action. This would include some provision that is 'additional to and different from those provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum'. This would be thoroughly monitored through target setting and review, and parents would be consulted.

Some children would be at School Action Plus, which would involve provision as above. In addition to this, the class or subject teacher and the SENCO are provided with advice or support from outside specialists e.g. SENDIS. Thresholds for School Action Plus are summarised in Milton Keynes SEN Handbook.

- **Evaluating persistence**

The child has received effective provision at School Action. The child has at least one evaluated Individual Education Plan (IEP) that targets word level reading and/or spelling.

- **The provision of appropriate learning opportunities**

In order to use the term dyslexia, the child needs to have had access to:

**Wave 1:**

'Quality First Teaching': the effective inclusion of all children in a high-quality literacy hour. This would include ensuring that materials are age appropriate and conceptually relevant. Schools may be working towards dyslexia friendly classrooms.

**Wave 3:**

Specific targeted approaches for individual children identified as requiring SEN intervention.

Children at Wave 3 may have particular needs related to literacy, or needs associated with other barriers to their learning.

Provision at Wave 3 is likely to draw on specialist advice. It may involve the adjustment of learning objectives and teaching styles, and/or additional provision. It aims to reduce gaps in attainment and facilitate greater access to Waves 1 or 2.

Children receiving Wave 3 support will always be placed on *School Action* and on *School Action Plus* if an external agency is involved in assessment, planning and review.

Some children at Wave 3 may have received Wave 2 small group provision in the past, e.g. ELS, ALS or KS3 Literacy Units.

Many schools are identifying, developing and evaluating their provision through the use of a 'provision map'.

Further practical guidance on assessing reading and spelling is included in Appendix 1.

- **The role of support services**

**SENDIS**

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Inclusion Service works in partnership with schools and other settings to increase their capacity to teach pupils who have SEN and/or a disability. SENDIS support is based on the needs of individual pupils, broader school issues and issues across groups of schools.

SENDIS aims to:

- contribute to raising achievement by promoting inclusive practice where barriers to learning are overcome, suitable challenges set and pupils' diverse needs met.
- develop the knowledge, skills and expertise of practitioners and work collaboratively with other divisions and agencies.
- encourage early intervention.

### **The Educational Psychology Service**

Educational Psychologists work through a consultation framework to:

- support schools to meet children's complex needs.
- evaluate interventions and projects.
- work closely with parents.

An educational psychologist will always be involved if the Local Authority is making a statutory assessment of a pupil's special educational needs.

- **Parental involvement**

Parents should be involved in discussions when there are concerns about progress in literacy. The information that they can contribute to assessment can be valuable in identifying their child's needs and possible ways forward. Parents need to be aware of the actions the school is taking and their views should be taken into account. SENCOs should make use of the leaflet entitled 'Dyslexia: Information for Parents' available from the Educational Psychology Service.

- **Pupil involvement**

The child should be consulted about all matters concerning them including their learning targets. During the assessment process, they are likely to have some insights into what helps them to learn, and when they experience difficulties. Some useful guidance on involving children and young people can be found in the Enabling Pupil Participation section of the Milton Keynes SEN Handbook.

## **2. The Assessment of other Literacy Difficulties**

- **Comprehension**

Reading comprehension can only be assessed at text level. Informal assessment can be carried out using a range of reading books, curriculum texts, magazines, etc. taking into account a pupil's interests. Some standardised text-reading tests include miscue analysis, which provides useful information about the particular strategies being used. These can provide ideas for programme planning.

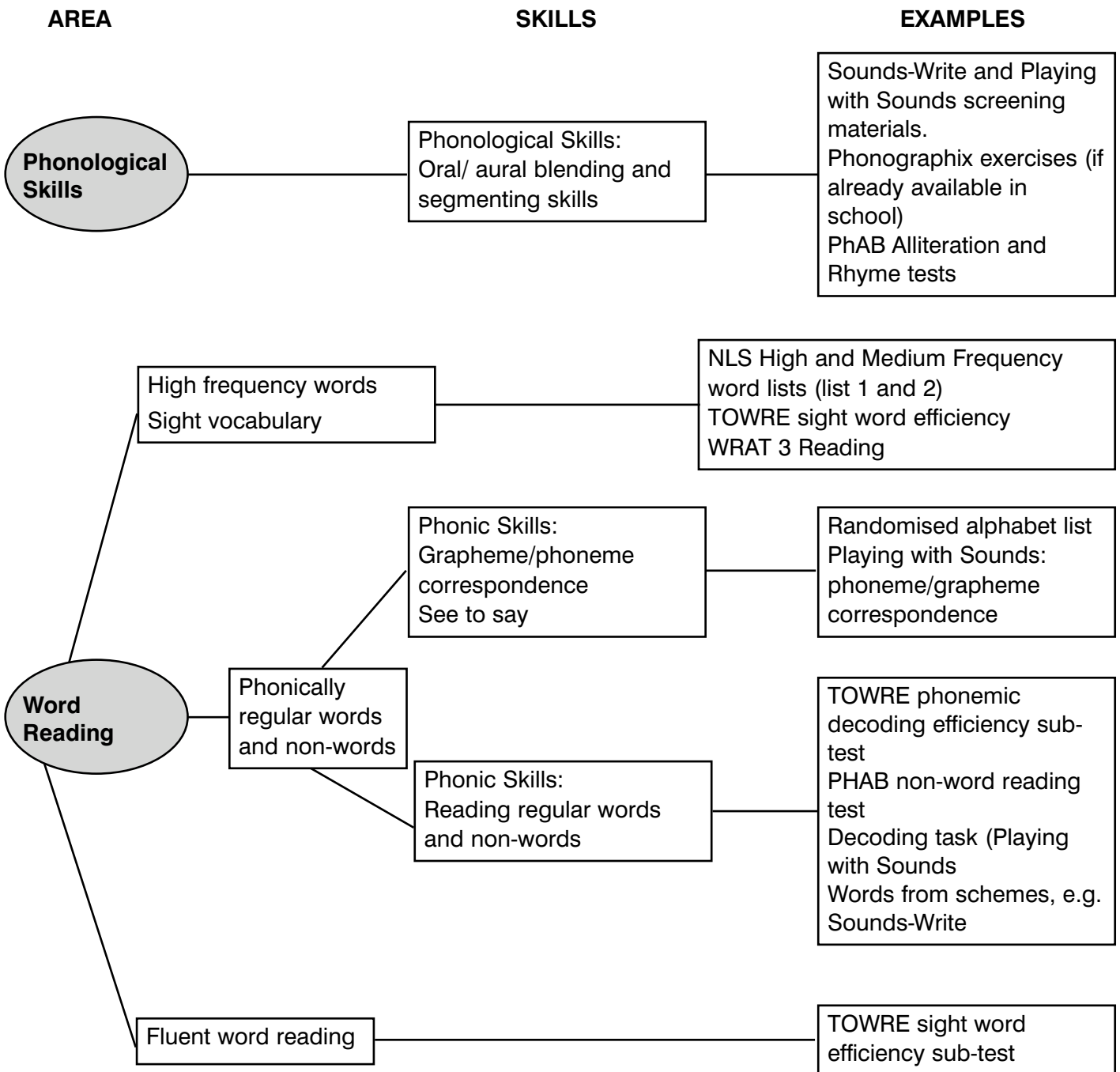
Many children who have problems in reading comprehension have difficulties in language development. Advice is available to schools from support services including the Speech and Language Therapy Service.

- **Handwriting:**

Some children with literacy difficulties have problems in developing handwriting skills. Guidance is given in the Guidelines for supporting school-aged children with co-ordination difficulties in the MK SEN Handbook.

Handwriting speed needs to be assessed for special arrangements for GCSEs and in some circumstances for SATs.

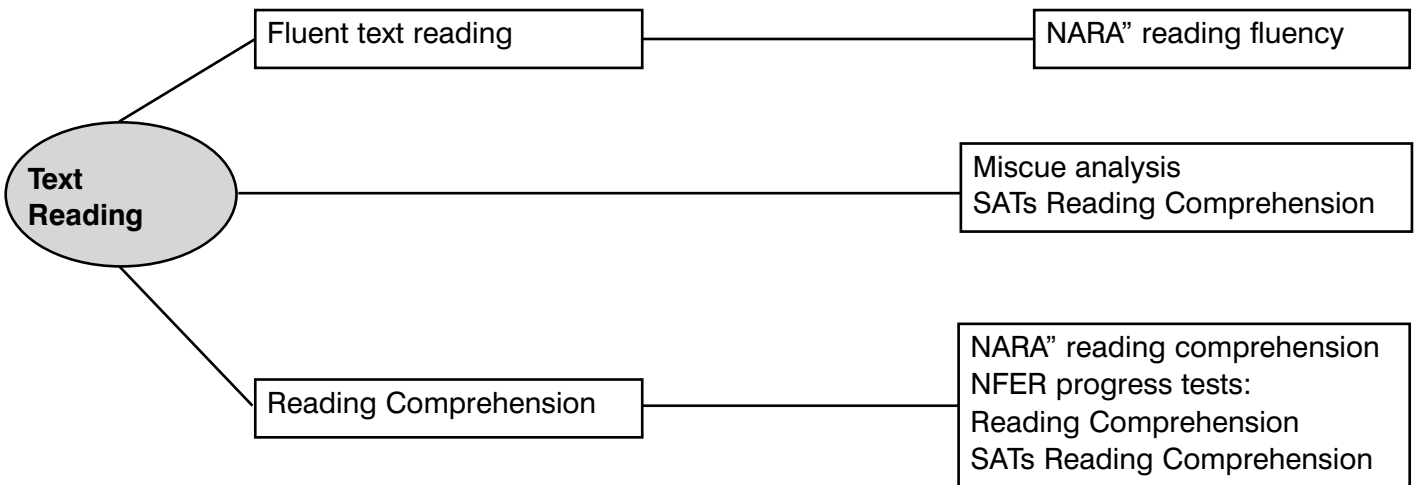
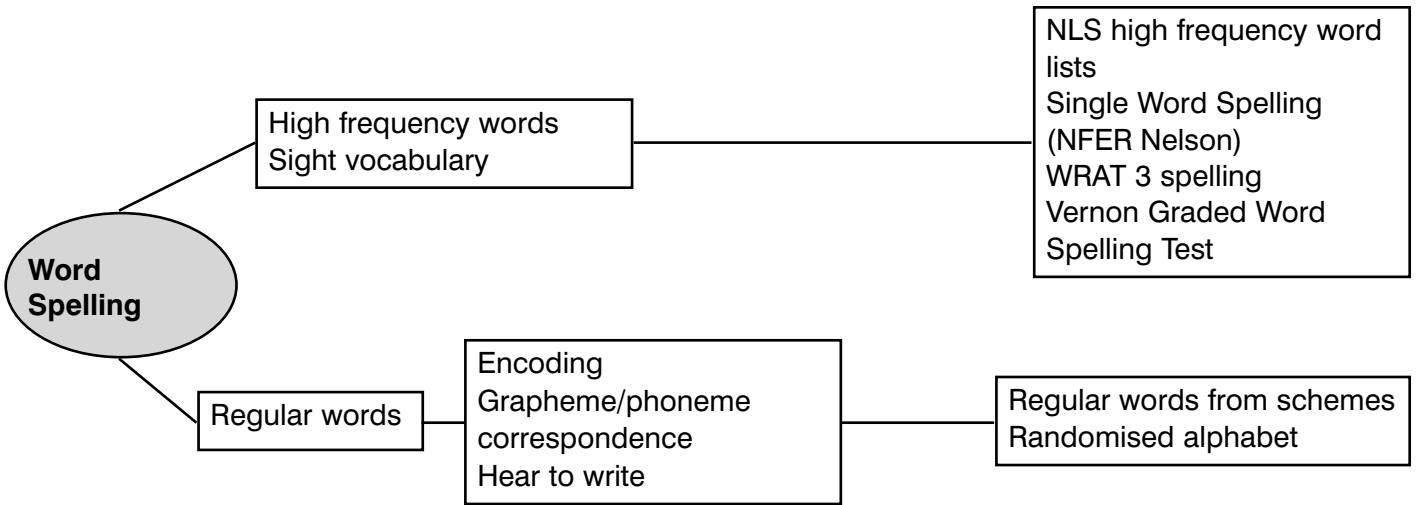
# APPENDIX 1: Assessing Reading and Spelling



**AREA**

**SKILLS**

**EXAMPLES**



## Resources

Title	Date	Authors	Publisher	Age Range
Neale Analysis of Reading Ability, 2nd revised British edition (NARAI)	1989	Neale, M D	NFER-Nelson <a href="http://www.nfer-nelson.co.uk/catalogue">http://www.nfer-nelson.co.uk/catalogue</a>	6 - 12 years 11 months
Reading Reflex (Phonographix)	1998	McGuinness, C and McGuinness, G	Penguin	Most appropriate for 5 -11 years
Phonological Assessment Battery (PhAB)	1997	Fredrickson, N; Frith, V and Reason, R	NFER-Nelson	6 -14 years
Sounds-Write	2004	Case, S; Philpot, D and Walker, J	Available locally following training	Most appropriate for 5 -11 years
Single Word Spelling	2000	Sacre, L and Masterson, J	NFER-Nelson	5 - 15 years 2 months
Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE)	1999	Torgesen, J K; Wagner, R K and Rashotte, C A	Pro-Ed (available in the UK from Harcourt Assessment)	6 -24 years 11 months
Vernon Graded Word Spelling Test	1997	Vernon, P E	Hodder and Stoughton	6 - 18 years
Wide Range Achievement Test <sup>III</sup> (WRAT 3) Reading, Spelling and Arithmetic	1993	Wilkinson, G S	Wide Range Inc (available in the UK from Harcourt Assessment)	5 - 18 years
Playing with Sounds: a Supplement to Progression in Phonics	2004		Department for Education and Skills Ref DfES 0280-2004	Foundation and Year 1 +

## References

- Backhouse, G. and Morris, M. (2005) *Dyslexia? Assessing and Reporting: The Patoss Guide* Hodder and Murray, London
- British Psychological Society Division of Educational and Child Psychology (1999) *Dyslexia, Literacy and Psychological Assessment* Report by the Working Party, British Psychological Society, Leicester
- DfEE (1999) *The National Literacy Strategy: Framework for Teaching* ISBN 0855227141
- DfEE (1999) *The National Literacy Strategy: Additional Literacy Support (ALS)* Ref 0337/2004 CD
- DfEE (1999/2000) *The National Literacy Strategy Phonics - Progression in Phonics* ISBN 0193122464
- DfEE (2001) *Key Stage 3 National Strategy - Literacy Progress Units* Ref 0477/2001
- DfES (2002) *SEN Code of Practice* Ref. DfES/581/2001
- DfES (2001) *The National Literacy Strategy; Early Literacy Support Programme* Ref DfES 0651/2001 and 0650/2001
- DfES (2002) *The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies: Including all Children in the literacy hour and daily mathematics lesson* Ref DfES 0465/2002
- DfES (2002) *The National Literacy Strategy - Further Literacy Support: Resource Pack* Ref 0359 /2002
- DfES (2004) *Primary National Strategy - Playing with Sounds: A supplement to progression in phonics* Ref 0280/2004
- Milton Keynes Dyslexia Policy (2003)* Milton Keynes Council
- Dyslexia: Information for Parents (2004)* Milton Keynes Council
- Special Educational Needs Handbook (2006)* Milton Keynes Council







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আপনার নিজের ভাষায় যাতে আপনি এই তথ্যগুলি বুঝতে পারেন সেই জন্য কাউন্সিল আপনাকে সাহায্য করতে পারে অথবা বিকল্প ভাবে এই তথ্যগুলি আপনাকে দিতে পারে। দয়া করে নিচের অংশটুকু ভর্তি করে ফেরৎ পাঠান।

Bengali

本市議會能以閣下自己的語言或提供其他型式以助閣下理解其內容。敬請填寫並寄回以下部份。

Chinese

આ માહિતીને તમારી ભાષામાં સમજવામાં કાઉન્સિલ તમને મદદ કરી શકે. વધારે જાણવા માટે નીચેના વિભાગમાં વિગતો ભરીને તમને જોઈતી ભાષા જણાવો અને નીચેના સરનામે મોકલો :

Gujarati

ਕੌਂਸਲ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਮਝਣ ਲਈ ਮਦਦ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਬਦਲਵੇਂ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਕਰਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਭਾਗ ਭਰੋ ਅਤੇ ਵਾਪਸ ਕਰੋ।

Punjabi

Baraza la jiji laweza kukusadia kufahamu habari hii kwa lugha ya Kiswahili ama ikuletee kwa muundo mwingine kama vilivyohitanjika. Tafadhali kamilisha sehemu iloko hapa chini harafu irejeshe kwetu.

Somali

Kansalku waxuu kaa cawinkaa fahamka akhbaatan oo luqadaada ku qoran ama siyaabo ka bedelan. Faldan soo buuxi oo soo celi qaybtan hoose.

Swahili

இந்த தகவலை உங்கள் சொந்த மொழியில் புரிந்துகொள்ளவோ அல்லது மாற்று வடிவத்தில் வழங்குவதற்கோ சமூக சபை உதவ இயலும். தயவு செய்து கீழ்க்கண்ட பிரிவை பூர்த்தி செய்து அனுப்பிவைக்கவும்.

Tamil

کوئسل ان معلومات کو آپ کی اپنی زبان میں سمجھانے میں مدد دے سکتی ہے یا متبادل شکلوں میں فراہم کر سکتی ہے۔ برا مہربانی نیچے دیا ہوا حصہ مکمل کر کے واپس بھیج دیں۔

Urdu

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Preferred Language:  **বাংলা** (Bengali)  中文 (Chinese)  **ગુજરાતી** (Gujarati)

**ਪੰਜਾਬੀ** (Punjabi)  **Soomali** (Somali)  **Kiswahili** (swahili)  **தமிழ்** (Tamil)  **أردو** (urdu)

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