

(J) The Curragh of Kildare

J1. Determine the Irish names of the following villages and translate each name.

	English	Irish	Translation
20	Mullaghbane	<i>An Mullach Bán</i>	<i>The White Summit</i>
21	Killananny	<i>Cill an Eanaigh/ Coill an Eanaigh</i>	<i>Church of the Fen/ Wood of the Fen</i>
22	Knocknakillardy	<i>Cnoc na Cille Airde/ Cnoc na Coille Airde</i>	<i>Hill of the High Church/ Hill of the High Wood</i>
23	Gortnabinna	<i>Gort na Binne</i>	<i>Field of the Peak</i>
24	Clashgortmore	<i>Clais an Ghoirt Mhóir</i>	<i>Pit of the Big Field</i>
25	Killbeg	<i>An Chill Bheag/ An Choill Bheag</i>	<i>The Small Church/ The Small Wood</i>
26	Blackcastle	<i>An Caisleán Dubh</i>	Black castle

J2. Explain your answers.

Orthographic correspondences: The English names are phonetic imitations of the Irish names. The letter correspondences (Irish/English) include *c/k*, *ch/gh*, and *agh/y*, but many Irish letters do not have English equivalents; for example, there is no distinction between *cill* and *coill*.

Irish place names: The names fit the following pattern, where brackets represent optional parts; note that adjectives come after the respective nouns:

[An] <noun-1> [<adjective-1>] [an/na <noun-2> [<adjective-2>]]

If a name includes a second noun, it is in the “of” form, which is analogous to the “<noun>’s” form in English, such as “John’s.” If it includes an adjective after the “of” noun, this adjective is also in the “of” form. Furthermore, an article before the “of” noun is sometimes *na* rather than *an*. We can identify the related patterns by comparing the two forms.

Nouns:

Base form	“Of” form	Translation
gort	an ghoirt	field
an currach	an churraigh	marsh
an pháirc/páirc	na páirce	park
cill	na cille	church
an choill	na coille	wood
an bun/ bun	?	base
an bhinn	?	peak
baile	?	town
cluain	?	meadow
gleann	?	valley
eanach	?	fen

Base form	“Of” form	Translation
an dún	?	ford
talamh	?	land
an mhainistir	?	abbey
an chlais	?	pit
?	na muice	pig
?	an mhullaigh	summit
?	an uain	lamb
?	an chairn	mound
?	an chaisleáin	castle
?	an chnoic	hill

We notice two classes of nouns.

Class A: The nouns whose last vowel is *i*.

- Insert *-h-* in the base form when preceded by the article.
- Add *-e* in the end to construct the “of” form.
- Use the article *na* in the “of” form.

Class B: The nouns whose last vowel is not *i*.

- No changes in the base form.
- Add *-i-* before the last consonant cluster to construct the “of” form.
- Use the article *an* and insert *-h-* after the first consonant in the “of” form.

Adjectives: The behavior of an adjective depends on the class of the related noun.

Base form		“Of” form		Translation
Class A	Class B	Class A	Class B	
	dhubh		duibhe	black
	bhán	bháin		white
ard				high
	íseal			low
mór	mhór			big
beag				small

An adjective after a Class A noun behaves like a Class A noun with an article. Similarly, an adjective after a Class B noun behaves like a Class B noun with an article.

English place names: The Irish words always have the same English correspondence, regardless of their grammatical form, with the exception of the *-ach/-aigh* words; for example, *bán*, *bháin*, *bhán*, and *báine* all correspond to *-bane* in an English name.