

Linguistic Landscape of South Asia

Linguistics · Answer Key · 15 Questions

1. Which language family does the majority of languages in Northern India belong to?

- A) Dravidian
- B) Indo-Aryan**
- C) Austroasiatic
- D) Tibeto-Burman

2. The concept of the 'Dravidian' language family was first systematically proposed by which scholar?

- A) Robert Caldwell**
- B) George Grierson
- C) William Jones
- D) Suniti Kumar Chatterji

3. Which of these is the most widely spoken language belonging to the Munda branch of the Austroasiatic family?

- A) Khasi
- B) Santali**
- C) Nicobarese
- D) Ho

4. What is the primary characteristic of the 'South Asian Linguistic Area' (Sprachbund)?

- A) Shared genetic origin
- B) Common script evolution
- C) Shared syntactic and phonological features despite diverse origins**
- D) Uniform grammatical gender systems

5. Which script is considered the ancestor of almost all modern South Asian writing systems, including Devanagari?

- A) Kharosthi
- B) Brahmi**
- C) Indus Script
- D) Grantha

6. The 'Great Andamanese' languages have historically been classified under which broader, controversial grouping?

A) Andamanese isolate

B) Indo-Pacific

C) Austronesian

D) Sino-Tibetan

7. Which language is legally recognized as a 'Classical Language' of India, notable for its 2,000-year-old literary tradition?

A) Marathi

B) Bengali

C) Tamil

D) Gujarati

8. The Shina and Kashmiri languages belong to which sub-branch of the Indo-Iranian family?

A) Dardic

B) Nuristani

C) Iranian

D) Indic

9. Which linguistic feature is commonly found in Dravidian languages but is rare in Indo-Aryan languages?

A) Agglutination

B) Vowel harmony

C) Tonal phonemes

D) Initial consonant clusters

10. What is the term for the literary dialect of Tamil that differs significantly from the spoken colloquial form?

A) Manipravalam

B) Sanskritic Tamil

C) Sen-Tamil

D) Dakhini

11. The Burushaski language is unique in South Asia because it is classified as a:

A) Dravidian dialect

B) Language isolate

C) Tibeto-Burman language

D) Indo-Aryan substratum

12. Which of the following South Asian languages is written in the Thaana script?

- A) Divehi**
- B) Sinhala
- C) Dzongkha
- D) Lepcha

13. The concept of 'Retroflex consonants' as a widespread feature in South Asian languages is an example of what phenomenon?

- A) Areal diffusion**
- B) Genetic inheritance
- C) Loanword adaptation
- D) Morphological simplification

14. Which language acts as the primary lingua franca in the context of the 'Dakhini' dialect spoken in the Deccan region?

- A) Urdu**
- B) Marathi
- C) Telugu
- D) Kannada

15. The Sinhala language, spoken primarily in Sri Lanka, belongs to which linguistic branch?

- A) Dravidian
- B) Indo-Aryan**
- C) Austronesian
- D) Tai-Kadai