Logarithms for Humans

SELF CHECK 1:

Here's a frivolous quiz.

There is no need to answer any of the questions,
and if you do, the points you earn mean nothing!

(Feeling curious to give it a try anyway?)

SELF CHECK 1

Question 1 [20 points]

Which of these arithmetic problems would you prefer to solve with pencil and paper?
(*Please choose the third and fourth options*!)

a) $45{,}980{,}878 + 98{,}758{,}463$

b) $45{,}980{,}878 \times 98{,}758{,}463$

c) Neither of them

d) But if I were forced to do one, I'd choose the addition problem.

Question 2 [40 points]

Henry Briggs, a colleague of John Napier, helped create a table of logarithms aligned to the powers of ten: $1, 10, 100, \ldots$

number	Briggsian logarithm
1	0.000
2	0.301
3	0.477
4	0.602
5	0.699
6	0.778
7	0.845
8	0.903
9	0.954
10	1.000
11	1.041
12	1.079

Which of the following summations would allow you to compute 2 x 6 using Briggsian logarithms?
(Let's pretend we don't already know the answer is 12!)?

a) $0.301 + 0.477$

b) $0.301 + 1.079$

c) $0.301 + 0.778$

d) What are you even talking about? You can't use addition to solve a multiplication problem!

Question 3 [40 points]

What is the etymology of the word *logarithm*?

a) It comes from the Latin words for "ratio" and "arithmetic values" as Scottish mathematician John Napier was working with ratios of arithmetic values.

b) It originates from Latin words associated with snakes living under fallen trees: *logs* and *adders*.

c) It is French for "an exceptionally polite giraffe."

d) I don't know what "etymology" means and cannot guess its meaning from the context of this question.

Answers:

1. c) d) 2. c) 3. a) or maybe d)