

Literary Competition

Tasks 1 and 2 are meant for students in their sixth-ninth years at school. For this reason, they will not be taken into account for those in their 10th and 11th years. The rest of the tasks are addressed to all contestants. It is advisable to do thoroughly at least one task or answer the questions that do not seem very difficult. A contestant is not expected to do every task.

1.(6–9) *Read these two fragments. One is written by Hans Christian Andersen (1805–1875); the other one is by L. S. Petrushevskaya (b. 1938). Try to guess who is the author of each one giving as many arguments as possible. Find the similarities and differences. What is the genre of these texts? Write an ending for one of them.*

1. Did you ever hear the story of the old street lamp? It is not remarkably interesting, but for once in a way you may as well listen to it. It was a most respectable old lamp, which had seen many, many years of service, and now was to retire with a pension. It was this evening at its post for the last time, giving light to the street. His feelings were something like those of an old dancer at the theatre, who is dancing for the last time, and knows that on the morrow she will be in her garret, alone and forgotten. The lamp had very great anxiety about the next day, for he knew that he had to appear for the first time at the town hall, to be inspected by the mayor and the council, who were to decide if he were fit for further service or not; — whether the lamp was good enough to be used to light the inhabitants of one of the suburbs, or in the country, at some factory; and if not, it would be sent at once to an iron foundry, to be melted down. In this latter case it might be turned into anything, and he wondered very much whether he would then be able to remember that he had once been a street lamp, and it troubled him exceedingly. Whatever might happen, one thing seemed certain, that he would be separated from the watchman and his wife, whose family he looked upon as his own. The lamp had first been hung up on that very evening that the watchman, then a robust young man, had entered upon the duties of his office. Ah, well, it was a very long time since one became a lamp and the other a watchman. His wife had a little pride in those days; she seldom condescended to glance at the lamp, excepting when she passed by in the evening, never in the daytime. But in later years, when all these, — the watchman, the wife, and the lamp— had grown old, she had attended to it, cleaned it, and supplied it with oil. The old people were thoroughly honest, they had never cheated the lamp of a single drop of the oil provided for it.

2. Once a samovar was literally left behind and forgotten, it just happened like that. During all summer days the samovar had been the pride and decoration of the table; he had been listening to nice compliments from all sides; he used to sing his songs proudly every evening, being surrounded by cups and saucers, by jams and biscuits. They said that the tea from the samovar had a special flavour, not like that from the kettle; and the kids would go out to the woods to fill baskets with pine cones to heat the samovar with. It was a big affair to start the samovar boiling, it was a real science. You could not just approach the samovar matter-of-factly; no, sometimes an old high boot was necessary; that was how the things were. The samovar shone like a mirror. He had been found in the attic and got

cleaned so hard that he looked like a mirror. And a false mirror he was, so everyone felt like making faces in front of him. All around the samovar were laughing, singing, drinking tea and telling funny stories. The children put up real plays in the evening, and there was no fear of mosquitoes as the smoke coming from the samovar frightened them away. That was the samovar, the pride of the family. And all of a sudden he was left behind and forgotten. . . . He would cry, but he had been cleaned dry with a towel, so there were no tears. There was no way for tears to drop from as the little tap had been turned off firmly. And now it was most important to understand why he had been treated like that, why he had been abandoned so cruelly.

2.(6–9) *Compare the poems by William Carlos Williams (1883–1963) and Richard Hughes (1900–1976). Analyze in detail their similarities and differences. Which of them seems to be more sophisticated or unusual? Which of them do you like best and why? Try to guess which of them was written by Williams?*

Outside the Cottage

Poem

Green-eyed Care
May prowl and glare
And poke his snub, be-whiskered nose:
But Door fits right
Against the Night:
Through criss-cross cracks no evil goes.

As the cat
climbed over
the top of

Window is small:
No room at all
For Worry and Money, his shoulder-bones:
Chimney is wide,
But Smoke's inside
And happy Smoke would smother his moans.

the jamcloset
first the right
forefoot

Be-whiskered Care
May prowl out there:
But I never heard
He caught the Blue Bird.

carefully
then the hind
stepped down
into the pit of
the empty
flowerpot

3.(6–11) Read the extracts from two well-known works.

1. I am writing to you in the full assurance that we shall never see each other again. A few years ago on parting with you I thought the same. However, it has been Heaven's will to try me a second time: I have not been able to endure the trial, my frail heart has again submitted to the well-known voice ... You will not despise me for that — will you? ... Good-bye, they are coming! .. I must hide this letter.

2. My own, my darling! I wish to write to you, yet know not where to begin. Things are as strange as though we were actually living together. Also I would add that never in my life have I passed such happy days as I am spending at present. ... Yes, you are my little daughter, beloved. But why mention the four sorry shirts that I sent you? ... It will always be a particular pleasure to me to gratify you in anything. It will always be my one happiness in life. ... Through Theresa I have received your message that you need some pretty silk threads for embroidery, so I will go and purchase one. Yes, tomorrow I mean to purchase those silk threads, and so give myself the pleasure of having satisfied one of your wants. ... For the time being I remain your sincere friend,

Name the authors and the titles of the novels. What can one learn about the writers of the letters and their addressees? Try to remember as many other literary works that contain letters of the characters as possible. Why do you think authors may need them?

4.(6–11) The authors of these two poems are William Henry Davies (1871–1940) and Emily Dickinson (1830–1886). Analyse the differences and similarities of these poems giving as many arguments as you can. Try to guess which poet wrote each poem.

1.

When on a summer's morn I wake,
And open my two eyes,
Out to the clear, born-singing rills
My bird-like spirit flies.

To hear the Blackbird, Cuckoo, Thrush,
Or any bird in song;
And common leaves that hum all day
Without a throat or tongue.

And when Time strikes the hour for sleep,
Back in my room alone,
My heart has many a sweet bird's song —
And one that's all my own.

2.

A sepal¹, petal², and a thorn
Upon a common summer's morn
A flask of Dew —
A Bee or two
A Breeze — a caper in the trees
And I'm a Rose!

5.(6–11) “Why does your quick crayon / draw my Arabic profile?” – Pushkin addressed this question to Dawe, an artist. “I can see myself as if in a mirror, / but this mirror flatters me.” – He wrote to another artist, Orest Kiprensky. These lines give most general impression of the poet's portraits. Other poets have left more detailed descriptions of their own appearance, self-portraits in verse as it were.

Do you know any other poems whose authors describe what they or other poets look like? Try to remember some quotes.

Write a poem which would be a portrait or a self-portrait of a well-known poet. Try to make the poet's style and the appearance recognizable.

¹one of the small leaves under a flower
²a short jumping or dancing movement

Don't forget to **sign** your work (please, write the card number, your last name, school and grade) before **submitting** the work. You do not have to submit the sheet with the tasks. The tasks, their solutions and the results of the competition will be published at <http://turlom.olimpiada.ru> after November 20th.