

## Literary Competition

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Tasks 1 and 2 are meant for students in their four-nine years at school. For this reason, they will not be taken into account for those in their 10 and 11 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.

**Task 1. (For pupils of 4–9 years)** *Read these two fragments. One comes from the book by Hugh Lofting, an English author; the other one is from the book by Kornei Chukovskiy, who retold Lofting's story in Russian in his own way.*

*Extract 1.* Well, the point from which we are beginning, then, is where the Dolittle party (Jip the dog, Dab-Dab the duck, Too-Too the owl, Gub-Gub the pig, the pushmi-pullyu and the white mouse) had returned at last to the little house in Puddleby-on-the-Marsh after their long journey from Africa. It was a large family to find food for. And the Doctor, without a penny in his pockets, had been a good deal worried over how he was going to feed it, even during the short time they would be here before arrangements were made to join a circus. However, the thoughtful Dab-Dab had made them carry up from the pirates' ship such supplies as remained in the larder after the voyage was done. These, she said, should last the household – with economy – for a day or two at least.

The animals' delight had at first, on getting back home, banished every care or thought of the morrow from the minds of all – except Dab-Dab. That good housekeeper had gone straight to the kitchen and set about the cleaning of pots and the cooking of food. The rest of them, the Doctor included, had gone out into the garden to re-explore all the well-known spots. And they were still roaming and poking around every nook and corner of their beloved home when they were suddenly summoned to luncheon by Dab-Dab's dinner-bell – a frying pan beaten with a spoon. At this there was a grand rush for the back door. And they all came trundling in from the garden, gabbling with delight at the prospect of taking a meal again in the dear old kitchen where they had in times past spent so many jolly hours together.

*Extract 2.* Doctor U was fond of walking. Every evening after work he took his umbrella and went to the woods or the field, his animals accompanying him.

Tyani-tolkai was trotting by his side; Kika the duck was running ahead; Avva the dog and Khru-Khru the pig — behind; Bumba the old owl was sitting on the doctor's shoulder.

They used to go very far away, and when doctor U got tired, he would mount Tyani-tolkai and they would gallop gaily hill and down.

Once when they were walking they saw a cave at the sea shore. They wanted to enter it, but the cave was fastened. There was a huge lock on the door.

'What do you think is hidden in the cave', said Avva? 'There must be honey cakes', — said Tyani-tolkai who loved sweet honey cakes more than anything.

'No', said Kika, 'There are lollipops and nuts.'

'No', said Khru-Khru, 'there are apples, acorns, beets and carrots...'

*You have to recognize the one written by Lofting. Give your arguments as to why you think so.*

*What is the title of the book written by K. Chukovskiy? What other animals might Doctor U own? Try and invent names for them.*

*Do you know any other stories with animals talking to people?*

*Do you know any children's books retelling, reshaping or following stories from world literature? Give the titles and the authors' names.*

*Why, in your opinion, do authors use and change stories written by others? Dwell at least upon one example in detail.*

**Task 2. (For pupils of 4–9 years)** *Read the translations of these two poems by Agniya Barto, which you must have known since childhood.*

1. Teddy

On the floor lies tiny Teddy  
Half a paw is gone already.  
He is tattered, torn, and lame.  
Yet I love him just the same.

2. The Ball

Little Tanya's sadly sobbing,  
On the waves her ball is bobbing.  
Don't cry your eyes out so:  
Rubber balls don't drown, you know.

*Analyze these two poems to the smallest detail: compare both the content and the style; find the principal differences.*

**Task 3.** *Here is a translation of a poem by Vladislav Khodasevich, a Russian poet of 20 c. The original is written in iambic tetrameter.*

Shouldn't it be in the four-foot iambus,  
The cherished, antediluvial iambus?  
What about but itself –  
That tetrameter full of grace?

From the heights of the Musicia above the stars  
Brought to us by angels,  
It is stronger than all Russia's strongholds,  
More glorious than all its flags.

Years have gnawed out of memory  
Who and for what fell in Khotin,  
But the first sound of the Khotin Ode  
Became, for us, the first cry of life.

On that day, onto hills of snow  
The Russian Camena ascended  
And sent her wondrous voice over  
To faraway sisters.

Since then, in a strict variety,  
Like that illustrious Waterfall,  
Down its four rapids,  
Russian verses have been seething.

And the more forcefully they are falling from the steep,  
The foamier the whirlpool,  
The more precious the melodious harmony  
And the higher the flight of light spray –

That spray where, like a vision, is hovering,  
Shining with the bliss of height,  
Sparkling with the tinge of meaning, –  
The living rainbow of dream.

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Its nature is mysterious:  
The spondee sleeps in it, the pean sings;  
It knows only one law – freedom;  
In its freedom, there is law.

*Write your comments on the poem so that to make the theme clear. Besides, explain the meaning of those words and idioms which are essential for comprehension. The poem contains a few references to several pieces of Russian poetry. Find them.*

*Compose a poem about a certainmetrical form and use this form for your poem.*

**Task 4.** *Here is a passage from a classic Russian novel.*

X. went to bed late, and all night long he was oppressed by disordered dreams... Y. kept on appearing in them; now she was his mother and she was followed by a kitten with black whiskers, and this kitten was really Fenichka; then Z. took the shape of a great forest, with which he had still to fight. Pyotr woke him at four o'clock; he dressed at once and went out with him.

*Name the author, the novel and the characters.*

*Why do you think the author tells about the protagonist's dream? Is there any connection between the dream and the events of the novel?*

*What other works of Russian and world literature tell about characters' dreams? What meanings can they have? Think of a few examples you might analyze.*

**Task 5.** *Here are translations of two poems written by different poets, Fedor Tyutchev (1803–1873) and Arseniy Tarkovskiy (1907–1989).*

### **Rain**

How I want to breathe into my verse  
All of this world, that changes its countenance:  
The ungraspable movement of grass,

The momentary and vague magnificence  
Of trees, the itchy and winged  
Dry sand, chirping like birds.

All this world is beautiful and humpbacked,  
Like a tree on the bank of the Ingula.  
There I heard the first peals

Of thunder. It bent the stubborn trunk  
Like a ram's horn, and I saw the crown –  
The green mold of the thunder's roar.

And the rain ran along the clay slope,  
Pursued by arrows, all branchy-horned,  
Already in everything akin to Actaeon.

It fell to my feet embattled half the way.

### **Spring storm**

I love a storm in early May  
When springtime's boisterous, firstborn thunder  
Over the sky will gaily wander  
And growl and roar as though in play.

A peal, another – gleeful, cheering...  
Rain, raindust... On the trees, behold! –  
The drops hang, each a long pearl earring;  
Bright sunshine paints the thin threads gold.

A stream downhill goes rushing reckless,  
And in the woods the birds rejoice.  
Din. Clamour. Noise. All nature echoes  
The thunder's youthful, merry voice.

You'll say: 'Tis laughing, carefree Hebe –  
She fed her father's eagle, and  
The Storm Cup brimming with a seething  
And bubbling wine dropped from her hand.

*Match the poems with the poets and explain your decision.*

*Compare the poems according to the theme and form and point out to the differences. Try to go to the smallest detail.*

*Which of them is written in terzarima? Explain the reasons for your decision*