

10th ANNUAL ACTR NATIONAL POST-SECONDARY RUSSIAN ESSAY CONTEST

Students taking Russian in accredited colleges and universities are invited to participate in the ninth annual National Post-Secondary Russian Essay Contest sponsored by the American Council of Teachers of Russian.

All students must pay a registration fee according to the following schedule:

- * Students whose teacher is an ACTR member - \$5.00 per registration
- * Students whose teacher is not an ACTR member - \$7.50 per registration
- * Students may not register themselves, but can only be registered by a teacher.

When registering your students, please consult the criteria below to select the appropriate level.

Students will not receive the essay topic until the time scheduled to write the essay. Judges will review the essays in March 2009 and winners will be announced by April 15, 2009.

Please note that students cannot use any books or notes and may not work together. Essays must be written legibly in blue or black ink. The time limit for writing the essays will be one hour. The essays must be written in blue or black ink on lined paper provided by teachers. Pencil is not acceptable (as it won't photocopy). After the students write the essay, the organizer will make four photocopies of each essay as per the directions and then send the originals and three photocopies to Patricia Zody within 48 hours of the test date. All essays will be evaluated anonymously: no essay will be identifiable by the name or institution of the student who wrote it. Gold, silver, bronze and honorable mention ribbon awards (certificates) will be presented for the best essays at each level.

Here are sample essay topics from previous contests:

- * "What Is Your Dream?"
- * "An Important or Funny Thing Happened When"
- * "A Person (Real or Fictional) Who Is Important to Me and Why?"
- * "My Life Changed When"
- * "My Favorite Place"
- * "When I Relax"
- * "Write a letter to a figure from Russian history or a hero (heroine) from Russian literature./ Napishte pis'mo istoricheskomu litsu ili geroiu russkoi literatury."
- * "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." (Все счастливые семьи похожи друг на друга, каждая несчастливая семья несчастлива по-своему.)

All categories and levels of students use the same essay topic.

Teachers may not substitute students for those registered by the deadline. No refunds are available for students who don't show up for the essay contest.

Essays will be ranked according to levels as follows:

Category 1: Non-Heritage Learners (those learners who do not and did not ever speak Russian in the home. Please take the time to calculate the number of hours that your students have studied Russian to place them in the proper category.)

Level One: students who at the time of the essay contest will have had fewer than 100 contact hours of instruction in Russian (whether in college alone or in college and high school). (Please note that heritage learners of any Slavic language, including Russian, are not allowed to participate in this level and category of the contest.)

Level Two: students who at the time of the essay contest will have had more than 100 contact hours, but fewer than 250 contact hours of instruction. (This is mostly students in second-year Russian.)

Level Three: students who will have had more than 250 contact hours, but fewer than 400 contact hours of instruction. (This is mostly students in third or fourth-year Russian.)

Level Four: students who will have had more than 400 contact hours of instruction. (This is mostly students in fourth-year or fifth-year Russian.)

Category 2: Heritage Learners

Heritage Learners (1): students who speak Russian with their families and who have NOT attended school in Russia or the

former Soviet Union and have to learn reading and writing skills after emigration.

Heritage Learners (2): students who speak Russian with their families and who have attended school for fewer than 5 years in Russia or the former Soviet Union and may have had to relearn reading and writing skills after emigration.

Heritage Learners (3): students who speak Russian with their families and who have attended school for 5 or more years in Russia or the former Soviet Union and have not had to relearn reading and writing skills after emigration.

Judges will evaluate essays according to content (the ability to express ideas in Russian and communicate information about the topic) and length, lexicon, syntax, structure (grammatical and orthographic accuracy), and originality or creativity.

Awards will be announced in the ACTR Letter and Web site, and the AATSEEL Web site. The best gold ribbon essays will be published in the ACTR Letter.