

History Competition

All competition tasks are for schoolchildren of any age: everyone can pick and choose what he/she likes or knows. It is enough to give a correct (and not necessarily complete) answer to any 2 of the first 8 questions or mention at least 10 historic mistakes in the task 9 or 10. Tasks marked by asterisk (*) are considered more difficult by the judging panel, they will be given a higher score.

1. Main adversaries of Stierlitz (famous Soviet TV series The Seventeen Moments of Spring) are Schellenberg, Mueller, Kaltenbrunner, Himmler and Bormann. What was the sequence of their leaving the political scene? Who of them left way earlier than actually died, who – later by far? How did that happen?

2*. Many historians say that French patriotism was born during the Hundred Years' War whereas English patriotism existed even before the War was begun. Do you agree with this statement? What was the origin (when and how) of English patriotism? Which national leaders contributed most to the development of English and French patriotism?

3*. Once upon a time there lived two kings, both were historians by vocation. Both had no desire to rule, but were made to ascend the throne during military uprisings as there were no other pretenders. Spouses of both kings helped them to govern their countries: one of them was true, the other – an adulteress. One of the kings wrote a handbook on reigning and died peacefully. The other wrote a history of two rival neighbour nations and was poisoned. Name the kings and describe a few details of their rule.

4. Shaka, Mzilikazi, Moshoeshe, Zara Yaqob. Which African nations consider those men founders of their nations and states? When did they live, what were they famous for? Who were their main allies, rivals and enemies?

5. It is said that the first around the world Arctic expedition was performed by two Norwegians, although not together but separately. Is it true? If so, write down their names and the year of their sailing expeditions. What other discoveries were made by those explorers? Did any Russians participate in their endeavours?

6. Unravel a short chain of common acquaintances from Cossack leader Yermak Timofeyevich to English mariner Francis Drake.

7. In the time of the Han Dynasty the Chinese accomplished a long expedition into the West to the Dayuan country to acquire heavenly horses. A portrait of one of these horses currently adorns the very centre of Moscow in the full view of passers-by. When and why was it put there?

8*. In Iceland there is a place called Thingvellir. It is as remarkable in European nations' history as it is in the history of planet Earth, though time scale is different. What important events took place there in the old times and what happens there now? Are there other places of similar qualities in Northern Eurasia?

9. The following text contains many errors. List as many errors as you can: explain which event mentioned in the text must have happened elsewhere, or in another time, or with other participants, or could not have happened at all?

Luther and company

Last evening Luther had another vision of the Devil. The Devil was standing in the corner of his cell, making faces at the monk and whispering: "You will never finish your translation! And just like Hieronymus, Methodius and Wulfila you'll never see it in print!" Then Martin could not stand it any longer. He threw his inkpot at the Devil shouting on top of his voice: "Go back to Hell! Turn the spit which skewers Pope Medici! He excommunicated me with his bull – but I got him with my printed word! Thanks to brother Johann from Dobra Gora I know how to create leaflets in my native Bavarian language. Now I can rewrite the Gospel for those who speak my native language and have a grasp of plain German literacy. There are millions of them, and they do not give a damn for you or for your emperor. Go away!"

The Devil disappeared, shamed. Brother Martin prayed for the late brother Dante who was also tormented by the Devil while writing *Divina Commedia* (The Divine Comedy). But the brave Roman feared neither the Devil nor the Pope. Now Pope Clement burns in hell, sent there by king Philipp. Impious Gregory Medici suffers alongside him and another place nearby is reserved for emperor Charles of Luxembourg!

But the latter will not be joining the Devil for some time: before that he will have to take full measure of mortal suffering. Charles already sampled it in part when he was taken captive by the French after the defeat from the Duke of Alba near Pavia. The rest will be provided by the Turks. They obey Sultan Mehmed and have recently taken over the Second Rome. Now they are marching towards the First Rome by the way of Vienna and Avignon. The Catholics will pay dearly for the tears of the God's Chosen actors from Jan Hus to Thomas Muntzer!

It all came about because emperor Charles worshipped golden idols from across the sea – those brought from Peru by that robber Enrique Cortes. They should have been melted into pure gold to adorn the icon of Virgin Mary in Augsburg. Instead of which Charles exhibited those in his palace, where painter Leonardo praised them aloud and evil scribe Machiavelli wrote about them. Let them all burn in hell till the second coming of Christ!

Actually, it's not long to wait now, it will soon be a thousand years since pagan Caesar Constantine was converted to Christianity. Then everywhere on Earth from Italy to Mexico, from Germany to Muscovy and China there'll start the new millennium of saint apostles and their rule, replacing the thousand year reign of profane Caesars.

Not all Luther'dreams came true in the following centuries. But his translation of the Gospel into the Saxon language became a foundation for modern German literature. So Martin Luther joined the same pleiad of National writers as Pierre Abelard, Dante Alighieri, Niccolo Machiavelli and William Shakespeare.

10. The following text contains many errors. List as many errors as you can: explain which event mentioned in the text must have happened elsewhere, or in another time, or with other participants, or could not have happened at all?

Olga's day

One July at sunset of St. Olga's day a messenger from Chernigov rushed into Kiev to announce the imminent arrival of imperial ambassadors! The head of the Embassy, Bishop Humbertus, is a friend and tutor of the new Pope Sylvester, the sworn enemy of all Byzantines and other Greeks. It is easy to guess why he comes to Rus': the Roman Pope and the Imperial Munich are ready to sever all ties with Byzantium and want Rus' on their side. But Rus' does not need it! Princess Olga has been recently deliberating her way to Christ: should she accept baptism from Franks in Rome or from Byzantines in Tsargrad? What name should she have in the Kingdom of Heaven: Helena Regina Rugorum or the Basilissa Helena? What language should she use when addressing Apostle Paul: Latin or Greek?

It's been a hard choice. Olga's ancestors in Visby and Hedeby accepted baptism from ambassadors of Rome but it's monks from Chersonesus and Bulgaria that come to Kiev! Olga hesitated no more after she received a personal letter from Caesar Romanus Lecapenus. He did call the newfound daughter of the Church to Tsargrad promising to show her the way to Paradise via the St. Sophia. German man of war Otto, who languished in a plain dwelling among the ruins of Colonia Augusta could promise her nothing of that kind! A friendly message from Simeon, basileus of Bulgars, who has forged a union with Roman, basileus of Greeks, also helped. Olga had decided to sail to Tsargrad instead of Rome.

Now old Otto is dead as is ingenuous Romanus and cunning Simeon. Olga-Helena herself has grown old and thinks more about the inheritance she would leave to her grandson Vladimir (baptized George). Should he fight Kipchaks near Danube or Turks near Volga? Join Bulgars against Franks or Germans against Byzantines? Nobody knows it yet. But it is clear that Rus' has nothing to gain in the argument between Rome and Tsargrad. If Byzantines fail to agree with Franks on a joint crusade to Jerusalem, ships from Rus' will have nothing to do south of Bosphorus.

Forging friendship with Greeks has more use for Kiev. Greeks never attacked Rus' even to retaliate for Svyatoslav's expeditions to Tsargrad. And it would be a gain to find for young Vladimir a bride from Tsargrad like Otto did for his son. They say Greek Theodora brought to Munich a library like nothing any Frank saw before. Kiev should strive to lure such an educated princess too! Will future basileus Vladimir manage it? God knows. . .

Twenty years passed before prince Vladimir-George became son-in-law of basileus Constantine Monomachus. Constantine got this surname because he fought on his own with numerous Turks and Arabs on the way to Holy Sepulchre. After thinking this over Vladimir and his descendants decided not to take part in this quarrel: Rus' needs peace for its southern border!