

ВСЕРОССИЙСКАЯ ОЛИМПИАДА ШКОЛЬНИКОВ ПО АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ
2025-2026 уч.г
МУНИЦИПАЛЬНЫЙ ЭТАП.
9 -11 классы

SPEAKING

Set 1

Preparation (10 minutes)

Presentation and questions (15 minutes)

Task 1

1. Monologue. Time: 3-4 minutes.

Your school is planning to take part in an international competition for the best documentary about an outstanding writer. Your classmates need to choose one person whose legacy has changed the world. Make a speech about **Leo Tolstoy** to persuade your classmates to choose his life story for the documentary.

You need to

- comment on the 5 aspects mentioned below;
- remember to make an introduction and conclusion.

Prepare to speak **about Leo Tolstoy** using the Fact File. You will have to comment on:

- life facts;
- education;
- novels;
- recognition;
- interesting facts.

You can make notes during the preparation time, but you **are not allowed to read them** when you answer.

2. Questions/ Answers: Time: 2- 3 minutes

Now answer 2 questions from your partner, who wants to get **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**, not mentioned in your presentation.

Task 2

Now you are a classmate.

1. Listen to your partner's presentation.

2. Questions/ Answers: Time: 2- 3 minutes

Ask 2 **QUESTIONS about Fyodor Dostoevsky** to get **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION** not mentioned in the presentation.

2 presentations and questions – 15 minutes

YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE RECORDED

Fact file

Leo Tolstoy

Full Name: Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy Born: August 28, 1828, Yasnaya Polyana, Russian Empire Died: November 20, 1910, Astapovo, Russian Empire (aged 82) Occupation: Novelist, short story writer, playwright, essayist, philosopher
Life Facts
Early Life: Born into an old aristocratic Russian family on their estate, Yasnaya Polyana. Orphaned at a young age and raised by relatives. Family Life: He had 13 children with his wife, Sofya Andreevna Behrs, though not all survived to adulthood. Their marriage was complex and often strained. Youth & Military: Spent time in Moscow and Kazan. Served in the Crimean War (1853-1856), an experience that profoundly influenced his later pacifist views. Philosophical Shift: In his 50s, he underwent a significant spiritual and moral awakening, leading him to renounce his aristocratic lifestyle and advocate for Christian anarchism and simple living. Social Reformer: Became a fervent critic of the Russian Orthodox Church and the state, dedicated to living a life closer to that of the common peasant. Final Years: At the age of 82, he secretly left his family home in search of a simpler, more spiritual existence. He died shortly after at a remote railway station.
Education
Early Years: Initially educated at home by French and German tutors. University: Attended Kazan University in 1844 to study Oriental languages and then law, but left in 1847 without earning a degree, finding formal education unfulfilling. Self-Taught: His intellectual development largely came from extensive self-study and reading after university. Educational Philosophy: Later in life, he developed his own educational theories and founded schools for peasant children on his estate, emphasizing practical and moral learning.
Novels & Major Works
War and Peace (1869): An epic historical novel detailing the French invasion of Russia and the impact of the Napoleonic era on Tsarist society. Celebrated for its historical accuracy, philosophical depth, and complex characters. Anna Karenina (1877): A tragic novel exploring adultery, societal hypocrisy, and faith. A masterpiece of realistic fiction, delving into themes of passion, family, and social constraints in 19th-century Russia. The Death of Ivan Ilyich (1886): A powerful novella contemplating themes of mortality, self-deception, and the search for spiritual truth. Resurrection (1899): His final major novel, a profound critique of the legal system's injustices and the church's hypocrisy. Other works: Autobiographical trilogy (<i>Childhood</i>, <i>Boyhood</i>, <i>Youth</i>), numerous short stories, and influential philosophical essays (e.g., <i>What Is Art?</i>, <i>The Kingdom of God Is Within You</i>).
Recognition
Literary Giant: Universally regarded as one of the greatest authors of all time, a pioneer of realistic fiction, and a master of psychological insight. Global Influence: His works are celebrated worldwide for their profound insights into human nature, society, and spirituality. Philosophical Impact: His ideas on non-violent resistance and pacifism deeply influenced figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., shaping global movements for social justice. Nobel Prize Controversies: He was repeatedly nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature from 1902 to 1906 but never received it, partly due to his uncompromising social and religious critiques. Legacy: His ancestral estate, Yasnaya Polyana, is preserved as a museum, serving as a global pilgrimage site for admirers of his life and work.

Interesting facts

Ascetic Lifestyle: After his spiritual crisis, Tolstoy began to live an ascetic life, renouncing his wealth and adopting peasant clothing. He even learned to make shoes and often engaged in manual labor alongside his serfs.

Copyright Renunciation: Towards the end of his life, he renounced the copyrights to his works, believing that his writings should be freely available to everyone without commercial restrictions. This caused significant conflict within his family.

Correspondence with Gandhi: Tolstoy maintained a significant correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi for several years, discussing their shared views on non-violent resistance. Their exchange profoundly inspired Gandhi's satyagraha movement.

Excommunication: Due to his radical religious and social views, which directly challenged the authority of both the state and the Russian Orthodox Church, he was officially excommunicated from the Russian Orthodox Church in 1901.

Vegetarianism: He became a committed vegetarian in the mid-1880s, influenced by his spiritual beliefs and advocating for a simple, non-violent way of life.

SPEAKING

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Task 1

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Now you are a classmate.

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2 presentations and questions – 15 minutes

YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE RECORDED

Fact file

Fyodor Dostoevsky

Full Name: Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky Born: November 11, 1821, Moscow, Russian Empire Died: February 9, 1881, Saint Petersburg, Russian Empire (aged 59) Occupation: Novelist, short story writer, essayist, journalist, philosopher
Life Facts Early Life: Born into a middle-class family; his father was a surgeon at a Moscow hospital. His childhood was marked by his father's strictness and early exposure to poverty and suffering through the hospital patients. Family Tragedy: His father's sudden death in 1839 (possibly murdered by his serfs) deeply traumatized Dostoevsky and greatly influenced his later works. Political Activity & Arrest: In 1849, he was arrested for involvement with the Petrashevsky Circle, a literary discussion group that criticized the Tsarist regime and discussed utopian socialist ideas. Mock Execution & Exile: He was sentenced to death by firing squad. The sentence was commuted at the very last moment to four years of hard labor in a Siberian katorga (penal colony), followed by military service in exile. This harrowing experience profoundly shaped his worldview and writing. Personal Struggles: Throughout his life, he struggled with chronic poverty, gambling addiction, and epilepsy, all of which often found their way into his characters and narratives. Later Life: After his exile, he returned to Saint Petersburg, resumed writing, and eventually achieved significant literary success, though financial stability remained a challenge.
Education Early Education: Received initial education at home and at a private boarding school. Military Engineering: In 1838, he entered the Nikolayev Military Engineering Institute in Saint Petersburg, graduating as a military engineer in 1843. Literary Calling: Despite his engineering background, he felt a strong calling to literature. He resigned his commission shortly after graduating to pursue writing full-time. Self-Taught: Like many writers of his era, his true education came from voracious reading of Russian and European literature, philosophy, and theological texts.
Novels & Major Works Poor Folk (1846): His first novel, an epistolary work, which brought him immediate critical acclaim and introduced his characteristic focus on the lives of the poor and humiliated. Notes from Underground (1864): A seminal novella, often considered one of the first existentialist novels, exploring the psychology of an alienated, bitter narrator and challenging utopian ideals. Crime and Punishment (1866): His most famous novel, about an impoverished student, Raskolnikov, who murders an old pawnbroker and struggles with guilt, morality, and redemption. The Idiot (1869): Features Prince Myshkin, a truly good and compassionate man, attempting to navigate the corrupt and materialistic society of 19th-century Russia, often seen as Dostoevsky's attempt to portray "a truly beautiful soul." Demons (also known as The Possessed, 1872): A powerful political novel satirizing nihilism and revolutionary movements in Russia, exploring the destructive consequences of ideological extremism. The Brothers Karamazov (1880): His final and arguably greatest work, a philosophical novel delving into profound questions of God, free will, morality, and the nature of good and evil through the story of a parricide and its impact on the Karamazov brothers.
Recognition Pioneer of Psychological Realism: Recognized as a master of psychological depth, delving into the darkest corners of the human psyche, exploring complex motivations, moral dilemmas, and spiritual struggles. Influence on Existentialism: His works are foundational to existentialist philosophy, exploring themes of freedom, suffering, meaninglessness, and individual responsibility. Global Literary Giant: His novels have had an immense and lasting impact on world literature, philosophy, and psychology, influencing countless writers, thinkers, and psychoanalysts.

Enduring Relevance: Dostoevsky's exploration of faith, doubt, crime, and redemption continues to resonate with readers worldwide, providing profound insights into the human condition.

Legacy: His works remain highly studied and translated, standing as monuments of Russian literature and global intellectual thought.

Interesting facts

The Mock Execution: In 1849, Dostoevsky and other members of the Petrashevsky Circle were led to a public square, read a death sentence, and prepared for execution by firing squad. At the last minute, their sentences were commuted to hard labor, a traumatic event that had a profound psychological effect on him.

Siberian Experience: His four years of hard labor in Omsk (Siberia) were incredibly harsh. He was forbidden to read anything except the New Testament, which he studied intensely. This period was crucial for his spiritual development and understanding of human suffering, directly inspiring *Notes from the House of the Dead*.

Gambling Addiction: Dostoevsky struggled with a severe gambling addiction, particularly roulette, throughout his life. He often lost everything, putting his family into debt. He famously wrote *The Gambler* in just 26 days to pay off a debt to his publisher.

Epilepsy: He suffered from epilepsy, experiencing seizures throughout his adult life. These experiences are vividly depicted in characters like Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot* and Smerdyakov in *The Brothers Karamazov*, often portrayed as moments of intense spiritual insight or profound disorientation.

Shorthand Secretary Wife: His second wife, Anna Snitkina, whom he married when she was 20 and he was 44, was initially his stenographer. She took down his dictation in shorthand, allowing him to complete *The Gambler* quickly and playing a crucial role in managing his finances and supporting his writing career.

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- education;
- major works;
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Task 2

Now you are a classmate.

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Ask 2 QUESTIONS **about Anton Chekhov** to get ADDITIONAL INFORMATION not mentioned in the presentation.

2 presentations and questions – 15 minutes

YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE RECORDED

Fact file

Nikolai Gogol

Full Name: Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol-Yanovsky Born: April 1, 1809, Sorochyntsi, Poltava Governorate, Russian Empire (now Ukraine) Died: February 21, 1852, Moscow, Russian Empire (aged 42) Occupation: Novelist, short story writer, playwright, essayist
Life Facts Early Life: Born into a family of Ukrainian gentry. His father was an amateur playwright, which likely influenced young Gogol. He spent his early years on a rural estate, soaking in Ukrainian folklore and traditions. Move to St. Petersburg: In 1828, he moved to Saint Petersburg with ambitious dreams of becoming a famous writer, but initially faced financial struggles and disappointments. Early Success: He gained significant recognition with his collection of Ukrainian tales, <i>Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka</i>, and later established himself as a prominent figure in Russian literary circles, befriending Alexander Pushkin. Travel and Wanderlust: Gogol spent a significant portion of his life abroad, particularly in Rome, Italy, where he found inspiration and a calmer environment for writing. Spiritual Crisis: Towards the end of his life, Gogol underwent a severe spiritual crisis. He became increasingly devout and ascetic, renouncing much of his previous work as sinful. Tragic End: In 1852, driven by religious fervor and despair, he burned several manuscripts, including much of the second part of <i>Dead Souls</i>. He then embarked on a severe fast, leading to his physical and mental collapse and eventual death.
Education Early Education: Received initial schooling at home and from local tutors. Nezhin Lyceum: From 1821 to 1828, he attended the Lyceum of Higher Sciences in Nezhin (now Ukraine). Here, he showed an interest in literature and theatre, participating in school plays. Self-Study: While his formal education was somewhat limited, Gogol was a keen observer of life and a diligent self-learner. He immersed himself in Ukrainian history, folklore, and the works of contemporary European literature. Brief Academic Career: He briefly held a position as a professor of history at Saint Petersburg University, though he was not particularly successful in this role due to his lack of formal historical training.
Novels & Major Works Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka (1831-1832): A collection of romantic short stories steeped in Ukrainian folklore, humor, and supernatural elements, which first brought him widespread fame. Mirgorod (1835): Another collection of stories, including "Taras Bulba" (a historical novella about Cossack life) and "Viy" (a terrifying supernatural tale). The Inspector General (Revizor) (1836): A satirical five-act play, a masterpiece of Russian theatre, exposing the corruption, greed, and folly of provincial bureaucracy. The Nose (1836): A highly absurd and satirical short story about a Saint Petersburg official who wakes up to find his nose has detached itself and is living a life of its own. The Overcoat (1842): A seminal short story about Akaky Akakievich Bashmachkin, a lowly clerk whose life revolves around a new overcoat, and the tragic consequences when it is stolen. This story profoundly influenced later Russian literature. Dead Souls (1842): His most famous novel, often considered an epic poem in prose. It follows the rogue Chichikov who travels across Russia buying "dead souls" (deceased serfs whose names are still on census lists) in a scheme to acquire wealth and status. It's a biting satire of Russian society and bureaucracy.
Recognition Founder of Russian Realism: Gogol is widely considered one of the founders of Russian realism and modern Russian literature. His detailed, often grotesque portrayals of ordinary life and people were groundbreaking. Master of Satire and Grotesque: He is celebrated for his unique blend of sharp social satire, biting humor, and elements of the grotesque and absurd, which he used to expose societal flaws and human vanity.

Influence on Later Writers: His "Petersburg Tales" (including "The Overcoat" and "The Nose") significantly influenced later Russian writers like Dostoevsky, who famously remarked, "We all come out from Gogol's 'Overcoat'."

Literary Innovator: Gogol introduced new narrative techniques and explored themes of identity, social alienation, and the supernatural in ways that were revolutionary for his time.

Enduring Legacy: His works continue to be staged, adapted, and studied worldwide, valued for their literary genius and their timeless critique of human foibles and societal issues.

Interesting facts

Burning Manuscripts: In his deep spiritual crisis shortly before his death, Gogol famously burned the majority of the manuscript for the second part of *Dead Souls*, believing it to be a sinful work. This act is one of the great tragedies of Russian literature.

Fear of Being Buried Alive: Gogol suffered from taphephobia, the fear of being buried alive. He left instructions that he should not be buried until clear signs of decomposition were present. Legend has it that when his coffin was exhumed years later, his body was found turned on its side, fueling rumors (likely unfounded) that his fear had come true.

Obsession with His Nose: There's a theory that Gogol was self-conscious about his own unusually shaped nose, which some believe inspired his famous short story, "The Nose," a surreal tale where a nose leaves its owner to live its own life.

Hypochondria: He was known for his extreme hypochondria, constantly believing he was suffering from various ailments, which worsened during his spiritual crisis.

Eccentric Personality: Gogol was known for his reclusive and eccentric personality. He had few close friends, rarely spoke openly about his personal life, and was often shy and reserved in social settings, contrasting sharply with the vivid and often boisterous characters in his stories.

SPEAKING

Set 2

Preparation (10 minutes)

Presentation and questions (15 minutes)

Task 1

1. Monologue. Time: 3-4 minutes.

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2 presentations and questions – 15 minutes

YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE RECORDED

Fact file

Anton Chekhov

Full Name: Anton Pavlovich Chekhov Born: January 29, 1860, Taganrog, Russian Empire Died: July 15, 1904, Badenweiler, German Empire (aged 44) Occupation: Playwright, short story writer, physician
Life Facts Early Life: Born into a humble family in Taganrog; his father ran a grocery store. This background, unlike the aristocratic Tolstov or Dostoevsky, gave him a unique perspective on ordinary life. Medical Student & Family Support: While studying medicine in Moscow, he began writing short humorous stories to support his family, who were often in financial hardship. Physician & Writer: He successfully completed his medical degree and practiced as a doctor throughout much of his writing career, famously stating, "Medicine is my lawful wife, and literature is my mistress." Sakhalin Journey: In 1890, he undertook a challenging several-month journey to Sakhalin Island, a remote penal colony, to document the conditions of prisoners and settlers. His findings led to a book, <i>Sakhalin Island</i>, and significantly influenced penal reform. Struggle with Tuberculosis: Chekhov suffered from tuberculosis for many years, which increasingly impacted his health and eventually led to his early death. He often sought warmer climates for his health. Marriage: In 1901, he married Olga Knipper, a leading actress at the Moscow Art Theatre, where many of his famous plays premiered. Their marriage involved frequent separations due to Chekhov's health and Knipper's acting career.
Education Schooling in Taganrog: Attended a local Greek school and later the Taganrog Gymnasium (classical secondary school), where he developed an interest in theatre and literature. Moscow University: In 1879, he moved to Moscow and enrolled in the medical faculty of Moscow University, graduating as a physician in 1884. Impact of Medical Training: His medical background profoundly influenced his writing. It provided him with a scientific approach to observing human behavior, a keen eye for detail, and a deep understanding of psychological states and suffering, leading to realistic and objective portrayals of his characters.
Major Works Short Stories: Chekhov is considered a master of the short story form. Key works include: • "The Lady with the Dog" (1899): A poignant story of a fleeting romance. • "Ward No. 6" (1892): A powerful critique of societal apathy and human dignity in a mental asylum. • "The Student" (1894): A story about spiritual continuity and hope. • "Gooseberries" (1898): Explores themes of contentment, idealism, and the pursuit of happiness. • "A Boring Story" (1889): A professor's reflections on life, illness, and the lack of true purpose. Plays: His plays are foundational to modern theatre. Key works include: • The Seagull (1896): Explores unrequited love, artistic ambition, and disillusionment. Its initial failure led to the founding of the Moscow Art Theatre. • Uncle Vanya (1897): Focuses on wasted lives, unfulfilled dreams, and the quiet despair of rural existence. • Three Sisters (1900): Depicts the lives of three sisters yearning for a return to Moscow and a more meaningful existence, contrasting their hopes with the bleak reality. • The Cherry Orchard (1904): His last play, a tragicomedy about an aristocratic family losing their beloved cherry orchard and estate to social change.
Recognition Master of the Short Story: Widely regarded as one of the greatest short story writers in history. He revolutionized the genre by focusing on mood, character, and indirect action rather than conventional plots. Pioneer of Modern Drama: Along with Ibsen and Strindberg, Chekhov is considered a founding father of modern theatre. His plays introduced a new psychological realism, emphasizing subtext, atmosphere, and the unspoken emotions of characters.

Chekhovian Atmosphere": His work is known for its unique blend of comedy and tragedy, often referred to as "Chekhovian," reflecting the bittersweet absurdity of ordinary human life.

Global Influence: His plays and stories continue to be performed, adapted, and studied worldwide, influencing countless playwrights and writers and offering timeless insights into the human condition.

Humanist Perspective: He depicted ordinary people with profound empathy, revealing their inner lives, struggles, and quiet desperation without moralizing or judgment.

Interesting facts

Prolific Pseudonym User: In his early career, Chekhov wrote hundreds of humorous stories under various pseudonyms, the most famous being "Antosha Chekhonte," to protect his reputation as a doctor.

"Chekhov's Gun" Principle: He famously stated a dramatic principle: "If in the first act you have hung a pistol on the wall, then in the next act it must be fired. Otherwise, don't hang it there." This emphasizes that every element introduced in a story should serve a purpose.

Wrote on Toilet Paper: Due to his financial struggles while a medical student, he sometimes used whatever paper he could find to write, including, reportedly, pieces of toilet paper.

His Dog, Khina: Chekhov was a dog lover, and his dachshund, Khina, was a constant companion. He would often write humorous letters from Khina's perspective to his friends.

Died in Germany: Despite his strong ties to Russia, Chekhov died in Badenweiler, Germany, while seeking a cure for his worsening tuberculosis. His final words, reportedly, were "Ich sterbe" (I'm dying) in German, followed by a glass of champagne.