

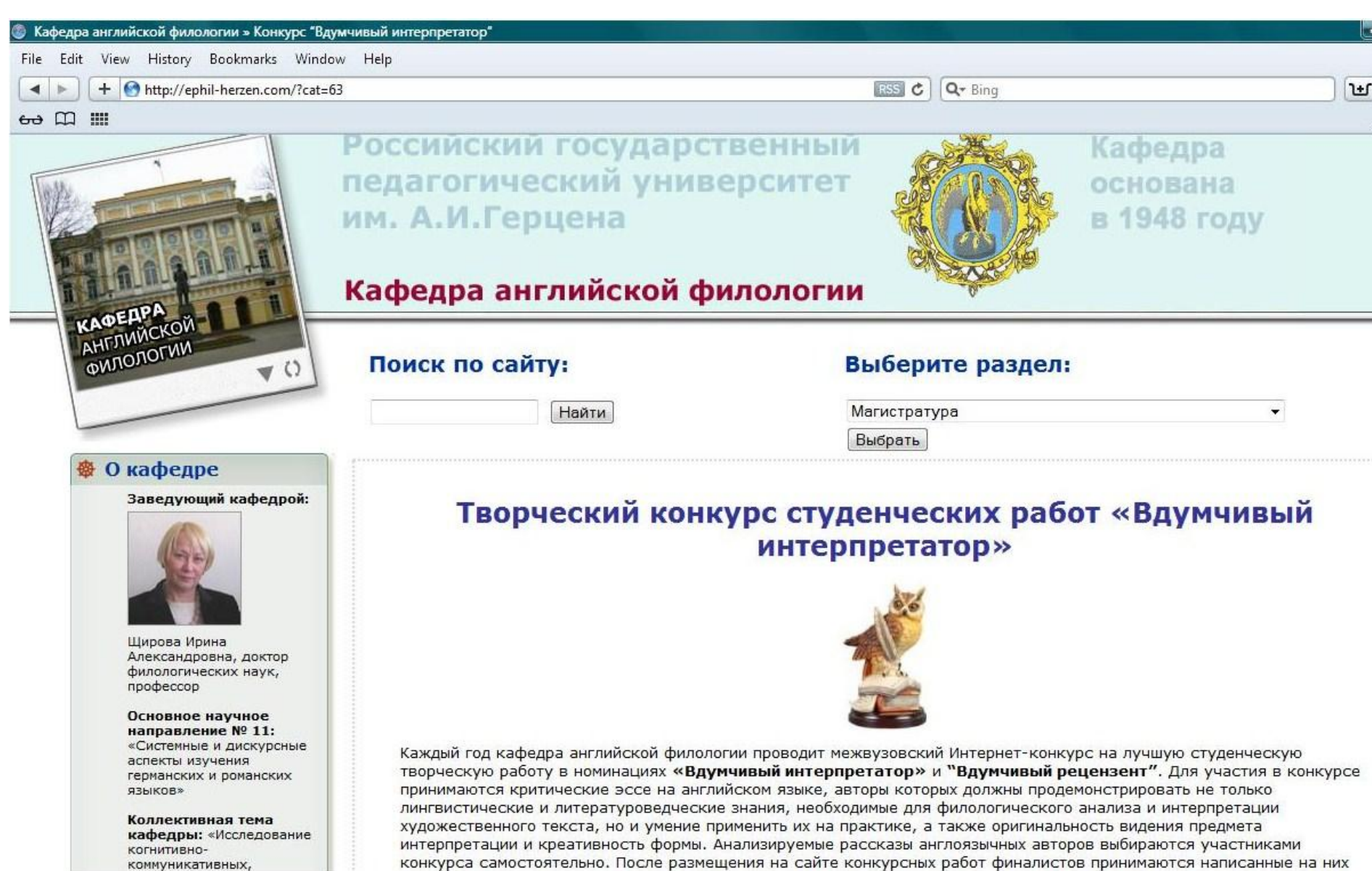


“THE INGENIOUS READER” Internet Contest of Students’ Essays: write with style!

Assoc. Professor Yulia V. Sergaeva
Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia

Every year the English Philology Department at Herzen University announces the Internet contest ‘The Ingenious Reader’ («Вдумчивый интерпретатор») — a competition of students’ critical essays on assigned fictional or publicist works by English-language writers.

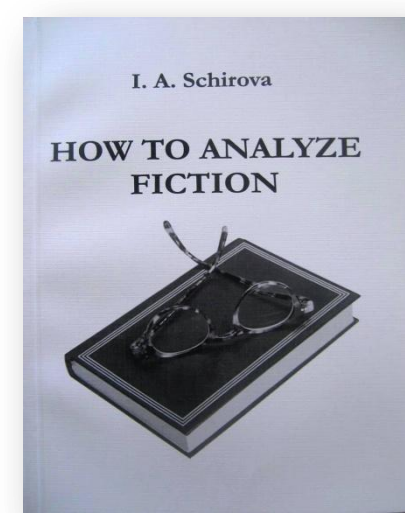
The e-format makes the contest accessible not only for students of the faculty of Foreign Languages at Herzen University (Saint-Petersburg), but for all students across Russia, Europe and overseas.



Our participants



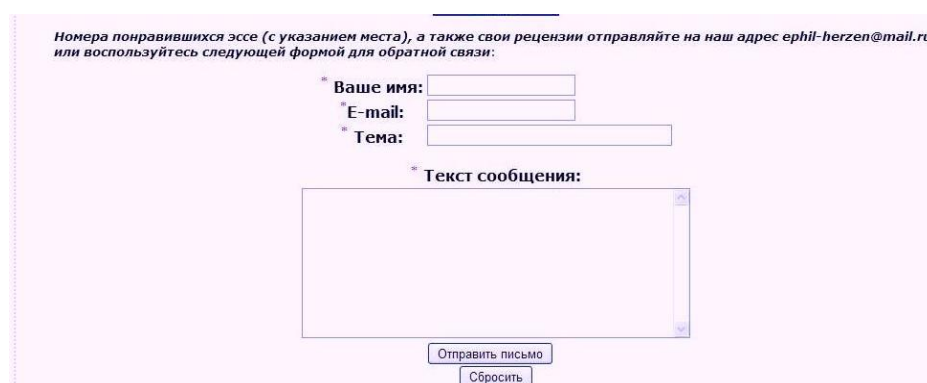
- The educational potential of the contest is based on the extensive supplementary material on style and text interpretation (articles, tips, books, presentations) uploaded on the contest web page - <http://ephil.herzen.spb.ru/?cat=63> :
- 1) I.A.Schirova “How to analyze fiction”
 - 2) I.A.Schirova ‘The Ingenious Reader’ - promoting literary analysis skills and creativity
 - 3) Contest of students’ essays “The Ingenious Reader” (Presentation by Prof. I.A. Schirova)
 - 4) I.A.Schirova The Review of Typical Mistakes



As the number of our contestants is large, we usually hold the competition in two rounds.

During the 1st academic term till December 31, all essays submitted via e-mail are reviewed by a team of experts consisting of post graduate students, teachers and professors of English Philology Department. The selected essays (5-6 of them) are further uploaded and featured on the contest’s web page (<http://ephil.herzen.spb.ru/?cat=63>) to be assessed and voted for by our site’s visitors.

Apart from voting, peers can send a review of one of the essays commenting on its strong and weak points. Their opinions are also taken into consideration and influence the results.



Finally, in May, the contest jury (Prof. I. Schirova, the Chair of the jury, Ass. Prof. Y.Sergaeva, Vice-Chair, and Ass.V. Menyalo forming its ‘core’) announces 3 winning essays and 1 best essay review, as well as publishes the experts’ feedback. The final result is calculated as the sum of points and votes given by the judges together with Internet users.

- SOME USEFUL TIPS on READABILITY:**
- Mind the length of paragraphs. Long paragraphs send off alarms in most readers’ minds; very short paragraphs suggest insubstantiality and flightiness.
 - Stick to the motto: “Assert and support”. Offer the careful argumentation to make your position convincing.
 - Oratory should never be asked to substitute for accuracy and truth. Avoid passive structures, ‘there is/there are’ sentences, clichés, and vague qualifiers, such as ‘interesting’, ‘important’, or ‘unusual’.
 - As pretentiousness is a stumbling block for beginning writers, ‘don’t use words you don’t understand
 - Emphasize through position and proportion.

- Being a substantial part of extra-curriculum activities, ‘The Ingenious Reader’ contest contributes to mastering writing and literary analysis skills, as well as promotes:
- Creativity and Originality
 - Independence of critical thinking
 - Understanding of literature and culture of English-speaking countries.

Participate in our contest next year! Send your essays to our e-mail: ephil-herzen@mail.ru

