



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

<https://doi.org/10.24833/2687-0126-2022-4-2-78-89>

COMPREHENSIVE PREPARATION FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE OLYMPIAD AS PART OF IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN RUSSIA

Artem P. Gulov

MGIMO University

(Moscow, Russia)

gulov@tea4er.org

Abstract: Modern foreign language education in Russia is riddled with various challenges, ranging from the forced introduction of interactive technologies to complications imposed by the political agenda. The article analyses Olympiad tasks and their peculiarities at different Olympiad stages, considering various competitive projects, both university Olympiad projects and the All-Russian Olympiad of schoolchildren. The author offers some recommendations on better preparation for the regional and final rounds of the All-Russian School Olympiad, which the author trialled while working with groups and individual students from Moscow and which have proven to be successful. The article specifies manuals which can be used for this purpose as well. Empirical material for the study comprises a survey, aimed at students who attended the courses to prepare for the Olympiad to determine their attitudes toward online courses. The suggested system can function in any region of Russia, which will help the development of young talent throughout the country.

Keywords: School Olympiad, language assessment, preparation for the Olympiad, assessment criteria, gifted children.

How to cite this article: Gulov A.P. (2022). Comprehensive Preparation for the English Language Olympiad as Part of Improving the Quality of Language Education in Russia. *Professional Discourse & Communication*, 4(2), pp. 78–89. <https://doi.org/10.24833/2687-0126-2022-4-2-78-89>

1. INTRODUCTION

Participation in intellectual competitions in Russia is becoming an attribute of public education; the Olympiad movement is gaining momentum in all regions of the country [Tsvetkova et al., 2020]. In our study, we analyse academic literature on the subject of the Olympiad, and we conclude that the issue of preparing schoolchildren for the English language Olympiad has not been sufficiently explored by previous researchers. The purpose of the article is thus to highlight the particular features of the competitive rounds, as well as to propose methods of effectively preparing students for them. Language competitions test all aspects of English language acquisi-

tion, including writing and speaking skills [Kurasovskaya et al., 2018]. English is becoming an important subject of choice among school leavers who aim to enter the country's top universities by taking the Unified State Exam. Alongside changes to the state exam, there are constant reforms being made to the All-Russian School Olympiad (later also referred to by its Russian abbreviation, VsOSH), as well as school Olympiads held by individual universities.

The Olympiad movement is gaining popularity in Russia, piquing the interest of the vast majority of school students. Grants, awards, the chance to secure a place at a higher educational institution, and the drive to assert themselves amongst peers are some of the key motivations leading children to take part in multiple municipal-level subject competitions at once as early as in grades 7-8 [Gorshkova & Maksimchik, 2020]. As a rule, in grades 9-11, students narrow down their focus to 1-2 similar subjects, although there are rare cases of successful participation in Olympiads in completely unrelated subject areas – for example, History and Physics; English and Ecology; Russian and Law. Precedents like these are, however, the exception to the rule, even though it is worth noting that many students often choose English alongside some other subject in their pursuit of an Olympiad diploma. The logic behind this is that English is a “practical” subject that can be studied for personal development and is a gateway to integration into international spaces, which brings about opportunities such as using English-language resources to study the main subject of interest.

Nevertheless, English language Olympiads are challenging intellectual competitions requiring participants to demonstrate not only advanced productive skills (i.e. writing and speaking), but also analytical comprehension skills, such as extracting information from texts and classifying judgments as true or false according to the source [Kurasovskaya & Makhmuryan, 2018]. In essence, the Olympiad is an academic test that probes fitness for university study. In light of this, test developers – as a rule, university lecturers – try to rank participants according to their academic skills, critical thinking and creativity. A closer look at some of the tasks in the All-Russian Olympiad for schoolchildren in English shows that they tend to invoke vocabulary and task formats characteristic of academic tests at C1-C2 level, in spite of their formal difficulty level being capped at B2-C1 [Methodical recommendations of the Central Methodological Commission for the English language, 2018]. Worth highlighting at the same time is the pronounced distinctiveness of the approach to task writing – for example, the integration of listening and reading, the introduction of creative tasks (such as writing fairy tales or giving guided tours to an imaginary audience or to a partner) and the use of non-standard tasks (crosswords, puzzles, wordplay tasks) only feature in Russian Olympiads. In the Western approach, with communicative methodology at its forefront, tasks like these generally play an insignificant role and are mostly used by teachers with the sole aim of bolstering motivation by incorporating “gamification” into their teaching style. In academic exams, the assignment format is pre-determined, with a specimen paper and clear preparation guidance from the exam board accessible well in advance [Besyadovskaya, 2017].

Olympiad English can clearly be categorised as English for Specific Purposes (ESP), along with business English, medical English, aviation English, etc. For successful preparation for the Olympiad it is crucial to focus on past-paper formats, which requires thorough research and analysis of past tasks by the teacher. As a rule, Olympiad task sets are based on putting participants' academic English skills to the test whilst also incorporating tasks geared towards evaluating their language aptitude, creativity and ability to understand the main idea of a task under time pressure [Gorodetskaya, 2019].

The **relevance** of our study stems from insufficient methodology and research available on the topic of Olympiad preparation under the conditions of increasing school digitalisation. The work uses various methods, ranging from analysis of articles and publications on the topic to systema-

tisation of data obtained empirically. The **purpose** of our study is to determine the main features specific to Olympiad preparation in a 21st-century school equipped with digital technologies, as well as to describe the model employed for preparing Moscow students for the regional and final stages of the All-Russian School Olympiad during the pandemic.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As part of our research, we studied the works of international [Smith et al., 2021; Ahmed et al., 2020; Anwarudin et al., 2021] and domestic experts on the subject of the proposed article. We also made use of the results obtained in the course of a survey of the Moscow English Olympiad team. A number of researchers identify specific problems associated with teaching generation-Z students [Keldibekova & Avazova, 2018; Vergasova, 2015], who, whilst being technologically adept, face issues of a socio-psychological nature precisely because of their excessive immersion in virtual reality; this, however, does not inhibit successful teaching in a digitised environment. Some authors believe that the digital competencies of a modern student can be built on to increase engagement in a new-generation lesson [Campillo-Ferrer & Miralles- Martínez, 2021], this mission being facilitated by the ubiquitous spread of technology. We have also studied the general regulations and annotations to past Olympiad papers [Kurasovskaya, 2017; Kurasovskaya, 2021; Gorodetskaya, 2017], issued under the editorship of the members of the Central Subject-Methodological Commission for English. Some researchers believe that preparation for Olympiads and other intellectual competitions is part of a “hidden curriculum” [Makhmuryan, 2012]; others, on the contrary, believe that Olympiad achievements are a direct indicator of a high level of teaching and learning in educational institutions [Golubnichaya & Yanova, 2021; Tsvetkova & Abaturova, 2020]. We note that many researchers agree that Olympiad participation provides powerful incentives to learn a language to an advanced level [Besyadovskaya & Trubitsina, 2020; Egorov, 2017]. We also studied the task formats unique to the All-Russian School Olympiad in English, as well as the specificities of devising these tasks [Kirdyaeva, 2018; Kirdyaeva, 2020; Nikitina, 2021].

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Consider the main drivers of the growth of the Olympiad movement, which encompass a guarantee of a place at any higher educational institution of choice (on a programme relevant to the subject of the Olympiad), coupled with scholarships and grants for gifted children awarded by local governments. Talent support programmes operate in many regions of Russia; there has been a rise in the number of so-called supplementary education centres, both public and private, which aim to help children win Olympiads [Mamontova, 2018]. State financial support for schools producing Olympiad winners and prize-winners incentivises secondary educational institutions to actively participate in the process and compete for a high Olympiad ranking. A phenomenon observed across the country is “academic migration” – in search of high-quality Olympiad training, children change schools, switch to distance learning, and some even relocate to a different region.

Constantly on the rise is the number of school clubs and extracurricular study groups, as well as advanced training courses on offer for teachers. Progressively more communication is being established between the Central Subject-Methodological Commission (Russian abbreviation: TsP-MK) and regional teams of experts. The criteria for examining productive skills are becoming more transparent and more widely available for download on the Internet; the availability of past Olympiad questions (together with the answer keys) allows students and their mentors to gain

familiarity with the format [Kirdyaeva et al., 2019; Maksimchik, 2020]. Despite the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, in 2021, the regional and final stages of the VsOSH were successfully held in person, with the speaking part of each taking place online. The ubiquitous spread of video communication allowed expert boards to assess the responses remotely, which also played a role in facilitating inter-regional exchange of methodological experience.

The number of Olympiad participants grows every year; for example, in Moscow, more than 30 thousand schoolchildren (grades 7-11) take part in the municipal stage – of these, about 1500 (grades 9-11) make it to the regional stage. The final stage sees participants from all over the country – generally no more than 250 people – flock to the hosting location. All subjects of the Russian Federation are entitled to send at least 1 participant to the final stage, even if the cut-off score was not achieved by anyone in the region (in which case, the person with the highest regional score is allowed to progress to the final stage).

The possible number of winners and prize-winners of the final stage is capped at 45% of the total number of participants. In 2020, the final stage was cancelled due to the epidemiological situation. All participants from grade 11 were automatically conferred with prize-winner status; no winner diplomas were awarded. Students in grades 9 and 10 were granted automatic progression to the next year's final stage, which led to the number of participants increasing to 258 in the 2020-2021 academic year. Of these, 24 participants were 9th-grade students; grade 10 accounted for a further 88, and grade 11, the remaining 146. In the aftermath of the competition rounds, 116 people were awarded winner and prize-winner diplomas. We note that for many participants, English is still a “practical” subject and more of a tool they use to further their education rather than its main focus – as a result, many do not take advantage of the opportunity to get a guaranteed place on a language-related university course that Olympiad diplomas provide [Pogrebnya, 2020].

The transition to a distance learning model at the Center for Pedagogical Excellence (Russian: Tsentr Pedagogicheskogo Masterstva GAOU DPO, further: TsPM), where Olympiad preparation courses for the Moscow regional subject teams are held, had to be very abrupt in light of the epidemiological situation in the country; it is worth noting, however, that prior to that we had long been trialling this learning model on classes held in small groups and one-on-one consultations. The cohort preparing for the final stage in the 2019-20 academic year had their courses moved fully online in March-April 2020.

After the restrictions were relaxed, TsPM chose to default to this online teaching format for English language courses. Consider *the key reasons* for the switch to remote teaching and learning:

1. Olympiad preparation classes generally take place after school hours; in metropolitan areas, the commute can be very time-consuming;
2. Video communication platforms can host more participants in a single conference than a standard classroom can accommodate, which is convenient for the organisation of lecture-format lessons. Modern platforms also furnish a function allowing to split the group into session rooms, which makes it possible to carry out project-style activities;
3. A fully remote municipal stage and remote speaking rounds of the regional and the national stage call for the development of digital competencies;
4. Online learning eliminates the risk of the spread of infection between members of the team, which, in mass numbers, could invite quarantine measures.

We will point out the use of technologies students are familiar with as, in principle, the main motivating factor used to encourage in-depth study of their chosen subject; students are accustomed to using the Internet for work, independent search for information, and communication on discussion boards and in messenger apps. As Internet “natives”, many generation-Z children and

adolescents find it easier to understand and process information presented electronically than to do so offline [Abramova, 2019]. This approach, of course, is not all-encompassing and does not meet all the needs of every student; in-person pedagogical engagement is a crucial component of the learning process and is implemented through short, intensive “field courses” and “boot camps”. Nonetheless, a number of experts emphasise mixed learning as being the most effective approach that allows teachers to tap into students’ full potential. We also note that some researchers have developed their own digital Olympiad preparation programmes.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

Successful Olympiad performance requires high-quality language training, combined with a deep understanding of the task format. In our opinion, the most successful preparation trajectory at primary and secondary stages is the consistent acquisition of successive language levels on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), consolidated and certified by obtaining a Cambridge English qualification in each. Preparation for exams such as KET (Key English Test), PET (Preliminary English Test), FCE (First Certificate in English), etc. can serve as a basis for versatile language skill development, as well as teach students to work with all aspects of the language. The exclusive development of communication skills at the expense of others cannot guarantee Olympiad achievement, since many tasks, especially in the Reading and Listening sections, are aimed at examining students’ critical thinking, as well as information search and analysis and logical skills. Brilliant public speakers who achieve top scores in the Speaking part but struggle with convoluted Reading tasks or a confusing Listening section, will not be able to compete with those equipped with strong analytical skills. Moreover, the information required to answer the questions is often scattered throughout the text, which demands full concentration and maximum effort from the participants, as well as puts to the test their ability to quickly memorise information and use it in their reasoning.

Use of English section tasks, such as crosswords, anagrams, mistake search or contextual word formation, are aimed at examining not so much exclusively language skills, but rather creativity and ability to quickly adapt to an unfamiliar format.

The All-Russian School Olympiad is the most prestigious academic competition of its kind in the country, organised by the Ministry of Education. Children first get the opportunity to take part in Olympiads at school and municipal levels from grade 5, whilst competition for regional and final stage rankings begins in grade 9. In the 2020-21 academic year, a change was introduced into the selection process – students in grades 9, 10, 11 for the first time in the history of the English Olympiad, were ranked separately, with different cut-off scores required to progress into the final stage for each year group. Bearing this in mind, most of the tasks were still the same for all three-year groups, as prior to the change. The Olympiad structure incorporates four sections: Listening and Reading, Use of English, Writing, and Speaking. In 2021, Use of English was the only section where the tasks set for different year groups were different – this was not the case in previous years, where there was no difference in the question papers for grades 9-11, with a single cut-off score. An important feature of the Olympiad is that the tasks in the regional and final stages are identical nationwide, which ensures equal opportunities for all participants and standardised assessment criteria.

As a rule, the contextual basis of Olympiad tasks relies on the assessment principles used in internationally recognised English language proficiency exams, such as IELTS (International English Language Testing System), TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), CAE (C1 Certificate in Advanced English), CPE (Certificate of Proficiency in English), etc. At the same time, the declared difficulty level of the tasks at the regional and final stages ranges from B2 to C1 – in our opinion, however, some of the vocabulary used in the source materials (e.g., reading texts) and the peculiarities of the creative approach to the development of tasks place the difficulty level of some of the individual tasks at C2. At the same time, it is important to note that it would be wrong to try to classify Olympiad tasks into difficulty levels using exclusively the CEFR framework, as the main goal of the Olympiad is not simply to test pre-existing language skills, but to uncover students' language learning aptitude and their ability to make use of underdisciplined skills.

The key features of the structure of English Olympiad tasks include:

- lack of a rigid framework for task developers or any specification limiting the choice of theme or format;
- extensive use of “creative” tasks, such as anagrams, crosswords, or puzzles, which require students to think outside the box and draw on their general knowledge;
- the presence of a block of “socio-cultural competence” questions, which examine students' familiarity with the cultural features of the countries where the target language is spoken (generally, these questions mostly focus on the USA and the UK);
- the use of “modified” assignment formats, when participants are offered a task whose format is recognisable and bears many similarities to those encountered in international exams, but is at the same time different from them in specific ways (as a result of which misreading or incorrectly interpreting the wording of the task may lead students to fundamentally misunderstand the question);
- the use of “integrated” tasks, which may require students to combine application of listening and reading skills, or reading and writing skills.

Thus, the range of tasks that may be set at the Olympiad is virtually unlimited, which rules out “grooming” students for specific task formats as a preparation method. Comprehensive preparation for the Olympiad can be said to be based on the following five “pillars”:

- 1 – general language proficiency at the Advanced or Proficiency level,
- 2 – familiarity with international language exams and well-developed time-management skills,
- 3 – familiarity with past Olympiad papers,
- 4 – a deep immersion into the culture and traditions of the US and the UK, which entails knowledge of their history, literature, geography, politics, etc.,
- 5 – practice of mock tests based on the same principles as real past Olympiad papers that at the same time offer new, unexpected formats, which enables students to develop attention to detail and start engaging their analytical skills in order to identify the main idea of the task.

5. STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TO DISTANCE LEARNING

We conducted a survey of students in order to probe their level of satisfaction with the teaching quality, as well as to identify the elements of the course that were most or least liked. We surveyed 100 students (participants of the regional and final stages) who attended remote training courses in the 2019-2021 academic years. The results of our survey are presented in the table below.

Table 1. Students' Feedback concerning Online Preparation for the Olympiad

Question	Responses	
Are you satisfied with the quality of online teaching?	"Yes": 80%	"No": 20%
Would you prefer online preparation to in-person classes?	"Yes": 60%	"No": 40%
What did you like most about online classes?	"Convenient access to information in a digital format at any time": 33% "The comfort of working from home, time saved on commuting": 27% "Collaboration on projects": 23% "Automated assessment": 17%	
What did you dislike most about online classes?	"Lack of a real physical space": 28% "Lack of in-person social interaction": 27% "Increased fatigue": 25% "Technical issues": 20%	

As can be seen from the results of the survey, the vast majority of students expressed their satisfaction with the online courses on offer – at the same time, many would still prefer live teaching. Thus, despite the obvious advantages of distance learning, some students would prefer traditional teaching methods. Nevertheless, online teaching has vast development prospects. We note that for a number of regions, online courses are the only viable option even in a favourable epidemiological situation due to the limited number of Olympiad mentors and the wide geographical spread of talent in the region. Remote “field courses” make it possible to hold Olympiad preparation courses regardless of the season, weather conditions, students’ area of residence and other factors that could complicate the organisation of face-to-face classes.

6. DISCUSSION

Successful preparation for the Olympiad is impossible without the use of textbooks and teaching manuals, but it is necessary to understand that this is not a question of developing self-contained manuals based on the domestic curriculum. The Olympiads test language skills beyond the standard school specification, which generally does not extend beyond B2-C1. Therefore, to develop higher levels of language skills, it is preferable to use British textbooks such as “Master-class C2” (Oxford), “Objective C2” (Cambridge), or “Expert C2” (Pearson). These manuals also contain sample tasks used in the CPE exam (passing which certifies language proficiency at the highest CEFR level).

We offer several manuals (authored by us) that are aimed at Olympiad preparation [Gulov, 2019a; Gulov 2019b; Gulov, 2020a; Gulov, 2020b]. The “Olympway” series (publisher: MNCM-NO) compiles lexical and grammatical tasks of various levels of difficulty; the “Olympiad Builder” series (publisher: Title) is a complete textbook series covering stages from elementary school to high school; the “Great Lengths” manual is a free textbook to be used with grade 9-11 students, published by Pearson Education in 2021.

The main features of “Great Lengths” are:

1 – the manual consists of 15 complete sample papers, combining Reading, Listening, Use of English, Writing, and Speaking tasks (300 in total);

2 – it presents a variety of task formats, including integrated tasks – a relatively recent introduction to Olympiad papers;

3 – most of the texts the tasks are based on are of a socio-cultural nature, which has the additional benefit of introducing students to the cultural realities of English-speaking countries to prepare them for regional studies questions;

4 – a variety of productive skill tasks is offered; the “Writing” and the “Speaking” sections cover typical formats such as articles, stories, reports, reviews, essays for the former and presentations and guided tours for the latter.

5 – the manual underwent a testing period of 3 years, during which time it was incorporated into the training programme for the Moscow Olympiad team;

6 – within the framework of a non-commercial project, an electronic version in the form of a .pdf file was published alongside the print version; free legal download and distribution of all pages of the manual is allowed for educational purposes.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Of note is the wide geographical distribution of Olympiad participants. University-organised Olympiads are divided into 3 tiers; by the 2020-21 academic year, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation had formally approved 83 Olympiads, successful performance in which brings university admission benefits. We observe a broad interest among children from different regions; moreover, intellectual competitions are organised by universities located not only in Moscow and St. Petersburg, but also in Chelyabinsk, Kazan, Tomsk, Rostov-on-Don, and other large cities – i.e. talented students can receive quality higher education without leaving their own regions. VsOSH, as the most prestigious competition, understandably attracts the attention of students nationwide, and, as a rule, the final stage indeed hosts participants from all regions of the country. The presence of a “quota” – i.e. the right of each region to send at least one participant to the final round of the Olympiad, regardless of their performance at the regional stage – is a key factor in expanding the geography of the final stage, transforming it into a truly “all-Russian” project.

The nationwide nature of the competition also shapes the preparation system; different regions can join forces to improve the efficiency of their preparation programmes by exchanging methodological experience and engaging methodological and research personnel specialising in a range of subjects. The forced digitisation associated with the epidemiological situation in 2020 brought unexpected advantages – many educational institutions have now converted their Olympiad preparation courses into a digital format.

As a final point, let us consider the specific requirements for the functioning of a course of this type, with the constraints and requirements imposed by the subject area taken into account. Above all, it is important to highlight the need to analyse and draw from international experience – online courses aimed at learning and teaching English are an important export product for the UK and the USA, which is something that can and should be taken advantage of. Major international publishers such as Cambridge, Oxford, Macmillan, and Pearson offer digital products for successful language learning. Many teaching manuals are also complemented by a digital version, available online by subscription. A range of American and European universities offer their own distance learning courses, many of which have open public access. Major media outlets such as BBC, CNN and others offer educational materials based on their own journalistic output such as articles, podcasts, broadcast recordings, etc. However, Olympiad preparation is incomplete if

undertaken with the use of only “foreign” textbooks or authentic language materials. The goal of Olympiad training is to combine standard global practices with domestic modifications that reflect the modern challenges of language education in Russia. This type of training builds on the principles of communicative language teaching whilst drawing important lessons from the features of the Olympiad format. We note that for English teachers, the transition to a virtual environment mostly ran very smoothly compared to other subjects, such as the humanities or natural sciences. It appears possible to lean into internationally accumulated experience and methodology in domestic realities, whilst, of course, making adjustments to account for certain aspects specific to Olympiad preparation.

Conflict of interest

The author declares there is no conflict of interest

REFERENCES

1. Abramova, L. A. (2019). Povyshenie roli proforientacii uchastnikov olimpiad shkol'nikov v ih dal'nejshem obrazovanii i professional'nom samoopredelenii [Increasing the Role of Career Guidance for Olympiad Participants in their Further Education and Career Choice]. *Higher Education Today*, 10, 47-51. doi:10.25586 / RNU.HET.19.10.P.47 (in Russian).
2. Ahmed, N., Urmi, T., & Tasmin, M. (2020). Challenges and opportunities for young female learners in STEM from the perspective of Bangladesh. *Proceedings of 2020 IEEE International Conference on Teaching, Assessment, and Learning for Engineering, TALE*, 39-46. doi:10.1109/TALE48869.2020.9368378
3. Anwarudin, M., Dafik, & Ridlo, Z. R. (2021). The analysis of olympiad student's metacognition skills in solving the national sciences olympiad problem on two-variables linear equation system material. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series, The 2nd International Conference on Physics and Mathematics for Biological Science (2nd ICOPAMBS) 8-9 August 2020, East Java, Indonesia, the Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 1832(1). doi:10.1088/1742-6596/1832/1/012042
4. Besyadovskaya, N. A., & Trubitsina, O. I. (2020). Algoritm analiza zadaniy testovoj chasti olimpiady po inostrannomu yazyku i ego primenenie (na primere zaklyuchitel'nogo etapa gercenovskoj olimpiady shkol'nikov po anglijskomu yazyku) [An algorithm for the analysis of tasks in the multiple choice section of the Olympiad in a foreign language and its applications (using the example of the final stage of Herzen's School Olympiad in English)]. *Scientific opinion*, 6, 104-113 (in Russian).
5. Besyadovskaya, N.A. (2017). Ispol'zovanie materialov mezhdunarodnyh ekzamenov v processe podgotovki shkol'nikov k zaklyuchitel'nomu etapu vserossijskoj olimpiady [Use of international exam past papers and EGE materials in the process of preparing schoolchildren for the All-Russian Olympiad in English]. *Topical issues in language assessment*. Publishing House of St. Petersburg State University, 641-652 (in Russian).
6. Campillo-Ferrer, J. M., & Miralles-Martinez, P. (2021). Effectiveness of the flipped classroom model on students' self-reported motivation and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 8(1). doi:10.1057/s41599-021-00860-4
7. Egorov, A. G. (2017). Vserossiyskaya olimpiada shkol'nikov 2017 goda v Smolenskom gosudarstvennom universitete [All-Russian School Olympiad in 2017 at Smolensk State University]. *News of Smolensk State University*, 2 (38), 327-329.

8. Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2021). A distance learning instructional framework for early literacy. *Reading Teacher*, 74 (6), 827-831. doi:10.1002/trtr.2002
9. Golubnichaya, E. V., & Yanova, M. G. (2021). Features of pedagogical workers preparation for the organization and holding of All-Russian school olympiads in municipal education system. *Journal of Siberian Federal University - Humanities and Social Sciences*, 15(4), 546-553. doi:10.17516/1997-1370-0470
10. Gorodetskaya, L. A. (2017). Razvitie kriticheskogo myshleniya i podgotovka shkol'nikov k vserossijskim olimpiadam po anglijskomu yazyku [Development of critical thinking and preparation of schoolchildren for the All-Russian Olympiad in English]. *Internationalization strategies in foreign language education: materials and reports of the 05-06 June, 2017, International Conference in Samara*, 32-39 (in Russian).
11. Gorodetskaya, L. A. (2019). Integrirovannye zadaniya po audirovaniyu i chteniyu na regional'nom i zaklyuchitel'nom etapah Vserossijskoj olimpiady shkol'nikov po anglijskomu yazyku [Integrated listening and reading tasks at the regional and final stages of the All-Russian School Olympiad in English]. *The Moscow University bulletin, series 19: Linguistics and Intercultural Communication*, 1, 51-61 (in Russian).
12. Gorshkova, E. S., & Maksimchik, O. A. (2020). Specifika zadaniy Vserossijskoj olimpiady shkol'nikov po anglijskomu yazyku. Razdely Listening, Reading [Specific features of tasks of the All-Russian Olympiad for schoolchildren in English. Listening and Reading sections]. *Topical issues in the methodology of teaching foreign languages*, 212-216 (in Russian).
13. Gulov, A. P. (2019a). *Olimpiady po anglijskomu yazyku dlya 8-11 klassov. Pyat' variantov s otvetami* [English Olympiads for grades 8-11: study guide: five practice papers with keys]. Titul (in Russian).
14. Gulov, A. P. (2019b). *Olimpiady po anglijskomu yazyku dlya 8-11 klassov. 250 zadaniy* [Olympiads in English for grades 8-11. Use of English: 250 tasks: study guide]. Titul (in Russian).
15. Gulov, A. P. (2020a). Vserossijskaya olimpiada shkol'nikov: trenirovochnye zadaniya dlya podgotovki po vsem vidam rechevoj deyatel'nosti [All-Russian School Olympiad: practice tasks for all types of speaking activities]. *Foreign languages at school*, 8, 72-93 (in Russian).
16. Gulov, A. P. (2020b). *Olympway. Integral'nyy sbornik olimpiadnyh zadaniy po anglijskomu yazyku. Leksika, grammatika, stranovedenie* [Olympway. Integral collection of English Olympiad tasks. Vocabulary, grammar, regional studies]. MCNMO Publishing House (in Russian).
17. Keldibekova, A. O., & Avazova, E. T. (2018). Distancionnye i evristicheskie olimpiady – sovremennye formy provedeniya predmetnyh olimpiad [Remote and heuristic Olympiads – modern forms of subject Olympiads]. *Questions of pedagogy*, 9, 34-37 (in Russian).
18. Kiryaeva, O. I. (2018). Konkurs ustnoj rechi v ramkah vserossijskoj olimpiady shkol'nikov po anglijskomu yazyku: tipy zadaniy i rekomendacii po ih vypolneniyu [Speaking contest within the framework of the All-Russian School Olympiad in English: types of tasks and recommendations for their implementation]. *Teaching the culture of oral speech in English: traditions, problems, prospects: collection of scientific papers and materials of the International Scientific and Methodological conference*, 36-49 (in Russian).
19. Kiryaeva, O. I. (2020). Zadaniya po chteniyu dlya podgotovki k standartizirovannym ekzamenam i olimpiadam po inostrannym yazykam [Reading tasks for preparation for standardized exams and Olympiads in foreign languages]. *Foreign languages at school*, 3, 70-74 (in Russian).
20. Kiryaeva, O. I., Kostrub, E. V., & Simonyan, T. A. (2019). Olimpiada po anglijskomu yazyku: primery zadaniy [English Olympiads: example tasks]. *Foreign languages at school*, 1, 60-73 (in Russian).

21. Kurasovskaya, Y. B. (2017). Zadaniya na proverku sociokul'turnoj kompetencii uchashchihsya v ramkah olimpiad po anglijskomu yazyku [Tasks for assessing the socio-cultural competence of students in the framework of English language Olympiads]. *Russia and the West: A Dialogue of Cultures: Collection of Articles of the XIX International Conference*, 504-515 (in Russian).
22. Kurasovskaya, Y. B., & Makhmuryan, K. S. (2018). Vserossijskaya olimpiada shkol'nikov kak pokazatel' kachestva obucheniya inostrannomu yazyku [The All-Russian School Olympiad as an indicator of the quality of foreign language teaching in schools]. *Foreign languages at school*, 11, 32-47 (in Russian).
23. Kurasovskaya, Y. B. (2021). Transformaciya formata zadaniy EGE v zadaniyah Vserossijskoj olimpiady shkol'nikov [Transformation of the format of EGE tasks in the tasks of the All-Russian Olympiad for schoolchildren]. *Pedagogical measurements*, 1, 71-79 (in Russian).
24. Kurasovskaya, Y. B., Simonyan, T. A., & Titova, O. A. (2018). *Key to success. Collection of practice exercises to prepare for the All-Russian Olympiad in English*. MTsNMO Moscow.
25. Makhmuryan, K. S. (2012). Olimpiady kak instrument razvitiya inoyazychnogo obrazovaniya shkol'nikov [Olympiads as a tool for the development of foreign language education in schools]. *Foreign languages at school*, 10, 47-56 (in Russian).
26. Maksimchik, O. A. (2020). Prakticheskie rekomendacii po sostavleniyu zadaniy vserossijskoj Olimpiady shkol'nikov po anglijskomu yazyku (na primere municipal'nogo etapa v Samarskoj oblasti) [Practical recommendations for devising tasks for the All-Russian School Olympiad in English (e.g., the municipal stage in the Samara region)]. *Samara Scientific Bulletin*, 9 (2), 258-265. doi:10.17816 / snv202308 (in Russian).
27. Mamontova, A. K. (2018). Vserossijskaya olimpiada po anglijskomu yazyku kak effektivnyj instrument razvitiya lingvisticheskoy odarennosti uchashchihsya [The All-Russian Olympiad in English as an effective tool for the development of students' linguistic talent]. *Linguodidactics and intercultural communication: topical issues and research prospects: Collection of scientific articles*, 211-219 (in Russian).
28. Methodical recommendations of the Central Methodological Commission for the English language. (2018). APKRO.
29. Nikitina, G. A. (2021). Analiz rezul'tatov regional'nogo etapa Vserossijskoj olimpiady shkol'nikov po anglijskomu yazyku [An analysis of the results of the regional stage of the All-Russian School Olympiad in English]. *Bulletin of the Saratov Regional Institute of Educational Development*, 2 (26), 72-76 (in Russian).
30. Pogrebnaya, I. F. (2020). *Predmetnaya olimpiada po anglijskomu yazyku: teoriya i praktika [Subject Olympiad in English: theory and practice]*. Rostov-on-Don: Foundation for Science and Education (in Russian).
31. Smith, K. N., Jaeger, A. J., & Thomas, D. (2021). "Science olympiad is why I'm here": The influence of an early STEM program on college and major choice. *Research in Science Education*, 51, 443-459. doi:10.1007/s11165-019-09897-7
32. Tsvetkova, M. S., & Abaturova, V. V. (2020). Strategiya formirovaniya organizacionno-tehnologicheskoy modeli olimpiadnoj sredy regiona v sisteme obshchego obrazovaniya [A strategy for the development of an organisational and technological model of a regional Olympiad environment in the general education system]. *Specialised school*, 8(6), 11-24. doi:10.12737 / 1998-0744-2020-11-24 (in Russian).
33. Tsvetkova, M. S., Abaturova, V. V., & Kiryukhin, V. M. (2020). Perspektivnye napravleniya povysheniya kvalifikacii uchitelej-predmetnikov v sisteme podgotovki uchastnikov Vserossijskoj olimpiady shkol'nikov [Promising directions of professional development of subject teachers in the

- system of preparing participants for the All-Russian School Olympiad]. *Specialised school*, 8 (1), 3-22. doi:10.12737 / 1998-0744-2020-3-22 (in Russian).
34. Vergasova, E. V. (2015). Osobennosti provedeniya distancionnyh olimpiad po inostrannomu yazyku dlya mladshih shkol'nikov [Features of remote Olympiads in a foreign language for primary school students]. *Topical issues in linguistics*, 1, 118-119 (in Russian).

About the author:

Artem P. Gulov, Cand. Sci. (Pedagogy) is Senior Lecturer in the Department of the English Language #6 at MGIMO University (Moscow, Russia). ORCID: 0000-0001-7192-5316

Received: March 17, 2022.

Accepted: May 12, 2022.