

НОМИНАЦИЯ «Fly Bookshelf» КОНКУРС ДЛЯ УЧАЩИХСЯ 9 - 11 КЛАССОВ

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Dear friends!

We are glad to offer another task from our bookshelf. You will have to deal with a passage from the novel "The Catcher in the Rye" by J.D. Salinger. It is one of the most famous books in American literature. It is a novel for young people and about them. Here you will see good examples of American English in general and its slang in particular. It was also a very popular book, all the vogue all over the world in your parents' times. We hope you will like the main character and read further about his adventures. You shouldn't forget about the new words and interesting grammar forms. Good luck, we are looking forward to your deep research and original view-points. *N.B. If some task seems to be **too** difficult, leave it and try to do your best with the others. You are welcome with all your attempts.*

Task 1.

Write what you know about J.D. Salinger. Try to answer the following questions:

1. What kind of life did he live?
2. Did he write any other books, besides this one? What was their fate?
3. Was the novel "The Catcher in the Rye" approved of by the public and critics? What reasons did the writers opponents give against his works?

Your information shouldn't be given in more than in 30 sentences. (15 points).

Task 2.

What is the novel "The Catcher in the Rye" about? Why is it titled like this? (Find some information about the plot or (much better) read the book itself). Who is the narrator of the story? Why does he have problems with his parents and friends? Sum up your answers in 15 sentences (15 points).

Task 3.

Read the extract and think about the following: What sort of person is Holden? What is his attitude towards his teacher? Is he respectful to him in his behavior? Is he sincere? Develop your ideas giving evidence from the text. (15 points).

Task 4.

Mr. Spencer says that " *life is a game that one plays according to the rules*". How do you understand this statement? Do you agree with this idea? Do these rules have any exceptions? Is it right always to live by the rules? Do you try to live by the rules or do you try to change them somehow? Do you or your friends have the same problems? Develop your ideas, giving examples from real life. (15 points).

Task 5.

Give the Russian equivalents of the following words and phrases. Mind their register and remember that you are to give neutral Russian words but not rude one. (10 points):

- To get a big bang out of smth,
- to be old as hell,
- to hit the ceiling,
- smth. as sharp as a tack,
- a false alarm,
- a dirty trick,
- to be on opposite sides of the pole,
- goddam,
- to flunk,
- to shot the bull.

Task 6.

What is the difference between the teacher's and Holden's speech? Find examples that can show that they speak absolutely different variants of English. Pay attention to the words they use, the structure of their sentences. Explain the meanings of your examples. Sum up your answers. (20 points).

Task 7.

Do you find any "grammar mistakes" in Holden's speech? Why does he build up his sentences in such a way? What does the sentence "They each had their own room and all" mean? Are there any similar sentences in the extract? (10 points)

Task 8.

Suggest a theme for an essay on the extract you have read and write an essay, expressing your feelings about Holden and his attitude towards life.

They each had their own room and all. They were both around seventy years old, or even more than that. They got a bang out of things, though-in a haif-assed way, of course. I know that sounds mean to say, but I don't mean it mean. I just mean that I used to think about old Spencer quite a lot, and if you thought about him too much, you wondered what the heck he was still living for. I mean he was all stooped over, and he had very terrible posture, and in class, whenever he dropped a piece of chalk at the blackboard, some guy in the first row always had to get up and pick it up and hand it to him. That's awful, in my opinion. But if you thought about him just enough and not too much, you could figure it out that he wasn't doing too bad for himself. For instance, one Sunday when some other guys and I were over there for hot chocolate, he showed us this old beat-up Navajo blanket that he and Mrs. Spencer'd bought off some Indian in Yellowstone Park. You could tell old Spencer'd got a big bang out of buying it. That's what I mean. You take somebody old as hell, like old Spencer, and they can get a big bang out of buying a blanket.

His door was open, but I sort of knocked on it anyway, just to be polite and all. I could see where he was sitting. He was sitting in a big leather chair, all wrapped up in that blanket I just told you about. He looked over at me when I knocked. «Who's that?» he yelled. «Caulfield? Come in, boy.» He was always yelling, outside class. It got on your nerves sometimes.

The minute I went in, I was sort of sorry I'd come. He was reading the Atlantic Monthly, and there were pills and medicine all over the place, and everything smelled like Vicks Nose Drops. It was pretty depressing. I'm not too crazy about sick people, anyway. What made it even more depressing, old Spencer had on this very sad, ratty old bathrobe that he was probably born in or something. I don't much like to see old guys in their pajamas and bathrobes anyway. Their bumpy old chests are always showing. And their legs. Old guys' legs, at beaches and places, always look so white and unhairly. «Hello, sir,» I said. «I got your note. Thanks a lot.» He'd written me this note asking me to stop by and say good-bye before vacation started, on account of I wasn't coming back. «You didn't have to do all that. I'd have come over to say good-bye anyway.»

«Have a seat there, boy,» old Spencer said. He meant the bed.

I sat down on it. «How's your grippe, sir?»

«M'boy, if I felt any better I'd have to send for the doctor,» old Spencer said. That knocked him out. He started chuckling like a madman. Then he finally straightened himself out and said, «Why aren't you down at the game? I thought this was the day of the big game.»

«It is. I was. Only, I just got back from New York with the fencing team,» I said. Boy, his bed was like a rock.

He started getting serious as hell. I knew he would. «So you're leaving us, eh?» he said.

«Yes, sir. I guess I am.»

He started going into this nodding routine. You never saw anybody nod as much in your life as old Spencer did. You never knew if he was nodding a lot because he was thinking and all, or just because he was a nice old guy that didn't know his ass from his elbow.

«What did Dr. Thurmer say to you, boy? I understand you had quite a little chat.»

«Yes, we did. We really did. I was in his office for around two hours, I guess.»

«What'd he say to you?»

«Oh... well, about Life being a game and all. And how you should play it according to the rules. He was pretty nice about it. I mean he didn't hit the ceiling or anything. He just kept talking about Life being a game and all. You know.»

«Life is a game, boy. Life is a game that one plays according to the rules.»

«Yes, sir. I know it is. I know it.»

Game, my ass. Some game. If you get on the side where all the hot-shots are, then it's a game, all right-I'll admit that. But if you get on the other side, where there aren't any hot-shots, then what's a game about it? Nothing. No game. «Has Dr. Thurmer written to your parents yet?» old Spencer asked me.

«He said he was going to write them Monday.»

«Have you yourself communicated with them?»

«No, sir, I haven't communicated with them, because I'll probably see them Wednesday night when I get home.»

«And how do you think they'll take the news?»

«Well... they'll be pretty irritated about it,» I said. «They really will. This is about the fourth school I've gone to.» I shook my head. I shake my head quite a lot. «Boy!» I said. I also say «Boy!» quite a lot. Partly because I have a lousy vocabulary and partly because I act quite young for my age sometimes. I was sixteen then, and I'm seventeen now, and sometimes I act like I'm about thirteen. It's really ironical, because I'm six foot two and a half and I have gray hair. I really do. The one side of my head-the right side-is full of millions of gray hairs. I've had them ever since I was a kid. And yet I still act sometimes like I was only about twelve. Everybody says that, especially my father. It's partly true, too, but it isn't all true. People always think something's all true. I don't give a damn, except that I get bored sometimes when people tell me to act my age. Sometimes I act a lot older than I am-I really do-but people never notice it. People never notice anything.

Old Spencer started nodding again. He also started picking his nose. He made out like he was only pinching it, but he was really getting the old thumb right in there. I guess he thought it was all right to do because it was only me that was in the room. I didn't care, except that it's pretty disgusting to watch somebody pick their nose.

Then he said, «I had the privilege of meeting your mother and dad when they had their little chat with Dr. Thurmer some weeks ago. They're grand people.»

«Yes, they are. They're very nice.»

Grand. There's a word I really hate. It's a phony. I could puke every time I hear it.

Then all of a sudden old Spencer looked like he had something very good, something sharp as a tack, to say to me. He sat up more in his chair and sort of moved around. It was a false alarm, though. All he did was lift the Atlantic Monthly off his lap and try to chuck it on the bed, next to me. He missed. It was only about two inches away, but he missed anyway. I got up and picked it up and put it down on the bed. All of a sudden then, I wanted to get the hell out of the room. I could feel a terrific lecture coming on. I didn't mind the idea so much, but I didn't feel like being lectured to and smell Vicks Nose Drops and look at old Spencer in his pajamas and bathrobe all at the same time. I really didn't.

It started, all right. «What's the matter with you, boy?» old Spencer said. He said it pretty tough, too, for him. «How many subjects did you carry this term?»

«Five, sir.»

«Five. And how many are you failing in?»

«Four.» I moved my ass a little bit on the bed. It was the hardest bed I ever sat on. «I passed English all right,» I said, «because I had all that Beowulf and Lord Randal My Son stuff when I was at the Whooton School. I mean I didn't have to do any work in English at all hardly, except write compositions once in a while.»

He wasn't even listening. He hardly ever listened to you when you said something.

«I flunked you in history because you knew absolutely nothing.»

«I know that, sir. Boy, I know it. You couldn't help it.»

«Absolutely nothing,» he said over again. That's something that drives me crazy. When people say something twice that way, after you admit it the first time. Then he said it three times. «But absolutely nothing. I doubt very much if you opened your textbook even once the whole term. Did you? Tell the truth, boy.»

«Well, I sort of glanced through it a couple of times,» I told him. I didn't want to hurt his feelings. He was mad about history.

«You glanced through it, eh?» he said-very sarcastic. «Your, ah, exam paper is over there on top of my chiffonier. On top of the pile. Bring it here, please.»

It was a very dirty trick, but I went over and brought it over to him-I didn't have any alternative or anything. Then I sat down on his cement bed again. Boy, you can't imagine how sorry I was getting that I'd stopped by to say good-bye to him.

He started handling my exam paper like it was a turd or something. «We studied the Egyptians from

November 4th to December 2nd,» he said. «You chose to write about them for the optional essay question. Would you care to hear what you had to say?»

«No, sir, not very much,» I said.

He read it anyway, though. You can't stop a teacher when they want to do something. They just do it.

The Egyptians were an ancient race of Caucasians residing in one of the northern sections of Africa. The latter as we all know is the largest continent in the Eastern Hemisphere.

I had to sit there and listen to that crap. It certainly was a dirty trick.

The Egyptians are extremely interesting to us today for various reasons. Modern science would still like to know what the secret ingredients were that the Egyptians used when they wrapped up dead people so that their faces would not rot for innumerable centuries. This interesting riddle is still quite a challenge to modern science in the twentieth century.

He stopped reading and put my paper down. I was beginning to sort of hate him. «Your essay, shall we say, ends there,» he said in this very sarcastic voice. You wouldn't think such an old guy would be so sarcastic and all. «However, you dropped me a little note, at the bottom of the page,» he said.

«I know I did,» I said. I said it very fast because I wanted to stop him before he started reading that out loud. But you couldn't stop him. He was hot as a firecracker.

DEAR MR. SPENCER [he read out loud]. That is all I know about the Egyptians. I can't seem to get very interested in them although your lectures are very interesting. It is all right with me if you flunk me though as I am flunking everything else except English anyway. Respectfully yours, HOLDEN CAULFIELD.

He put my goddam paper down then and looked at me like he'd just beaten hell out of me in ping-pong or something. I don't think I'll ever forgive him for reading me that crap out loud. I wouldn't've read it out loud to him if he'd written it-I really wouldn't. In the first place, I'd only written that damn note so that he wouldn't feel too bad about flunking me.

«Do you blame me for flunking you, boy?» he said.

«No, sir! I certainly don't,» I said. I wished to hell he'd stop calling me «boy» all the time.

He tried chucking my exam paper on the bed when he was through with it. Only, he missed again, naturally. I had to get up again and pick it up and put it on top of the Atlantic Monthly. It's boring to do that every two minutes.

«What would you have done in my place?» he said. «Tell the truth, boy.»

Well, you could see he really felt pretty lousy about flunking me. So I shot the bull for a while. I told him I was a real moron, and all that stuff. I told him how I would've done exactly the same thing if I'd been in his place, and how most people didn't appreciate

how tough it is being a teacher. That kind of stuff. The old bull.

The funny thing is, though, I was sort of thinking of something else while I shot the bull. I live in New York, and I was thinking about the lagoon in Central Park, down near Central Park South. I was wondering if it would be frozen over when I got home, and if it was, where did the ducks go. I was wondering where the ducks went when the lagoon got all icy and frozen over. I wondered if some guy came in a truck and took them away to a zoo or something. Or if they just flew away.

I'm lucky, though. I mean I could shoot the old bull to old Spencer and think about those ducks at the same time. It's funny. You don't have to think too hard when you talk to a teacher. All of a sudden, though, he interrupted me while I was shooting the bull. He was always interrupting you.

«How do you feel about all this, boy? I'd be very interested to know. Very interested.»

«You mean about my flunking out of Pencey and all?» I said. I sort of wished he'd cover up his bumpy chest. It wasn't such a beautiful view.

«If I'm not mistaken, I believe you also had some difficulty at the Whooton School and at Elkton Hills.» He didn't say it just sarcastic, but sort of nasty, too.

«I didn't have too much difficulty at Elkton Hills,» I told him. «I didn't exactly flunk out or anything. I just quit, sort of.»

«Why, may I ask?»

«Why? Oh, well it's a long story, sir. I mean it's pretty complicated.» I didn't feel like going into the whole thing with him. He wouldn't have understood it anyway. It wasn't up his alley at all. One of the biggest reasons I left Elkton Hills was because I was surrounded by phonies. That's all. They were coming in the goddam window. For instance, they had this headmaster, Mr. Haas, that was the phoniest bastard I ever met in my life. Ten times worse than old Thurmer. On Sundays, for instance, old Haas went around shaking hands with everybody's parents when they drove up to school. He'd be charming as hell and all. Except if some boy had little old funny-looking parents. You should've seen the way he did with my roommate's parents. I mean if a boy's mother was sort of fat or corny-looking or something, and if somebody's father was one of those guys that wear those suits with very big shoulders and corny black-and-white shoes, then old Haas would just shake hands with them and give them a phony smile and then he'd go talk, for maybe a half an hour, with somebody else's parents. I can't stand that stuff. It drives me crazy. It makes me so depressed I go crazy. I hated that goddam Elkton Hills.

Old Spencer asked me something then, but I didn't hear him. I was thinking about old Haas. «What, sir?» I said.

«Do you have any particular qualms about leaving Pencey?»

«Oh, I have a few qualms, all right. Sure... but not too many. Not yet, anyway. I guess it hasn't really hit me yet. It takes things a while to hit me. All I'm doing right now is thinking about going home Wednesday. I'm a moron.»

«Do you feel absolutely no concern for your future, boy?»

«Oh, I feel some concern for my future, all right. Sure. Sure, I do.» I thought about it for a minute. «But not too much, I guess. Not too much, I guess.»

«You will,» old Spencer said. «You will, boy. You will when it's too late.»

I didn't like hearing him say that. It made me sound dead or something. It was very depressing. «I guess I will,» I said.

«I'd like to put some sense in that head of yours, boy. I'm trying to help you. I'm trying to help you, if I can.»

He really was, too. You could see that. But it was just that we were too much on opposite sides of the pole, that's all. «I know you are, sir,» I said. «Thanks a lot. No kidding. I appreciate it. I really do.» I got up from the bed then. Boy, I couldn't've sat there another ten minutes to save my life. «The thing is, though, I have to get going now. I have quite a bit of equipment at the gym I have to get to take home with me. I really do.» He looked up at me and started nodding again, with this very serious look on his face. I felt sorry as hell for him, all of a sudden. But I just couldn't hang around there any longer, the way we were on opposite sides of the pole, and the way he kept missing the bed whenever he chucked something at it, and his sad old bathrobe with his chest showing, and that grippy smell of Vicks Nose Drops all over the place. «Look, sir. Don't worry about me,» I said. «I mean it. I'll be all right. I'm just going through a phase right now. Everybody goes through phases and all, don't they?»

«I don't know, boy. I don't know.»

I hate it when somebody answers that way. «Sure. Sure, they do,» I said. «I mean it, sir. Please don't worry about me.» I sort of put my hand on his shoulder. «Okay?» I said.

«Wouldn't you like a cup of hot chocolate before you go? Mrs. Spencer would be—»

«I would, I really would, but the thing is, I have to get going. I have to go right to the gym. Thanks, though. Thanks a lot, sir.»

Then we shook hands. And all that crap. It made me feel sad as hell, though.

«I'll drop you a line, sir. Take care of your grippe, now.»

«Good-by, boy.»

After I shut the door and started back to the living room, he yelled something at me, but I couldn't exactly hear him. I'm pretty sure he yelled «Good luck!» at me.

I hope to hell not. I'd never yell «Good luck!» at anybody. It sounds terrible, when you think about it.