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ANALYSIS OF GRADE 7 RUSSIAN LITERATURE TEXTBOOKS' TASKS FOR ACTIVE-PRODUCTIVE READING OF EPIC PROSE

The article examines approaches to developing reading competence among 7th-grade students in Russian-language literature classes through a systematic analysis of textbook tasks. It argues for a shift from reproductive engagement with text to meaningful and productive comprehension supported by staged instruction. Drawing on the fourth unit of two state-approved literature textbooks (V. V. Saveleva; N. P. Loktionova), the study identifies task types calibrated to different levels of textual understanding and their distribution across lessons. On this empirical basis, it proposes a five-stage methodological model for forming reading competence: motivational-orientational; semantic (close) reading; analytical-interpretative; reflective-productive; and evaluative-generalizing.

The emphasis stated in the title of the article reflects its dual focus: an analysis of Grade 7 Russian literature textbook tasks on epic prose and the design of a five-stage model of active-productive reading. The paper demonstrates that this model is directly derived from the empirical analysis of tasks and is designed to supplement and extend the existing task spectrum by systematically targeting meaning-oriented and interpretative levels of comprehension.

Classroom-oriented readings of short stories by V. Nabokov and V. Tendryakov illustrate how the model operationalizes transitions from surface comprehension to deeper inference, interpretation, and value judgment. A mixed-methods study was used. Teachers from School-Gymnasium No. 209 in Almaty participated in the survey. The results are intended for literature teachers, methodologists, and curriculum designers and can inform lesson planning, assessment design, literature clubs, and teacher-training seminars. The study contributes a replicable framework for aligning textbook tasks with progressive levels of comprehension and for integrating semantic reading practices into the middle-school literature curriculum.

Keywords: reading competence, semantic reading, productive reading, literary text analysis, methodological model, Grade 7 curriculum, epic prose.

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Орыс әдебиеті бойынша 7-сыныпқа арналған оқулықтардағы эпикалық прозаны белсенді-өнімді оқуға бағытталған оқу тапсырмаларын талдау

Мақалада 7-сынып оқушыларының оқырмандық құзыреттілігін қалыптастырудың тәсілдері әдебиет сабағындағы оқу тапсырмаларын жүйелі талдау негізінде қарастырылады. Мәтінді жай қайталаудан мағыналық және өнімді оқуға көшу қажеттілігі дәлелденіп, оқу үдерісін кезең-кезеңмен ұйымдастырудың маңызы айқындалады. Мемлекеттік мақұлданған екі әдебиет оқулығының (В.В. Савельева; Н.П. Локтионова) төртінші бөлімі материалында көркем мәтінді түсінудің әртүрлі деңгейлеріне сәйкес келетін тапсырма түрлері және олардың сабақ құрылымындағы орналасуы анықталды. Осы эмпирикалық негізде оқырмандық құзыреттілікті қалыптастырудың бес сатылы әдістемелік моделі ұсынылады: мотивациялық-бағдарлау; мағыналық (жақын) оқу; аналитикалық-интерпретациялық; рефлексивті-өнімді; бағалау-қорытындылау кезеңдері.

Мақала атауында айқындалған негізгі назар зерттеудің екі өзара байланысты қырын бейнелейді: 7-сыныпқа арналған орыс әдебиеті оқулықтарындағы эпикалық прозаға қатысты тапсырмалар жүйесін талдау және белсенді-өнімді оқудың бес кезеңді моделін әзірлеу. Ұсынылған модель тапсырмалардың эмпирикалық талдауы нәтижелерінен тікелей туындайтыны және мәтінді мағыналық және интерпретациялық деңгейде түсінуге жүйелі түрде бағыттау арқылы қолданыстағы оқу тапсырмаларының спектрін толықтырып, кеңейтуге арналғаны дәлелденеді.

сетіледі. Аралас әдістерді қолдану арқылы зерттеу жүргізілді. Сауалнамаға Алматы қаласындағы №209 мектеп-гимназиясының мұғалімдері қатысты. Зерттеу нәтижелері әдебиет мұғалімдеріне, әдіскерлерге және оқу бағдарламаларын әзірлеушілерге арналған; оларды сабақ жоспарлау, бағалау құралдарын жобалау, оқырмандар клубтары мен мұғалімдерге арналған тренингтерді ұйымдастыруда қолдануға болады. Мақала оқу тапсырмаларын түсінудің деңгейлерімен сәйкестендіруге және мағыналық оқыту тәжірибелерін негізгі мектептің әдебиет курсына интеграциялауға арналған қайта қолдануға болатын әдістемелік үлгіні әзірлеуге үлес қосады.

Түйін сөздер: оқырмандық құзыреттілік, мағыналық оқу, өнімді оқу, көркем мәтінді талдау, әдістемелік модель, 7-сыныптың оқу бағдарламасы, эпикалық проза.

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Анализ учебных заданий 7 класса по русской литературе для активно-продуктивного чтения эпической прозы

В статье рассматриваются подходы к формированию читательской компетентности учащихся 7 классов в русскоязычных классах на основе системного анализа учебных заданий по литературе. Обосновывается необходимость перехода от репродуктивного усвоения текста к его осмысленному и продуктивному чтению, обеспеченному поэтапной организацией работы с художественным произведением. На материале четвертого раздела двух утверждённых государством учебников по русской литературе для 7 класса (под ред. В.В. Савельевой и Н. П. Локтионовой) выявляются типы заданий, соотносённые с различными уровнями понимания текста, и особенности их распределения в структуре уроков. На этой эмпирической основе предлагается пятиступенчатая модель формирования читательской компетентности: мотивационно-ориентировочный этап, этап смыслового (близкого) чтения, аналитико-интерпретационный, рефлексивно-продуктивный и оценочно-обобщающий.

Акцент, заявленный в названии статьи, отражает её двойной фокус: анализ системы заданий по эпической прозе в учебниках русской литературы для 7 класса и разработку пятиэтапной модели активно-продуктивного чтения. Показано, что предложенная модель непосредственно вырастает из результатов эмпирического анализа заданий и призвана дополнить и расширить существующий спектр учебных заданий посредством целенаправленного включения смыслового и интерпретационного уровней понимания текста.

Чтение и анализ рассказов В. Набокова и В. Тендрякова демонстрируют, как предложенная модель обеспечивает переход от поверхностного понимания к глубинным выводам, интерпретации и ценностному осмыслению. Использовались смешанные методы исследования. В опросе приняли участие учителя школы-гимназии № 209 г. Алматы. Результаты исследования адресованы учителям литературы, методистам и разработчикам учебных программ и могут быть использованы при планировании уроков, проектировании оценочных средств, организации читательских клубов и курсов повышения квалификации. Статья вносит вклад в разработку воспроизводимой методики согласования учебных заданий с уровнями понимания и интеграции практик смыслового чтения в курс литературы основной школы.

Ключевые слова: читательская компетентность, смысловое чтение, продуктивное чтение, анализ художественного текста, методическая модель, учебная программа 7 класса, эпическая проза.

Introduction

Developing reading competence within school literature instruction is one of the priorities of Kazakhstan's updated educational policy. Reading competence is understood as an integrated set of skills that ensure full reception, comprehension, and interpretation of a text, as well as the formation of a personal reader's stance. In the context of the rapid expansion of the digital environment and the prevalence of "clip" perception among con-

temporary students, the task of cultivating stable skills of meaning-oriented reading becomes especially urgent. As a school subject, Literature possesses a unique potential to address this task, since it appeals not only to the intellectual, but also to the emotional, ethical, and aesthetic dimensions of the learner's personality.

The relevance of this study is determined by the need to reconsider traditional approaches to literature teaching under conditions of societal digitalisation and the renewal of educational standards. Con-

temporary adolescents increasingly demonstrate fragmented and superficial perception of texts, limiting themselves to elementary plot reproduction. At the same time, educational policy documents and curricula require a level of reading competence that presupposes the ability to analyse and interpret what is read and to articulate a grounded personal position. This produces a clear tension between the requirements of functional literacy and the nature of classroom tasks that still predominate in practice and are at times oriented predominantly toward reproductive engagement with content.

This tension is particularly salient in Grade 7 literature classes in schools with Russian as the language of instruction, when students enter a phase of active cognitive and personal development and are ready for deeper engagement with epic prose. A preliminary examination of task structures in officially approved Grade 7 literature textbooks suggests that the distribution of assignment types may not consistently prioritise meaning-oriented reading or literary interpretation – a proposition that the present study sets out to examine empirically.

The article addresses this problem through a focused analysis of the content and structure of Grade 7 literature tasks and their potential to foster meaning-oriented reception of literary texts. First, it draws on psychological and pedagogical research on adolescents' reception of fiction to outline factors that support the transition from reproductive to productive, interpretive reading. Second, it examines contemporary methodological approaches to the formation of reading competence in school literature instruction, with particular attention to technologies that scaffold deeper levels of comprehension. Third, it presents a comparative analysis of classroom tasks from officially approved Grade 7 literature textbooks, considering their sequencing, logical structure and cognitive demands in relation to practices of active, productive reading.

On the basis of this empirical and theoretical groundwork, the article proposes an original five-stage methodological model for teaching meaning-oriented reading in Grade 7. The model organises textual work into a system of progressively more complex tasks that align with different levels of comprehension and guide students from initial orientation in the text to interpretive and evaluative judgements. The analysis demonstrates that this structured approach can be used by literature teachers to design lesson scenarios and task sequences that systematically develop reading competence, critical thinking and the ability to articulate a per-

sonal stance, while remaining compatible with the requirements of Kazakhstan's renewed curriculum and applicable in both classroom and extracurricular formats.

Literature review

Contemporary approaches to literature instruction aim to activate students' reading activity and to shift from rote learning to creative meaning – making. Reading competence is treated as a multi – level process encompassing reception, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of a literary work, which presupposes a move from reproductive forms of work to productive reading. Foundational contributions to school – based text analysis were made by M. A. Rybnikova, V. V. Golubkov, A. G. Balyberdin, among others, establishing an activity-based approach in which the student acts as a co-creator of meaning.

Within Kazakhstan's renewed curriculum, reading competence is understood as an integrative quality comprising the ability for meaningful reception, interpretation, and critical analysis of a text, as well as the formation of a personal position based on reading. Kazakhstani researchers emphasize that reading competence is a key learning outcome directly linked to students' functional literacy (Smagulova & Bektasova, 2023).

In line with recent Kazakhstani scholarship, literary education is increasingly seen as a dialogic encounter of cultures that broadens adolescents' cognitive, ethical, and aesthetic horizons. A. Zh. Kulbaeva, S. V. Ananyeva, and S. K. Mizanbekov (2025) show that a poly-stylistic and culturally dialogic approach to teaching literature-based on comparison of texts, multiplicity of viewpoints, and reflective discussion – creates conditions for developing mature reading competence and value-based understanding of texts in both Kazakh and Russian literary traditions.

Reading literacy – a means of developing adolescents' critical thinking and emotional intelligence, particularly in literature classes with high educational potential. The methodological literature thus converges on the necessity of shifting emphasis from retelling and memorization to interpretation, discussion, and creative meaning-making.

Psychological Specificities of Adolescents' Literary Reception

From a developmental perspective, Grade 7 constitutes a favorable period for advancing analytical and reflective reading. According to Vygotsky

(1984), this age marks the transition to thinking in concepts, opening new possibilities for abstract comprehension. Bozhovich (1995) describes the emergence of an “inner position” of the schoolchild – a stable system of value orientations that shapes the perception of literary characters and events. Mukhina (2000) characterizes ages 12 – 13 as early adolescence, during which the emotional sphere becomes increasingly intellectualized: students strive to make sense of their experiences and actively search for meaning in surrounding phenomena.

Research indicates that adolescents’ capacity for inner reflection and independent evaluation of information grows during this period. Dragunova (1973) notes that they begin to perceive learning as solving theoretical problems that require thought and analysis. The need to understand characters’ motives and feelings comes to the fore, creating preconditions for a shift from plot retelling to interpretation. The development of reading motivation and interest in textual interpretation is also addressed by Stanchev (1985) and Marantsman (1994), who emphasize adolescents’ heightened emotional responsiveness to literary imagery and their inclination to discuss ethical questions raised by literature.

Accordingly, adolescents’ psychological characteristics – aspiration to independent judgments, interest in characters’ inner worlds, and growing abstract thinking – create favorable conditions for purposefully cultivating reading competence. Tasks for seventh-graders should account for these features: they should provide avenues for expressing personal opinion, encourage empathy and moral – philosophical generalization, and engage students in analyzing characters’ actions and motives.

Forms of Classroom Interaction in Literature Lessons

Effective development of reading competence depends on the organization of classroom work. Group, individual, and whole-class formats each play distinct roles depending on instructional goals. Researchers stress the special value of small – group work for activating adolescents’ thinking during discussion of the text (Khorenko, 2000). In small groups, students learn to argue their viewpoints, attend to alternatives, and jointly develop interpretations. Individual work is essential for cultivating skills of independent analysis and reflection, while teacher-guided whole-class discussion sets a shared vector for meaning-oriented inquiry.

A modern methodology of literature teaching should synthesize theoretical knowledge, psychological regularities of adolescent development, and

instructional techniques that build reading competence as a foundation of functional literacy. This implies not only the presence of analytical and interpretive tasks in textbooks, but also the creation by the teacher of conditions for their meaningful execution. The teacher’s role is that of a facilitator who guides discussion and encourages students’ creativity and critical thinking in working with the text. In sum, the theoretical analysis supports a transition toward readerly activity centered on meaning-oriented reading and active interaction with the literary text and with peers.

Materials and methods

The study employs a mixed-methods design that combines quantitative and qualitative analyses to identify how textbook tasks shape the development of reading competence. The following methods were used:

Content analysis of textbook tasks included in Section 4 of the Grade 7 Russian Literature textbook by V.V. Savelieva, G.G. Lukpanova, and A.B. Yarmukhamedova (2017) and the textbook – reader by N.P. Loktionova and G.V. Zabinjakova (2017). The analysis of each book’s pedagogical apparatus enabled a systematic grouping of tasks by orientation and complexity – from simple reproductive questions to interpretive – analytical problems.

Comparative – contrastive analysis was applied to reveal differences in the structure, logic, and content of tasks across the two textbooks, as well as the extent to which they are oriented toward active, productive reading. This method integrated comparison of quantitative indicators (counts of task types) with examination of qualitative features.

Pedagogical classification organized tasks into functional types: factual, analytical, interpretive, creative, reflective, evaluative, comparative, game – based, cross-curricular, etc. This typology clarified the didactic functions of each task type in reading instruction. For example, factual questions check basic understanding and recall; interpretive tasks cultivate the search for implied meanings; creative tasks stimulate imagination and personal expression; evaluative tasks develop critical thinking.

Instructional modeling was used to construct an authorial framework for cultivating reading competence derived from the empirical analysis. Modeling made it possible to conceptualize the staged transition from reproductive to productive reading and to formalize it as a practicable sequence of phases and tasks.

Analytic – synthetic integration connected contemporary theoretical research (ideas of L. S. Vygotsky, L. I. Bozhovich, V. S. Mukhina, and others) with findings from the assessment of real instructional material. This linkage aligned adolescents' psychological characteristics and new curricular requirements with the concrete content of textbook tasks.

Pedagogical forecasting substantiated the applicability of the proposed model in a literature teacher's practice – both in lessons and in extracurricular formats. The forecast, grounded in the identified trends, outlines potential outcomes of implementation (increased reading engagement, higher-quality textual analysis, etc.).

The combined use of these methods ensured a comprehensive and reliable analysis. Quantitative results (counts and classification of tasks) are supported by qualitative interpretation of their instructional roles, culminating in a substantiated model aimed at fostering students' meaningful and creative engagement with literary texts.

The empirical basis of the study is a comparative analysis of tasks included in the epic-prose unit (Section 4) of two officially approved Grade 7 literature textbooks. The sample comprises the textbook edited by V.V. Savelieva (2017) and the textbook-reader edited by N. P. Loktionova (2017). Section 4 was selected because it includes short stories and a novella (by V. Nabokov, V. Tendryakov, and J. R. R. Tolkien) that are well suited to developing seventh-graders' productive and meaning-oriented reading. The section also contains a substantial corpus of tasks explicitly targeting work with textual meaning, making it indicative for the purposes of this study. As an auxiliary source, we consulted the Grade 7 calendar-thematic plan in literature, which helped align the analysis with program requirements and time allocation for the specified works.

Research Methodology: Online Survey of Teachers at School-Gymnasium № 209 in Almaty. To clarify the practical feasibility of the proposed five-stage model for developing seventh-graders' reading competence in the study of epic prose, a pilot online survey of Russian literature teachers was conducted. All 12 Russian literature teachers at the gymnasium were invited to participate; 9 completed the questionnaire in full (response rate: 75%), representing varying years of teaching experience and different qualification categories. Although the sample size is limited, it reflects the full set of practitioners in a language-oriented gymnasium and provides an in-depth view of the perceived feasibility

of the model in a real school context. The study was conducted in cooperation with the school administration, which facilitated communication with the teaching staff and ensured teachers' access to the online questionnaire. The gymnasium uses current Russian literature textbooks for Grade 7, which provides substantive continuity between the survey and the previously conducted content analysis of textbook tasks.

An original online questionnaire entitled "Developing Reading Competence in Lessons on Epic Prose (Grade 7)" was designed and implemented as a Google Form. The questionnaire comprised five sections:

- 1) General information about the teacher (years of experience, qualification category, teaching load, language of instruction, textbooks used);
- 2) Experience of working with epic prose and textbook tasks (assessment of the sufficiency of factual, analytical and interpretative tasks);
- 3) Evaluation of the five-stage model (motivational-orienting stage, stage of close/meaning-oriented reading, analytical-interpretative stage, reflective-productive stage, and evaluative-generalising stage);
- 4) Practical conditions and possible challenges in implementing the model;
- 5) Open-ended questions on the most effective types of tasks and on teachers' needs for methodological support.

Items in Sections II – IV were rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 – "strongly disagree" to 5 – "strongly agree"). The survey link was distributed via the school's internal communication channels with the support of the administration; participation was voluntary and anonymous. The online format enabled teachers to complete the questionnaire at a convenient time without interrupting their teaching. All responses were automatically recorded in a spreadsheet for subsequent analysis.

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics (mean scores for each item and the distribution of responses along the scale). For each item, the proportion of respondents selecting scores 4 («rather agree») or 5 («strongly agree») was calculated and reported as the measure of agreement. Neutral responses (score 3, «difficult to say») were recorded separately, as their prevalence constitutes a substantive finding in its own right. Responses to the open-ended questions were subjected to thematic analysis, which made it possible to identify recurring motifs and typical positions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the model and the con-

ditions for its implementation in the gymnasium's practice.

Results and discussion

The analysis covered 55 tasks in Section 4 of Savelieva's textbook and 64 tasks in the corresponding section of N.P. Loktionova's textbook – reader. Tasks were classified according to the aforementioned criteria (factual, interpretive, analytical, creative, reflective, evaluative, comparative, game – based, cross – curricular). Comparison of quantitative indicators revealed distinct methodological emphases across the author teams.

Savelieva's textbook is marked by a predominance of analytical and interpretive tasks, along with exercises consolidating literary – theoretical concepts. Many activities are directed toward structural – compositional analysis: drafting a detailed outline of the story, analyzing selected episodes, identifying stylistic devices (metaphor, symbol) and their functions. For example, after reading, students are asked to complete a plot schema by distinguishing exposition, climax, and denouement; to analyze the image of the butterfly as a symbol; and to read key fragments expressively. This approach prioritizes close reading and mastery of literary terminology.

N.P. Loktionova's textbook – reader, by contrast, offers a broader spectrum of creative and reflective tasks. It frequently employs techniques that foster meaning – oriented reading: “thin vs. thick” questions, plotting a character's “emotional line” across the storyline, and keeping a reader's journal. Students are encouraged to formulate independent conclusions using a Fishbone diagram (graphically mapping cause effect relations), invent alternative chapter titles, and exchange viewpoints in pairs or groups. Creative tasks include cluster mapping of key ideas, writing a letter in a character's voice, dramatizing fragments, and composing a cinquain. These exercises develop not only textual understanding but also students' cross-curricular competencies – collaboration, empathy, and self-expression.

Overall, N.P. Loktionova's textbook – reader contains more tasks that stimulate personal meaning-making. Prompts such as “What saved the protagonist?”, “How did the character's inner world change?”, and “What did the story make you reconsider?” invite reflection and connections to lived experience. Savelieva's textbook directs its empha-

sis differently, placing greater priority on exercises consolidating foundational analytical skills – plot structuring, identification of literary devices, terminology application which constitute an important component of reading competence at this level. Nevertheless, both textbooks maintain a certain balance, ranging from factual checks of plot comprehension to higher – order tasks that require interpretation and evaluation.

For clarity, the quantitative distribution of task types is presented in table 1:

Table 1
Quantitative Distribution of Task Types of 4th unit

Task Type	V.V. Savelieva's Textbook	N.P. Loktionova's Reader
Factual	12	8
Interpretive	10	12
Analytical	14	10
Creative	10	12
Reflective	3	6
Evaluative	2	5
Comparative	3	5
Game-based	0	3
Cross-curricular	1	3
Total	55	64

Source / Note: This table was compiled by the authors based on the analysis of materials

Interpretation of the Distribution:

The table indicates that N.P. Loktionova's reader contains more creative, reflective, evaluative, and game – based tasks, whereas Savelieva's textbook leads in the number of analytical exercises. Both textbooks include a comparable volume of interpretive questions, though they are phrased somewhat differently. Quantitatively the differences are not drastic; qualitatively the approaches diverge: one is more academically oriented, the other more learner – centered. Thus, the emphasis stated in the title of the article on the analysis of Grade 7 Russian literature textbook tasks serves as the empirical basis for constructing a five-stage model of active-productive reading of epic prose. The relative underrepresentation of systematically staged meaning-oriented tasks identified in the course of the analysis directly shaped the architecture of the model.

Case Study: V. Nabokov's "Christmas":

To illustrate, consider the task system accompanying V. Nabokov's short story "Christmas" in the epic – prose unit.

Factual – comprehension level: "Briefly retell the plot." This secures baseline comprehension and ensures the storyline is understood. A complementary task – "Devise a title for each of the story's four parts" – targets recall and logical structuring of the plot.

Initial meaning – making; Questions focus attention on textual detail: "What roles do verbs, adjectives, and comparisons play in the description? What creates the Christmas – Eve atmosphere?" These require close reading and lead to identifying authorial techniques.

Interpretive level; "What symbolic meaning does the butterfly assume in the story's finale?" "Compare the descriptions of the outhouse and the house. How do their moods relate?" Here students access latent meanings and symbols, analyzing detail and its affective-semantic force.

Conceptual – axiological level: "How does the author relate to the protagonist? In what does this stance manifest?" A creative task follows: a mini-essay on "The Butterfly as a Symbol of Renewal in V. Nabokov's 'Christmas.'" These tasks elicit independent interpretation and judgment and the formulation of personal conclusions.

Special attention is given to the key episode – the butterfly's emergence from the chrysalis – which functions as the story's climax. Students identify key words in this fragment (e.g., "darkness," "wings," "movement," "rest"), determine the micro – meaning of each element (moment of transformation, symbol of rebirth), and synthesize a conclusion about the passage's philosophical subtext. This "quantized" analysis reflects Gorlova's (2020) methodology of meaning-oriented reading, in which successive identification and reinterpretation of meaning quanta moves readers from surface perception to depth.

In sum, the task sequence for "Christmas" is cumulative: from retelling, to analysis of detail, to symbol interpretation, to reasoned judgment. Each subsequent task addresses a higher tier of meaning – oriented reading. Factual questions correspond to the initial stage of textual work (securing comprehension). Interpretive prompts engage students in analytic – interpretive examination, revealing latent meanings. Creative and evaluative tasks move learners to reflective – productive and evaluative – synthesizing levels, where a personal stance is formed.

This multi-stage architecture accords with the aims of meaning – oriented reading: students first grasp what happens, then how and why, and finally what it signifies – personally and in terms of shared human values.

Case Study: V. Tendryakov's "Bread for a Dog":

V. Tendryakov's story, likewise included in Section 4 of both textbooks, is well suited to fostering productive reading. The accompanying task systems combine analytical and learner – centered approaches.

In V.V. Savelieva's textbook, students are asked to:

- Draft a detailed outline, clearly marking key episodes.

- Analyze pivotal moments (e.g., the "quiet street incident," scenes with the protagonist's father) by addressing targeted content and significance questions.

- Clarify selected historical realia of the 1930s and prepare a brief contextual note to illuminate the social background of the narrative.

- Read expressively and interpret passages involving moral choice; discuss the protagonist's feelings.

- Write a short essay on the line "I was not feeding the dog... I was feeding my conscience," commenting on its ethical import.

This set underscores the story's social and moral problematics. Students are expected not only to understand events (e.g., why the protagonist gives bread to the dog) but to reflect on ethical categories – conscience, responsibility, compassion – within the hardship of the 1930s. Analyzing actions through moral concepts supports deep comprehension and the formation of civic and ethical judgment.

N.P. Loktionova's reader complements this with techniques for critical thinking: A Fishbone diagram to visualize causes of characters' actions and their consequences; A character "emotional line" tracing the dynamics of the protagonist's feelings; A cluster of key words related to "conscience," constructed as an associative schema.

Students also engage in discussion, correlating well-known statements on conscience (I. Kant, A. Schweitzer, A. P. Chekhov) with the protagonist's behavior. The section concludes with reflective self-assessment: what the story taught them and how they evaluate their reading experience.

The given rich task set demonstrates the literary text's capacity not only to build reading competence but also to educate the adolescent personality. Through discussion of a piece of bread given to a

starving dog, students address mercy, honor, and human dignity – fulfilling literature’s humanistic function. Simultaneously they exercise core readerly skills: plot analysis, interpretation of motives, evaluative judgment, and formulation of moral conclusions – hallmarks of advanced reading competence.

A central outcome of the study is the recognition that the practical realization of meaning-oriented reading requires specific techniques embedded in instruction. Recent literature pedagogy highlights staged penetration into textual depth. Gorlova’s (2020) “meaning-quantum” technology, which develops and operationalizes ideas earlier discussed by Itelson (1973), proposes a transition from holistic first reading to detailed semantic analysis via the extraction, structuring, and reinterpretation of small units of meaning. Our analysis of tasks for V. Nabokov’s “Christmas” shows that elements of the quant approach are already incorporated in school materials (e.g., identifying key words and formulating micro-meanings), indicating the transfer of research-based methods into classroom practice.

Effective formation of reading competence is multi – stage. The tasks identified in our comparison map onto the phases of the proposed model. An initial motivational – orienting phase includes prompts that spark curiosity (title discussion, predictive questions based on illustration). The meaning – reception phase comprises first reading and plot reproduction (factual tasks). The analytic – interpretive phase includes tasks that deepen understanding (symbol tracing, language analysis, motives). The reflective – productive phase features tasks eliciting opinion, identification, dialogue with the author (creative and evaluative prompts, essays, journals). Finally, the evaluative – synthesizing phase consolidates learning: students formulate the main idea and assess actions and the work as a whole.

Findings support a shift from reproductive to productive reading as the foundation of reading competence. These findings suggest that teachers may productively enrich existing textbook sequences by supplementing them with tasks that target meaning-oriented and interpretative levels of comprehension. At the same time, the positive experience seen in N.P. Loktionova’s reader – diverse creative and reflective tasks – offers models for future textbook development.

Teacher support remains decisive. Even the most carefully designed tasks risk becoming formalities without a climate of trust and intellectual curiosity. Literary discussion presupposes dialogue and

respect for each student’s view. Productive reading is cultivated in collective thinking – in pairs, small groups, or whole-class conversations under the teacher’s guidance. In this study, tasks are treated as instruments; outcomes depend on the skill with which they are used in situated pedagogy.

Results of the Online Survey of Teachers at School-Gymnasium № 209

The pilot survey yielded responses from 9 of the 12 invited teachers (response rate: 75%). Given the exploratory nature of the instrument and the sample size, findings are reported as descriptive distributions and interpreted as practitioner perspectives rather than statistically generalisable results.

Section I: Assessment of textbook tasks. Regarding the proposition that current Grade 7 textbook tasks are predominantly oriented toward factual understanding (Q1), 33% of respondents (3 of 9) selected scores 4-5 («agree»), while 67% selected score 3 («difficult to say»). A comparable pattern emerged for the item on the insufficiency of meaning-oriented and interpretative tasks (Q2): 33% agreed, 44% were undecided, and 22% disagreed. These results indicate that teachers’ perceptions of the textbook task structure are heterogeneous: a meaningful minority shares the analytical observation regarding task distribution identified in the content analysis, while the majority expresses uncertainty – a finding that itself points to the need for greater teacher awareness of task typology and its cognitive demands.

Supporting this reading, 44% of respondents agreed that their students more frequently retell the plot than discuss thematic and authorial emphases (Q3), with a further 44% undecided. This distribution reinforces the content-analytical finding that meaning-oriented tasks, while present, are not yet sufficiently foregrounded in everyday classroom practice.

Section II: Evaluation of the five-stage model. The model received conditional but consistent support. Fifty-five percent of respondents (5 of 9) agreed that the logic of the five-stage model is methodologically sound and close to their own practice (Q7). For the item on whether the analytical-interpretative stage enables students to move from retelling to understanding authorial intent (Q10), 33% agreed and 22% disagreed, with 44% undecided – reflecting both interest and the inherent difficulty of implementing this stage under existing curricular conditions. Forty-four percent of respondents agreed that lessons structured according to the model raise the quality of students’ responses (Q11).

Section III: Readiness and implementation conditions. The strongest finding across the survey was recorded on the item concerning formal curricular integration: 78% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the five-stage model should be incorporated into official methodological recommendations and curriculum planning documents for Grade 7 (Q16). This result – the highest agreement rate in the entire instrument – indicates that practitioner support for the model is most unambiguous when framed as a systemic, institutionally embedded tool rather than an individual pedagogical choice.

Readiness to apply the model systematically was expressed by 55% of respondents (Q12). The principal constraint identified was curricular time pressure: 55% agreed that the density of the programme makes it difficult to implement all five stages within a single lesson (Q14), leading several respondents to note in open-ended replies that the model is more realistic when applied across a sequence of interconnected lessons devoted to a major epic prose text.

A clear methodological need was also identified: 67% of respondents reported lacking ready-made materials – lesson plans and task banks – structured according to the model's stages (Q15). In open-ended responses, teachers most frequently requested worked examples of meaning-oriented and interpretative tasks, and professional development focused on active-productive reading in a language-oriented gymnasium setting.

Overall interpretation. The survey data do not yield a uniform picture of strong endorsement; rather, they reveal a nuanced distribution in which conditional support coexists with widespread uncertainty and some dissent. This pattern is consistent with the study's own content-analytical finding: meaning-oriented reading as a systematically staged instructional sequence is not yet uniformly embedded in everyday classroom practice – a situation shaped by curricular time constraints and the limited availability of ready-made task materials rather than by the intent of any individual textbook. The most robust signal from the survey is institutional: nearly four in five teachers support embedding the model in official curriculum documents, suggesting that the primary barrier to implementation is not motivation but structural support.

Conclusions

The study is limited by its focus on tasks from only two Grade 7 Russian literature textbooks and primarily a single thematic unit (epic prose). The

conclusions and the proposed model reflect the specific features of these teaching – learning materials, which may constrain full generalization to other textbooks or age groups. In addition, the research is theoretical – methodological in nature and does not include an experimental validation stage in real classroom settings; this is identified as a direction for future work.

The pilot survey was completed by 9 of the 12 teachers invited to participate (response rate: 75%). Given this sample size, all reported percentages reflect the responses of individual teachers (one respondent = 11.1%) and should be treated as exploratory indicators rather than statistically generalisable findings. The survey is best understood as a structured elicitation of practitioner perspectives from a single school context.

Thus, the analysis of Grade 7 textbook tasks serves not as an end in itself, but as an empirical basis for constructing and testing a five-stage model of active-productive reading of epic prose. The title of the article reflects this dual focus: diagnostic analysis of the existing task system and the subsequent design of a competency-oriented instructional model.

The study addresses its objectives and achieves its aim: to analyze Grade 7 literature tasks and, on that basis, to propose a model for developing reading competence. Across the fourth unit of two official textbooks, 119 tasks were examined (55 in V.V. Savelieva; 64 in N.P. Loktionova). Typological and level-based classification shows divergent emphases: one corpus foregrounds structured literary-analytical competencies; the other emphasises reflective and creative engagement – both orientations serving distinct and complementary pedagogical functions within the development of reading competence.

Close analysis of V. Nabokov's "Christmas" (with 18 meaning – oriented and 10 interpretive tasks identified) validates the classification and illustrates how a multi-tiered task system progressively deepens comprehension. A parallel examination of tasks for V. Tendryakov's story demonstrates literature's potential to cultivate ethical values and civic qualities through literary education.

The results affirm the necessity of prioritizing active, productive, meaning – oriented reading in Grade 7. This dimension of reading competence unites intellectual and emotional apprehension of the text and fosters critical and creative thinking. The proposed five-phase instructional model offers a practical tool for teachers, specifying a logical progression – from motivation to reflection and

supporting differentiated task design aligned with adolescents' cognitive and developmental profiles.

The pilot survey conducted among teachers at School-Gymnasium № 209 complements the content analysis with practitioner perspectives. While responses were heterogeneous – reflecting the diversity of teaching experience and classroom contexts – the survey identified two particularly robust signals: a majority of teachers (55%) expressed conditional readiness to apply the model systematically, and 78% supported its formal integration into curriculum planning documents. The primary obstacles reported – curricular time pressure and the absence of ready-made task materials – are structural rather than attitudinal, and point directly to the applied directions most needed to support implementation: the development of stage-by-stage task banks and the incorporation of active-productive reading into teacher professional development programmes.

The study's outcome – identifying textbook task features and offering a model for their application – has both theoretical and applied significance. Classroom implementation of the model is hypothesised to support the development of students' sustained skills – a proposition that warrants empirical

verification through classroom-based experimental study, identified here as the primary direction for future research.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest

Authors' contributions

D.A. Bildebayeva – development of the research concept, conducting a survey, collecting and analyzing data, statistical processing of the results, preparing the manuscript of the article

R.U. Shanayev – scientific supervision of the study, methodological support, analysis of the study results, approval of the final version of the article

K.N. Galay – consulting on research methodology and international scientific approaches, expert evaluation of research results

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