**1. Some people think that school years are the happiest days in people’s lives. Can you say that you have been happy at school? Why?**

School is the traditional place for acculturating children into our national life. In the modern age, the role assigned to our schools is to prepare children for the literate public culture. Some students like school, others don’t; but they all study for eleven years and gain knowledge by doing different tasks. For students who are doing well in most subjects and who want to get higher education, school is an attractive place. But those who are not successful at school, and who are always pressed by teachers and their parents, school is boring and uninteresting.

I think that the most important role of school is giving knowledge. I can say that my school gives such knowledge, and that’s why I’m happy at school. Most of my teachers have a lot of teaching experience; they understand very well the difficulties of the learning process. They help us to learn all subjects well. They also guide us and advise us on all aspects of our study and life. They share their knowledge and experience with us, and we respond with love.

If you want to study well, you must feel relaxed and happy with your family, school and your social life. Your parents should understand you and help you when you need their help. My parents usually help and support me when I need it. We have our school psychologist who also helps us to overcome difficulties and cope with our problems. The main purpose of our school is to create a supportive and caring atmosphere for students.

The standard of education in our school is very high. I’m a rather good student really. I don’t have many problems with the work; but I usually get into trouble for talking, especially when I speak at the same time as the teacher.

However I think that sometimes we have too much homework. Teachers and parents insist that doing homework develops the student’s ability to work without assistance, or that additional work could help us complete our education successfully. But I believe, in many subjects, homework is totally unnecessary, because it doesn’t do me any good. I think it’s really stupid to copy from a textbook, and there is no point in duplicating the textbook. And if we could get rid of unnecessary homework, we would have more time to take up hobbies and interests.

School is not only a place of education; it is a place where we develop our relationships, increasing tolerance and respect to each other. At school we can enjoy different activities and demonstrate our individual talents. Everyone has an opportunity to take part in different performances at a school or class party, or to take part in different sport competitions. These activities help us with our education and relationships among our classmates. We want to have harmony in our class and among our classmates, but it is rather difficult to achieve. Of course, we try our best to do it, and in many cases we overcome our problems and solve them. And only sensitive teachers can help us, because boys and girls are not passive lumps of clay; they are living, pulsating, developing, mysterious beings who must be studied and understood before they can be taught in the true sense.

So a teacher plays an important role in our education, and when we remember our school years we usually remember our teachers, if they were fair and intelligent or not. I think that I’m a lucky person – almost all my teachers are very interesting and intelligent. When our teachers criticize us, they follow such rules: they try to correct a student’s action, not him; they do not impress upon him that he has no abilities; they try to contribute to the minds and souls of their students; they try to be a path for their students to go through a dark forest of school rules. But I can’t judge all teachers, because there are as many opinions how to treat a child as there are people. Teachers must choose their methods themselves, but they should remember that they influence and shape the student’s opinion about their school. As for me, I think that in our school almost all teachers understand the students and become like parents to us. They support us and care for us. I’m happy at my school and so are my classmates.

**2. If you want to continue your education, what kinds of institution will you attends? Explain your choice.**

At the age of fifteen, students in Russia have to make some important decisions. Will they continue on at school? Or will they enter a lyceum or a gymnasium? Of course, it’s not easy to make the right choice. In our country a nine-year education is compulsory and after the ninth form students have an opportunity to choose. To enter a university or a college it is necessary to study two more years, and take five examinations on finishing the eleventh form. To get a professional education, students have to enter a technical college or a vocational school and study for three years. Finally, they may finish their education, leave school, and get a job. The choice depends on their likes and dislikes.

When choosing a place for future studies, it’s a good idea to consider a number of factors. First of all, we should take into account our own preferences and find out what our talents are. We can do this through aptitude tests, interviews with specialities, and consulting reference books on the subjects that interest us. Different types of schools, for example lyceums and gymnasiums, often specialise in various fields. They can offer a good choice of subjects that will be useful in a future profession. Most of them are affiliated with universities and colleges and help pupils to prepare for their entrance examinations.

I am not sure what I am going to do when I leave school. By the time I finish school I will have already formed a much better idea of what I’d like to do. But the problem is we have to decide which subjects to study for university or college two years before we finish school.

It’s not easy to make the right choice. There are a number of things we could do. For some of the most interesting professions, like medicine, you have to be very good at chemistry, and I am not much of a chemist. Although my parents are doctors, I don’t seem to be very interested in caring for others and helping them with their problems. I don’t think it’s the best decision to follow in the footsteps of a parent or a relative if you are not interested in this profession.

I have always wanted to be something like a computer programmer, because I like computers and I am interested in knowing how computer programmes work. Besides, I have an aptitude for working with figures and solving mathematical problems. Maths is my favourite subject, and I am really good at it. So I think I can work in a scientific or computational field. As far as my personal qualities are concerned, I can say that I’m creative and hard-working; I have good logical-reasoning and problem-solving skills. Besides, I’m rather communicative and like to work in a team. So I feel I can become a good specialist in programming.

To my mind the profession of a programmer has a lot of advantages. It is a highly paid job, and it can offer many opportunities. I will be able to work on the full range of development activities, such as analysis, design, coding, testing and implementation. Computers are the most rapidly changing sphere of modern technology. The next generation of computers will be able to talk and even to think. We are living in the age of information. And I think that the future will be just filled with computers. Today, in the USA people work, go shopping, or even go on dates, sitting at their computers.

But to become a good specialist in computing, you should know a lot of programming languages and application programmes. So after finishing school it is necessary for me to enter a university or a college and to study computer science. I’ll have to take three entrance examinations: in Maths, Physics and Literary composition. If I am lucky, I’ll have the chance to study interesting sciences, and to listen to the lectures of famous professors.

However, it’s very difficult to pass entrance examinations. The school I am now studying in is a comprehensive school with a standard curriculum. Though the teachers here are very knowledgeable and experienced, my school only offers general education. So after finishing the ninth form, I would like to leave it and to enter a lyceum of information technologies. It gives its pupils profound knowledge in Maths, Physics and other academic subjects. Besides, pupils are offered a wide choice of elective subjects connected with computers. They study different programming languages and learn how to write programmes. The teachers there are friendly and well-qualified. The lyceum is known for its academic excellence.

I hope my education at the lyceum will form a basis for my future occupation. But it goes without saying that I’ll need some extra knowledge to pass my entrance exams at the university or college. That is why I’ll have to take preparatory courses in Maths and Physics. Anyway, I have to get down to some hard work now, if I want to achieve my aims.

**3. Choosing a profession is not an easy matter. What do you think can help you to make the right choice?**

What do you want to be when you grow up? We have heard this question many times during our school years. Perhaps, it was difficult for us to give a definite answer earlier. But now we understand that the time to choose our future profession has come. Finishing school is the beginning of an independent life for millions of school-leavers. Many roads are open before us: technical schools, colleges and universities.

Centuries ago there were only a few jobs: people were farmers, bakers, butchers or carpenters. Today there are thousands of different kinds of jobs, and new ones are constantly appearing. No wonder that it is not an easy thing to make the right choice.

When choosing a future career, we should consider different factors. In my opinion, money is one of the most important factors when you make a choice. There are highly paid jobs and low-paid jobs. For example, a businessman, a president or a film star, are highly paid jobs. A worker, a doctor or an engineer, are low-paid jobs. I think everybody wants to earn as much money as possible. Training, promotional prospects and conditions should be also taken into account.

On the other hand, it’s good when you get satisfaction from your job. It is very important to choose a profession that suits your interests. In my opinion, a job should be interesting and socially important. Some jobs are considered to be more suitable for men and others for women. For example, the professions of secretary or nurse are more suitable for women. A lifeguard or a pilot are more likely the jobs for men. You should also decide whether you want to work indoors or outdoors.

To make the right choice, you should take into account your traits of character. It goes without saying that to become a good doctor you must be patient, caring and kind. Teacher’s work requires love for children, profound knowledge of subjects, and the ability to explain. A secretary has to be efficient and careful in order to do her work quickly and accurately. Salespeople need to be friendly and persuasive, to get people buy their products.

There are so many people who influence us in choosing our occupation. Parents and friends play a very important role in our choices.

My father works is a bisnessman. It is a highly paid job and it offers a lot of opportunities. You can travel abroad and meet different people. My father is a friendly person and he is easy to talk to. He thinks that I must choose my future profession according to my taste and preferences. I respect him but I want to become a programmer.

I have always been interested in computers. I’m rather communicative and have good social skills. I have good analytical abilities and I am good at problem-solving. Besides, I am good at English. English has become the standard language for all kinds of international programs. To know English today is absolutely necessary for every programmer.

But to become a good specialist in computing, you should know a lot of programming languages and application programmes. So after finishing school it is necessary for me to enter a university or a college and to study computer science. I’ll have to take three entrance examinations: in Maths, Physics and Literary composition. If I am lucky, I’ll have the chance to study interesting sciences, and to listen to the lectures of famous professors.

**4. There are different ways of learning about the world: through the mass media, books, travelling, visiting museums, meeting other people, etc. Which ways do you prefer to learn about the world?**

There are a lot of different ways of getting new information. In the past the only way to learn about the world was traveling. The first travelers were explorers who wanted to discover new lands. Nowadays, millions of people travel around the world either for pleasure or on business. Traveling has always been a part of people’s education. It teaches people about the art and culture of different countries. It teaches them to be understanding. Besides, you can improve your knowledge of foreign languages. In my opinion, traveling is the most pleasant way of learning about the world. It’s always interesting to discover different ways of life, to visit different museums, to try different foods, and to listen to different kinds of music. In brief, when we travel, we can learn a lot of things that we can never see and learn at home.

But to travel around the world you need a lot of money. That is why the main source of information for millions of people is mass media. Mass media includes newspapers and magazines, advertising and radio, and, of course, television.

Television is a reflection of the modern world. It gives you an opportunity to travel all over the world, to see different peoples, and learn about their customs and traditions. Television keeps you informed about the rest of the world. When you need immediate information about the latest world events, you switch the TV on. There are always a great variety of programmes on TV: current affairs programmes and documentaries, plays and feature films, talk shows and TV games. A lot of people like TV news because they can see everything with their own eyes. Besides, TV has the power to educate and broaden our minds.

Some people think that the only way to be in the know of everything is to read newspapers and magazines. If you get on a bus or catch a train during the morning and evening “rush hours”, when most people travel to and from work, you will see a lot of people with their heads in a newspaper or a magazine.

Newspapers are packed with the latest news, information, fashion and facts. They cater to a variety of political views, interests and levels of education. Papers are generally divided into “quality papers”, or broadsheets, and “popular papers” that are half the size of broadsheets. But the size is not the only thing that makes them different. “Quality papers” are serious, with long, informative articles; while “popular papers”, known as “tabloids”, have a more sensational reporting style and contain more human interest stories than news. The two most popular British daily newspapers, The Sun and The Daily Mirror, are both tabloids. Tabloids sell many more copies than broadsheets.

In Russia we also have these two types of newspapers. For example, Izvestiya or Kommersant are broadsheets. They contain political, business and cultural information. Such tabloids as Megapolis-Express and Express Gazeta contain the latest gossip, sensations and crossword puzzles. People choose a paper according to their tastes and preferences. Though newspapers don’t react to events as quickly as TV, they usually provide us with extra details, commentaries and background information.

There are also a lot of magazines and other periodicals. Whatever your interest, there is likely to be a magazine about it – from sport, cookery, and farming, to religion, computers, cinema and more. Young people below the age of 18 do not buy newspapers; but they do buy magazines. Girls enjoy magazines about pop music, clothes, fashion and make-up; whereas boys prefer to read about sport, cars and computers. As far as I am interested in fashions I enjoy reading Yes. It is a monthly magazine for girls containing the latest information about our favourite pop, film and soap stars, brilliant fashions and beauty, sports and romance. It approaches interesting subjects with intelligence and good humour. Besides, there is a lot of useful advice on various areas of life.

Still, many people prefer the radio. It’s good to listen to the radio in a car, or in the open air, or when you do something about the house. Listeners can tune into all kinds of stations: pop or classical music, news, sport or foreign radio stations. People can often call in and ask questions about everything from cooking or car repair to politics or health. Callers often get a chance to give their opinions on the air. Besides, radio has fresher news than newspapers. They inform every half hour.

The Internet has recently become another important source of information. It is a computer system that allows millions of people around the world to receive and exchange information about almost everything. The main use of the Internet is to find information – for your schoolwork or job, or just to find out more about your hobbies, sports or current events. All the latest information is available to you in your home, at any hour of the day and night. It’s much faster and easier to surf the net in search of information from all over the world than to travel to libraries in dozens of countries.

However, the real world of the Internet may not be as perfect as it seems. With so much information available, finding what you want can take you hours. Multimedia web pages with photographs are attractive, but they make downloading slow and boring. Besides, there is too much advertising instead of real information.

With so many modern forms of finding information, such as radio, TV and the Internet, people read fewer books, newspapers and magazines. Nowadays, most people consider television their most important source of information, and a majority ranks television as the most believable news source. In my opinion, we can’t say exactly which source of information is the best. It depends on what kind of information you need. However, I don’t think we should forget the educational value of reading a good book.

**5. Travelling is one of the ways of discovering new countries. What attracts tourists to Russia? What would you show your foreign friends in your home town?**

Millions of people all over the world are fond of travelling. They travel to see other countries and continents, to discover different ways of life, to meet different people and to practise foreign languages. It goes without saying that travelling broadens the mind. While travelling we can see and learn a lot of things that we can never learn staying at home and watching TV or reading books. That’s why a lot of foreign people come to Russia to get acquainted with Russian culture, with Russian customs and traditions.

Russia has always been a country of mystery attractive for foreigners. There are lots of villages and towns in Russia famous for their specific crafts: painted boxes in Palekh, wooden tableware in Khokhloma and toys in Dymkovo. Thousands of foreigners visit Russia to enjoy the typical Russian log houses, decorated with wood carvings.

Tourists like to visit old Russian towns and cities famous for their ancient architecture. They are especially attracted by Russian orthodox cathedrals, churches and monasteries. One of the most interesting old cities in Russia is Novgorod, or Novgorod the Great, as it was called in the old times. It is a treasury of architecture, painting and applied art created over the 11th to 17th centuries. The first records of the city on the Volkhov River date back to the year of 859. Now Novgorod has expanded far beyond its former limits. It is an important industrial and cultural centre, located on the busy highway linking Moscow and St. Petersburg.

The focal point of the city is the Detinets, or the Kremlin. The present-day Kremlin stems largely from the 15th century. Several alterations made in the 16th and 17th centuries were minor and did not affect its appearance. Novgorod’s contribution to the development of Russian culture is outstanding. No other city excels Novgorod in the number of ancient monuments of architecture. The Novgorod Museum of History, Architecture and Art shows visitors the history of the medieval Novgorod. Its artistic value lies primarily in its collection of medieval icon painting.

There is a lot to see in Russia, but first of all foreign tourists visit the capital of our country, Moscow, its political, economic, commercial and cultural centre. They dream of visiting Red Square, which is called the heart of Moscow. Perhaps, the most ancient monument of Red Square is St. Basil’s Cathedral. With its nine beautifully painted cupolas, it is a real masterpiece of ancient Russian architecture.

If you come to Moscow for the first time, you should by all means visit the Kremlin, which is very impressive. On the territory of the Kremlin you can see old cathedrals, the Bell Tower of Ivan the Great, the State Kremlin Palace, the Tsar Cannon and the Tsar Bell, the biggest cannon and bell in the world. The tallest Kremlin tower, the Spasskaya Tower, has become the symbol of the country.

If you leave the Kremlin by the Trinity Gate you will come to the Alexandrovsky Gardens. The first thing to do in the Gardens is to stand by the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, still and silent. Not far from the Alexandrovsky Gardens, behind the Bolshoi Kamenny Bridge, you will see Christ the Saviour Cathedral, with its huge beautiful gilded dome. Foreigners are usually surprised by the number of churches and cathedrals in and around the city. There are also a lot of beautiful palaces, old mansions and monuments in Moscow.

There are more than 80 museums in our capital. The largest museums are the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, whose collections include works of art of the ancient Orient and ancient Egypt, and the State Tretyakov Gallery, which houses a rich collection of Russian painting and Russian icons. Other unique museums in Moscow are the State History Museum, the All-Russia Museum of Decorative, Applied and Folk Art, the Polytechnical Museum and many others. Moscow is famous for its theatres, too. The best-known of them is the Bolshoi Opera House. Drama theatres and studios are also very popular.

Another interesting place to visit in Moscow is the All-Russia Exhibition Centre which occupies an area of 530 acres. The Exhibition Centre is situated in a beautiful park. The most admired feature of the Exhibition Centre is its fountains. The “Friendship of the Nations” and the “Stone Flower” fountains are the most beautiful. The Exhibition Centre is a large cultural and commercial complex where different international exhibitions and fairs are held.

One of the most famous sights of the city is the Moscow Metro and a journey by Metro will be unforgettable. In the Metro you do not feel as if you’re underground. This is due to the unique architecture and the artistic design of the stations, which are more like palaces. No two stations are alike; most of them have their own appearance.

Of course, every foreigner should visit St. Petersburg, the second largest city in Russia and one of the most splendid cities in the world. It was founded in 1703 by Peter the Great at the mouth of the Neva River. Now it is an important industrial, cultural and educational centre.

St. Petersburg is indeed a wonderful city: at every turn there is something to catch your eye. The Winter Palace, St. Isaac’s Cathedral, the Peter-and-Paul Fortress, and the Admiralty Building attract thousands of tourists from every corner of the world. Petersburg’s many museums house some of the world’s most famous art collections. The Hermitage and the Russian Museum, for example, contain the richest collections of pictures in the world.

The city is called the Northern Venice, because there are 65 rivers, branches and canals there with artistically decorated bridges. It’s also famous for its beautiful white nights.

There are a lot of Hero-cities in our country. And I would recommend that my foreign friends visit one of them. Volgograd is a legendary city, because here in 1943 the Soviet Army won the great and glorious victory over the fascists. The city was completely ruined during the war, but now it is a beautiful city again. It stands on the banks of the great Russian river Volga. The symbol of Volgograd is the Mamaev Hill. It was the centre of fighting during the heroic defence of Stalingrad. Now there is a great memorial there. Besides, you can visit the Stalingrad Battle Panorama Museum, which is situated on the bank of the Volga River. The centre of Volgograd is the Square of the Fallen Heroes. In the middle of it there is a granite obelisk and the common graves of the heroes of the Civil War and the Great Patriotic War. At the foot of the memorial you can see the Eternal Flame. Now Volgograd is a big industrial and cultural centre.

There are a lot of other interesting towns and cities in Russia, which are all worth visiting.

**6. Every country is special. What comes to your mind, when you think of the UK and its people?**

The British Isles is the name for a collection of about 4000 islands, including Great Britain and Ireland. Great Britain, known as Britain or GB, is the name for the largest of the Islands in the British Isles. It includes England, Scotland and Wales. The United Kingdom or UK is a political term which includes England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. All of these countries are represented in Parliament in London, and the abbreviation UK is used on most official documents produced by Parliament. Everybody from the UK is British, but be careful: only people from England are English. People from Wales think of themselves as Welsh; people from Scotland as Scottish; people from Northern Ireland as either British or Irish.

Britain is split into counties. The word county describes an area with its own local government. County councils are elected to run things, such as education, housing, town planning, and rubbish disposal. They look after things like roads, libraries and swimming pools.

The British flag, known as the Union Jack, is a combination of three flags: the Saint Andrew’s cross, the Saint Patrick’s cross and the Saint George’s cross.

The Saint Patrick’s cross is the former flag of Ireland. Saint Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. He was born about AD 390. He converted the Irish to Christianity. Saint Patrick’s Day is celebrated on 17 March. The symbol of Northern Ireland is a shamrock and a red hand.

The Saint George’s cross is the English flag. Saint George is the patron saint of England. He was a soldier famous for saving the Princess Cleolinda from being eaten by a dragon. Saint George’s Day is celebrated on 23 April. The symbol of England is a red rose.

The Saint Andrew’s cross is the Scottish flag. Saint Andrew, a fisherman, was one of the 12 apostles who followed Jesus Christ. Paintings of Saint Andrew often show him being crucified on an X-shaped cross. Saint Andrew’s Day is celebrated on 30 November. He is the patron saint of both Scotland and Russia. The symbol of Scotland is a thistle.

The Welsh flag shows a dragon. Saint David, the patron saint of Wales, converted Wales to Christianity and established the Welsh church. Paintings of Saint David show him with a dove on his shoulder. Saint David’s Day is celebrated on 1 March. The symbol of Wales is a daffodil or leek.

London is the capital city of England and the UK. It is a place where the invading Romans first crossed the River Thames. They built a city and called it Londinium. This original site of London is now called the City of London. London manages in a unique way to reflect the past and, at the same time, to live a life of a modern city. The saying “When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life” means that you can’t be bored in London. There are hundreds of historic buildings, galleries and museums in London.

As for me, I’m fond of history and I’ve read a lot about English kings and queens. I’d like to visit all places in London which are connected with Royal London, such as Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey, Whitehall and Trafalgar Square, St Paul’s Cathedral, and the Tower of London. And I’d like to visit places which are not in London, such as Windsor Castle, the Queen’s house in Greenwich, the Palace of Holyrood house in Edinburgh and other places in the UK which are connected with the Crown. The UK is famous for its castles such as Edinburgh Castle and Leeds Castle and others, and I’d like to see them with my own eyes. Another place which is worth seeing is Madam Tussaud’s Museum of Waxworks. This museum consists of several halls with wax images of outstanding political characters, poets and writers, world-famous film stars and musicians. Then I’d like to see one of the wonders of the world – the famous Stonehenge. Every year thousands of young people go to Stonehenge to take part in the midsummer Druid festival. I wish I were there.

Palace of Holyrrodhouse in Edinburgh

In the House of Lords, the Chancellor sits on a sack of wool. This tradition comes from old times when sheep wool made England rich and powerful. In the House of Commons there are two rows of benches: one row is for the government and the other one is for opposition. There is a red line in the carpet in front of each “front bench”. The person who is speaking is not allowed to step across it. It is also a tradition from old days, when that division prevented the two parties from fighting during the debates. Even the Legislation of the country is traditional. It includes many laws that haven’t been changed for centuries. Other traditional features of Great Britain are the numerous clubs that unite people of various interests; and the pubs, the local beer halls, where Englishmen like to spend their time talking, discussing traditional matters: politics, sports, and weather, over a glass of beer. The British have a reputation of being conservative, for having established values without questioning their validity. They drive on the left side of the road and use double-decker buses. They stick to their own measurement system and continue to measure distances in miles and yards (not in kilometres and metres). They buy cheese in pounds and ounces, milk in pints, petrol in gallons.

Fire-place

English people are famous for their habit of politeness. It is considered polite to give up one’s seat to a woman who is standing, to open a door for her, carry things for her, and so on. Most British people expect the person in front of them to hold the door open for them. People think you are rude, if you don’t do this. English people are very reserved. This means that they don’t talk much to strangers, and don’t show much emotion. A reserved person never tells you anything about himself. But the people of the North and West of Britain are much less reserved than those of the South and East. Most British people queue when they are waiting for a bus or waiting to be served in a shop. But during the rush hour, when a bus or train arrives, people often push forward to make sure they get on. This is called jumping the queue. British people keep their old traditions and are very proud of them. They are famous for their sense of humour. English people show great love for animals. And, of course, English people are fond of sports. Many continentals think life is a game; the English think cricket is a game. To many Englishmen cricket is both a game and a standard of behaviour. When they consider something unfair, they say “That isn’t cricket”.

Cricket

The traditional love of English people for tea is well known. They like to drink tea with milk. They have their five-o’clock tea not only at home or in offices, but also in tea-rooms and tea-shops, which can be found in every town.

A nation is born from its land, its history, its art, its traditions and its institutions. These things work together to make people what they are. But above all, a nation is made up of people, and although there are things they all share, all of those people are different. We can say there is still a “British nation,” and one of the most characteristic features of Englishmen is their traditions, which they respect, and which they have kept for centuries. The traditions don’t only accumulate the experience and wisdom of many generations, but they bring some stability into the rapidly changing world.

**7. Each country takes pride in its own achievements and success. What makes you feel proud of your country?**

Our country is great, and I’m very proud of it. Russia is famous for its outstanding people – scientists, writers, poets, travellers and explorers. Russia is a stable and democratic society. Its citizens have many freedoms, among them the freedom of speech, religion and the press. Russia is a member of the United Nations. Russia is one of the largest trading countries. It has a lot of energy resources and exports oil and natural gas. Russia has for centuries encouraged research and innovation and it has a lot of achievements throughout the twentieth century. Nobel prizes for science, literature and peace have been won by Russian citizens. In the fields of art, media and sports, Russia enjoys an international reputation. Russia has nuclear weapons, a strong army and remains a widely-respected country.

For ages mankind was dreaming of travelling in the space. The science itself came later. K. E. Tsiolkovsky, the great Russian scientist, is the father of the theory of interplanetary travels. His words that “mankind will not remain on the Earth forever” came true. On 4 October 1957 the Soviet Union launched the world’s first satellite “Sputnik”. This word, “sputnik”, immediately began to be used in all languages. The first cosmonaut on the Earth to fly into space, Yuri Gagarin, was from Russia, and he made his flight around the Earth on 12 April 1961 that lasted 1 hour 48 minutes. Years will pass, people will conquer the Universe and make landings on other planets, but mankind will always remember Yury Gagarin as the first to pave the way to the stars.

Russia is also famous for its ancient churches, cathedrals, and towns. Moscow, the capital of Russia, is famous for its monuments to outstanding people, churches, galleries, theatres, squares and streets.

The heart of Moscow is Red Square. It’s my favourite place in my native city. I show it to all my guests from different countries. It is our history, and I’d like to tell you some facts about the buildings on it. St Basil’s Cathedral was built in 1551–1561 after the victory over the Kazan Kingdom. It’s a magnificent Cathedral, with eight churches placed around the tallest ninth one. There is a monument to Minin and Pozharsky in front of the Cathedral. It was built in 1818 and it was the first statue put up in Moscow. Minin and Pozharsky were heroes of the people’s struggle in the war against Poland in 1612. You can see Lobnoye Mesto near the Cathedral. It was erected in the 16 century; the tsar’s orders were read from it, also it was used as a place for execution. The tallest tower of the Kremlin is the Spasskaya Tower. It’s also on Red Square. It’s one of the symbols of Moscow, because the Kremlin clock, made in the 16th century, is on it. The clock strikes on the hour, half hour and quarter of an hour. The Lenin Mausoleum is in the centre of the square. It was at first made of wood; and in 1930 it was rebuilt, and made of stone, brick, marble and granite. The State History Museum was opened in 1883. It has a rich collection of documents, drawings, pictures, and materials about the country’s past and Russia’s great people. The State Department Store (GUM) is one of the largest department stores in the country. It is an impressive building with a glass roof.

Of course the most ancient part of Moscow is the Kremlin. Nowadays the Kremlin centre looks truly magnificent, with its many-domed cathedrals in Cathedral Square and with its Tsar Bell and Tsar Cannon.

A very interesting place in Moscow is the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour. The original cathedral was erected by order of Emperor Alexander as a token of the Russian people’s gratitude to God for the deliverance of Russia from Napoleon’s invasion in 1812. In 1931 it was demolished by order of Josef Stalin. In 1995, Moscow’s Mayor Yuri Luzhkov and the world-famous musician Mstislav Rostropovich laid the first stone in the foundation of the new Cathedral of Christ the Saviour. Today you can admire this Cathedral in the centre of Moscow.

People in Russia keep their old traditions and are very proud of them. They celebrate religious holidays such as Easter, Christmas, and Maslenitsa. They eat traditional food for Maslenitsa such as pancakes with honey, caviar or sour cream; they colour eggs; bake kulich cakes; make a paskha out of cottage cheese for Easter. Many Russians are religious people. The main church in Russia is the Orthodox Church, but there are other religions too. The Orthodox Church has survived during hard times, and now we speak about a rebirth of religion in our country.

Russian people are open-hearted, hospitable, and friendly. They like to invite guests to their homes and cities; they like to give traditional souvenirs to their foreign friends such as matryoshka dolls, beautifully painted mugs, plate and spoons from the village of Khokhloma, Palekh boxes, art books, badges and etc.

We are proud of our famous and talented poets and writers such as Alexander Pushkin, Michael Lermontov and many others. We are proud of our famous composer Peter Tchaikovsky and one of our famous artists, Isaak Levitan. We can see his paintings and the paintings of other outstanding Russian artists, such as Repin, Vasnetsov, Shishkin, Surikov, Benua, Korovin, etc., in the Tretyakov Gallery. It is one of the most famous and well-known picture galleries in our country and in the world. It is situated in the centre of Moscow and is named after its founder Pavel Tretyakov. He began to collect Russian paintings in 1856. He was a famous patron of arts. In 1892 Tretyakov donated his collection to Moscow.

Russia is proud of its famous sportsmen who win a lot of gold, silver and bronze medals in different international sports competitions.

So, I’m very proud of my country, my native city and the people who brought a lot of fame to my country. And I invite everyone, who has never been to my country, to visit it, and to see its achievements with their own eyes.

**8. What famous people from Russia would you tell your foreign friends about? Which famous British and American people do you admire? What made/makes them famous?**Each country is proud of its famous people, and Russia is among them. I’d like to tell you about Russian famous writers, poets and musicians, because I’m fond of literature and music. A. Pushkin is the most important Russian writer and poet of all time. He is like Shakespeare in England. He provided the standards for Russian arts and literature in the 19th century. In 1823 Pushkin began writing his masterpiece “Eugene Onegin”. It became his linguistic and literary standard. It is a commentary on the life of early 19th century Russia. Pushkin also wrote a lot of other poems and created masterpieces in drama and prose. All Russian people know Pushkin. Galleries and museums were named after him. In the centre of Moscow there is a monument to Pushkin built by the famous Russian architect Opekunshin in 1880. Pushkin’s memorial museums in different cities attract many visitors. One of the other famous poets and writers in Russia was M. Lermontov. He won fame as a poet after his poem on Pushkin’s death had been published. Lermontov’s poems “Demon”, “Mtsyri”, his great novel A Hero of Our Time and his play “Masquerade” are masterpieces of Russian literature.As for me I like reading F. Dostoevsky and L. Tolstoy. They are famous Russian writers. I like M. Bulgakov; Master and Margarita is one of the world’s masterpieces. I often go to Patriarch’s Pond where the book begins. It has a special atmosphere even now. I go there to be inspired. I like reading poetry, and Anna Ahmatova is my favourite. Russian’s famous musicians and composers such as Sergei Rachmaninov and Peter Tchaikovsky are recognized all over the world. Tchaikovsky composed a lot of symphonies and created beautiful music for operas and ballets. His famous operas “Eugene Onegin”, and “Iolanta” and his famous ballets “The Swan Lake”, “The Sleeping Beauty” are masterpieces. His memorial museum was opened in 1894 in Klin not far from Moscow. And the international Tchaikovsky Music Competition started in 1958 in Moscow. S. Rachmaninov was an outstanding Russian composer and pianist. He became famous with audiences around the world for his piano performances.Great Britain is also proud of its famous people. And I’d like to tell you about one of its famous writers A. Conan Doyle. He invented Sherlock Holmes, one of the most famous characters and detectives. Arthur Conan Doyle was born in Scotland. He was a doctor. In 1882 he moved to England to set up a practice. One of the doctors he worked for, was the model for Dr. Watson. Conan Doyle’s medical knowledge was a great help in his detective stories. He started the fashion of the detective stories. Nowadays I don’t know a person who doesn’t like detective stories. We know a lot about Sherlock Holmes. We even know his address – 221 “B” Baker Street in London. If you go to London, you won’t find 221 “B” Baker Street. But instead, you can go to a pub called “The Sherlock Holmes” in Northumberland Street (near Trafalgar Square). In that pub there is a room like his room at 221 “B” Baker Street, as described in Conan Doyle’s stories. There is also the stuffed head of a hound. It is said to be the original “hound of the Baskervilles”. A lot of tourists visit this pub. When Conan Doyle began to get tired of writing detective stories, he “killed” Holmes in one of his stories. But the public didn’t like it. Conan Doyle had to write another story in which Holmes came back. So we can say that Conan Doyle was a famous British writer. He became popular because of his love for people.I also admire American famous people. I’d like to tell you about Walt Disney, the pioneer of animated cartoons. He is famous for creating such cartoon characters as Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Pluto, Goofy and others. He was born in 1901 in Chicago. His father was a carpenter, farmer and building contractor. So the family changed homes several times. In 1917 Walt entered a Higher School in Chicago, where he took photographs, made drawings for the school paper and studied cartooning, for he wanted to get a job as a newspaper cartoonist. After World War 1, in which he participated as a truck driver for the American Red Cross in France and Germany, he returned to Kansas City. There he met Ub Iverk who turned into his partner for life. They started a small studio of their own and began making short animated advertising films. In 1927 Mickey Mouse appeared. Disney himself provided the voice for Mickey. Then the other cartoons appeared. Gradually, the Disney studio turned into a big enterprise and began to produce a variety of cartoons for children. And it was he, who initiated plans for a huge amusement park, which is known as Disneyland. A lot of grown-ups and children visit this park and remember the person who founded it, Walt Disney. And, of course, they remember Walt Disney because of his remarkable cartoons.

**9. What would you tell your foreign friends about traditional Russian holidays and celebrations? What do you think your British friends will tell you about their traditional holidays and celebrations?**

Every country has its own national holidays, but there are holidays that are common for many countries. People all over the world know New Year’s Day, Christmas and Easter. In Russia, New Year’s Day is the most popular holiday; but in the West people pay more attention to Christmas.

Christmas

New Year’s Day is a family event in Russia. People begin to prepare for this holiday beforehand. Everything is rush and bustle. There is a great air of expectation. People decorate their New Year trees with tinsel, various baubles and coloured lights. They usually put their presents under the tree. When the Kremlin clock strikes 12 they see the New Year in.

There are also dates and events in our country that are memorable to Russian people. They are Victory Day, the Day of Reconciliation and Harmony, Women’s Day, the Day of Spring and Labour, Independence Day, Country Defendant’s Day, Constitution Day, and Maslenitsa. Besides, there are many professional days in our country: Teacher’s Day, Miner’s Day, etc.

Christmas in Russia is celebrated on 7 January. It is celebrated with all-night services in churches. Country Defendant’s Day is celebrated on 23 February. This holiday is devoted to soldiers and officers and everyone else who defended the country or is in the Army. Women’s Day is celebrated on 8 March. It is a day-off. Men and boys try to please their mothers, sisters and friends by giving them presents and flowers. Maslenitsa marks the end of winter and the beginning of spring and Lent. During this festival people make pancakes, sing and dance traditional songs and dances, and visit each other. Maslenitsa and Easter are movable holidays. Easter is the main Orthodox festival. People colour eggs and enjoy traditional Russian dishes. Churches hold special services on this day.

The Day of Spring and Labour is celebrated on 1 May. On this day people prefer to go outdoors and take part in all kinds of outdoor activities. Victory Day is celebrated on 9 May – it celebrates the end of the Soviet Union’s participation in World War II in Europe. People put flowers at the tombs of the soldiers who were killed during the war. The main ceremony is held in Moscow. People lay flowers in Moscow’s Park Pobedi and at the Tomb of an Unknown Soldier. Independence Day is celebrated on 12 June. On this day Russia became an independent country after the break up of the Soviet Union in 1991. This is an official holiday. The Day of Reconciliation and Harmony is celebrated on 7 November. It used to be the greatest official holiday, celebrating the anniversary of the October Revolution. Now this day is marked by marches and demonstrations. For many people it’s just a day-off. The Constitution Day is celebrated on 12 December. It celebrates the new Constitution of 1993.

There are fewer public holidays in Great Britain than in other European countries. They are: Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year’s Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Spring Bank Holiday and Late Summer Bank Holiday. All holidays and traditions are connected with the history and culture of the country.

The most popular holiday is Christmas. Every year the people of Norway give the city of London a present. It’s a big Christmas tree and it stands in Trafalgar Square. The central streets are beautifully decorated. People decorate their houses with holly and mistletoe. They send Christmas cards to greet each other. Children hang their stockings, hoping that Father Christmas will come with toys and sweets. Before Christmas groups of people go from house to house – they sing Christmas carols and collect money for charity. Christmas is a family holiday. The family usually meets for a traditional dinner of turkey and Christmas pudding, and everyone gives and receives presents. New Year’s Day is less popular in Britain than Christmas. But in Scotland, Hogmanay is the biggest festival of the year. They celebrate New Year. The preparations for the occasion begin several days before the New Year’s Eve, which is known as Hogmanay. The night of Hogmanay is a time for merrymaking, the giving of presents and observance of the old customs. The name “Hogmanay” is supposed to come from the Anglo-Saxon “Haleg Monath” (Holy Month), or the Gaaelic “oge maiden” (New Morning). December 26th is Boxing Day. People usually visit their friends, go for a drive or for a long walk, or just sit around and watch TV recovering from too much food after Christmas dinner. In the country there is fox-hunting.

Easter

Easter is the time when certain old traditions are observed. It is celebrated as the start of spring and as a religious festival. It is the time for giving and receiving presents, such as Easter eggs, hot cross buns, fluffy little chicks, baby rabbits, and springtime flowers to signify nature’s reawakening.

Four times a year the banks are closed on Monday apart from traditional weekends. Such days are called Bank Holidays.

Besides public holidays, there are certain traditional festivals which have existed over centuries in the country. They are Pancake Day, Guy Fawkes’ Night, Saint Valentine’s Day, Mother’s Day, Hallowe’en, April’s Fool Day, etc. These days are not days-off. But they help to keep many traditions, which Englishmen have always been famous for.

As for me, most of all I like Hallowe’en. It goes back many, many hundreds of years. At that time the Celts lived in England. The Celts said, “In this night the ghosts of the dead come back.” Nowadays children in the USA and Britain dress up as witches or ghosts. Some children also make jack-o’-lanterns out of pumpkins. They put them in the windows at night. In the evening, the children go out in groups and knock at people’s doors. The children call out: “Trick or treat.” Most people then give the children a “treat”. This is usually a sweet, some chocolate, or maybe a toffee apple. But some people do not give the children a treat. Then the children play a trick on them. Sometimes, they ring the doorbell again and then they hide or run away. Or they come to the house again later and put leaves, grass, stones or other things into the letterbox. Children and older people often have Hallowe’en parties where they play games such as “bobbing for apples”, “apples on a string”, “fortune telling”. I wish we celebrated Hallowe’en in Russia because this holiday is very funny and interesting.

**10.** **You are going to spend a month with an American or British family. What do you think will be interesting for your host family to learn about you?**

Hello! Let me introduce myself to you. I’m Alexander, Alex for short. I live in Moscow. I’m a student of the 9th grade. We are a family of four: my mother, my father, my elder brother and me. We live in a block of flats on the 11th floor. There are three rooms in our flat and we have all modern conveniences. I share a room with my elder brother. My brother is a student of Moscow University. We are close friends. I discuss everything with him and we don’t have any secrets from each other. We get on very well. Sometimes I even borrow his clothes and he never gets annoyed. We don’t feel competitive, because we have different interests. I’m more academic and he’s more artistic. But we are both fond of sport very much. We both go to the swimming pool twice a week. It helps us to keep fit, it gives us good stamina, and it’s good for our hearts and lungs. We hardly ever quarrel or fight. My brother never sees me as being in the way. I think I’m quite easy-going. I’m similar in personality to my mother. She is always very friendly to all, although she can be quite critical of people. I like to be friendly to the people around me, and I don’t normally like to let my bad moods and anger inside me, come out and affect other people.

I don’t know if I’m particularly obsessive. I like to do different things every day. I am fond of collecting different things. One day I collect toy cars, another day I want to collect badges. But most of all I prefer collecting stamps because it’s a family hobby. You can learn a tremendous amount through stamps, especially about history. Stamps are a great way to bring history alive. All the members of my family collect stamps and the theme of our collection is history. It is a long-lasting hobby and who knows – in 20 years or so it may have become an impressive collection that can be appreciated and enjoyed by my own children too.

I have grandparents, my mother’s parents. They don’t live with us; but I often visit them. They live a very routine life, but they like it. I can’t put my finger on it, exactly, but there is some atmosphere in their house like nothing has changed for twenty years. My parents are doctors and they work in the hospital. They are very giving, caring persons, and always consider those around them. They work very hard in their hospital and really put all their energy in their work. They are very much in love, even after years of being married and always caring for each other. My parents have warm, friendly eyes and always express a spirit of goodwill towards people. I love my parents very much and my ambition is to be a doctor too, because I want to help people if they have some problems with their health. I originally became interested in medicine during my 9th grade, when I realized that my skills and my traits would serve me well in my future career. Besides I’m good at Chemistry, Biology and History – they are my favourite subjects. I’m not very good at English, but I understand that it is one of the most important subjects now, and I try my best to improve it.

We have a pet. It’s a dog. Her name is Sunny. Her mother is a Scotch Shepherd dog. I am never lonely with my pet. She is a great favourite with everyone in our family. All people admire her. She wears a good collar with her name on it. She especially likes morning walks with my father.

My native city is Moscow. Many people associate Moscow with the Kremlin and Red Square as the heart of the city. It is really the oldest historical and architectural centre of Moscow and my favourite place in Moscow, because it’s connected with the history of my country. Nowadays the Moscow Kremlin, with all the beauty of the palaces and cathedrals, is a wonderful sight. All these cathedrals have been converted into museums. Ivan the Terrible Bell Tower, one of the most remarkable structures of the 16th century, rises in the centre of the Kremlin. It unites all the Kremlin Cathedrals into a majestic ensemble. One of the well-known Kremlin museums is the Armoury Chamber. It was built in 1851. The famous golden cap of Monomach, the first Russian imperial crown of Catherine II made of silver, and many other precious historical items are exhibited there. So when you come to my native city, I’ll show you all the interesting and amazing sights of it.

**11. People have various reading preferences. What do you like to read? What is your favourite writer?**

I think that we can’t live without books. There are a lot of different kinds of books in the world, for example, thrillers, historical novels, science fiction, adventure books and others. Most of them are with us during all our life. Boys all over the world like reading adventure, thrillers and horror stories, whereas girls prefer romances, historical novels and poetry. Encyclopaedias, reference books and dictionaries help pupils to do well at school.

All the members of my family like reading very much. My father often reads newspapers and magazines. He thinks that it is the only way to be in the know of everything. And my mother is keen on reading romances and modern novels. For her they are more interesting than boring historical novels. She agrees with Anatole France that “history books which contain no lies are extremely dull”. But she wouldn’t mind reading about the life of well-known people.

I enjoy reading very much. Most of all I like reading detective stories, because they have interesting story lines and unusual endings. I am particularly captivated by characters who conduct investigations.

I never believed there really were books that you couldn’t put down. I changed my opinion when I started to read The Woman in White by Wilkie Collins, an English writer. The book was written in the 19th century. It’s a very good detective story, with a bit of romance thrown in it. The book is basically about mistaken identity. The main character in the story is a young artist who goes up to the north of England to instruct two young ladies. And he falls in love with Miss Fairlie, who looks very like the woman in white. Finally they turn out to be identical twins. The author brilliantly describes the adventures, love and fears of his heroes. He really brings the characters to life. A good writer knows how to keep you reading the book. In The Woman in White the reader’s interest is caught from the very first page and there is suspense till the very end! This is a great book and I would recommend it to anyone.

But my favourite writer is Agatha Christie. She is possibly the world’s most famous detective story writer. She wrote 79 novels and several plays. Her books are translated into 103 foreign languages. Many of her novels and short stories have been filmed. Her sales outnumber those of Shakespeare, but her life was often lonely and unhappy.

She was born in 1890 in Devon. She didn’t go to school, but was educated at home by her mother. During World War I, while she was working in a hospital dispensary, she learned about chemicals and poisons, which proved very useful to her in her later career. She wrote her first detective novel, “The Mysterious Affair at Styles”, in 1920. In it she introduced Hercule Poirot, the Belgian detective, who appeared in many subsequent novels. Her other main detective was an elderly spinster called Miss Marple. Miss Marple doesn’t look like a detective at all. This old lady always uses her instinct and knowledge of human nature to investigate crimes.

In 1914 she married Archibald Christie, but the marriage was unhappy. It didn’t last long, and they divorced in 1926. Agatha desperately wanted solitude and developed very bitter feelings towards the media because the newspapers had given her a hard time over her breakdown. She was determined never to let them enter her private life again and she buried herself in her work. On November 25, 1952 her play “The Mousetrap” opened in London. Today, over 50 years later, it is still running. It is the longest running show in the whole world. Agatha Christie died peacefully in 1976. People all over the world value this talented writer and consider her to be the Queen of Crime.

I don’t mind reading adventure stories. I especially like to read about characters who go through dangers to complete their mission. I think it’s more interesting than reading dull historical novels. But I dislike poetry, especially modern poetry. I find it too complicated. Sometimes I fail to understand what poets mean.

I am sure that reading is an essential part of our life. Only in books can you find answers to all your questions. Books can tell us a lot about the modern world and ancient times. Besides, they can help us to explore new ideas and expand our outlook. I completely agree that “reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.” What is more, books teach us to be kind and honest. While reading we learn how to solve our problems and to make people happy. And I think that reading is a perfect way to spend free time and not to feel bored. Books must be our friends during all our life.

**12. Television is much spoken about nowadays. It has both good and bad points. What are your arguments for and against watching TV?**

It goes without saying that television plays a very important part in people’s lives. It’s a wonderful source of information and one of the best ways to spend free time and not to feel bored. Television viewing is by far the most popular leisure pastime. For example, in Britain over 99 per cent of British homes have a TV, and the average person watches “the box” 26 hours a week. It’s not surprising, because TV channels show a great variety of programmes: documentaries and current affairs programmes, feature films and comedies, soaps and police series, concerts and talk shows.

There are four TV channels in Britain: BBC 1, BBC 2, ITV and Channel 4. BBC 1 and BBC 2, the two state channels, do not show adverts. ITV and Channel 4, the two independent channels, do show adverts. BBC 1 and ITV tend to broadcast popular programmes: sports programmes, recent films, news, game shows, children’s programmes and soaps. BBC 2 and Channel 4 show programmes which usually attract much smaller audiences: TV plays, classical concerts, foreign films and programmes for minority groups.

Russian television has between 10 and 15 channels, which show all kinds of programmes: news and sports programmes, talk shows and quizzes, documentaries and feature films, soaps and police series, comedies and concerts.

Thanks to satellites, TV viewers can increase their options and watch TV from different countries. Conventional television has to struggle to retain its audience, as people switch over to cable viewing, satellite TV, or renting video cassettes.

Television is a reflection of the modern world. It gives you an opportunity to travel all over the world, to see different people and learn about their customs and traditions. Television keeps you informed about the rest of the world. And of course, it helps you to escape from everyday problems.

A lot of people usually relax watching soaps – TV serials which dramatise their characters’ daily life. Their story lines are entertaining, but often unbelievable. I don’t think that they show life realistically; but to many people, the characters in the weekly TV serial shows have become more important than real people.

As for me, I prefer watching different quizz shows. That’s why my favourite TV programme is “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?” It is shown twice a week, and lasts about an hour. The programme is now hosted by Maxim Galkin. It is a game show where the player is asked different questions. If the answers are correct, the participant gets a lot of money. But if he is wrong, he loses everything. I particularly enjoy watching this programme, because the questions are always very interesting and they help me to expand my outlook. Besides, it’s a perfect way to be in the know about everything. I find this programme clever and informative and try not to miss it.

Of course, not everything shown on TV is made in good taste. There are badly-written programmes which contain unnecessary bad language and violence. The strange thing is that neither politicians nor producers like to admit that watching violence on TV leads to greater violence on the streets.

Many people admit that the quality of television could be better. They would prefer to see fewer soap operas and crime series, and more history, drama, and science. One reason for the poor quality of programmes is advertising. Not all people like watching commercials. They find ads silly and boring. As for me, I don’t take advertising seriously. On the one hand, advertisements help people choose the best products and get the best value for their money. But on the other hand, they show life unrealistically and give false information. Besides, in adverts all people seem to be happy consumers, all kids seem to be healthy and well off. But this is not true at all. What is more, I find it very annoying when a film stops at the most interesting moment. Nevertheless, I am not against commercials on TV, because television companies earn their money from advertising.

Another thing I would like to complain about is the amount of smoking in the films that are shown on TV. Smoking is often shown as a very “cool” thing to do – making young people much more likely to copy what they see, and take up smoking themselves.

Some people say that television is a terrible waste of time. Of course, there are TV addicts who can’t drag themselves away from the box. They watch TV for hours without choosing programmes, and spend time in front of television which they could spend talking to their friends and family. In this case, television makes them really waste time. But on the contrary, if we watch TV for an hour a day, to find out what is happening in the world or to relax, then television is really useful.

In short, television does have its good points. Many of the broadcast programmes are educational and can help with schoolwork. A good soap-opera or a comedy is a source of relaxation for many people. Television also provides jobs for thousands of people. So I think it is not the TV itself which is to blame for the bad effects it has, but the fact that people do not know how to make the best use of it.

**13. What are the most popular free time activities for British and Russian teenagers? What activities do you like? Why?**

Britain has recent by been described as a “leisure society.” This is because there are a great variety of leisure pursuits. Young people generally go out on Friday or Saturday nights to a disco, to a concert or to a pub. In recent years going out for a meal or getting a take-away meal have become popular too. During the past years there is a great increase in keeping fit and staying healthy. A lot of teens started running, jogging and going to different fitness clubs in their spare time. Aerobics classes and fitness clubs opened in every town, and the number of recreation centres greatly increased. Indoor pools, with their wave-making machines, water slides and tropical vegetation, have became very popular.

And the same is true in Russia. A lot of teens go in for different kinds of sport. Sport helps them to feel as fit as a fiddle. In both countries there are special programmes for problem teenagers, such as a high-risk activities, for example they are taught to jump out of aeroplanes. But despite the increase in the number of teens participating in sport, the majority of young people still prefer to be spectators. They prefer to be couch potatoes. Watching sports on TV is a popular leisure activity, as is going to football matches on Saturday. Cinemas have been redesigned with four or more screens, each showing a different film at the same time, and a lot of teens like going to the cinemas too.

The young generation is fond of communication. There are many available methods of communication nowadays, and the most popular one is computers. A lot of teenagers spend plenty of time working on computers. The Internet seems really good fun. You may send e-mails to friends from different countries and get their answers instantly. You even may talk to them. It is easy and quick. A lot of teenagers have mobile telephones, so they can always be contacted, if they keep their telephone switched on, at any time of the day or night, or tend text messages.

A lot of teenagers in both countries are crazy about animals. They race them, train them and breed them. They like to hear stories about them on television programmes and they like reading books about them. Many teens have a pet animal. It could be a dog, a cat, a goldfish, a bird or a small furry animal like a hamster. Looking after and being kind to their pets is very important for teens. Why are teens so interested in animals? Perhaps it’s because they are rather shy in their heart of hearts. One of my friends says: “I can say anything I like to my dog, but she never thinks I’m silly.”

There are plenty of other kinds of activities, such as travelling, visiting historical places, babysitting, delivering newspapers, putting together jigsaw puzzles, reading, going to different museums, skateboarding, going fishing, hitchhiking, shopping, helping people in need, joining a computer club and others. We can say “So many teens; so many kinds of activities.”

Now some words about me. I am fifteen and I am a computer addict. I am fond of communication with other teens. That’s why I have a lot of friends in my and other countries. We send messages from one computer to another one using e-mail; we have on-line conversations. I am a member of the computing club and I spend much time there. Of course, it’s rather expensive, but my parents understand me and give me enough money to pay for my computer club. And I think that my hobby will be useful in my future profession. Besides, I spend my free time in the sport club. I go in for kung fu. Recently films about kung fu have become very popular in Russia. This fighting itself is a great art, the result of many years of hard work and self-discipline. The man who made kung fu films famous was Bruce Lee. He used fists, elbows, feet (never weapons) and moved as fast as lightning. I am rather good at kung fu now, but I never use my skills to hurt anybody, unless it is absolutely necessary. Now people know what Kung Fu is, and I think it may become a sport of the future, because it develops up your personality, will and nobility.

**14. Young people are fond of different styles of music. What kinds are popular now? What kind of music do you like? Why?**

Can you think of a day without music? We can hear music everywhere: in the streets and at home, over the radio and on TV, in the shops and in the parks. People all over the world are fond of music. They listen to music, they dance to music, they learn to play musical instruments.

But what is music? Specialists explain that music isn’t only a combination of pleasant sounds. It is an art which reflects life. There are a lot of different kinds of music. Some of them appeared long ago, and some are modern. For example, folk music appeared long ago, but it is still alive. There are many local performers, choirs and folk groups in Russia; but perhaps the most famous singer is Nadezhda Babkina. Folk songs are very tuneful and pleasant to listen to. Classical music is often associated with the music of the past. However, this style also includes music being written now, and we may speak of modern classical music. Rap is a modern musical style where the singer speaks or shouts the words in time to music with a steady beat. Such groups as Public Enemy or House of Pain are leaders in this style.

Great Britain has produced more popular music stars than any other country. Over the last 30 years rock and pop music have been very popular in Britain. The Beatles, with their style of singing, eloquent and exciting, is still one of the most popular groups. British groups often set new trends in music. New styles, groups and singers continue to appear. Some of the more recent pop groups are Dire Straits, Eurhythmics and Spice Girls. Many of the new bands have been able to use the changes in technology to develop their music. Computerised drum machines, synthesisers and other electronic instruments are now just as popular as the piano and electric guitars.

Tastes differ. So people’s musical interests range from pop and rock music, which are extremely popular nowadays, especially among young people, to classical music and opera.

My favourite style of music is pop music, because it is breathtaking and full of energy. When I listen to pop music it makes me remember happy times and forget the problems of everyday life. It helps me to relax when I’m tired, and entertains me when I’d like to have fun. My favourite group is Abba. It was formed in 1973 in Sweden. Abba’s cheerful tunes made them international pop stars and one of the most successful groups of the seventies. Their most famous songs (“Waterloo”, “Money, Money, Money”, “Knowing Me, Knowing You”, etc.) often topped European charts. Though the group doesn’t exist any more, it is still popular with people of all ages. I can’t but admire their style of singing. I find it fascinating and overwhelming. When I have free time I listen to their records. I also like having background music while I am working.

I don’t mind listening to dance music, especially when I go to disco clubs. This style of music is catchy and firey and I like catchy tunes. It makes me more energetic.

It’s a pity that many young people like to listen only to modern music. As for me, I also enjoy listening to classical music. I find it tuneful and appealing. Classical music is always a complex of emotions. It gives me delight, pleasure and a sense of happiness. Some pieces of classical music are really wonderful. Not long ago I listened to the First Piano Concerto, composed by Tchaikovsky. The power of his music captivated me. The impression was overwhelming.

The music I hate is heavy metal. I find it noisy and dreadful. When I listen to this style of music it presents to my mind pictures of dark days. Though some young people are fond of this style of music, it is not to everyone’s taste. To my mind, music too loud can destroy our ears. I am indifferent to other styles of music. For example, I don’t mind listening to jazz. Improvisation is an important part of this style, that’s why a jazz song may sound a little different each time it is played. I think that jazz is a mixture of many different kinds of music, but I consider it a bit complicated.

My mother and father approve of my tastes in music. Though they prefer to listen to classical and “bard music”, they think that, on the whole, modern music is not too bad. My parents agree that each generation has its own tastes.

It goes without saying that music plays a very important role in people’s lives. It reflects our moods and emotions. Music appeals to our hearts and transforms our feelings. It conquers our souls and enriches our minds. Besides, listening to music is the perfect way to spend free time and not to feel bored. You can hardly find a person who doesn’t like or need music, who never sings or dances. Music is beauty in sounds, it is our magic source of inspiration.

**15. What are traditional British kinds of sports? Are they popular in Russia? What kinds of sport, is your family interested in?**

Englishmen are known to be great sports-lovers. One of the most popular British games is cricket, which foreigners can hardly understand. There are two teams of 11 players. Matches last from one to five days. It is played all over the country in the summer. To many Englishmen cricket is both a game and a standard of behavior. When they consider something unfair they say “That isn’t cricket.” Almost all Englishmen become fans when they watch a traditional cricket match between the teams of Great Britain and Australia, or New Zealand. England without cricket would be like bacon without eggs.

Another game which attracts great attention is soccer (European football). There are plenty of amateur and professional soccer clubs in every town. Professional soccer is big business. The Cup Final played in London is the culminating event of the football season. Rugby football is also very popular, but it is played mainly by amateurs. It’s a kind of English football in which the players use their hands for carrying the ball. This game is played by teams of 15 men with an oval ball and it’s often considered to be a violent game.

A great number of people play and watch tennis. Among many tennis tournaments the most famous is the one in Wimbledon. Horse racing is also extremely popular in Great Britain. The racing season includes five races. The annual race for “Derby” is perhaps the most famous sporting event in the whole world. Englishmen also go in for golf, baseball, hockey, basketball, bowling, and badminton. Athletic sports, such as running, jumping, rowing, swimming, boxing and gymnastics, are practiced at schools and colleges. The annual Oxford-Cambridge boat race on the river Thames attracts lots of people and is very popular. In Scotland, where there are good conditions for winter sports, skiing is very popular.

Great Britain and America are the birthplaces of many sports. That’s why many of them have English names. It is easy to understand how these games were named. For example, baseball is played with a ball and bases. Basketball is played with a ball and two baskets. The names for other sports come from the name of the place where they were first played. Badminton comes from the name of a piece of land owned by an English Duke. The game was first played on the Duke’s land in 1873. Golf was first played in Scotland, but its name comes from the Dutch word for a hockey club “colf.”

Almost all these games are popular in Russia. Russian people even began to play cricket. And plenty of bowling clubs appeared in our country. This is because we can hardly overestimate the meaning of sport in our life and day-to-day activities. The main purpose of going in for sports is to develop a generation of strong and healthy people. Sports prevent us from getting too fat, and brings up a harmoniously developed generation. Sometimes playing a sport is connected with great risks. Besides, there are violent kinds of sports and sportsmen and fans discuss whether these kinds of sports are necessary.

In my family we prefer swimming. I began swimming at the age of six. I think that swimming is something like music or languages, and that’s why it’s very good to start as early as possible if you want to be good at it. There is no question that you can speak; there is no question that you can walk; and there is no question that you can swim if you start at a very early age. My parents also go to the swimming pool, but they began going in for swimming when they were grown-ups. There are some sports which I’ve not had a chance to experience but would really like to. They’re mostly non-competitive sports. I love the water very much and I’d really like to try some more water sports. For instance, being pulled by a boat whilst wearing water-skis would, I’m sure, be a fantastic experience. And I’d also like to try surfing. I think there’s no greater feeling on earth than riding the top of a wave on a surfboard. I’d like to try it just to see. My parents and I are great fans. We subscribe to a sports newspaper and like watching nothing but football matches. We read the newspaper from cover to cover and lie on the sofa watching sport competitions on television on Sunday.

**16. Some people go in for sports, while others like to watch sports competitions? Which is better: to watch or to participate?**

The modern way of life, when people have little physical activity, use cars instead of walking, watch television for many hours, and work on computers is turning them into legless creatures. Although a lot of people are interested in staying healthy, not many people do very much about it. Only 10 per cent of adults take part in sport more than twice a week.

The majority of people live in towns and cities, where space for team sports is limited. To keep fit, most people take part in individual sports. They usually go walking, swimming, cycling, or do aerobics. Taking part in all of these sports is informal and casual. Most people just want to relax. If they do aerobics or go swimming, they usually go to the sports centre; but not many people join a sport club.

Some people argue that sports are not very useful. It takes a lot of energy and time. As a result of going in for sports, people have broken legs and arms and other injuries. Besides, it makes you unhappy when you lose. A lot of people prefer to watch sports competitions rather than take part in sports. Thousands of people go to the stadiums to support their favourite teams and sportsmen. The most popular spectator sports are football, hockey and figure skating. Most of the important competitions are televised, and people enjoy watching sports programmes on TV. They needn’t buy tickets and go to a stadium, especially in cold and rainy weather. But certainly watching sports events and going in for sports are two different things.

In my opinion, people can’t do without sports. Sports play an important part in our lives. I think sports help us in different ways. First of all, it helps us to stay in good shape, to keep fit and to be healthy. It makes people strong, fast and agile. What is more, sport builds character; it teaches us to compete and practice sportsmanship. It makes us more organised and better disciplined in our daily activities. Besides, it is a good way to meet people and to make new friends.

Sports are an essential part of our everyday life. To have a healthy mind, you must have a healthy body. But to be healthy, it is not necessary to become a professional sportsman. You may go in for sports just for pleasure, when you have free time. Some people jog every morning; some follow fitness classes shown on TV. Young people usually put on their roller-skates and skate in the streets and parks. A lot of young people spend their holidays hiking; it doesn’t cost much, and it is a really good way of getting away from crowds.

Physical education is an important subject at school. It helps pupils to relax and to keep fit after a hard working day. Each school has sports facilities. A lot of different competitions are usually held at school and a great number of pupils take part in them. That’s why I think sports are so popular in our country.

The most popular sports in Russia are football and hockey, skating and skiing, track and field and swimming, tennis and basketball. It is not always easy to decide which sport to take up. The aim of all sports training is to improve fitness and skills, and to develop training programmes that are both safe and effective. The important thing, however, is that anyone who is not used to exercising should not do too much at the beginning. Moreover, it is better to do a little regularly than a lot once every two months. Among the be-nefits of regular exercise are a healthier heart, stronger bones, quicker reaction times, and less susceptibility to various illnesses. Scientists believe that if you go in for sport on a regular basis, it could even help you to live longer.

I enjoy many sports; but best of all I love swimming. I started to learn when I was about seven years old. When I was younger I used to go swimming three or four times a week. Now I have less free time, but a week never goes by without my visiting the pool at least once. Sports help me to work off my extra energy.

Swimming is an inexpensive and simple sport. You do not need any complicated equipment. You just need a swimming costume or trunks and perhaps a cap. You can swim in the sea or a river, or you can go to a special swimming pool. I love swimming because it is a very good exercise for the whole body. I would recommend it because it is so convenient to do: you can do it when you like and for as long as you like.

**17. What does a healthy way of life mean? How do you look after your health?**

People nowadays are more health-conscious than they used to be. They understand that good health is above wealth.

To be healthy we should avoid different bad habits that can affect our health. In my opinion, smoking, and drinking too much alcohol, are the worst ones. It’s common knowledge that smoking and drinking can shorten our lives dramatically. Smoking, for example, causes a number of heart and lung diseases, such as pneumonia, emphysema and cancer. Besides, it makes your teeth yellow and skin unhealthy. Fortunately, in recent years smoking has received a lot of bad publicity, and fewer people smoke nowadays. Some companies don’t employ people who are smokers. Smoking has been banned in most public places because everyone agrees it does harm to our health. I don’t smoke, because I don’t want to have unhealthy skin and teeth and die young.

Smoking and drinking are joined by less dangerous habits, such as skipping meals, eating unhealthy food, or even overeating. Of course, they are not quite as deadly as smoking or drinking alcohol, but they also affect our health.

If we eat too much, we’ll become obese, and obesity leads to serious health problems. A lot of people like drinking coca cola and coffee, and enjoy pizzas and hamburgers. But what is tasty is not always healthy. Fast food makes you fat, that is why Americans are the fattest people in the world.

In recent years eating habits have undergone a change. People are encouraged to eat less fat and more fibre. Fat is believed to be one of the major causes of obesity and heart disease. High fibre and low fat foods can now be found in all shops and supermarkets. Salads, beans, and fruit have taken the place of steak and ice cream. The fashion for health food is growing all the time.

Many people feel they are too fat, even if their doctors disagree. And a lot of people try to improve their fitness. There are a lot of ways to lose weight and avoid gaining it. Perhaps the most popular of them is following a diet. If you want to lose weight, you should cut out snacks and desserts, and cut down on fat. People have also become more aware of calories, the energy value of food. Some people count the number of calories they eat every day; so that they can try to take in fewer calories and lose weight. This is called a calorie-controlled diet. Manufacturers are increasingly producing special foods with fewer calories for slimmers.

But excessive dieting may be dangerous, too. Some people refuse to eat meat as they consider it harmful. They say a vegetarian diet reduces the risk of cancer and vegetarians live longer than others. I can’t agree with them, because meat is an excellent source of good nutrition. In my opinion, it’s wrong to put down a food simply because excessive amounts can cause health problems. Consumed in moderate amounts, meat is perfectly good for our health.

To my mind, the only way to stay healthy and to keep fit is by going in for sports. Among the benefits of regular exercise are a healthier heart, stronger bones, quicker reaction times and more resistance to various illnesses. Besides, you can eat and drink as much as you want because you are burning it all off.

To be healthy, it is also very important to spend a lot of time in the open air. It is useful to go for a walk before going to bed, or to air the room.

I think it is very important to be fit and healthy, and it is necessary to take care of your health. Being fat, in fact, can cause real problems. It is harder for fat people to get a good job, or even to make friends. If you want to do well, you must be thin. That’s why I go in for sports on a regular basis. I have been doing aerobics for three years and I feel great. I am not enthusiastic about strict dieting, but I try to eat only low-fat food, and fruit and vegetables which are rich in vitamins.

Personally I believe that regularity in life promotes our health. Sleeping eight or nine hours, getting up early, regular meals, a healthy diet and going in for sports is really a good way to live.

**18. The problems of ecology are very important now. Which problem is the most urgent, in your opinion? What can you and the people around you do to protect the planet?**

Environmental problems have become exceptionally acute in the modern world, and environmental protection has become a vital necessity for all people.

Our planet is in serious danger. One of the most important environmental problems in the world today is the shortage of clean water. Industrial pollution has made many sources of water undrinkable. Rivers, lakes and even seas have become poisonous. Thousands of fish die every year as a result of the illegal dumping of waste in rivers by factories all over the world.

Lake Baikal is one of the worlds’ largest and most beautiful lakes. It contains a rich variety of fish and plants, including 1,300 rare species that do not exist anywhere else in the world. However, they are being killed by massive industrial waste, which some factories still pour into the lake every day. A few years ago people thought that the supply of clean water was unlimited. Now clean water is scarce, and we are beginning to respect this precious resource. We must protect the clean water that remains for the sake of our children and grandchildren.

Air pollution is another important problem. In hundreds of cities and towns the concentration of harmful substances in the air is over ten times the admissible level. Every day a huge number of plants and factories emit lots of harmful substances into the atmosphere of big cities. The great increase in the use of motor cars in the last quarter of the twentieth century has caused an increase in a new kind of air pollution. Pollution from factories and cars poison the air we breathe, and is the main reason for the greenhouse effect and acid rain.

Acid rain can damage life in lakes and rivers and destroy forests. The greenhouse effect may also have disastrous consequences for our planet. It is already affecting several areas of the world with unusual weather causing droughts or heavy storms. The world’s temperature is going up and the climate is changing. Cutting down on emissions from large combustion plants and exhaust fumes from vehicles would help solve the problem. I think we should try and use alternative energy, such as solar energy and wind energy, and design plants and cars that run on electricity, a much cleaner fuel than petrol.

One of the most alarming environmental problems is depletion of the ozone layer, which protects the Earth from the dangerous ultraviolet rays of the sun. Because of the ozone holes, the dangerous rays get through the atmosphere, causing skin cancer and other serious diseases. Many scientists think that these ozone holes are the result of air pollution.

In my opinion, the most urgent ecological problem today is the environmental safety of nuclear power stations. Nuclear pollution can’t be seen, but its effects can be terrible. We all know how tragic the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster are. Nuclear waste also endangers people’s lives. People all over the world protest against nuclear tests and nuclear weapons. If we do not take any action, the possibility of a global nuclear disaster is very real.

Of course, we can’t help mentioning such burning issues as destruction of tropical forests and wildlife, overpopulation, and shortage of natural resources. The list of serious ecological problems could be continued.

Today environmental issues are much spoken and written about on TV, radio, and in the newspapers. If people want to survive, they must do their best to solve these problems. Fortunately, it’s not too late to save our planet. We understand that our environment is not just our home town, but the whole earth. The protection of the environment requires the cooperation of all nations. Governments should take measures that will help improve the environment.

There are a lot of environmental groups and international organisations, whose main goal is to strengthen cooperation among environmentalists from different countries. The most famous of them is Greenpeace, which combines the people’s efforts for peace with the huge and ever mounting movement for nature conservation. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is the name of another international organisation that appeared in 1961. It has created or given support to National Parks on five continents.

However, there are a lot of simple things we should all do to stop the destruction of the environment. First of all, we mustn’t drop litter in public places. Besides, we shouldn’t dump our rubbish without thinking which things, such as bottles and paper, can be recycled. We must stop using aerosol sprays, because the stuff they contain destroys the ozone layer. We should take care of birds and animals. We can help to plant trees and create parks for endangered species. We can clean rivers and canals and create footpaths. But first of all we must change people’s attitude towards the environment.

If we take action now, there might be some hope for the future. If we do nothing, we are heading for disaster!

**19. People set up different organizations for various purposes. What do you know about these organizations? Are you a member of any organization? Which organization would you join? Why?**

The 20th century is characterized by the creation of international organizations: only a small number of the international organizations now in existence were formed before 1850, and about 90% were organized in the period 1900–1956. In the 1980s there were more than 2500 international organizations, of which about 750 were formed after World War II. This number included more than 130 intergovernmental agencies, of which the most notable were the United Nations and its affiliates.

The name United Nations was devised by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt and was first used in the “Declaration by United Nations” of 1 January 1942, when representatives of 26 nations pledged their governments to continue fighting together against Germany, Japan and Italy. The Charter of the United Nations was signed by 51 states on 26 June 1945. This day is now celebrated each year throughout the world as United Nations Day. Russia is a member of the United Nations.

A specialized agency of the United Nations is UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). It was founded in 1946. It promotes international collaboration in education, science and culture. Education is UNESCO’s main activity. The organization attempts to assist and support national efforts of member states in eliminating illiteracy, training teachers, developing educational institutions and extending free education. UNESCO also works to study, develop and promote cultural heritage and protect historic monuments and the natural environment. UNESCO assists and supports the efforts of member states through conferences, seminars and publications, through the promotion of research and exchange of information and knowledge.

Now I’d like to tell you about the World Health Organization (WHO). It began its activities in 1948. It is a specialized agency designed to further international cooperation for improved health conditions. The major function of the WHO is to establish measures for the control of epidemic diseases. This consists of mass campaigns promoted by WHO against communicable diseases. The major function of WHO is nursing concerned with maternal and child health. It also assists educational programmes for nurses and assistants. WHO is coordinating an international effort against Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) as well as the current threat of SARS.

Another medical organization is the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The Red Cross is an humanitarian agency with national affiliates in almost every country in the world. The Red Cross movement began in 1863. Its peacetime activities include first aid, accident prevention, water safety, training of nurses’ aids and mothers’ assistants and maintenance of maternal and child welfare centres, clinics, blood banks and numerous other services. The Red Cross is the name used in Christian countries; the Red Crescent is the name used in Muslim countries.

Greenpeace is an international nongovernmental organization dedicated to preserving endangered species of animals, preventing environmental abuses and taking care of wildlife. Greenpeace was founded in 1971 in Vancouver, Canada. It brought together people concerned with terrible abuses to the environment. The organization has a small staff and relies largely on voluntary staffing and funding. Greenpeace also campaigns:

– for stricter control over chemical waste disposal on land;

– to stop all nuclear weapons tests;

– to close down nuclear power stations and nuclear reprocessing plants;

– to stop acid rain and protect the atmosphere;

– to reduce the trade in endangered species products;

– to declare Antarctica a World Park – free of military and industrial exploitation, and so forth.

Today it is a global organization with national offices in 27 countries; one of them is in Russia (since 1992).

There are also youth organizations, because the main aim of society is to prepare young people for responsible roles in the adult world and to provide constructive outlets for energies of young people. Some organizations such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts or Guides, and Young Men’s Christian Association and Young Women’s Christian Associations, have spread all over the world. The Boy Scout movement was founded in Great Britain in 1908. In 1910 the Girl Scout movement was also founded in that country. There are about 1,300,000 boys and girls in them. The movement of the Boy Scouts has its aim to help a Scout (a boy from 8–18) to develop into a good man and a useful citizen. He must be able to handle sails, to use a compass, to lay and light a fire outdoors, he must know first aid and develop his interest in music, literature, drama, arts and films. A Scout is a friend to animals, he’s “clean in thought, word and deed”. He must obey the Scout Law.

As for me, I’m not a member of any organization. But if I had chance, I would become a Scout, because I like the aims of this organization and the ways they are achieved.

**20. Growing up can cause problems. Do you have any problems with your friends, your parents and other people around you? How do you cope with these problems?**

It’s hard not to see that teenagers nowadays have a lot of problems. One of the real problems is having no close friend. Several days ago I had a best friend, but now I don’t. My friend was much more to me than just a person with whom I communicated. We were as thick as thieves. We helped each other to survive and got along well. But some days ago we quarrelled, and now I’m at a loss what to do. Fortune turned its back on me and I feel very lonely. I can’t say that my parents don’t understand me, they try to support me; but I think only time can heal me. Some young people are just sure that their parents don’t want to understand them. It’s a very serious problem. I’m sure that this point of view is absolutely wrong.

Psychologists believe, parents-child conflicts cannot be avoided in a society that is undergoing rapid change. In our society youngsters are at odds with their parents on a wide range of issues, from how late they can stay up, to whom they should marry. It’s called a generation gap. But I think our parents are people whom we can trust. In most cases teens don’t understand their parents and become very nervous. When this happens, it’s time to say to yourself “stop”, and try to find in your parents more positive than negative traits. Our parents should understand one thing, that today’s children will become tomorrow’s society. So they should try to understand the child; they should find out about teen problems and help solve them.

The other very important problem is our school life. Teens are often under pressure in many ways at school – they are supposed to be “macho” – good at school subjects, able to stand up for themselves without crying. If they can’t, they are “wimps”, and often children will tease and bully them, especially at school. But all children are different – they have different needs and talents, likes and dislikes. Teens are not just “machos” and “wimps”, they are rebels and conformists, extroverts and introverts. Our teachers and our parents should assure us that all these types of people are good, and it will reduce a lot of our problems.

Teenager’s Problems

There are so-called “problem teenagers”, who take drugs. A large number of teens use them very often. They are drug addicts. I don’t have such friends and I think that there should be special programmes to solve this problem.

Drugs Destroy Lives

Another problem is connected with biorhythms. Not all people know what it is, and they begin to laugh at you and can offend you, when sometimes you are all fingers and thumbs, when you are accident-prone, or when your temper seems to be on a short fuse. It is because we all have an internal “body clock” which regulates the rise and the fall of our bodies’ energies and it’s called biorhythms. So our teachers, parents and classmates should understand it and not pay attention to it because it’s the law of our life and nature.

My other serious problem is to enter a good university and find a good job afterwards. But unemployment rates are extremely high – even qualified people with great knowledge can’t find something good. But in spite of that I hope for the best.

I always want to impress people. But the first impression we make almost fully depends on what we wear and how we wear it. Manners and speech are noticed next and character only later. Many teens have the same taste. They like to keep up-to-date with the changes in our society. They like to wear clothes which look good and which you feel comfortable in. Being in fashion makes you feel good, in tune with the world you live in. But when you are at school it is important to wear the right clothes, even formal ones, and not to dress up. I understand it, but some of my classmates don’t. They like to shock their teachers and parents, and provoke them, and that’s why they have some problems at school. So you should have some “clothes sense” to know and feel the types of things that are your style in formal situations (when you are at school) and at parties.

As for me nowadays, I try to cope with all my problems alone, or with the help of my parents. My parents are real friends and they understand me and try to help me or give advice.

So if someone denies all of the problems teenagers have, they are not being honest. Teens have a lot of problems. But the first thing we have to think about is the future we’re building for ourselves and our children. The better we are now, the better we understand one another, the better our place will be when we grow up.