**School years**

Some people think that school years are the happiest in their life. As for me, I cannot say whether it is right or wrong. I am still too young. I am 14 years old, and it is difficult for me to say whether my future will be more happy than my past. Moreover, school takes so much time that I hardly have time for anything else. I have classes in the first half of the day and in the evening I have to do my homework, which takes me several hours. Sometimes I have to sit up to write a composition, prepare a report, or learn a poem. Autumn and spring holidays are very short. In winter I have only two weeks free of school. Summer is the only time when I can forget about school. But it is impossible to do so. Little by little I start to understand that school plays a very important part in the life of every person, and knowledge gained at school is the key to the future success or failure.

School years may certainly be fairly happy. However, there are a lot of problems even today connected with school life and the formation of a personality. People think differently about this time of their life experience. In my opinion optimism or pessimism in the attitude to school years is equally wrong. School is the place where almost everything happens with a person for the first time. School years are the time of great expectations and great emotions. Not all emotions are always pleasant. School is the first true experience of the real life. At school a person makes his first friends, meets his first love, confronts the first betrayal. Here at school the person reads the first book and writes the first composition. He acquires basic knowledge of physics, mathematics, literature, history, biology, etc. But here at school the person not only accumulates knowledge, school helps the pupils to get on in life and become successful.

In a way it is a kind of society in miniature. School society is a model of real society with its advantages and disadvantages. School lessons are not given by teachers only. The harsh reality of everyday school life teaches pupils a lot of lessons which will be useful in their later life.

School plays a very important social role. It provides high-quality education for pupils between the ages of 6 and 17. It brings together children with different interests and experience. School offers pupils the opportunities to develop their abilities, satisfy their curiosity, and realise themselves as individuals. At school pupils are taught to be responsible, gallant, and honest. Pupils should be aware that generosity and sympathy might be as important as moral virtue. School helps pupils to establish for themselves a set of convictions and beliefs. Here at school pupils can compare themselves with each other in terms of academic ability and athletic achievements. Teachers are knowledgeable in their subjects. School provides high-quality conditions that will enable pupils and teachers to make the most of their time. Knowledge acquired at school enables pupils either to continue their education or start working.

Now I want to say some words about my school. My school is located in the centre of our city. Set up before World War II, it values its traditions, which, however, have changed in the course of time. When I started to go to school it was an old building with a garden around it. Every year on the first of September all the pupils and teachers of our school gather in the forecourt for a meeting at which the beginning of a new academic year is proclaimed. After the meeting the pupils go to their classrooms. The classrooms are very large. In our school mere are lour specialised classrooms. The first is a Biology classroom with a lot of flowers and two exotic trees. By taking care of the flowers and trees we learn to love and protect nature. The second is the Literature classroom. It resembles a library with a lot of bookcases around the walls and the portraits of the classics of Russian literature. The third is the History classroom. There are maps and archaeological artefacts in this classroom. I like history because it tells us about the events of the past. Most of all I like the English classroom. On the wall of the English classroom there are posters with London places of interest: Westminster Abbey, Houses of Parliament, and the Tower of London. There are some portraits of the British and American writers such as Shakespeare, Byron, Hemingway, and Mark Twain there. Our English teacher teaches us not only the language of the Englishmen but their culture, history and traditions as well. By learning more about the life style of other peoples we start to appreciate customs and traditions of our country. During our English classes we read and translate texts, discuss some English books, and listen to the tape-recorder.

I spend much time at school. But at school we do not only study. We have some extracurricular activities as well. They are part of school life. Our social and cultural life is well organised. We have different clubs. We often go to the museums and theatres. At school I have many interesting subjects and they are all different. My favourite subjects are English, English literature and History. I like to learn new English words, dramatise texts and dialogues. I like to discuss interesting problems in English during our English classes. Everything that is connected with Great Britain is very important to me. I like my classmates, and we always spend our time together. I am sure that eventually they will be ready to enter our society as full-fledged citizens.

- What is one of the greatest problems of school life?

- One of the greatest problems of school life is connected with communication. There are about 30 boys and girls in a class, and they have to live and learn together for more than a decade. Every person has his own interests and attitudes to everything. It is very important for classmates to become friends. Sometimes some of them become real friends for the rest of their lives. In some cases pupils cannot establish contacts and good relations with their classmates. The pupils who accept all the difficulties of school life and break the wall of misunderstanding with their classmates are happy at school.

- What can you say about your school building?

- Our school has been recently rebuilt. Now it is a modern four-storied building. On the ground floor one can find administrative offices, a gym and a cloakroom. The assembly hall is on the third floor. On the first floor there are primary school classes. Teenagers are not allowed to spend time on the first floor, because primary school pupils are too small. On other floors there are different classrooms.

- What do you usually do during the breaks?

- Breaks at school are not very long. They can last from 5 to 20 minutes. Sometimes we hardly have enough time to move from one classroom to another. Usually we talk or play. During one of the longest breaks we have lunch, in early autumn, and late spring we can play in the school yard.

- What do you talk about with your classmates?

- Usually we express our views about the books we read, computer games we play or films we have seen or want to see. We discuss our plans for the weekends and decide how to spend our free time.

- Do you work hard at school?

- Yes, I do. I work very hard. I never miss classes and I always do my homework. Sometimes it really takes several hours to do it, but I do not complain. I am really interested in what I learn at school. Moreover, I understand perfectly well that in the nearest future this knowledge will help me a lot.

- Do you have many friends at school?

- There are 28 boys and girls in our class. We are all good friends. Nevertheless, I have a few good friends. There are six of us in our company. We usually spend our free time together. We meet after classes, and go to the museums and cinemas. We have a very good time together, especially at the weekends.

- Some people when they grow older do not like to speak about their school years. What do you think about it?

- School years are connected with hard mental activity. That is why some people don't like to speak about them. For self-assured people, whose character was moulding at that time, the recollection of their school years can be very pleasant. All unpleasant moments of their school life they present with humour. And this is the key to their success. This very attitude has been worked out at school and by school.