**My favorite holiday**

Every nation has its own customs and long-lived traditions. There is a great number of exciting events which are held in every country throughout the year. Such events of national importance unite people, make them feel proud of their nation.

Each family is like a little country with its own traditions. So and my family. We celebrate all holidays in a very special way and it keeps our family together in spirit. Our most favorite holiday is Christmas. We celebrate it on the 25th of December. Preparation for Christmas are always pleasant: buying gifts, sending Christmas cards and decorating Christmas tree with small, bright-colored lights and small colored glass ornaments. Our church holds a special service on Sunday before Christmas. We sing songs, give presents and then there is always a staging about Christmas. And the best thing about this staging is that all actors are only children, whose touching playing makes this day more wonderful. And then the Christmas comes. It starts in the morning with the smell of cookies, cakes, chocolate and cinnamon. My mom makes the most tasty cakes and cookies in the world and I enjoy decorating them with the specially-prepared cream. The receipt of this cream is kept in a secret among the women of our family. It is told from mother to daughter only. The cookies and cakes are very special not only because of the cream but also because of their form and color. For example, they look like Christmas-trees, funny smiling faces, or teddy-bears. When the meal is ready the real Christmas comes with the big family dinner, gifts, candles, sweets and illumination. In our family this dinner is very important, all the members should be present. I believe that on this day if you make a wish staying next to the Christmas tree it will undoubtedly come true, just because it is Christmas. Usually we celebrate this holiday in a family circle but sometimes we invite our relatives and close friends to the party. Next morning after Christmas we all are looking for the sweets which the Father Frost puts into the Christmas stoking. I don't really believe in Father Frost but I believe that Christmas is a very unusual holiday when the wonders happen and all dreams may come true.

Another holiday that is especially popular in my family is St. Valentine's day. February 14 is the day of lovers. Boys and girls, sweethearts and lovers, husbands and wives, friends and neighbours, and even the office staff exchange greetings of affection. Valentine's day is a whirl of hearts, candy and good wishes in the form of bright, lacy, colorful cards, with loving emblems and amorous doggerel, saying: "Be my Valentine". People give and get presents decorated with love emblems: hearts, roses, ribbons and lace. I like both giving and receiving presents. There is a wonderful feeling when you open the rustling colorful paper or watch the face-expression of the person who is trying to guess what you put inside of this box for him.

My family strongly believe in rules and traditions. All my life is filled with traditions which have been set by my grand-grand parents long ago. We have traditions in fashion, in food, in behavior and in all other aspects of life. I would like to tell about fashion traditions, passed down in my family from mother to daughter with the unquestioned authority of the Ten Commandments. You never wear clothes with food on them, clothes should not have holes in them, clothes should not be dirty. My sister and me sometimes call these rules: Mother being annoying. In our family you are not allowed to wear short skirts or too tight trousers. My dad often explains his decision in this area of fashion with the short phrase: Let's not advertise what we don't have for sale. Time to time I fight against these rules and develop my own set of personal fashion rules. But as they say, every journey is a return journey. My hair is often pulled back in a bun. To dress up, I have a long, embroidered skirt that I wear with black lace-up boots and a turtleneck. I think my grand-grand-grand mother would be pleased. Fashion, after all, is rules - what changes is who makes the rules.