***My country-Russia.***

The Russian Federative Republic is one of the largest countries in the world. It covers the eastern part of Europe and the northern part of Asia. Its area is about 17 million square kilometers. ***R*** is washed by the seas of the Pacific, the Atlantic, and the Arctic oceans. It is also washed by the Black sea, the Caspian sea and the sea of Azov. In the south ***R*** borders on China, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and other countries. In the west it borders on Norway, Finland, the Baltic states, Belorussia, Ukraine and others.

The scenery of ***R*** varies a lot from region to region. There are steppes in the south, plains and taiga in the north, highlands and deserts in the east. On the territory of ***R*** there are different types of climate. In the north the climate is arctic, in the south it is subtropical and in the middle of the country it is moderate and continental.

***R*** has two great plains. One of them is the Great Russian plain and the other one is West Siberian lowland. The largest and the most famous river in ***R*** is the Volga river. It is of great historical, economic and cultural importance to ***R***. The Volga river flows into the Caspian sea, which is in reality the largest lake in the world but not the sea. The deepest lake in the world is lake Baikal. It is about 1600 meters deep. It is also the cleanest lake. Nearly in the middle of ***R*** there is the mountain chain, which separates Europe from Asia. It is named the Urals and it is the largest mountain chain in ***R***.

***R*** has one-sixth of the world’s forests. They are concentrated in the European north of the country, in the Siberia and in the far east. There are different types of forests in ***R***. They varies from leaf-bearing to conifer forests.

***R*** is very rich in coal, iron, oil, natural gas, gold and other natural resources. The state is both industrial and agricultural.

The population of the country is about 150 million people with more then 100 nations and nationalities living in it.

At present ***R*** is a republic. It means that the head of the state is a president who is elected by the secret ballot. The president appoints the prime minister who then forms the government. The legislative power belongs to the parlament which consist of two chambers. The upper chamber is the Federal Council and the lower chamber is the state Duma.

Nowadays there are a lot of problems in the social, political and economic spheres, but our country has a lot of opportunities for it to become powerful and one of the leading countries in the world as it used to be.

***Moscow.***

Moscow is the capital of Russia. It is also the largest Russian city. Its area is about 880 square kilometers. ***M*** is Russian political, economic, educational, transport, historical and cultural centre. There are a lot of museums, universities, factories, research laboratories, airports, railway stations, theatres, etc.

Interest in ***M*** and its history has been especially on the rise on the eve of its 850th anniversary. Changes that are observed in the Russian capital with every passing day largely whet this interest. Throughout the ages ***M*** attracted and inspired poets, artists, travellers. They have left us pictures of the ***M*** of years ago enabling us to see its streets and squares and the way Muscovites lived.

The history of Russian capital is very vivid. ***M*** was founded more than 8 centuries ago by Prince Yuri Dolgoruky. It is interesting that Dolgoruky was his nickname. Dolgoruky means “long hands”. He was called so because he wanted to collect Russian lands around ***M***. The year of 1147 is accepted as the start of ***M*** history. ***M*** was sit in the crossing of two rivers the Moskva and the Neglinnaya. There are many rivers in ***M*** but most of them are underground. There are many legends about the origin of the name of the city. According to one of the legends that was the names of the tribe Mos and his wife Kwa. But the historian Karamzin says it originates from ugro-finish words “dark water”.

In the 16th century ***M*** became the capital of the country. In 1721 Peter the Great moved the capital to St. Petersburg. Only after the October revolution ***M*** became the capital again.

Modern ***M*** is very beautiful. Architectural monuments are being restored, cathedrals are being rebuilt, shining with their golden domes. Destroyed sanctuaries such as the Kazan cathedral in Red Square, the Resurrection Gate, the Chapel of the Virgin of Iberia and the Cathedral of Christ the Savior have been given a new lease of life. ***M*** streets and squares such as Tverskaya, Lubuanka and Okhotny Ryad have regained their historical names. A lot of museums and exhibitions are opened in ***M***. A lot of new monuments appeared. For example “Peter the Great” by Tzaritelli or “Saint George slaying the Dragon”. The most popular sightseeing of ***M*** is the Kremlin. The word “Kremlin” means fortress. The Kremlin has 20 towers and it is surrounded by the stone wall which is up to 21 meters in height. The thickness of the walls is about 5-6 meters. The Kremlin is the place where Russian tzars were crowned and now its the seat of the Russian Government. The heart of ***M*** is Red Square. At one end of it there stands St. Basil’s cathedral. It is famous for its varicolored domes and unique architecture. It was erected in 1552 by the orders of Ivan the Terrible to commemorate his victory over the Tartars of Kazan on the Volga. One of the landmarks of the Kremlin is the Tower of Ivan the Great. The Tzar-bell, which is one of the largest bells in the world is situated near the tower.

The Tretyakow gallery is a real treasure for art-lovers. It was opened in the middle of the last century by Tretyakow. He was a merchant. He patronized a lot of the contribution of developing art in Russia. Nowadays the Tretyakow gallery is the richest art gallery in Russia.

In modern ***M*** one can find everything he needs. There are a lot of sport and nightclubs for youth and a lot of theatres, exhibitions and museums for people of all ages. ***M*** is famous for its underground. The stations of it are decorated with mosaic, engravings etc.

I was born in ***M*** and I have lived all my life here. I consider ***M*** to be my home. I simply adore this city. If I had a chance to be born once again I would like to be born in ***M***.

***Russian holidays.***

Our country is a country of great culture. Russians has a lot of holidays and customs. The most important of them are New Year’s day, Women’s day, May day, Victory day, Independence day.

The New year is celebrated on the 31st of December. There are some traditions on New year. People decorate a New year tree and wait for the Father Frost to bring them presents.

The Independence day is a new holiday. Its only been celebrated since June the 12th 1992 when the first president of Russia was elected.

On such days as New year’s day, Victory day, Women’s day and so on people do not work.

Russians have some holidays that are of religion origin. They are Christmas and Easter. Christmas is celebrated on the 7th of January. On this day people celebrate the birthday of Jesus Christ. Easter Symbolizes the resurrection of Jesus Christ. On this holiday we have traditional brightly painted boiled eggs and special cakes.

**Mazhorova Anastasia.**