**Topic N1 ("Choosing a Career")**

Choosing a career is like any other activity; it is best to work to a plan. Too many people start looking for a specific job before thinking out their occupational aims. It is a good idea to begin by attempting to define in clear terms what your requirements are from a career. This involves taking a realistic view of your strengths and weaknesses. You may think for example, that you would like a job which involves organizing people, but liking such a job is not a sufficient justification if experience you already may have suggests that this is not your strong point. On the other hand, you should remember that training will equip you to do new things. A further point to consider is how far you will be willing to do for a time things which you do not like knowing that they are necessary to achieve your longer term objectives. Having thought carefully about the sort of person you are, try to work out a realistic set of occupational requirement. In particular, you can answer to important questions. First: what sort of life do you want to lead? For example, do you want to live in the country or in the town? Is leisure time of great importance to you? Is the size of your salary important? Do you want to put down roots or travel widely? Second: what sort of work do you want to do? For example, do you like working alone or with others? Does teaching people appeal to you? Do you want to be an organizer of other people's activities? Do you want to develop new ideas and initiate changes. As for me, I have made up my mind to be an engineer. As my parents are an engineers they have made a great influence on my choice and I can say that this profession runs the family. My choice of this occupation didn't come as a sudden flash. I think that nowadays this profession is of great need and importance to our country. It is my aim to be a qualified specialist and to serve the interests of my country. To be a well prepared engineer I should have some important qualities: great capability persistence, knowledge of science and, of course, knowledge of foreign languages. In spite of these arguments we mustn't forget about everybody's vacation. I think that my facilities combined with the knowledge would be quiet enough to succeed in my work.

**Topic N2 ("At the Doctors")**

It is winter now. It is often cold. I can't say that I can stand colds. So, sometime ago I suddenly fell ill. I mounted a high temperature. I had a running nose and a sore throat. Also I had a splitting headache and a cough. My whole body ached. My mother fixed me a hot lemonade but that didn't help me much. She wanted to give me some aspirin tablets too, but there weren't any in our house. My mother told me to stay in bed, then she called for a doctor. The doctor came, remove his coat and put on his white gown. The doctor asked me to strip to the waist. He examined my lungs, felt my pulse and blood pressure, took my temperature. Then he examined my throat and said that it was a little inflamed. He said that is was a light case of the flu and told me to stay in bed and to have a rest. He wrote a prescription for a gargle and cough medicine. Also he gave me some sulfa pills, a slip for X-Ray and blood examination. He prescribed cups and mustard plasters. The prescription, which the doctor left, was made up at the chemist's. I followed all the doctor's instructions and very soon I felt much better. In 10 days I fully recovered and resumed my studies.

**Topic N3 ("At the Theatre")**

I will never forget my first visit to the Bolshoy Theatre. It was ages ago, but this stands out in my memory quiet vividly. My mother bought beforehand two tickets for a matinee performance of the ballet "Sleeping Beauty" by Chaikovsky. We came to the theatre long before the performance began. A sign at the entrance of the theatre said that "house full". Many people were standing at the entrance of the theatre asking if we had an extra ticket. We left our coats in the cloak-room and bought a program from the usher to see what the cast was. I remember we were glad to see that Ulanova was dancing the main part. When we came into the hall the orchestra were tuning in their instruments. We found our seats which were in the stalls and went exploring the theatre. My mother showed me the boxes, the pitm the dress-circle, the tieres and balconies. At 12 sharp the lights went down. The conductor appeared and the overture began. After the overture the curtain went up. I was in raptures at what I saw on the stage. I have never seen anything more wonderful. The scenery and the dancing were superb. The ballet seemed to me a fairy-tale. When the last curtain fell, the house burst out into applause. I applauded so much, that my hands ached. The cries of encore sounded all over the theatre. The dancers got many curtain calls and were presented with many flowers. The performance was a great success with the public. It was one of my brightest memories.

**Topic N4 ("Entertainment")**

I am fond of good books and good music, and when I have some time to spare, I like to go to the theatre or a concert. There are more than a dozen very good orchestras in Britain and some of them are world famous. Orchestras in Britain have no concert halls of their own, but play in halls rented from local authorities or private companies. There are 2 big concert halls in London. The Old Royal Albert Hall and the New Royal Festival Hall, which is one of the most modern concert halls in the world. Theatrical performances are given by theatre companies. There are about 200 professional theatres in Britain. Like orchestras, the theatre companies usually play in rented theatres, but there are several theatres which have their own homes. The center of the actrical life is London. London is also the main center of opera and ballet. I am not particularly fond of the cinema. Rather then take trouble of going out to see a film, I would stay at home and watch television. I seemed to share this attitude with the most other people in Britain. In Britain the choice of films is limited to young people. Films are placed in one of three categories in Britain. "U" - suitable for everybody, "A" - more suitable for adults, "X" - suitable only for adults. A person under 16 years of age may see an "A" film only in company of an adult. Only person over 16 years of age may see "X" films. Those, who prefer to stay at home may spend their free time, watching TV, listening to the radio. They have many TV and radio programs to choose from.

As for me, I am a great cinema-goer. I like the cinema tremendously. I see all the best films that are on. I prefer features films, though I enjoy documentaries almost as much to say nothing of animated cartoons films, news-reels or popular science films. I usually go to the cinema for the morning or day shows. If I want to go to an evening show I book tickets beforehand. I like to come to the cinema a couple of minutes before the movie starts. If there is a long time to wait I can always look at the portraits of film stars hanging on the walls of the foyer, or listen to a little concert that is usually given for the spectators. It is a good idea, that those who are late are not allowed to enter the hall until the news-reel is over. I hate being disturbed when a film is on. If I like a movie very much I go to see it a second time and besides I see many of the movies televised. I often read the paper "Film Week" to know which films have been released and which ones are being shot. I know all the famous script writers, producers and cameramen.

**Topic N5 ("Books and Reading")**

Books can fit almost every need, temper, or interest. Books can be read when you are in the mood; they don't have to be taken in periodic doses. Books are more personal and more impersonal than professors. Books have an inner confidence which individuals seldom show; they rarely have to be on the defensive. Books can afford to be bold, and courageous, and explanatory; they don't have to be so careful of boards of trustees, colleagues, and community opinion. Books are infinitely diverse; they run the gamut of human activity. Books can express every point of view; if you want a different point of view, you can read a different book. Reading is probably the most important skill you will need for success in your studies. You will have to read lengthy assignments in different subjects with varying degrees of detail and difficulty. If you read inaccurately, you will fail to understand some of the information and ideas you read. If you read slowly, you will have to spent too much time reading your assignments so that your other work may suffer. Poor reading may be a problem for you, but it is not a hopeless one. Like other skills your ability to read English rapidly and accurately will depend upon a careful instruction and purposeful practice. You must continue to practice on your own to improve your reading skill.

Reading speed is determined in part by how many words your eyes can see at a single glance. Here is a comparison of three different readers and how many stops their eyes make.

Slow Reader:

Being і able і to read і by phrases і instead of і by single і words і results і from і practice.

Average Reader:

Being able і to read і by phrases і instead of і by single words і results і from practice.

Fast Reader:

Being able to read by phrases і instead of by single words і results from practice.

Notice that the slow reader's eyes must stop fourteen times, focusing on each word alone before they move on to the next. The eyes of the average reader stop six or seven times because they are able to see about two words at a single glance. The eyes of the fast reader stop only three times. They focus at the center of a phrase and see three or four words, then move rapidly to the next phrase. This ability to see words on either side of the point at which your eyes focus is called peripheral vision. As a foreign student of English, you may feel, that it is impossible to recognize so many words at a single glance. It is difficult for many native speakers, but it can be done - and must be done if you are to read as rapidly as you should. You can increase your peripheral vision by eye exercises.

**Topic N6 ("My Favourite Writer")**

I'm fond of reading. My favourite writer is William Somerset Maugham and I would like to tell about his biography. William Somerset Maugham was born in 1874 and spent his childhood in Paris in the family of a British diplomat. Having lost his parents at an early age, he went to live in England with his uncle, who was a clergyman. He was educated at King's school in Canterbury studied painting in Paris, went to Heidelbury University in Germany and spent six years at St.Thomas Hospital in England studying to be a doctor. He was an unsatisfactory medical student for his heart wasn't in medicine. He wanted, he had always wanted to be a writer and in the evening after his tea, he wrote and read. In 1897 he wrote a novel called "Liza of Lambeth", sent it to a publisher and it was accepted. It was something of a success. So William Somerset Maugham decided to abandon his medical profession and he did it with relif. The next ten years were very hard on him. He learned the terrible difficulties of making a living by writing. But he survived. He became a famous writer. He never regretted the five years he had spent at the hospital. They taught him pretty well all he knew about human nature.

The novel "The moon and sixpence" (1919) is based on the life of the artist Paul Gauguin was an immediate success. Maugham went to Tahiti and lived in Gauguin's hut while writing the book. His fame as a short story writer began with "The Trembling of a leaf". Since then he wrote many collections of books, essays and criticism. Many of his books and stories came out of his extensive travels in the East. His autobiographical books "The summing up" and "A writer's Notebook" are remarkable for both style and sincerity. His books have been reprinted many times. In 1927 William Somerset Maugham settled in the South of France and lived there until his death in 1965.

**Topic N7 ("The Book I've Just Read")**

William Somerset Maugham's short stories are most fascinating. Not long ago I read one of his short stories, it is the story about a man who is very rich, very powerful, very intelligent, very successful in his career and yet he is most unhappy. His name is Lord Mountdrago (the story says: he was an able and distinguished man who was appointed Secretary of Foreign Affairs when he was still under forty. He was considered the ablest politician in the Conservative Party and for a long time directed the foreign policy of his country). One day he comes to Dr. Audlin who is a psychotherapist and whose reputation as a psychotherapist is very good. Dr. Audlin seems to be able to help almost everybody (the story says: he could relif certain pains by the touch of his cool, soft hands and by talking to his patients often induce sleep in those who were suffering from sleeplessness. He spoke slowly. His voice had no particular color, but it was musical, soft and lulling. Dr. Audlin found that by speaking to people in that low monotonous voice of his, by looking at them with his pale, quiet eyes, by stroking their foreheads with his long firm hands he could sometimes do things that seemed miraculous). Lord Mountdrago has a strange dreams. They get on his nerves. And he is afraid that he will go mad or commit suicide if it goes on like that every night. He says that his decision can affect the welfare of the country. When Dr. Audlin asks to describe one of his dreams, he begins: "the first I had was about a month ago. I dreamt that I was at a party at Connemara House. It was an official party. The King and the Queen were to be there and many prominent people too. Suddenly I saw a little man there called Owen Griffiths, who is a member of parlament from the Labour Party and to tell you the truth, I was surprised to see him there. The Connemaras were at the top of a marble staircase receiving their guests... Suddenly I noticed that the King and the Queen had come, turned my back on the Connemaras I understood that I had got my trouses on. You can't understand what I felt at that moment, an agony of shame. I awoke in a cold sweat and understood what it was only a dream". Dr. Audlin can't diagnose the case and soon he learns that Lord Mountrago has ruined his opponent in the House of Commons. Whose name is Owen Griffiths. He did cruely and mercilessly. His conscience has protested that injury he caused to Griffiths. The story has a tragic end. Lord Mountdrago is unable to get rid of his terrible dreams. He commits suicide. His antagonist suddenly dies too. The newspaper wrote that his death was supposed to be due to natural reason but we know that his death was supernaturally conditioned by Lord Mountdrago's tragic end. In conclusion we come to after having read that supernational forces effect our lives. No matter how sensitive or insensitive we might be to them. Thus the moral of the story is that doing good is the only certainly happy action of a man's life.

**Topic N8 ("The Weather and Climate Fluctuations")**

'Funny weather we are having' is a statement of the obvious we have used for generations as a greeting. When the deep cold lasts long and heavy snow and blizzards give us the shivers we replace "funny" with something stronger, such as "terrible", "ghastly". At times like these people ask what is happening to the weather. So we go to the experts, who tells us, in language appropriate to the subject, what happened yesterday, what is happening today, and what might happen in the next few years. Weather and climate specialists all over the world have amassed a vast quantity of information. They can describe what is happening around us. With satellites they can forecast more accurately what might happen in the immediate future. Their research has produced evidence of why past climatic changes took place.

There have been many climate fluctuations over the 10,000 years since Britain was last covered with an ice sheet. Advances and retreats of ice in the northern hemisphere during the past 500,000 years can be accounted for by changes in the warmth from the Sun.

This was caused by alterations in the Earth's orbit at periods of 96,000, 40,000 and 20,000 years. Although that theory is widely accepted as a possible explanations for ice ages, it has not been proved. More than 50 theories have been put forward, but only a few have not been completely dismissed.

Not long ago a new theory was published in the science journal "Nature". According to Dr. Garry Hunt, of University College, intense radiations from the nuclear explosion of a nearby supernova - a star - could cause the destruction of part or all of the ozone layer and in this way trigger an ice age. As for me, I like Autumn best of all. The days become shorter and the nights longer. It isn't so hot in the day-time. The trees are covered with yellow and red leaves. At the end of summer apples, pears, plums and other fruit become ripe. In the South there are many oranges, peaches and tangerines. Autumn is pleasant when it does not rain. General Autumn is a rainy season of the year. When it rains the weather is nasty. The sky is covered with heavy clouds. It drizzles. It is muddy and wet.

**Topic N9 ("The Ecological Crisis: A Myth or Reality")**

At the present time the Earth accommodates more then 5 billion people. Half of which are undernourished. A total of 4 million deaths occur each year from starvation. Mankind has finally realised the threat of an increasing population and has faced the fact that something must be done. The food-supply increase lags considerably behind the immense growth of population. Besides conditions for life grow steadily worse due to numerous facets of environmental pollution. And worst of all, today's man constantly contributes to his own deadly crisis. We have got too many cars, too many factories, too much sewage and carbon dioxide, too little water and food deficiency - all that can be easily taced to too many people. That is why many western scientists say that our world is going through an ecological crisis which will mean the gradual destruction of the human race. Our scientists are not that pessimistic, although they do think that man's increased tampering with the world around him is posing a growing threat to the biosphere. It is not too late to forestall what could be drastic and irreversible changes in the environment and ensure that the world will be a healthy place for the present and future generations to live in.

**Topic N10 ("Holidays, Travel and Tourism")**

For most people there is no problem in deciding how they are going to spend the money they earn - it all goes on housing, food, clothes, transport and, if they are lucky, leisure and some holidays. Many of us have spent our lives without doing anything out of the ordinary and now I have got a marvelous opportunity of doing something exciting and I will. If I win the prize of 20,000 dollars, I will spend it in the world round trip. To travel round the world has long been my dream and with this sum of money behind me this dream is likely to be realized. I am going to take a trip round the world. I am going to do a lot of sight seeing. I am going to put up at expensive hotels and spend much money on entertainment and other exciting things. My travel experience would begin in New York, known as one of the world's most modern cities because of its high buildings and its dynamic spirit. From New York I would cross the Atlantic Ocean to England. In London I would explore the British Museum and visit the shops and pubs along King's Road in Chelsea. My next stop would be Amsterdam, an attractive city because of its steep narrow houses and canals lined with trees. Flying on to Copenhagen I would eat Danish open-faced sandwiches and be entertained at night clubs in Tivoli Gardens. Having seen enough cities by this time I would head South to the Italian Riviera. Portofino, a handsome fishing village resembling an opera setting, is one of the most charming vacations sports in Europe. Of course, a serious traveller could not leave Italy without visiting Florence, Venice, Naples and Rome, for all these cities are living museums. Continuing South, I would trace the beginning of Western civilization. I would make stops in Athens and Cario. Certainly a chance to see the pyramids should not be missed. Next, I would fly east to visit the shimmering island of Ceylon. Here, the traveller finds many precious gems for sale, but the brightest jewel of all is Ceylon itself. Leaving this island I would travel to Bangkok, an Oriental city of many charms. Then, like mane other travellers, I would be drawn to Hong Kong, the shopper's paradise.

Leaving Asia, I would load my over stuffed suitcase on a plane bound for Acapulco. In this Mexican resort, I would swim, sunbathes and eat spicy foods. At this time it would be necessary to count my remaining travellers checks.

If a tour of Latin America were still possible, I would want to stop in Peru, Argentina, Brazil. But by that time my funds would probably have run low. So, where would my round the would trip end? For me there is only one answer: Moscow, the city I will never tire of calling home.

**Topic N11 ("Shopping")**

I would like to tell you about shopping in the United Kingdom. Marks & Spencer is Britain's favourite store. Tourists love it too. It attracts a great variety of customers from house wives to millionaires. Princess Diana, Dustin Hoffman and the British Prime-minister are just a few of its famous customers. Last year it made a profit of 529 million pounds. Which is more than 10 million a week.

It all started 105 years ago when a young Polish immigrant Michael Marks had a stall in Leeds market. He didn't have many things to sell: some cotton, a little wool, lots of buttons and a few shoelaces. Above his stall he put the now famous notice: "Don't ask how much - it's a penny." Ten years later he met Tom Spencer and together they started Penny stalls in many towns in the North of England. Today there are 564 brances of Marks & Spencer all over the world: in America, Canada, Spain, France, Belguim and Hungary.

The store bases its business on 3 principals: good value, good quality and good service. Also, it changes with the times; once it was all jumpers and knickers. Now it is food, furniture and flowers as well. Top fashion designers advice on styles of clothes. Perhaps, the most important key to its success is its happy well-trained staff. Conditions of work are excellent. There are company doctors, dentists, hairdressers, etc. And all the staff can have lunch for under 40 pence.

Suprisingly tastes in food and clothes are international. What sells well in Paris, sells just as well in Newcastle and Moscow. Their best selling clothes are: for women - jumpers and knickers (M & S is famous for its knickers); for men - shirts, socks, pajamas, dressing gowns and suits; for children - underwear and socks. Best sellers in food include: fresh chickens, vegetables and sandwiches, "Chicken Kiev" is internationally the most popular convince food. Shopping in Britain is also famous for its Freshfood. Freshfood is a chain of food stores and very successful supermarkets which has grown tremendously in the twenty years since it was founded, and now it has branches in the High Streets of all the towns of any size in Britain. In the beginning the stores sold only foodstuffs, but in recent years they have diversified enormously and now sell clothes, books, records, electrical and domestic equipment. The success of the chain has been due to an enterprising management and to attractive layout and display in the stores. It has been discovered that impulse buying accounts for almost 35 per cent of the total turn over of the stores. The stores are organized completely for self-service and customers are encouraged to wander around the spaciously laid out stands. Special free gifts and reduced prices are used to tempt customers into the stores and they can't stand the temptation.