

Для подготовки к экзаменам

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АНГЛИЙСКИЙ ЯЗЫК

Тексты для проверки
понимания прочитанного
Образцы устных высказываний



11 класс

Минск «Экоперспектива»
2012

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Пособие

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за курс средней общеобразовательной школы. Включены тексты, представляю-
щие собой законченные отрывки, в которых отмечены абзацы для чтения вслух,
дается перевод некоторых новых слов, приводятся примерные вопросы для про-
верки умения вести беседу по прочитанному тексту. Представлены также об-
разцы устных высказываний с вопросами для проверки умения вести беседу на
английском языке.

Адресуется учащимся 11-х классов и абитуриентам, а также учителям.

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ТЕКСТЫ ДЛЯ ПРОВЕРКИ НАВЫКОВ ПОНИМАНИЯ ПРОЧИТАННОГО

TEXT 1

A Faithful Dog

A French merchant, having some money due to him, set out on horseback to receive it, accompanied by his dog. Having settled the business, he tied the bag of money before him, and began to return home.

The merchant, after riding some miles, stopped to rest under a tree. He took the bag of money in his hand and laid it down by his side. But on remounting he forgot it. The dog observing this, ran to fetch the bag, but it was too heavy for it to carry the bag in his mouth. It then ran after its master, and, by barking and howling, tried to tell him of his mistake. The merchant did not understand these signs. The dog went on with its efforts and after trying in vain to stop the horse, it at last began to bite its heels.

The thought now struck the merchant that the dog had gone mad. While crossing a stream, he looked back to see whether it would drink. The animal continued to bark and bite with greater violence than before. The merchant, feeling now certain that the dog was mad, drew a pistol from his pocket, and fired. In a moment the poor dog lay in its blood; and its master, unable to bear the sight, hurried away on his horse.

"I am most unfortunate", said he to himself; "I had almost rather have lost my money than my dog." There upon he stretched out his hand for his treasure but no bag to be found! In a moment he discovered his mistake, and was angry with himself for not paying attention to the sign, which his dog had made to him. He turned his horse, and rode back to the place where he had stopped. He saw the marks of blood, but he couldn't see his dog anywhere on the road.

At last he reached the spot where he had rested. And there lay the forgotten bag, with the poor dog, in the agonies of death, watching beside it. When he saw his master, he showed his joy by weakly wagging his tail. He tried to rise, but his strength was gone. It stretched out his tongue to lick the hand that was now petting him in deep sorrow. Then it closed his eyes and died.

(1998*)

*знаков с пробелами.

Merchant – торговец.

Answer the questions

1. Where did a French merchant go one day?
2. What did he forget to take on remounting?
3. What did the dog do trying to remind his master about his bag?
4. Did the man understand the signs the dog was giving him?
5. Did he discover his mistake later?

TEXT 2

My Family Tree

I never met him as he had died thirty years before I was born. I didn't even know that my great grandfather's name was Thomas until I had children of my own. But then something happened which helped me to know him just a little. My father's cousin found an old photograph in his attic. It's a picture of Thomas and his wife Kate and it must be about a hundred years old. The frame was broken, the glass was cracked and the picture was faded. But there they – were – my great grandparents. I had never seen them before. I found out where he was born, and where he lived as a boy. And one day I was able to go and visit that place.

When I was there I looked up at the night sky and I realized that I was seeing the same stars that he had seen over a hundred and fifty years ago. Somehow, that made me feel like I knew him, just a little. And I wanted to learn more about his life. I conducted a long-term investigation, appealed to my distant relations to collect all possible information about him. I now know that he lived through some horrible times. Many of the people he knew didn't have enough food to eat. Some of them starved and lots of others had to leave their homes and go far away across the ocean just like Thomas.

I know when he married Kate, and I know the year when he came to America. I know how many children they had. The first two were born in Ireland and the rest were born here. One of them was my grandfather. His name was John. I never knew him either as he died quite young. But we have a photograph of him and my grandmother Mary on our wall. I do know that he was a farmer and loved gardening. And she came to this country when she was only seven. So she could remember next to nothing about Ireland. Grandmother Mary lived her life peacefully in a large log house built by Thomas and his sons and died after her first grandson was born. I wish my children had known her and grandfather John. I want them to keep the family memory alive.

(1980)

Answer the following questions

1. What happened which helped the author to get to know his grandfather just a little?
2. Did he have to make any efforts to find more information about him?
3. Where were Thomas and Kate's children born?
4. What country did the author's grandfather leave Ireland for?
5. Why didn't the author know his grandfather?

TEXT 3

Hampton Court Maze

Hampton Court is famous for its maze. If you've read *Three Men in a Boat* by Jerome K. Jerome, you probably remember how Harris took his country cousin there: "We'll just go in here, so that you can say you've been, but it's very simple. It's absurd to call it a maze. You keep on taking the first turning to the right. We'll just walk round for ten minutes, and then go and get some lunch".

They met some people soon after they had got inside, who said they had been there for three-quarters of an hour, and had had about enough of it. Harris told them they could follow him, if they liked. They said it was very kind of him and followed.

Harris kept on turning to the right, but it seemed a long way. Harris began to think it rather strange himself, but he went on until, at last, they passed the bun on the ground that Harris's cousin swore he had noticed there seven minutes ago. Harris said: "Oh, impossible!" but the woman with the babe said, "Not at all", as she herself had taken it from the child, and thrown it down there, just before she met Harris. She also added that she wished she had never met Harris.

...Harris suggested that the best thing to do would be to go back to the entrance and start again. About ten minutes later they found themselves not at the entrance but in the centre of the maze. ...After that they simply couldn't get anywhere else. Whatever way they turned brought them back to the middle. ...They all got crazy at last, and sang out for the kipper, and the man came and climbed up the ladder outside, and shouted out directions to them. But all their heads were, by this time, in such a whirl that they couldn't understand anything. So the man told them to stop where they were, and he would come to them.

He was a young kipper, and new to the business; and when he got in, he couldn't get to them and then *he* got lost...

Of course, Jerome K. Jerome exaggerates the hazards of the maze and no one has ever been lost in it, but still it's not as simple as it seems.

(After Jerome K. Jerome)

(2012)

Maze – лабиринт.

Answer the questions

1. What was the rule of how to get out of the maze, created by Harris?
2. Why did Harris take his country cousin to the maze?
3. Why did some other people join Harris and his country cousin?
4. When did people question Harris's ability to lead them out of the maze?
5. Who tried to help them?

TEXT 4

Lost in the Mountains

Ian Middleton and Steve Swindlehurst were staying in a village in the Bavarian Alps. They were experienced skiers, so they had decided to ski down a difficult track, known as a Black Run, on a nearby mountain. It was the track neither of them had tried before.

When they had set off up the mountain, it was a beautiful day. They'd reached the top and started skiing. But the Black Run wasn't marked very clearly and suddenly, it seemed to come to an end. Steve and Ian were puzzled. They stopped and looked around. They soon realized they were on another track, somewhere deep in the middle of the forest. At first the two skiers were not worried. They thought it would be easy to find their way back to the Black Run. But as they went on, and on, they realized they must have missed it altogether.

On winter nights in the Alps, it's common for the temperature to drop to -20. It's difficult for a human to survive a night at this temperature. Ian and Steve knew this, but they failed to get down the mountain before it grew too cold. The forest was thick, and it was getting dark. They decided to stay in one place, so that it would be easier for a search party to find them.

It grew colder and colder. Ian and Steve made a shelter in the snow, to keep warm in, but it didn't work very well. Gradually, they gave up hope of being found that night: they had been missing for nearly eight hours. A rescue team had been looking for them. They'd been hunting for hours, and were about to give up. The mountainside was huge and forbidding in the dark, and the skiers could be anywhere. They decided to make their final attempt.

Ian and Steve were getting dangerously cold. They jumped up and down to keep warm, but nothing seemed to work. Would anyone ever come? When one of them thought he'd heard voices, it seemed too good to be true. They looked around but couldn't see anything. Then, a few minutes later, they heard voices again and saw flashlights through the trees. It was true – the rescuers had found them at last. They were safe!

(2066)

Forbidding – неприступный.

Answer the questions

1. Was this the first time that Ian and Steve tried that track?
2. Why were they lost?
3. Why can nights be dangerous in the mountains?
4. Were they being searched?
5. Did the help come in time?

TEXT 5

Chance Meeting

Kate was sitting in the dining car of the express train that was taking her back home to Bristol. She had hardly touched the meal in front of her. She was worried and in a bad mood. She had recently come back to England from Mexico, where she had been very happy teaching English to businessmen and engineers. *It seemed unlikely that she would ever find such a good job again. Two had been offered to her, both of which she had turned down because of the poor salaries. Nobody seemed interested in her excellent qualifications which included almost perfect Spanish, fluent German and French and an excellent knowledge of commercial and teaching English.*

Joe sat in another part of the train smoking nervously. He was director of Studies at a large English Language School in Cambridge which had recently started specializing in courses for foreign businessmen and engineers. He had a lot of problems. The one that bothered him most was finding good, qualified teachers who could teach the sort of English his students needed. A meeting of technical and commercial translators was taking place in Bristol, which was why he was going there. He hoped to persuade some of them to become teachers at his school and was prepared to offer good salaries.

The only other person in Joe's compartment was an old man who was already asleep. Even though Joe was not hungry he wondered if he might find more attractive company in the dining-car. It was only after he had sat down in the one vacant seat in the dining-car that he noticed Kate. She was opposite him and had the sort of face he liked. He wondered how he could start a conversation with her. He casually asked her if she minded him smoking, feeling sure she could not. But to his surprise, she did. She pointed to a no smoking sign which he had not noticed. Nothing more was said for a moment. Then, as he looked at her, Joe suddenly felt sure he had met her somewhere before.

(1938)

Answer the questions

1. How did Kate feel on the train?
2. What did Kate do in Mexico?
3. What event was taking place in Bristol?
4. Why was Joe going to Bristol?
5. Do you think the meeting of these two people was fatal?

TEXT 6

Real Bill Gates

It's hard to believe that the first personal computer, the prototype of the computer now found in homes and offices around the world, was developed less than thirty years ago. The software for that machine was developed by William Henry Gates.

Bill was born in 1955 in Seattle. He became interested in computers when he was 13. His parents sent him to the elite, private school, where he learned computer language. He placed within the top ten in the nation at the exam. Then Gates went to Harvard. Later William returned to Seattle where he established the Microsoft Company in 1975.

It employed only three workers at first. Microsoft developed software for established American companies like General Electric, City Bank and IBM. In 1981 IBM began selling a personal computer that used Microsoft products as part of its operating system. By then Microsoft had 129 workers.

Gates married Melinda French, in 1994. She graduated from Duke University with computer science and business degrees. Like Gates, she is smart and independent. Their daughter, Jennifer, was born in April 1996. "I used to think I wouldn't be all that interested in the baby until she could talk," says Gates. "But I'm totally into it now."

Gates runs his company mainly through three methods. Day and night he looks through e-mail messages; every month or so he meets with top management group; and most important – 70 percent of his schedule, he holds two or three small meetings a day with teams working on company products. For him the competition is sport.

Thanks to the success of his company, William Gates has earned a personal fortune of about 7 billion dollars. He is planning to give away 95 per cent of his wealth on charity. Gates has already given lots of money on some projects.

Today four out of five of the world's personal computers run on Microsoft software, on what is now called Windows. Windows system makes it much easier to use a computer. It's through the Windows system that we may access to the Internet, the global computer network.

(2051)

Answer the questions

1. Where did Bill Gates receive his education?
2. How did Microsoft develop?
3. Who make his family?
4. What are his rules by which he runs his company?
5. Has charity become his main focus?

TEXT 7

Like Teacher, Like Students

The phone rang on Dr Allen's desk. "Hello," she said picking up the phone. "Dr Allen here. "Oh, good morning, Dr Allen," a voice said. "It's Jenny Anderson here, Professor Smith's secretary. It's about that meeting on Monday. You are definitely coming, aren't you?" "The meeting. Yes, of course", Dr Allen said looking in her diary. "It's at eleven, I see." "Well, no. We had to change the time," Jenny Anderson said. "It's going to be at twelve. I'm sure I told you." "But I've got a lecture at twelve," Dr Allen said.

"But surely you can cancel your lecture – just for once," Jenny Anderson suggested. "The meeting's very important as you know." "I've got an idea. I'll record my lecture beforehand – and then I'll be able to come to the meeting".

"Wonderful," said Jenny Anderson. "I'll tell Professor Smith you'll be there, then."

At five to twelve on Monday morning Dr Allen went along to the lecture room. There were about twenty students waiting there for her. "I'm sorry," she told them, "I won't be able to give my lecture today." The students looked surprised. Dr Allen explained that she had an important meeting. "However," she went on, "although I can't be with you myself, my voice can!" She gestured towards the cassette recorder on the table. "You see, I've recorded my lecture and you can listen to it while I go to my meeting. So, in a way, I'll be in two places at once! One of the miracles of modern science!" Feeling rather pleased with herself, Dr Allen switched on the cassette recorder and left.

The meeting in Professor Smith's office finished a little early so Dr Allen decided to go back to the lecture room. She stood for a moment outside the door, listened to her own voice. Then very quietly, she opened the door. To her surprise, the room was empty. But then, as she looked around, she saw a number of small cassette recorders – all 'listening' to her lecture!

"Well," she thought, "if I can be in two places at once, so can they!"
(1996)

Answer the questions

1. What problem did Dr Allen face one day?
2. What plan did Dr Allen think of to be able to attend the meeting?
3. Did she realize her plan?
4. Were the students surprised at the words that she wouldn't be able to give the lecture that day?
5. What did she see in the auditorium when she came after her important meeting?

TEXT 8

The Magic Spring

Many years ago, long before Saxon foot pressed Irish ground, there was a King called Corc. Not far from his palace there was a spring. The water in the spring was so pure and so clear that it was the wonder of all Ireland. Many people came from far and near to get some water from the wonderful spring. The King was afraid that in time it might become dry. So he ordered his men to build a high wall around it. Whenever the King wanted water for himself he would send his daughter to get it. The King didn't trust the servants fearing they might give some of the water away.

One night the King gave a grand entertainment, and there were many great princes present. At this grand entertainment there was a young prince who danced merrily with the King's daughter. In the midst of the feast one of the great lords asked for water. The King asked his daughter to bring him some water. But his daughter refused. The King, who loved his daughter very much, understood why she did not want to go. "Oh, I see, you are afraid to go alone. But I'm sure the young Prince will be glad to go with you." The Prince stood up with a happy smile, took the golden vessel, and off they went.

When they came to the spring, the Princess unlocked the door with the greatest care. But stooping down she found the vessel so heavy. She lost her balance and fell in. The young Prince tried to save her, but in vain, because the water rose and rose and quickly covered the whole yard. He ran back to the palace, but the water ran faster. When the prince was back in the palace the King was up to his neck in water. And a few minutes later the water filled the entire green valley where the King's palace stood. So the present Lake of Cork was formed.

Every night since then the same entertainment and dancing goes on in the palace under the water, and it will last until someone has the luck to bring up out of the lake the golden vessel.

(An Irish Legend)

(1931)

Vessel – сосуд.

Answer the questions

1. When and where do the events take place?
2. What was the King both proud of and afraid of?
3. Whom did he ask to fetch him some water at the ball?
4. Why did he ask a young prince to accompany his daughter?
5. How was the Lake of Cork formed, according to the legend?

TEXT 9

A Dress for Cinderella

Fifty-five years ago, in 1952, a young Italian girl was dreaming about marrying a young man she was in love with, but she knew they would have to wait for a long time because they had no money.

In 1952, a young actress Audrey Hepburn was planning her wedding to a London playboy called James Hanson... While filming in Rome the actress ordered her wedding dress in a famous Fontana fashion house. It was a perfect wedding dress – made of white lace, with a flowing train. At last it was practically ready and Audrey had to go to the designers for the final fitting... but two weeks before the wedding Audrey called it off. She could just keep the dress or sell it, but instead she phoned Fontana and said; "I want my dress to be worn by another girl, someone who couldn't ever afford a dress like mine, the most beautiful poor Italian girl you can find."

Now the three Fontana sisters who owned the house had to find a girl, poor, young, beautiful and pencil-slim like Audrey. They thought of a poor new town of Latina, not far away from Rome. The mayor of Latina gave them the name of Amabile Altobello. Amabile met all the requirements, and she got the dress. The people of Latina were so excited that the town presented Amabile kitchen furniture and organized a honeymoon in Paris. "It was a dream come true," – she said.

The story was soon forgotten. But this year the Fontana fashion house was planning an exhibition of dresses made for film stars and other celebrities, so the last of the Fontana sisters decided to find out what had happened to Hepburn's dress and the girl who had got it.

Amabile Altobello still lives in the same town of Latina. She has three children and five grandchildren. She and her husband haven't become rich, but they have had a happy marriage, and Amabile says that the dress brought her luck, so she has kept it, carefully wrapped in tissue paper, all these years.

(1919)

Tissue – папиросная бумага.

Answer the questions

1. Why couldn't a young couple get married?
2. What was Audrey Hepburn's desire when her wedding had been called off?
3. Was the task given to Fontana fashion house difficult?
4. How did the town accept the news?
5. Did the celebrity's dress bring luck to the new owner?

TEXT 10

A Little Accident while Cycling

Harris, in his early married days, made much trouble for himself one summer while he was cycling with his wife through Holland. His wife sat on the tandem behind him. The roads were stony and the machine jumped a good deal.

"Sit tight," said Harries, without turning his head. What Mrs. Harris thought he said was, "Jump off." Why she thought so neither of them can explain. Mrs. Harris did jump off, while Harris pedaled away, under the impression that she was behind him. Having jumped off, she thought he was riding up the hill merely to show off.

She expected him to wait for her at the top of the hill. Seeing him, on the contrary, pass the summit and then disappear down the other side of the hill, she was first surprised, then angry, and last alarmed. Running to the top of the hill she shouted, but he never turned his head. She watched him disappear in a wood a mile and a half away, and then sat down and cried. Having no money and knowing no Dutch, she found herself in a difficult position. She tried to make the people passing by understand what had happened. They thought she had lost something, but could not understand what. They took her to the nearest village and found a policeman. He concluded from her pantomime that some man had stolen her bicycle.

Meanwhile, Harris continued his ride with much enjoyment. It seemed to him that he had suddenly become stronger. Having gone on in this way for about five miles, he began to feel that something was wrong. Stretching out his hand behind him he felt there was nothing behind him but space. He jumped off and looked back up the road; nobody was there. In ten minutes he came to where the road broke into four, and tried to remember which of the four roads he had taken.

While he was thinking, a man passed. Harris stopped him, and explained to him that he lost his wife. The man was neither surprised nor sorry for him. While they were talking, another farmer came along, to whom the first man explained the matter, not as an accident, but as a good story, at which they laughed.

(After Jerome K. Jerome)

(2079)

Merely – только, просто.

Answer the questions

1. What did Mrs. Harris hear when her husband said, "Sit tight"?
2. Why did he pedal away when Mrs. Harris jumped off?
3. What did she expect him to do on the top of the hill?
4. Did she find herself in a difficult situation?
5. What did Harris do when he began feeling something was wrong?

TEXT 11 Conquering Mount Everest

It was six-thirty in the morning of May 29, 1953. Two nearly frozen men crawled out of their tents. They each pulled three pairs of gloves onto their hands, put on their icy boots and lifted containers of oxygen. With the heavy burdens on their backs, they began walking upwards.

The men were roped together for safety. First one man took the lead and then the other. They looked up. The south summit of Mt Everest towered above them... Then the climbing became very dangerous – they had to climb up an almost vertical white wall of snow.

The two climbers were Tenzing Norgay of Nepal and Sir Edmund Hillary of New Zealand. Foot by foot they climbed. At last they stood on the south summit, but the true summit of Mt Everest still towered above them. They finished their first bottles of oxygen and left them behind. This action reduced their load and made climbing a little easier. Then up they started again in the brilliant sunshine. *They crossed narrow ledges, they had to squeeze through narrow gaps. If the ice or snow gave way, the men would be lost. But fortunately, the ice and snow held. They reached the top of the rock cliff. The summit seemed so close, yet there was danger ahead. Masses of ice and rock stuck out and made climbing extremely difficult. The men supported each other with ropes.*

At last two men from different lands and culture joined hands for this supreme achievement. Everest had at last been conquered. Tenzing and Hillary hugged each other. It was eleven-thirty in the morning, and the sun was shining brilliantly. The men looked around. They stayed on top for about fifteen minutes, took some pictures and then started down.

For thirty-three years brave men had challenged the mountain and failed. Naturally, Tenzing and Hillary became famous overnight. Hillary became a hero of the British Empire and the news reached London just in time for Elizabeth II's coronation. Tenzing became a symbol of national pride in Nepal, Tibet and India.

(1988)

Ledge – уступ склона.

Answer the questions

1. Who were the two people who conquered Everest?
2. Was it very cold on top of Mount Everest?
3. What difficulties did they meet while climbing?
4. How long did they stay on top of the mountain?
5. How were they rewarded?

TEXT 12 Pygmalion

Pygmalion, King of Cyprus, was an artist. Carving and sculpture gave him great pleasure, and it was in this way that he spent his time. One day, as he worked, he thought about the deceitfulness of women, how evil in the heart could be hidden behind beauty of face and figure. Suddenly he decided he would himself make the perfect woman.

So he took a piece of marble and began to carve. When it was finished, the statue was more beautiful than any woman in the world. And so great was his art in carving that the marble maiden seemed almost alive. Pygmalion looked on his lovely creation day after day, and for so long that he fell in love with it. He treated the statue as though it were really a human girl. He brought presents of flowers and jewellery, and he hung a rich gown from its shoulders, and often kissed it on the lips. But she was cold and stiff. He laid her on a couch, put soft pillows under her head, and spread over her a warm cloak.

Now just at this time came the yearly festival of Aphrodite, goddess of love.

Pygmalion prayed to the goddess. “Queen Aphrodite, goddess of love”, he cried in his desperation, “listen to my prayer. I love my marble maiden with a great and deep devotion. Have pity on my state. Give me for wife one who is in all respects as perfect and as lovely as she is.

The goddess had heard him and would consider his request. Pygmalion returned home. When he looked down on his marble statue, she seemed to be a real girl sleeping. He stooped and kissed her lips. They were soft and warm! So were her hands and arms. Pygmalion stood beside the couch, amazed, and half-afraid.

When the maiden opened her eyes and smiled at him, he knew she was indeed alive. Giving thanks to Aphrodite for this miraculous answer to his prayer, Pygmalion then raised the figure that had once been marble and held in his arms his living bride.

Aphrodite came to their wedding and blessed them. When their son was born he was called Paphos. Paphos is the place in Cyprus where the oldest and most famous temple of Aphrodite once stood.

(2068)

Deceitfulness – изменчивость, обманчивость.

Stoop – наклониться.

Answer the questions

1. Why did Pygmalion decide to make a statue of a woman?
2. How did he treat his marble maiden?
3. Why wasn't he still happy?
4. How did the goddess answer Pygmalion's prayer?
5. How did people commemorate this legend?

TEXT 13

The Inventive Barman

The other day I happened to finish my work earlier than usual. The weather was charming, so I decided to take a walk. Passing by one of the numerous pubs, it occurred to me that I could do with a pint of beer. "Nothing like a bottle of beer on a hot day like this!" I thought and entered the Golden Bar.

I looked about the place. It was just an ordinary bar. There were not many customers in it. Several men and women were seated at the tables having their lunch, others were standing at the bar, drinking beer.

I took a seat at one of the tables and ordered a pint of bitter. The beer was brought soon, but as I was in no hurry I took my time drinking it. By and by the place was filled with visitors and soon almost every seat was occupied.

Presently I finished my pint of beer and was about to leave the bar when it began to rain. I waited a few minutes, but the rain did not stop. The strange part of it was that there were no clouds in the sky, and yet it was raining hard.

I could not possibly go out – I had no umbrella or waterproof with me – so I changed my mind and ordered a substantial lunch. I noticed that many people did the same, so the waiter had plenty of work to do.

The rain showed no sign of stopping. It was falling with a cruel persistence, though the sun was shining brightly. I was through with my lunch, had finished a cigar, and yet the rain would not stop. It was beginning to get on my nerves. I saw it was no use waiting any longer, so, prepared for the worst, I went out.

I walked a few steps in a hurry and then stopped in surprise. There was no rain. In fact, there had been no rain! What did I see, you may ask? There wasn't very much to see, after all. Just a few metres from the front door of the bar there was an elderly woman comfortably seated on a chair. She was holding a hose linked to a tap and was watering the pavement in front of the bar assiduously.

A clever dog, that barman was!

(1938)

Hose – шланг.

Answer the questions

1. What made the author go into the bar one day?
2. What was the atmosphere in that bar?
3. Did the weather suddenly change?
4. Why couldn't the visitor leave the bar?
5. What did he see when he left the bar?

TEXT 14

A Clear Advertisement

As Mr Ferbrecher came to live in England soon after the war, he thought he should open a fish business in Birmingham, and so he did. He had smuggled some gold into Britain, and was now able to set to work at once. He had hired a small shop in Marryfield Road, and before the month was out, everything was ready for the opening ceremony.

He has seen to everything: got in touch with some fishermen ferrying fish, gave advertisements in the local press and painted on the window pane in huge block white letters: "HERE I SELL FRESH FISH".

A friend of his who had been in Britain for some time by then came to see him on that day and said: "You don't know the customs of the country, man! The words you wrote on the shop window aren't in the spirit of the English language. It's too long, you know. The English like to make very short and clear sentences, and don't use any unnecessary words. For instance, I don't see any point in your writing HERE. It's obvious that you sell fish here and not elsewhere, isn't it? "Then, what am I to do?" – asked the fishmonger. "Cross it out! Wipe it out!" As the businessman did so the friend looked again, and went on: "I wonder why you should write I SELL". The English don't write obvious things down. It's clear that you sell and not buy fish here. I'd wipe out the two words if I were you!" As the businessman washed out the words the rest read FRESH FISH. It looked nice and tidy, and yet the friend did not seem quite happy about it.

"It's stupid to say your fish are fresh. Of course, they are! You sell nothing but fresh fish." The businessman agreed with him and removed the word FRESH. "Well, said the friend approvingly, we did manage to reduce the advertisement to one word only, and I suppose you could leave it there, but I would have it wiped out too. You see, one can smell your fish two miles away from here. Believe me, there can be no doubt as to what you sell here. By the way, it would be much better English and sound much more idiomatic if you got rid of it all together.

(2054)

Answer the questions

1. Who opened a fishmonger's in Birmingham?
2. Did he see to everything before opening his shop?
3. What did his friend accuse the fishmonger of?
4. How did they manage with the problem?
5. What were the reasons why the fishmonger listened to his English friend?

TEXT 15

A Table for Two

Christian was working in a restaurant on a London road. One day he saw an old Rolls Royce in a car park. A very fat lady in a fur coat got out and came into the restaurant. She had with her a small pet dog.

"A table for two", ordered the lady. "This way, madam", said Christian. He was very pleased. "Ladies like that usually give good tips", he thought. "Would you like to order now, madam or will you wait for your friend?" "A friend? I'm alone. The other place is for my dog", said she. At that moment the dog jumped on to the empty chair and sat down. *The woman looked at the menu. She ordered a five-course lunch: soup, fish, chicken and rice, fruit with cream and cheese. She also ordered a bottle of the most expensive French wine. "And the dog, madam?" asked Christian. "Fido? Fido always sits at the table with me". Christian served the lady. While she ate she gave little pieces of meat and fish to Fido. Fido ate them and asked for more. "Oh, dear. I've given so much chicken to Fido but I'm still hungry. Please, bring me some roast duck."* Christian brought the roast duck and the lady gave a lot of that to Fido too." Then when she had finished the meal she ordered coffee and a box of the most expensive cigarettes.

"A very nice meal. Now will you please bring me my bill." Christian added up the bill. It came to 10 pounds. The woman looked at the bill. "Ten pounds. That is a lot of money. I'll have to pay by the cheques." The woman signed the cheques and Christian took it straight to the manager's office. "Tell her politely that we don't accept cheques", said the manager. But it was too late. The woman had gone. The manager telephoned the bank at once, but the bank had never heard of the woman. The manager was very angry and called to the police station. Half an hour later the manager called Christian. He was laughing: "They've caught her. And Fido was still hungry. He bit a policeman".

(1932)

Answer the questions

1. Where did the woman go to have a meal?
2. Who accompanied the lady?
3. Why did Christian expect the woman to give him good tips?
4. Who called the police station?
5. What happened to the woman at the end of the story?

TEXT 16

The Christmas Present

Lotta and Ann had had a lovely Christmas Eve, they had helped their Mum with all kinds of preparations for the holiday and now were ready for bed. As they walked across the living-room they stopped to look at the wonderfully decorated Christmas tree. They wondered what exciting gifts they would get the next day. Lotta wanted a doll that walked and talked and Anna wanted a car racing set. Then they noticed a large present next to the tree. They hadn't seen it before. It was huge and beautifully wrapped. Quietly they crept over to the present to get a closer look. Suddenly it swung open. The girls jumped back a little afraid. They huddled together by a chair and looked at the open present. As they watched two people came out of the present.

The woman was carrying a tiny baby carefully in her arms. The man helped her to sit down. The girls looked at each other amazed but kept very quiet. Then some shepherd arrived, bringing a lamb for the Baby and more people in beautiful clothes appeared. They carried gifts for the Baby. All of them knelt before Him for a while and left. Lotta and Anna also wanted to give the baby something, but they didn't know what.

Then someone else came out of the present, he was dressed in a long white gown. The visitor went straight across to where the girls were hiding. They were afraid but his voice was kind. "This is a very special baby, His name is Jesus. He is the Son of God. He wants your love and he wants you to love each other and all people, at Christmas and throughout the year". With that the angel left. Quietly the girls crept out from their hiding place and went to the Baby. They knelt beside Him and gave Him a gentle kiss on the forehead. At that moment all the people returned into the box and it swung closed behind them.

The girls wondered whether to tell their parents what they had seen but they knew they wouldn't believe them. Hand in hand they went to bed looking forward to Christmas Day, not for the doll or a car-racing track, but because they knew now what Christmas was about: Love.

(2081)

Huddle – ютиться, тесниться.

Answer the questions

1. What time of the day was it when the story took place?
2. Why did the girls stop while walking across the living room?
3. What happened when the box swung open?
4. What did the angel tell the girls?
5. What is the main idea of Christmas?

TEXT 17

A Mystery of Stonehenge

Stonehenge may be the biggest single wonder of the prehistoric world. It is certainly one of its great mysteries. In the Middle Ages, Stonehenge was explained by the power of magic: Merlin, King Arthur's court wizard, had summoned the huge stones from Ireland. The 19th century was hooked on the idea of the druids, no matter that those ancient Celts actually worshipped in groves of sacred oak trees, not in stone temples. Astronomer Sir Fred Hoyle has declared Stonehenge to be a prehistoric computer, programmed to forecast eclipses of the sun and the moon. For New Ages, Stonehenge is a sacred place and a source of earth energy.

There were three phases of development: Stonehenge began soon after 3 000 BC as a circular site defined by a low bank with a large external ditch. The stones were erected much later. A number of tall, rectangular bluestones were brought from the Preseli mountains almost 220 km away in Wales sometime around 2600 BC. The outer ring and inner horseshoe of arches were built from sandstone blocks brought by men from a place 40 km to the north. The biggest of these stones in the inner horseshoe is almost seven metres tall and weighs more than 45 tones. The stones probably began to be put on the top over about a thousand years later, and what the Romans saw is much what we see now.

When the large stones were first erected, some scientists believe, there were no settlements close to Stonehenge. The landscape, dominated by the stones, was given over to the rituals of life and death. The surrounding countryside contains many Bronze Age burial places. This suggests that around 2000 BC, Stonehenge may well have been much like the prehistoric parkland.

Stonehenge was designated a World Heritage Site in 1986. Few people have privilege to walk inside the stone circle at present. The vision of English heritage is to create the greatest prehistoric monumental park in the world.

(1945)

Worship – поклоняться.

Heritage – наследие.

Answer the questions

1. What are the theories of the origin of Stonehenge?
2. How many phases were there in the constructing of Stonehenge?
3. What was done during each phase?
4. Were there any settlements around Stonehenge in those times?
5. What is it now?

TEXT 18

Our Senses

People and animals have five senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. Both people and animals get all of their knowledge from their senses, and that is why our senses are so important. All senses depend on the working nervous system. We have five main sense organs. They are the eyes, nose, ears, tongue, and skin.

Vision dominates our lives, our language and our minds. We say "I see" when what we mean is "I understand". We say "Look" when we mean "Listen".

People and animals all hear slightly differently. A friend's favourite music may sound terrible to you. Every sound we hear is made by movement of the air. These movements are called vibrations. But ears do more than just hear sounds – they help us to keep balance.

Smell is the only sense we can't turn off. We smell all the time and with every breath, twenty thousand times a day. The sense of sniff starts with the nose but it includes other parts of our head and brain. Human beings have a very weak sense of smell. As people evolved and began to use reason more, they didn't need to smell things quite as well as other animals did. They could use their eyes and their brains in a different way.

Tasting and smelling work very closely. If we can't smell our food, it is difficult to recognize the taste. Tasting is the work of the tongue. All other flavours are a mixture of taste and smell.

Unlike the other senses, which are located only in the head, our sense of touch is all over our body. There are thousands of tiny sensors all over your body. They are all linked to the spinal cord and the brain to make up what is called our central nervous system. Through this system, the various parts of the body can send message to the brain. One feeling we cannot get used to is the feeling of pain. Pain is an important message, because it tells our brain that something harmful is happening to the person. Our brain reacts by doing something right away to protect us.

(1951)

Sniff – нюхать.

Answer the questions

1. What do all our senses depend on?
2. What do we say when we mean 'I understand' and what do we say when we want to attract somebody's attention?
3. Do ears do more than just hear sounds?
4. In which way is our sense of smell different from all our senses?
5. What is one feeling we cannot get used to? Why?

TEXT 19 The Present

It was the old lady's birthday. She got up early to be ready for the post.

Today she was sure there would be something. Myra wouldn't forget her mother's birthday, even if she seldom wrote at other times. Of course Myra was busy. Her husband had been Mayor last year, and Myra herself had got a medal for her work for the aged. A daughter to be proud of!

The old lady was eighty today. She had put on her best dress. Perhaps Myra might come. After all, eighty was a special birthday; another decade lived or endured just as you chose to look at it.

Even if Myra did not come, she would send a present. The old lady was sure of that. Two spots of colour brightened her cheeks. She was excited like a child. *She would enjoy her day.*

What would she like? A pair of slippers perhaps. Or a new cardigan. A cardigan would be lovely. Blue's such a pretty colour. Or a table lamp, so that she wouldn't drop so many stitches in her knitting. Or a travel book, with pictures, or a little clock, with clear black numbers. So many lovely things. She stood by the window, watching.

The postman turned round the corner on his bicycle. Her heart beat fast. Johnie had seen him too and ran to the gate. Then clatter, clatter up the stairs. Johnie knocked at her door. "Granny, Granny," he shouted. "I've got your post." He gave four envelopes, three unsealed cards from old friends. The fourth sealed, in Myra's writing. The old lady felt disappointment. "No parcel, Johnie?" "No, granny."

Maybe the parcel was too large to come by letter post. That was it. It would come later by parcel post. She must be patient. Almost reluctantly she tore the envelope open. Folded in the ornate card was a piece of paper. Written on the card was a message under the printed Happy Birthday. "Buy yourself something nice with the cheques," Myra and Harold. The cheques fluttered to the floor like a bird with a broken wing. Slowly the old lady stopped to pick it up. Her present, her lovely present. With trembling fingers she tore it into little bits.

(2043)

Flutter – развеваться, трепетать.

Answer the following questions

1. How old was the woman?
2. Did her daughter give the old lady a present?
3. What did the old lady expect to get for her birthday?
4. Why did the old lady feel a pang of disappointment?
5. What did she buy with the check her daughter sent her?

TEXT 20 The Wooden Bowl

I guarantee you will remember the tale of the Wooden Bowl tomorrow, a week from now, a month from now, a year from now. A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and four-year-old grandson. The old man's hands trembled, his eyesight was blurred, and his step faltered.

The family ate together at the table. But the elderly grandfather's shaky hands and failing sight made eating difficult. Peas rolled off his spoon onto the floor. When he grasped the glass, milk spilled on the table cloth. The son and daughter-in-law became irritated with the mess. "We must do something about father," said the son. "I've had enough of his spilled milk, noisy eating, and food on the floor." So the husband and wife set a small table in the corner. There, Grandfather ate alone while the rest of the family enjoyed dinner. Since Grandfather had broken a dish or two, his food was served in a wooden bowl! When the family glanced in Grandfather's direction, sometime he had a tear in his eye as he sat alone. Still, the only words the couple had for him were sharp admonitions when he dropped a fork or spilled food.

The four-year-old watched it all in silence. One evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with wood scraps on the floor. He asked the child sweetly, "What are you making?" Just as sweetly, the boy responded, "Oh, I am making a little bowl for you and Mama to eat your food in when I grow up." The four-year-old smiled and went back to work. The words so struck the parents so that they were speechless. Then tears started to stream down their cheeks. Though no word was spoken, both knew what must be done. That evening the husband took Grandfather's hand and gently led him back to the family table. For the remainder of his days he ate every meal with the family. And for some reason, neither husband nor wife seemed to care any longer when a fork was dropped, milk spilled, or the tablecloth spoiled.

(1961)

Frail – тщедушный.

Blur – затуманивать.

Falter – дрожать.

Admonition – наставление.

Answer the questions

1. What does the author guarantee those who will read this story?
2. What were the younger members of the family irritated with?
3. What did they do to correct 'bad manners'?
4. What did the parents notice one evening?
5. What was the lesson they learnt from their little son?

ОБРАЗЦЫ УСТНЫХ ВЫСКАЗЫВАНИЙ

SITUATION 1

1. Do you have healthy eating habits or do you prefer fast food? Comment on the saying "You are what you eat"

This saying means that to be fit and healthy you need to eat healthy food. And I fully agree with it.

For someone it may sound a bit ridiculous. Does food make what I really am? Ok, it is not strange that books you read can show who you are. You can be judged by the friends you have. Music you like can also show what kind of person you are. But food?

Our inner world definitely plays an important role if to talk about our personalities. However, humans also have bodies – physical shells where our inner world hides. Whether we like it or not but these physical shells are made up of what we eat. The healthier the food that we consume is, the better our bodies look and the healthier we are.

Most experts say eating a balanced diet is the best way to get your share of good food for healthy body. Experts say people should remember a wise proverb "An apple a day keeps the doctor away". This means that we should eat more fresh vegetables and fruit, foods which are high in fiber and vitamins A, B, C and E. Such vegetables as Brussels sprouts, cabbage and cauliflower contain agents that block cancer. Beet greens, bell peppers, carrots and tomatoes as well as cherries, apricots and watermelon are rich in beta-carotene.

They also say that we should bake, boil, roast and steam food. Doctors keep reminding us that we should cut down the amount of fatty, salty and sweet food we consume. So we should eat less fatty red meat, poultry and whole eggs. Scientists prove that people who eat large amounts of fat face an increased danger of breast and colon cancer. Eating less fat reduces the amount of dangerous cholesterol in blood. So, we should eat food which is low in fat. This includes lean meats, poultry without skin, low-fat milk and dairy products, seafoods, porridge and cereals. People should limit the amount of salt in their food as it causes high blood pressure. And high blood pressure is linked to heart disease. We should cut down the amount of sugar and unhealthy proteins which can be found in hamburgers, sweets and processed cheeses. We should limit the amount of fizzy drinks too.

So, food is not only something delicious, tasty and pleasant. Food is something that can make our bodies ugly and our organs diseased. However, not many people nowadays eat enough fresh fruit and vegetables. They consume more processed food with lower nutritional value than nutrient-dense fresh foods. And this leads to an increasing number of obese people. Nowadays there are a lot of children who suffer from overweight. It also leads to cancer and disorders of the heart and blood system. So we should mind what we put into our bodies.

Experts say that it is not surprising that people eat too much of the wrong foods. Everywhere we look high-calorie and high-fat foods are advertised. Despite the fact that these foods are low in cost, they are low in nutrition. In other words, they may not be good for us, but they are really cheap. Some experts call this a toxic-food environment.

As I have already mentioned, particular kinds of food can tell something about a person. For example, people who like spicy and exotic food are brave and adventurous; those who are fond of chocolate are easy-going and sociable, but they lack confidence; people who are interested in big amounts of food are considered to be generous and hard-working; and people who haven't got a large appetite are artistic and sensitive, though they lose their temper easily.

In conclusion I would like to say that people realize that in today's competitive world it's really important to stay healthy if they want to be active and successful in life. That's why we should remember that "You are what you eat" and "An apple a day keeps the doctor away" and we should try to stick to these simple pieces of advice.

2. Do you believe in the effect of diets for keeping feet?
3. What is your favourite dish? Can you share its recipe?
4. What would you like to ask a British teenager about his/her cuisine?
5. What would you advise your friend who wants to look attractive and fit?

SITUATION 2

1. Do you agree that our character is what we do when we think no one is looking?

As well as I know this saying belongs to Jackson Brown. I don't fully agree with it.

There is an ongoing confusion between behavior and character, so defining each one should help clear this up. Behavior is a means by which man expresses himself; it is something that can be learned through training, it is something that may be governed by one's emotions. For example, we have to be patient, respectful and obedient with our parents and teachers but we may be completely different with our peers. So, people's acts are aimed at a certain reaction of people around them. In my opinion, a person's reputation is what the world thinks the

person is; a person's character is what this person really is. Moral character, or character, is an evaluation of a particular individual's durable moral qualities. The concept of character can imply a variety of attributes including the existence or lack of virtues such as integrity, courage, fortitude, honesty and loyalty.

We all put on a different face when we are in front of people. If we want to know who we really are, we should look at what we do when no one is looking. There are things we all know we shouldn't do. But when alone and no one is looking, most of us tend to loosen up our value system. We tend to be more open to doing things that we would never do.

However, character isn't something that should disappear because you are alone. It is something that should be the same no matter who you are with or what you are doing. So what is it?

I consider myself to be kind-hearted, hard-working, honest, intelligent and reliable. I have high self-esteem. However, sometimes I'm a bit hot-headed. These features of my character are stable.

I want to be a success in life and that's why I study hard at school, staying late hours and sometimes burning my candle at both ends. I never leave things half-done. I may say I'm persistent and I put much effort to achieve my aim. I want other people to respect me. I want to be strong and self-organized in front of them. That's why I have to keep my emotions inside and although some of my classmates are jealous, I never show how offensive the things they say can sometimes be.

But when I come home, I give way to my emotions. And even though I may be a little naughty and rude and sometimes I quarrel with my mother, my character remains with me. I always try to help my mother about the house; I never lie to her as I'm concerned that "Honesty is the best policy". It makes me really happy when my nearest and dearest are happy.

I always look forward to meeting my friends. I relax and we have a lot of fun together. But with them I don't have to control myself very much. Sometimes I lose my temper easily and I speak my mind. But, as a wise proverb says, "When a friend asks there's no tomorrow". I never let my friends down. When they ask for help, I give them my helping hand immediately and never leave them at a loss. They keep on giving me gifts as they say I'm like a cactus myself: not very friendly outside but full of nice surprises.

To my mind, character is the sum of those actions, tendencies and qualities which distinguish one man from another. Character does not include personality, at the same time personality includes character. If you want to develop a winning personality, you must have the character to back it up. But *you cannot dream yourself into a character; you must hammer and forge one for yourself. And you should always remain true to yourself in your actions.*

2. When you first meet people what do you look at? What does it tell you about the person?
3. What features of character do you find annoying?
4. Would you call yourself a leader or a follower? Why?
5. What would you advise a person who is shy and indecisive?

SITUATION 3

1. Do you agree that “Money makes the world go round”?

To begin with, I would like to say that money plays an important role in our life. People use money every day to pay for things they buy. Money is an important option for people to communicate: they work for money, they go out to spend money, and they sometimes even make friends for money. But money also serves as a medium of exchange as people accept it for their goods and services. It is used as a “storehouse of value”. It is a “yardstick of value”. It also serves as a standard for future payments.

Nowadays there are many ways of earning money.

Some people become rich and famous due to their inventions and their natural talents. Bill Gates makes an example. Together with his friends from Harvard university he developed a version of the BASIC programming language. They founded Microsoft and he dropped out of the university to devote his time to it. Under his leadership the company expanded rapidly due to the success of its applications and operating systems. At the age of 31 Gates became the youngest millionaire in the USA. Now his fortune reached \$80 billion, making him the wealthiest individual in the world.

Success in such competitive spheres as sport and show-business can be overwhelming and rather profitable. Claudia Schiffer is a successful German supermodel and businesswoman. She has her own fitness video and she spends a lot of time working with charities.

A lot of young people nowadays take up part-time jobs. They work as babysitters, shop-assistants or cleaners. So they earn their own money, which gives them a sense of independence. It also teaches them to appreciate any labor and the money their parents earn.

Some people win money in lotteries. Last year I read about a British plumber who had won £3 mln. He had ordered a new house and two cars and had also do-

nated some money to charities. Even though that money would have been enough for him not to work any more at all, he said he would work any way.

There are also some people who agree to work without any pay. Volunteers help elderly people with shopping, preparing meals, cleaning and washing, they help the disabled and take part in different social and nature protection programs.

However, there are some people who do not want to work and try to get money illegally. For example, burglars break into houses and take most valuable things and hi-jack cars in order to resell them. Some of them can rob people in the street or even murder them as they don't value a human's life and labor at all.

As technologies advance, there has appeared a new type of criminals – hackers. They try to break through security systems and steal money from bank accounts. They also practise software pirating. Or some try to mislead others so that they would let out some private information on the Internet and they almost can't be controlled there.

I realize that nowadays a lot of people find their happiness in having a big amount of money. It gives them a possibility to be independent, to afford expensive things, to travel all over the world and a lot more. Our modern society is often called the “consumers” society and I agree with it. People depend on the amount of money they have. Modern people are influenced by material values and the conveniences of modern life a lot more than by moral laws. But I'm not a person of that kind. As for me, I try to be open-minded, kind-hearted and have self-respect. I study hard at school in order to get good education, find a prestigious and well-paid job, become a professional and be useful for the society I live in.

2. What would you rather be – rich or famous? Why?
3. What do you spend your pocket money on?
4. Imagine you are talking to a foreign student. Ask him/her what he/she usually spends money on.
5. What advice would you give to people who are fond of window shopping?

SITUATION 4

1. Do you work hard to be a success? Comment on the saying “Success is a ladder that can't be climbed with your hands in pockets”

What is success? What do people lack to be successful? We are all interested in finding answers to these questions.

For different people success means different things. For some people success is measured in financial terms: I mean by the amount of money they possess. An important factor in lives of many young people is having success with the opposite sex. Success at school is important to all pupils. In many professions success can be overwhelming and very profitable, especially in such competitive spheres as sport and show-business.

Wherever you look these days, in newspapers, magazines, on TV or radio, success is the key word. People have to be successful in their jobs. Nowadays people are constantly asked if their marriages are successful or if their children are successful at school. What worries me is that while we are all madly trying to emulate this successful persona created by the media, the rest of our life is passing us by.

There are a lot of people in the world who became famous and successful due to their talents. According to the dictionary a talent is a natural skill or ability at something. But here I should say that only gifted people who develop their talents become a success.

At the same time there are a lot of children who show much talent in their childhood but when they become adults, they don't achieve their ambitions. Why does it happen?

In my view, a person can realize his abilities and talent only if he or she works hard to develop them. A wise statement says that 99 per cent of any talent consists of practice and hard work and only 1 per cent is a person's talent.

To realize any talent, to have success in life a person needs a strong will. In my opinion, to develop their abilities people must be devoted to the activity they are keen on. They should be persistent, hard-working, brave, responsible and self-disciplined. They shouldn't be afraid of difficulties, bad luck or envy. They should be strong enough to concentrate on the most important things in their lives. A proverb says "Success is a ladder that can't be climbed with your hands in pockets".

So, I believe that having natural abilities is not enough to be a success. Working hard is more important. Let's remember Horatio Nelson. In his childhood he seemed very unlikely to become a seaman. However, despite his physical weakness he impressed his fellow pupils at grammar school by his great will. He did much physical exercise to achieve his aim. At the age of 14 he was allowed to join an expedition to the North Pole. Then he became a famous British admiral. A good example for me is Mikhail Lomonosov. His thirst for knowledge made him leave his native village for Moscow. His exceptional intelligence and hard work enabled him in 5 years to assimilate the 8-year school course of study and at the age of 25 he became a student at the St. Petersburg Academy. This person made a substantial contribution to the development of science and literature in Russia.

He is famous all over the world.

Summing up, I'd like to say that success is a ladder that can't be climbed with your hands in pockets. If you want to achieve much success in any sphere, you should work hard and try to make an effort every day of your life. But that doesn't mean you must always be in a hurry. On the contrary, take your time and try to do anything you've begun thoroughly. Involve yourself in your working environment. Use your initiative and think ahead. Don't do just what is expected of you – do more.

Then you should constantly develop your skills. You should always have your own opinion.

And what's really important, you should enjoy your job. If you don't like what you're doing, you will never be successful.

2. What is your greatest career ambition?

3. How can a person achieve fame?

4. Imagine you are talking to a celebrity. What questions would you ask him/her?

5. What would you advise your little brother/sister/cousin who wants to be a success at school?

SITUATION 5

1. Do you agree that family ties are the strongest? Comment on the saying "Blood is thicker than water"

There is a wise saying "Blood is thicker than water". From my point of view it means that your parents and other relatives will stick by you in times of need more than your friends will.

That old saying has always been true for me. There are some reasons to uphold my opinion. Our friends can be unstable while our parents and relatives are the ones who really care for us. Parents who have been living with me since the day I was born are the ones who understand me most. They have already been through all my experience, so they can give me some valuable advice. I myself do not want to confer with my best friend about my very secrets for fear of her/him revealing it to everyone the day we are not friends any more.

People may also be whining about their problems to their close friends but in all probability what they receive is often mild comments with several phrases like "Oh, I'm very sorry to hear that" or "Try harder next time" or they would even pretend to have deaf ears and ignore our whining completely. Few people really care for others apart from themselves, but that is not the case with our parents. They stand by us most of the time and give us good hints to help us resolve our problems.

I remember talking to my mother about some bad scores at school I got, and she said that it was not the end of the world and she had also had many appalling results at school. She fostered me to go on and never give up or feel ashamed about those bad scores because I surely learned a lot from them. I think it was a very wise comment of hers

By and large, I think friends do not understand us as much as our parents and relatives, so we must count on them and never let them down.

I enjoy honest and open relationship in our family. I'm happy to say that my home is the place where everybody understands, respects and loves me. To my mind, this is the way things should be in any family.

In happy, friendly, united families parents are frankly honest with their children without moralizing and bossing them around, and children in their turn learn how to get on with other people. Members of such families treat one another with understanding and compassion. They always share domestic chores. Children living in such families feel safe at home. They trust their parents, share their secrets and problems, ask parents for useful advice and rely on them. They don't run away from home as they feel happy living there.

It's common knowledge that family is a crucial instrument for the development of a child's personality. It's the primary group in which a person forms. That's why it's vitally important for every child to live in a friendly and happy family.

The family is very important as a unit in our society. Nothing else but family can be an emotional centre of people's lives and a transmitter of culture. Every mother feels great affection for her children and tries to bring them up in a proper way. Understanding between all members of the family and consideration for others are very important in family relationships. Tenderness, warm-heartedness and respect must always be present in the family to make it friendly. A lot of activities help family members to be on friendly terms: discussing plans together, going on trips together, visiting museums, theatres, exhibitions and exchanging opinions about them, sharing the same joys and sorrows.

In my opinion, when a child is brought up in a friendly family, he or she will become a loyal and responsible person with a strong character and mind.

In conclusion I would like to add that the bonds of family are always stronger than those between unrelated people. And I am happy to say that my home is a place where even the tea kettle sings from happiness. I can say that my parents

trust me, give me freedom, rely on me and respect me. These things, in my opinion, make family relations warm and pleasant. So, I'm very proud of my family and love them with all my heart.

2. Is the family ever likely to disappear as an institution?

3. Should the father or the mother be the head of the family? Why?

4. Imagine you are talking to foreign teenagers. What would you ask them about family traditions they have in their country?

5. What is the right age to get married in your opinion? Why?

SITUATION 6

1. Do you agree that "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder"? Prove your idea

What is beauty? According to the dictionary it's a combination of qualities that gives pleasure both to the eye, ear and to the mind. We can admire the beauty of a sunset, the beauty of somebody's singing, the beauty of music and poetry.

The word "beauty" is also used to describe a person or a thing that is beautiful. People who have delicate or strong regular features, slim or athletic bodies are often defined as beautiful. People who are solidly built, people who are either very short or very tall are often called ugly.

At the same time the image of a beautiful person constantly changes. Different cultures have different notions of what beauty is. In some African tribes women who have extremely long necks are considered to be beautiful. They lengthen their necks wearing special copper rings. In some African tribes people put special discs into their lips believing that it makes them very attractive. In Japan women who have small feet are called beautiful. As the proverb says "tastes differ". For example, some people, especially men, say that women who have long blond hair, long legs and a slim body are real beauties. Some people find women who strengthen their muscles through exercise and practise bodybuilding beautiful. Some people, especially women, believe that wearing a lot of make up, having long nails and long eyelashes makes a woman pretty. As for me, I don't think that bodybuilders are attractive. To my mind, women who practise bodybuilding look strange. I don't find people who put on a lot of make up attractive either. I don't understand it when both women and men who don't look ugly go to plastic surgeons to improve their bodies to look more attractive. Some people

make tattoos or scars, have their noses, lips, eyebrows and other parts of the face and body pierced to look strong and beautiful.

At the same time people's ideas of beauty are revealed by their style of clothes. A person can say by his clothes, "This is what I think is nice and I believe it makes me look more attractive". Psychologists say that 85 per cent of the information people accept is visual information. The clothes we choose to wear tell other people a lot about us. We often judge people by what they are wearing. For example, people, dressed in expensive clothes are often thought to be wealthy and beautiful. People who wear old, dirty or torn clothes can't be called beautiful by others. From my point of view, things that a person has in his or her wardrobe should be comfortable to wear. It's better to remain true to yourself. Fashion is not the most important thing in my life, but it helps me feel in tune with the world I live in. I can't say I'm a dedicated follower of fashion but I always try to keep up-to-date.

In our modern society fashion models, singers, musicians, dancers, actors and sportsmen are the idols of thousands of teenagers who try to copy them in the way they dress, walk and style their hair. Their lifestyles are advertised on TV and in fashion magazines. Numerous ads play on our feelings, emotions, and especially our wish to look beautiful.

My favourite fashion model is Claudia Schiffer who is a very successful German supermodel. She has appeared on the covers and fashion pages of all the major fashion magazines and is one of the faces of Chanel. She is tall. She has a slim body and very long legs. Her most stunning feature is her attractive face with sparkling eyes and a straight nose. She is a successful businesswoman who has her own fitness video and who spends a lot of time working with charity organizations.

Many people think that those who look beautiful are much happier in their lives because their beauty helps them charm others and be more successful. In my view, it must be a problem to be a really beautiful woman, because some men may be more interested in looking at you than talking to you. They may think of you as a picture rather than a person. At the same time some people think that women who are exceptionally pretty and men who are particularly handsome must be stupid. On the other hand, no one wants to be ugly. No one wants to be plain either – I mean to be neither attractive nor ugly and have a face that is easily forgotten.

In my opinion, being attractive is like being rich – it can help you find happiness but it doesn't always make you happy. The best thing is not to worry too much about your appearance, but simply try to be an interesting person.

In my opinion, a beautiful person is sociable, cheerful and vigorous. This person likes other people and the world around him or her. This person has a healthy body and a strong mind. This person has his or her own style in clothes, his or her own hairstyle, which shows his or her individuality. This person looks attractive not due to the fact that he or she is exceptionally pretty or handsome.

This person looks attractive because his or her inner world is beautiful and the appearance is in harmony with it.

So, this is my idea of what a beautiful person is.

2. Is beauty only a physical quality?

3. Do you think beautiful people are generally happier?

4. Imagine you are talking to a supermodel/bodybuilder. What questions would you ask her/him?

5. Give advice to your friend who wants to look beautiful.

SITUATION 7

1. Nowadays a lot of teenagers want to become famous. Would you like to be famous?

To be honest I wouldn't like to be as famous as a TV star. I can say that many of my classmates dream of becoming famous. Singers, musicians, dancers, actors, sportsmen and fashion models are the idols of thousands of teenagers who try to copy them in the way they dress, walk and style their hair. Their lifestyles are advertised on TV and in fashion magazines. Ads play on our feelings, emotions, and especially our wish to be up-to date. Many of my classmates are on the fantasy level about the life of a celebrity. They want other people to admire and adore them. They would like to be popular with fans, to give interviews and so on.

I'm not a person of that kind. I'll try to go into a more common job and I want to make a successful career. At the same time I am an ambitious person. When I want something, I keep on trying until I succeed in getting it. I have a lot of energy.

To my mind, being a celebrity is a hard task. These people are always in the highlight. Journalists and reporters try to learn everything about their personal life, drawbacks and bad habits. Paparazzi are in constant search for sensations. Tabloids make up unbelievable stories about famous people.

The life of a celebrity is stressful and involves risks. That's why many of them try to release tension by drinking alcohol, taking light or heavy drugs and so on. Merlin Monroe, for example, was a beautiful actress who suffered from drug-addiction. Britney Spears used to drink a lot of alcohol, she had psychological problems and needed help of qualified doctors. Many celebrities are afraid of being abused or killed, so they need strong bodyguards to protect them.

As for me, my idols are not famous singers or models. I admire scientists, writers and sportsmen. I admire people who are brave, hard-working, devoted to their jobs and hobbies, kind-hearted, open-minded and self-organized. I don't like people who are lazy, rude, hot-headed and bossy. I don't like it when celebrities show off, tell lies, humiliate or even hurt other people. When I read about Naomi Campbell's beating her servant with a mobile phone, I felt sorry for the model.

What famous people do I admire? My favourite sportsman is Roger Federer who is a Swiss professional tennis player. Many sports analysts, tennis critics, former and current players consider Federer to be one of the greatest tennis players. He is one of seven male players to capture the career Grand Slam and one of three (with Andre Agassi and Rafael Nadal) to do so on three different surfaces (clay, grass and hard courts). He is hard-working, persistent and ambitious. Although he lost his first final game in 1998, he defeated four-time defending champion Pete Sampras in Wimbledon in 2001. His great devotion to tennis helped him to win 4 ATP World Tour Finals and 17 ATP Masters Series tournaments. He also won the Olympic Gold Medal in doubles with his compatriot Stanislas Wawrinka at the 2008 Summer Olympic Games.

Roger Federer is kind-hearted and helpful. He supports various charities. He established the Roger Federer Foundation in 2003 to help disadvantaged people and to promote sports. In 2005 he auctioned his racquet from his US Open championship to aid victims of Hurricane Katrina. He was appointed a Goodwill Ambassador by UNICEF in 2006. Since then he has visited South Africa and one of the areas in India most affected by the tsunami caused by the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake. He has also appeared in UNICEF public messages to raise public awareness of AIDS. In my opinion, this famous person sets a good example of human behaviour.

As I have already said, I want to make a successful career. In my view, a person can realize his or her abilities and talent only if he or she works hard to develop them. To realize any talent, to have success in life a person needs a strong will. In my opinion, to develop their abilities people must be devoted to the activity they are keen on. They shouldn't be afraid of difficulties, bad luck or envy. They should be strong enough to concentrate on the most important things in their lives. If you want to achieve much success in any sphere of life, you should work hard and try to make an effort every day of your life.

At present I consider being a top-pupil and learning to play the guitar my greatest achievements. I'm sure good education is most essential for making a good career in future. That's why I work hard at school, staying late hours and burning my candle at both ends.

In conclusion I'd like to say that I admire people who don't want to be celebrities. I try to learn useful things from people who lived their lives to enlighten their native people, to speak about their native land. To my mind, when a person is devoted to his native land and its people, makes a great contribution into the de-

velopment of the country and its culture – all that makes him or her well-known all over the world. This is what I consider to be fame.

- 2. Would you rather be rich or famous?**
- 3. What qualities does a person need to become famous?**
- 4. Have you ever talked to a well-known person? What questions did you ask (would you like to ask) him/her?**
- 5. What would you advise your friend who wants to take part in the national talent contest?**

SITUATION 8

- 1. Imagine you are speaking at the environmental meeting in our school. Say whether you are an ecologically-conscious person or not and what you do to protect the environment.**

For hundreds of thousands years the human race has thriven in Earth's environment. But now, at the beginning of the 21st century, we are at a crucial turning point. Computers project that between now and the year of 2030 we are going to have an increase of the average temperature between 1.5 – 4.5 degrees C. Sea levels would rise by several metres, flooding coastal areas and ruining vast tracks of farmland. Huge areas would be infertile and become uninhabitable. Water contamination could lead to shortages of safe drinking water.

We have upset nature's sensitive equilibrium releasing harmful substances into the air, polluting rivers and oceans with industrial waste and tearing up the countryside to accommodate our rubbish. Every year the world's industry pollutes the atmosphere with millions of tons of dust and other harmful substances. The seas and rivers are poisoned with industrial waste. People who live in big cities are badly affected by harmful discharge from plants and city transport and by the increasing noise level which is bad for human health.

Among the most urgent problems are depletion of the ozone layer, acid rains and global warming. Another serious environmental problem is the disappearance of forests. If man continues to cut down rainforests, more than one million species of plants and animals will become extinct by the year of 2030.

There are a lot of places on our planet that need immediate help. The nuclear accident of Chernobyl has seriously aggravated the ecological situation in Bela-

rus. About 18 per cent of the country's soil is unfit for farming and some districts in the south-east of the country are dangerous to live in.

Pollution ruins nature, creates serious danger to the flora, fauna and man himself. So nature protection should become everybody's concern.

I believe that environmental disasters can be avoided if people broaden ecological education and every person understands that the beauty of nature is extremely fragile. In my opinion, people must obey the unwritten rules of nature. Governments must take serious actions against pollution. Many countries reduce air pollution making plants and factories fit affective filters on chimneys and car exhausts. They try to use natural resources more economically. Green zones around big cities are protected and extended.

159 countries-members of the UNO have set up environmental protection agencies. They hold conferences discussing ecological problems, set up environmental research centres and take practical measures to improve the situation. The 5th of July is proclaimed the World Environmental Day.

Different non-governmental organizations work actively to protect nature. The international organization "Greenpeace" is one of them.

As far as I know people in Europe and America are very ecologically-conscious and they do many things to protect the environment. They have so called "Clean Air Day", aimed at encouraging people to walk, bike, ride public transit, thereby reducing the use of personal cars. In a café you can get a recycled paper napkin with words "I feel sun on my face. Let me touch it growing" which line the picture of a green sampling, extending its leaves towards the sun. All recycled napkins call people to recycle. Carpooling is an arrangement among car owners by which each of them takes a turn driving the others to and from a designed place. So less gas is burnt and fewer emissions are discharged into the atmosphere. They also try to use the Internet instead of snail mail.

In many countries people work together on the program of sustainable development called "Local Agenda 21", which was set up in 1992. Our gymnasium takes part in different international environmental projects. We also have a volunteer group which promotes the ideas of sustainable development. Members of this group organize special contests for schoolchildren to attract their attention to environmental problems, offer litter-gathering, anti-litter and community involvement programs, they encourage pupils to divide garbage into regular garbage, recyclable garbage, yard waste, paper and cardboard so that it could be recycled.

There are many things we can do at home to help nature. We can waste less water by fixing leaky pipes, turning off the tap while brushing teeth, by taking showers instead of baths. We should remember that paper is not garbage and it can be recycled, so we shouldn't throw away newspapers. By recycling of one ton of newspapers we save 17 trees. Families should buy in bulk so that to eliminate the trash from extra-packaging. We should bike and use public transport.

I personally try to do what is within my reach. I try to save water, divide garbage, use energy-saving bulbs, plant trees, feed animals and birds. I do not throw away plastic bottles and glass.

But when I look around, I realize that not all people understand the importance of nature protection. For example, people of our town like to have picnics in the forest or on the lakeshores. They often leave behind a lot of rubbish – plastic bags and bottles, tins and paper. It makes me feel sad when I see people returning to town with huge bunches of forest or meadow flowers. To my mind in forests and on lawns there should be placed a notice "Please leave wild flowers for others to enjoy!"

I strongly believe that we must review our wasteful, careless attitude to nature, we must consume less, recycle more, conserve wildlife and nature, act according to the dictum "think locally, think globally, act locally". To my mind, we should remove factories and plants from cities, use modern technologies, redesign and modify purifying systems for cleaning and trapping harmful substances, protect and increase the greenery and broaden ecological education. "Reduce, reuse, recycle!" this is the motto for taking care of nature and adopting an ecologically friendly attitude towards the environment.

If we don't realize that we are responsible for what's happening around us, we will never feel secure about the future of the world we live in.

- 2. Do you agree that everybody must take care of nature?**
- 3. What is the ecological situation in our town (city/village) like?**
- 4. What questions would you ask a famous scientist who tries to find the ways to solve environmental problems?**
- 5. What would you say to a person who is indifferent to the environmental problems?**

SITUATION 9

- 1. Do you agree that work is a necessity and no worker goes to work because he likes it?**

To begin with, I would like to say that I absolutely disagree with the saying that no worker goes to work because he likes it. There are several reasons to uphold my opinion.

In one way or another, all people around the world work for the ultimate purpose of seeking a better life. It is widely believed that people work solely for money. However, it is only one of the numerous important purposes of working, and there are a lot of benefits that people obtain from working without even consciously realizing them. Nowadays, besides money, people still work for many reasons, including understanding and fulfilling their responsibilities in society, avoiding wastefulness and keeping their minds active.

People usually work to get the things that they need to live. The most basic needs are food, clothing and shelter. In some places people grow their own food, make their own clothes and build their own shelters, living much as their ancestors have for thousands of years. In other places people earn money to buy those things.

But people work not only for money but also for self-realization. By working people can feel satisfied with themselves. This is because when people work, they can apply what they have learned before in reality. They can feel they are useful. This feeling of satisfaction will generate happiness and motivations develop themselves.

For many people the biggest benefit of working lies in a priceless lesson of responsibility. Through working people learn how to be responsible, first for themselves, then for their families and the society. If working is all about money, why even kids from well-off families, Bill Gate's for example, bother going to work even though they are guaranteed a wealthy future life? It is because they want to be responsible for their own lives, to live on their labor, not on their parents' fortune. Next, working gives them a strong sense of responsibility for their family and society. Family life is happiest when all members share family work and together contribute to making a more comfortable and harmonious life. Likewise, a country is most prosperous when all citizens contribute their parts to make it thrive.

Another important reason that makes people look for a job is that they understand the importance of producing property and avoiding wastefulness. As a matter of fact, not working leads to indolence; indolence facilitates spending and extravagance. People who don't work at all have nothing to keep themselves busy with, waste lots of time and money on entertainment, lavish shopping and so on. Realizing this, many people choose to work to stay away from wastefulness and to be helpful. In short, working or living on what they created teaches them not only the value of labor and property but also the importance of frugality and economy.

Last but not least, to work is to keep us active and fit. Working is about constantly learning and understanding things around us. When we stop working, we spend less time thinking and pondering about things that so far have deeply affected our lives. Soon knowledge is eroded and our brains become idle and self-indulgent. As time goes on, we gradually lose concern about everything except

ourselves. To prevent this from happening, some people, especially the old, still learn and work in various ways even though they have retired. As for the case of a group of sixty-year-old men in the US I learnt about from the newspaper, retirement did not prevent them from going to college and doing farming. They said it helped them stay active and healthy.

To sum up, working is rewarding because of the great benefits it brings about. Apart from earning money, people also work for many important purposes, including being aware of their duties, staying lively and active and steering clear from wastefulness. I may say that people work because working is the best way through which they can enjoy life.

- 2. What things will you take into consideration when choosing your career?**
- 3. Would you rather take up a challenging but not very well-paid job or a monotonous well-paid job? Why?**
- 4. Imagine that you are an employer at the job interview. What questions would you ask a person applying for the job?**
- 5. What would you advise a person who is about to go to a job interview?**

SITUATION 10

- 1. Do you agree that reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body?**

As well as I remember, these words belong to Joseph Addison and Richard Steele. And I agree with them.

Long before the invention of printing people valued books as treasure troves of the human knowledge and experience. Hand-written manuscripts took months of writing and were collected and kept in monasteries with utmost care.

Why are they so precious? To my mind, a book is one of the greatest wonders in the world. It gives us a unique chance to link up with authors who lived hundreds and thousands years ago. Thanks to books we can talk to people who lived in different ages and countries. Books are the surest way to bring nations together. They give us an insight not only into the past but also into the future. A book is a faithful friend. Books stir my imagination, expand the boundaries of the

familiar world. Some books teach us to live, form our moral values, some entertain us and give pleasure, some are very helpful in difficult situations.

Even in the modern age of rapidly developing information technology I still feel that the greatest and most efficient way of expending our knowledge is by reading.

Reading is like doing exercises. It's very important for people to have some regular exercises. This is very good for the posture, which I believe greatly affects the general health of the body and makes you stronger, and makes you feel good. After doing some strenuous exercise followed by a shower, you can really feel that your life is renewed and you have a fresh vigor with which to face the day. It seems to me that the more you exercise, the more you want to exercise. When you want and when you are able to use your body, you don't feel so much like sitting around being lazy.

The same can be said about reading. It develops a person's logical and analytical thinking, it enriches a person's vocabulary and gives a lot of life experience. It helps to understand other people, teaches how to behave in difficult situations, helps to avoid problems. Books serve the purpose of learning, teaching and instructing. They influence our emotions and form our moral values. After reading an interesting book I can really feel that my life is renewed and I have a fresh vigor with which to face the day. The more I read, the more I want to read. I feel thirst for new information, emotional effect and good piece of advice which can be obtained through reading.

There are different kinds of books, such as historical novels which show people's life in old times; adventure stories which tell us about brave and clever people and their adventures; popular science fiction books which create imaginary worlds; detective stories which show crime, criminals and clever detectives; romantic novels which tell us about happy or unhappy love, people's feelings; psychological dramas which show how people behave in different situations; and fairy-tales with imaginary heroes who fight for the good against the evil.

I have always had a lot of books to read. But it's difficult for me to choose my favourite writer out of a range of talented authors.

Frankly speaking, I am not keen on reading women's novels, one-day fiction and tabloids. I am interested in real literature, the books that are to be "chewed and digested".

In my view, a good writer must have an ability to portray life truthfully, to describe nature with love and understanding. A good writer can always make people laugh or cry. He has a sense of humour, great lyrical power and rich imagination.

One of my favourite writers is Vladimir Korotkevich. We know him as the author of historical novels, plays and also short stories. Among Korotkevich's best works about the past of Belarus I can name *The Wild Hunt of King Stakh*, where the writer describes historical events in the form of detective story. His *The*

Land beneath White Wings is about the history and culture of Belarus from old times to today. Every line of this novel speaks about author's love for his motherland, its people and its beautiful nature. Vladimir Korotkevich was the winner of the Ivan Melezh and Ya. Kolas literary prizes in Belarus. There are translations of his books into many languages.

As I study English, I try to read as many books by English and American writers as possible. The names of writers and poets such as W. Shakespeare, A. Christy, M. Twain, R. Burns, J. London, Ch. Dickens, E. Hemingway and many others are well-known all over the world.

I strongly believe that reading books develops my personality and intellect, helps me be a success at school. It gives me topics to discuss in conversations with my friends.

It was once said that except a living man there is nothing more wonderful than a book. To my mind it may be true.

2. What book influenced you most? Why?
3. Who is your favourite Belarusian/Russian/British author?
4. Imagine you are talking to a famous writer. What questions would you ask?
5. What book would you advise your friend to read on holidays?

SITUATION 11

1. Are you an honest person? Comment on the saying "Honesty is the best policy"

To my mind, honesty is a very good quality that people may have. Honest people tell the truth, they always keep their promises, they never betray their friends. In my view, honest people are just, impartial, dignified, thoughtful, consistent and loyal.

I admire such people as they are brave enough to tell the truth despite the fear of being criticized or punished. When I was a small child, I was afraid to blame myself with something wrong I had done. It seemed to me that my parents would punish me, so I used to make up an excuse in order not to reveal the truth. When I told a lie, I felt so ashamed that I regretted telling it. When I became older, I understood that honesty is the best policy. When you tell the truth, you are not

afraid of being caught lying. You don't have to remember what details you've made up to make other people believe your lie. You do not feel anxious or scared. On the contrary, you are calm as you needn't disguise anything.

One of my hobbies is reading. Good books teach me moral values, I can always find a wise piece of advice in them. Reading books has taught me to be loyal to myself and tell the truth – no matter how difficult it can be. As a pupil, I never cheat while having a test as it is a moral rule for me to be well prepared for a test or exam, to have deep knowledge of the subject. As a friend I never lie to my friends and I trust them. I never let out my friends' secrets. In my opinion, friendship is a unique thing that happens between two people. And it's a great gift. So, it's very important for me to be loyal and devoted in friendship. I am against so called "white" lies. In my view, when a person is not given some important information, it's not good for him or her.

When I do something wrong, I am not afraid to say about it to my parents, teachers or friends. You know, some of my peers find my behavior strange and illogical. It seems quite normal to some pupils to lie or cheat in order to get a better mark or so as not to be punished. I don't think that lie may help.

To my mind, lie becomes popular in our modern society. For example, a lot of pop stars make up false biographies in order to be in the highlight. They change their names and surnames, make up a lot of lies to be famous. I find it stupid and useless. In my view, an outstanding person is as person who does a lot for his motherland and people, for the humans in general.

Some athletes take dope to win sports competitions. Steroids and amphetamines are rather popular with them. Cheating in sport is a problem nowadays. A lot of famous athletes have been disqualified because of it. In my view, cheating spoils a powerful effect that sport has on people. "The sporting spirit" is an ability to lose, to face hard knocks, not to get angry when something is wrong. It is the ability for both to win without boasting afterwards and to lose without complaining. According to the Olympic motto it is the participation and not winning, that matters. All sports competitions must be honest.

The society we live in at present is called the society of information. Access to information can give us power and advantages. At the same time it causes so-called problems of the 21st century. One of them is software pirating. Surfing the Internet and visiting chat rooms have become dangerous. There are people who try to mislead others, especially children, who can let out private information, steal money from bank accounts and even abuse other people.

In my view, many people find honesty unnecessary nowadays. I don't agree with them. It is important for me to be honest both with myself and with the people who know me. I fully agree that "Honesty is the best policy".

2. Have you ever had to deal with two-faced people?

3. Are you good at hiding your emotions?

4. What can help you decide whether a person is telling lies or not?

5. What would you advise your friend who was caught cheating?

SITUATION 12

1. Your sibling asks you for advice whether to change his/her best friend or not. Should he/she follow the proverb "Be slow at choosing a friend, but slower in changing them"?

If you ask for my piece of advice, I can tell you the following. I have read about a survey conducted by Get Connected, a telephone helpline for young people, according to which the main causes of anxiety for most young people are relationships with their friends. Nothing, as it seems to them, can be worse than falling out with best friends. By the way, people of all ages rely on their friends to talk through any problem they may have.

As you know, it's not an easy thing to find a real friend. In my opinion, a real friend is a person whom you trust and respect, who is "a friend in need" and who never lets you down.

There are no written rules of how to make friends. Usually friendship between people grows when they have common views and judgments on things and events, have common interests and ambitions. A real friend should treat me with understanding, sympathy and compassion, exactly the way he wants to be treated by me.

In my view, friendship is a unique thing that happens between two people. And it's a great gift. A lot of people say they have got best friends, but I wonder how many people actually have a best friend in the real sense of the word.

As for me, I'm a happy person as I have a true and reliable friend whom I can name my best friend. Her name is Leila. She is an energetic girl, good at sports, especially at volleyball and swimming. She has different interests, one of them is the cinema. There is no film she hasn't seen. She knows everything about famous actors and directors, about the plot of a film and when and where it was made. Leila has a good character, sometimes I even think that it's impossible to be such a pleasant person with everybody but then I realize this is some sort of tactics, Leila follows the rule: treat people as you want them to treat you. I try to borrow this quality from her. Leila is a very responsible person and what I really appreciate is if she promises anything, no doubt she will do it. Leila knows

how to organize her time, in my opinion, she has time for everything. She used to plan her activities for a week, that's why she has time to go to the swimming pool, cinema and so on.

According to another American survey, young people today have large groups of friends. Having a close group of people to depend on seems more attractive and more secure than one exclusive relationship with one other person. I can't agree with people who think like that.

I can discuss anything with my best friend. I can walk into a room and she knows exactly what mood I'm in, what I need and if I ask for help or advice she will give me her helping hand immediately and never leave me at a loss.

To my mind, this is what real friendship means. I wouldn't change our friendship, our exclusive relationship for having two or three new friends.

It's up to you to decide whether to change your best friend or not. Think about what I've just told you and remember what the proverb says "Be slow at choosing a friend, but slower in changing him".

2. Can you confide your secrets to your friends?
3. What qualities do you think your best friend appreciates about you?
4. What will you never forgive your best friend?
5. Imagine you have no friends. What would your life be like?

SITUATION 13

1. Practice makes perfect. Do you follow this proverb in your studies?

As you know, our modern world makes a person be flexible and mobile, creative and inventive, literate and well-read, ecologically and socially conscious. It makes him know how to use modern technologies and learn foreign languages. Modern life makes a person broaden his horizons as long as he lives. People have to get education during all their lives.

To get knowledge people need education: they need to learn a lot of theory and get practical experience. I mean they need to turn theoretical knowledge into practical skills. Nowadays we can get education at school, college and university. There are also a lot of possibilities for self-education in the modern world.

You can't obtain knowledge without practice and hard work. It takes us a lot of time to get deep knowledge and develop practical skills. It goes without

saying that people are different. They have different abilities and natural talents. For example, some primary school children are a success due to their abilities. They find it easy to study at school. At the same time there are pupils who have problems with learning and memorizing new information. They usually find lessons difficult. But the main task of school is to develop a child's personality and talents. Our teachers always try to show us how to learn difficult things. In my view, any child is given a possibility to be a success at school. His achievements and progress depend on his everyday hard work.

It often happens that successful primary pupils with good natural abilities have no achievements in secondary school and vice versa. To my mind, a hard working child has more chances to get good knowledge and develop practical skills than a lazy child with lots of talents. The secret of this success is simple. He should follow a wise proverb that practice makes perfect.

Let's remember Horatio Nelson. He seemed very unlikely to become a seaman. However, despite his physical weakness he impressed his fellow pupils at grammar school by his great will. He did much physical exercise to achieve his aim. At the age of 14 he was allowed to join an expedition to the North Pole. He became a famous British admiral.

As for me, I'm keen on learning. I like to study hard to achieve good results and to get deep knowledge. I think that I should learn every school subject well and every subject is interesting for me. I get only excellent marks and it makes me feel proud and happy. I strongly believe to be a success I should study hard every day of my school-life.

A good example to prove the idea that practice makes perfect is learning a foreign language. We start learning it with vocabulary and grammar. At first pupils can use only separate words and phrases. It takes them a lot of time and practice to master a language.

English is one of those languages which may seem easy in the beginning, but then the bridge between basic knowledge and mastery takes a long time to cross. Students who learn English have to memorize a lot of words, idioms, phrasal verbs, rules how to use prepositions, articles and so on. Every day I try to memorize English words, phrases and practise them. I try to learn new word combinations in context in order to learn how they should be used. When I learn a rule for the first time, it usually seems easy. But when I am given a complicated task, I often make mistakes. Only after having a lot of drills do I start to realize that I remember the rule. It happens that I forget words, phrases or rules when I don't use them for some time. The only way out is to revise the things I have already studied. It proves that practice makes perfect.

In my view, if I practise English every day, I will be able to master it. I read books, newspapers, magazines and other periodicals, it allows me to enlarge my vocabulary, learn up-to-date idioms and phrasal verbs, learn to guess the meaning of the words from their context and brush up my knowledge. Watching

videos and TV programs helps me learn informal English, practice listening and learn non-verbal communication.

As a person I'm persistent, hardworking, confident and patient. So, I'm not afraid of drills, learning a lot, doing tests or having exams. I want to be an educated and intelligent person who has an interesting and well-paid job. That's why studying hard is interesting and important for me.

2. **What do you think is the best way to develop self-discipline?**
3. **What kind of people achieve better results in learning: those who have natural abilities or those who work harder?**
4. **If you were given a chance to study in Great Britain for a month, would you go there? What would you like to be taught?**
5. **What would you advise a person who is choosing a foreign language to study?**

SITUATION 14

1. **Different works of art have been created to please the eye and to excite our emotions. Which form of art is your favourite?**

It goes without saying that art is a great power as it appeals to the heart of a person. Different works of art have been created to please the eye and to excite emotions. As for me, I'm fond of music. It appeals to my heart, strengthens my mind and helps me stay cheerful and active.

The dictionary defines music as "the arrangement of sounds made by the instruments or voices in a way that is pleasant or exciting". But in fact it is much more complicated notion. It is the art that reflects life. It reflects people's ideas and emotions using no words.

People all over the world are moved by the beauty of Tchaikovsky's music, Beethoven's "The Moon Sonate", fugues composed by Bach. It goes without saying that the appreciation and understanding of music comes in time and very much depends on the person's education and intelligence. Such musical genres as symphony, chamber music, opera and ballet are not easy to understand as their beautiful melodies need patience, concentration and peace of mind.

Classical music helps me feel the rhythms of the universe, find peace and harmony inside my heart. When I listen to it, I forget where I am as I become a

part of the whole world. Words can not describe this magic feeling. It is really fantastic. And I am happy I can have it.

At the same time our today's world has new kinds of music. Certainly, new rhythms are the result of changing times. Modern tunes are easily caught. We can listen to music wherever we go. It is heard in every big shop and on public transport. Pop music and rap are very popular with teenagers nowadays due to the influence of mass media and mass culture.

As for me, I prefer rock. It is full of vigor and force. In my view, this music unites people all over the world, makes them feel a part of global family. Rock music gives me a keen sensual delight and pleasure, makes me feel active and full of life. I enjoy listening to rock music either on the Internet or by playing the CDs I have at home.

Music preferences and tastes are always a good topic to discuss with my friends and the people who are interested in it. I enjoy visiting music shops in Minsk where I can buy the latest releases made by my favourite bands. I enjoy watching their concerts on TV. I hope I would be able to visit their live concerts some day.

Some scientists say that rock music makes people feel hate instead of love. I can't agree here. In my view this music has a lot of positive effects which I have already mentioned.

The reaction to music is very personal. Any music can be interpreted in different ways. To my mind, it is the most appealing feature of music.

If you ask me, what other forms of art I prefer, I can name theatre, especially opera and ballet, cinema and painting. In my opinion, theatre and cinema help us see and understand our life better. We can laugh at our drawbacks and fears; we can have strong feelings and emotions while watching a tragedy or drama. They teach us to live, set some models and examples of behaviour, help to find a way out. They help us rest and entertain.

Painting is a form of art which shows moments of life in their beauty and uniqueness. I am not fond of portrait painting or still life. They seem a bit boring. I prefer landscapes. They show the beauty of nature, its might and power. I was deeply impressed by Thomas Gainsborough's pictures. As well as I know, he influenced the English school of landscape painting. This artist painted his native land. In my view, his works "Sunset" and "The bridge" contain poetry and music. I also like Joseph Turner whose most favourite topic was to paint sea. He painted waves and storms, clouds and mists with great skill. Unfortunately, I haven't learnt much about different styles and peculiarities of painting but I hope to do it in future. I hope I will be able to visit the National Gallery in London and feel the beauty of painting.

So, a human's life is impossible without art. It is a real wonder. And it will last forever because life is short but art is long.

2. Are you a theatre/cinema-goer? Why?
3. Who is your favourite singer/artist/actor?
4. Imagine you are a journalist speaking to a famous actor/artist/composer. What questions would you ask him?
5. Your friend wants to visit a museum. What museum would you recommend him/her to go to?

SITUATION 15

1. Do you agree that teachers open the door but you must enter it by yourself?

A famous British scientist Francis Bacon said "Knowledge is power". I fully agree here. In my view, the most important thing in every knowledge is blowing the mind and molding one's personality. The way of thinking of every person strongly depends on his knowledge. The reason for it is that knowledge broadens people's horizons, makes every person think and understand the world he lives in.

A child needs a teacher to help him become a literate and educated person. According to our constitution everybody has a right to a schoolplace for a child. These places are provided free of charge. Children study at school for 9 years then they may either continue their education at school or go to colleges and vocational schools. There is a wide choice of schools, colleges, vocational schools and universities to suit all tastes, income and inclinations. Primary and secondary school education is compulsory in Belarus.

In my view, the main principles of the educational system in our country are the priority of human values, national culture as the basis for education, humanism, scientific basis and support of gifted children. Any person can get the high-quality education according to his abilities and inclinations.

As I've already said, at the beginning a child needs a good teacher to help him open the door which leads to knowledge. No teacher can make you learn his subject if you don't want to do it. A child should make much effort to learn and memorize new information, obtain knowledge and develop his or her logical and analytical thinking. All that is easily done when you have a clever teacher who loves his or her work and pupils. It's very important when your teacher makes your lessons interesting and exciting, encourages you to study for mind developing, broadening your horizons and just for pleasure to get new information. As

for me, since my first days at school English has become my favourite subject. At the age of 6 I was introduced into foreign speech and I was taught to read, write and listen to short texts in English. My first English teacher made each lesson an interesting game which I enjoyed.

It was exciting and interesting to learn English by playing games and singing songs. As we grew older our lessons became more instructive. Now learning English doesn't seem to be an easy thing but our teacher makes it interesting. At our lessons we watch videos and listen to music, we discuss important problems and learn a lot about British and American culture, we learn to speak about our country in English.

Our teacher is very creative and hard-working. Her lessons are always catching and instructive. She is never indifferent to any of us. She has been to different countries, so she often brings pictures, books, magazines, letters and videos which make our lessons very exciting. She involves us in interesting Internet project activities which helps us understand foreign culture better. Our teacher devotes her energy to making us speak good English. Moreover, she has succeeded in getting us to learn English individually at home.

Giving this example, I try to show that a good teacher does a lot to help pupils enter the world of knowledge and wisdom. My teachers have shown me how to get knowledge while reading books, periodicals, watching TV programs or surfing the Web. They help me understand that every person needs education and can get it by self-studying.

Speaking about my English teacher, I may say that she helped me love English. Now I read English books and periodicals on the Internet, watch TV and listen to music to improve my knowledge. I know what I should do to speak English fluently. I know that I will have to improve my knowledge throughout my life. So, I will continue learning foreign languages by travelling, watching TV, reading, listening, using self-training courses, surfing the Internet, communicating with my pen-pals and other foreign people. I'm going to learn German and Spanish in the future. English lessons showed me how to learn a foreign language. So, I think I will be able to do it either at special courses or by using self-training courses which include CDs, videos, text-books and exercises. I may follow such courses on my own and make progress as I go along.

As you know, our modern world makes a person be flexible and mobile, creative and inventive, literate and well-read, ecologically and socially conscious. It makes him know how to use modern technologies and learn foreign languages. Modern life makes a person broaden his horizons as long as he lives. People have to get education during all their lives.

A modern person has to know where and how to get information and knowledge in order to have a good job and be a success in the society. I may say that I'm lucky to have clever and tolerant teachers who help me get education as well as the knowledge how to obtain information and get knowledge in my future life.

2. **What is more important for success: to have natural abilities or to work hard?**
3. **Can you learn a foreign language without the help of a teacher?**
4. **Imagine you are working as a teacher at our school. Would you find this job interesting? Why? What subject would you like to teach?**
5. **What would you advise a primary school pupil who doesn't want to study?**

SITUATION 16

1. **Imagine that you overheard people talking about you. What would you like them to say?**

As a teenager, I may say that establishing relationships with other people – such as teachers, parents or my friends – doesn't always come easy to me. What other people think about my character, my behaviour, my appearance is important to me.

So, if I overheard my friends talking about me, what would I like them to say? On the one hand, I would like them to discuss positive features of my character. The way I see myself is that I'm an intelligent and responsible person. I'm kind-hearted, honest and friendly, I have high self-esteem. I appreciate people's honesty, kindness, sense of justice and intelligence. I don't like it when people are rude, aggressive, bossy, greedy and impatient, when they let me down. So, if I overheard my friends talking about me as an interesting person who is reliable, clever and friendly, I would be happy. On the other hand, it would be very interesting to overhear people speaking about my shortcomings and the features of my character they don't like.

Once I heard my best friend say that I was stubborn at times. I felt upset but I can't agree with her here. To my mind, being stubborn and persistent is not always a bad thing. It also means that I do everything possible to achieve my aim. I never leave things half-done. At times I feel dissatisfied with myself, especially when I fail to do something or can't do things the way they should be done. Frankly speaking, I wouldn't like my acquaintances to discuss my drawbacks. I want only my best friends to speak about the things I should get rid of. If I try to look at myself from aside, I may also say that I should be more patient, attentive

to people. I should be more sociable and more open-minded, because sometimes I feel scared of being lonely.

You know, a lot of young people are eager to keep up with the latest fashion in order to look attractive and trendy. Many teenagers try to copy fashion models and pop-stars in order to look cool. As for me, I don't think of clothes I put on much. Fashion is not the most important thing in my life, as I think that an attractive person is a person who is sociable, communicative, cheerful and vigorous. This person looks attractive not due to the fact that he or she is exceptionally pretty or handsome. This person looks attractive because his inner world is beautiful and his appearance is in harmony with it. When I look in the mirror, I see a blond girl with long, straight hair, hazel eyes and a slender figure. I prefer to look like that rather than look like a top-model or a TV star. I guess some of my acquaintances may criticize me behind my back for not looking fashionable or chic. I don't pay attention to their criticism when it concerns my clothes.

At the same time it's very important to me what other people think about my appearance. I try to keep fit to be healthy and look attractive, so I wouldn't like to be criticized behind my back for something people don't like about my body or hairstyle. I like it when people are open-minded and honest. I like it when my friends are honest enough to tell me about my complexes or the things they don't like about me.

If I overheard my teachers talking about me, I would like them to discuss my progress in school curricula. I'm a hard-working and diligent student, so, the things my teachers say about my abilities, the way I study are important for me.

If I overheard my parents talking about me, I would like them to say how much they love me. As any good parents, my mum and dad often try to criticize my bad behaviour. Sometimes I want them to show more love and understanding.

I may say that I'm not afraid of being criticized though I take it to heart sometimes. I realize that nobody is perfect and I'm ready to change some features of my character to become a better person.

2. **Do you get along with your classmates and family members?**
3. **Is it easy or difficult to work in a team?**
4. **If your best friend criticized you, how would you react to his/her words?**
5. **What would you advise a two-faced person if you overheard him/her talking about you?**

SITUATION 17

1. An early riser is sure to be in luck. Do you agree?

In my view, early risers are lucky as they have a lot of possibilities to have an interesting and exciting working day or a day off. If you belong to the type of people called 'owls', it's difficult for you to get up as early as 6 or 7 a.m. If you belong to the type of people called "larks", you can easily get up at 6 or 7 and quickly jump out of bed. After doing some strenuous exercise followed by a shower, an early riser can really feel that his or her life is renewed and he or she has a fresh vigor with which to face the day.

So, an early riser wakes up early in the morning, gets up easily, does morning exercises and meets a new day with a smile. In my view, to be lucky and successful everybody should organize and plan their life and be in a good mood. If a person wants to do a lot in the daytime, he or she should get up early and plan a working day in advance.

As for me, I am lucky to be a "lark". My working day usually starts at half past 6, and my days off start at half past 7. My parents help me realize that going in for sport makes people healthy and successful. As they say, exercise, diet, vitamins and healthy habits are basic principles to lead an active and healthy lifestyle. Sport occupies an important place in my life. It gives me health, force and beauty, it strengthens my body, puts me in good spirit and increases my capacity for work. So, I start every day with morning exercises. Then I go to the mirror and smile. I imagine a new day that has already started and I always look forward to meeting it.

I want to be a success in life. I think it is necessary to plan my working day and my days off in advance in order to do as many useful things as I am able to do. So, at the end of the week I try to organize the week that follows it. At the end of the day I plan the next day of my life. I am interested in different things. I have a lot of hobbies - that's why it is important for me to have enough time to do everything I have planned.

If you ask me what my favourite hobbies are, I can say that I'm fond of playing volleyball, swimming, playing the guitar, reading and listening to music. At the same time I like school and I'm keen on learning. I like to study hard to achieve good results and get deep knowledge. I think that I should learn every school subject well and every subject is interesting for me. As you see, every day I need a lot of time to realize everything I want.

Being an early riser helps me a lot. I usually go to school in a good mood. I work hard at my lessons and try to memorize new information well in order not to spend much time on doing my homework in the evening. After school I go in for sport. Three times a week I go in for swimming. From my point of view it's an excellent exercise. It helps flexibility, stamina, heart and lungs capability. I

play volleyball on Wednesdays and Saturdays. I love this team game because it requires different kinds of skills. You must do your best and at the same time you should keep your eye on what your teammates are doing and you need a quick brain too. Every Tuesday and Thursday I attend guitar classes. I am keen on music and I want to play the guitar well. I try to find time to visit my best friend. Our friendship is an important part of my life. We can listen to music, discuss books or films, surf the Internet, watch videos or go for a walk together. In spite of the fact that I have to do a lot of things every day, I always try to find some time to spend with my friend.

I have to do my household duties every day. I usually do the shopping, wash up, water plants and so on. On Saturday I tidy up my room. Frankly speaking, I'm not keen on tidying up either my room or our flat. But it's a necessity for me. Every Saturday I do the room: I vacuum it, mop the floor and arrange books and CDs in their usual order.

In the evening I do my homework. It usually takes me about an hour and a half or two hours to do it. Then I read a good book, watch a movie or listen to music. I usually go to bed at half past ten or 11 o'clock in the evening.

I make plans for my weekends in advance. I like to spend them either with my relatives or with my friends. We play indoor or outdoor games, visit exhibitions and concerts, cook tasty food, watch TV or videos, go for a walk and do a lot of interesting things together.

As you can see, I try to have enough time both for work and rest. My hobbies enrich my knowledge and help me relax. I think I've chosen hobbies according to my character and they make my life more interesting.

I think I organize my everyday life well. I try to fill it with useful things which develop my personality and abilities now and I hope it will help me in my future life.

2. What are the most time-consuming activities for you?

3. Do you have enough time for work and rest?

4. Imagine you are planning a weekend with your household. What would you suggest doing at the weekend?

5. What would you advise a person who can't save time?

SITUATION 18

1. Many people prefer to live in big cities, others dream of small towns. What are your preferences?

It's common knowledge that tastes differ. Nowadays there are a lot of people who prefer to live in big cities, and, at the same time, there are others, who dream of living in small towns. As for me, I prefer big cities to small towns.

It goes without saying that life in a big city has a lot of disadvantages. The first and foremost is an air- and noise-pollution. The car exhaust contains several pollutants and one of them is lead, which is particularly harmful to children, because their brains and nervous systems are more vulnerable than those of adults are. Besides, life in a big city is much more stressful and expensive than that in the country or in a small town.

Everyone grumbles about exorbitant rents that must be paid for tiny flats. Apart from accommodation, the cost of living is very high. A citizen runs into a lot of extra expenses paying for the public transport, snacks, food delivery and entertainment.

There are too many people living together in one city so the streets are crowded. Minsk has a population of 2 million people, St. Petersburg has a population of 5 million people, London – 8 million people, New York – 9 million people, Tokyo – 12 million people. In Tokyo, for example, the worst time to be in the street is at 11.30 p.m. That is when the night clubs are closing and everybody wants to go home. At this time the taxis are usually shared by four or five people who live in the same part of the city. It also takes people a lot of time to get to work on metro, as there are long distances between the stations. So, on London trains you will see a lot of people reading newspapers. On a Tokyo train everybody in a seat seems to be asleep. In big cities drivers suffer from traffic jams, accidents and car crashes. Pedestrians suffer from rush hour, constant queuing and irregularity of public transport.

But whatever the disadvantages are, I'm charmed with the speed of city life and great possibilities it gives.

Living in a big city gives you a lot of advantages nowadays. Firstly, life in big cities is more anonymous. You can be what you want to be and do what you want to do without anybody getting upset about it, whereas in a small town almost everybody knows you and expects you to live and behave in a certain way.

Secondly, there is so much going on in the city. You have access to a huge range of concerts of different types of music – pop, classical, jazz, whatever you are looking for. There are a lot of theatres, cinemas, museums, art galleries, libraries to visit as well as big shopping centres where you can buy any goods you need.

For example, the cultural life of Minsk is very diverse. There are about 10 theatres, a few concert halls, a circus and a lot of other cultural centres. It is a city of science. Young people can choose among the best Belarusian universities and academies which are situated there. The largest among them are the Belarusian State University and the Belarusian National Technical University. After leaving school, I'll try to enter the BSU as I consider it to be the leading university in our country. So, a big city gives a young person possibilities to get good education and to find a prestigious and well-paid job.

To my mind, schoolchildren in big cities are more advanced in education. They have museum classes and excursions, they can attend lectures and preparatory courses and therefore they have more chances to enter university.

City dwellers are sociable and communicative. I find the city an easy place to make friends in. In fact, in a big city you have a much wider range of people to choose from and to make friends with.

Big cities are beautiful. They look modern with their tall buildings, interesting architecture and design.

I'd rather quote Samuel Johnson's words, who said, "When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life". To my mind it is true. If you are tired of fun, pleasure, comfort and excitement a big city offers you, you are either tired of life or, most probably, you need some relaxing break in a small town or in the country for a change.

2. What is our town (city/village) famous for?
3. Are you a home-lover? Do you spend most of your free time at home?
4. Imagine you are given a chance to live in any place you want. What place would you choose? Why?
5. If you were visiting London, what would you ask your host about this city?

SITUATION 19

1. A man's home is a reflection of his personality. Is it true for your house?

In my view, a man's home is the reflection of his personality, as the clothes he wears, the food he eats, the friends he spends time with. Houses and flats reflect the

ways of life and habits of their owners. It's common knowledge that tastes differ. So, every person tries to furnish and do up his house or flat according to his taste.

For example, optimists prefer warm colors while pessimists are fond of cold ones. People who are romantic like fireplaces, cushions, carpets, flowers, romantic pictures and souvenirs. Big fans are keen on decorating their houses, especially their bedrooms, with posters of the celebrities they admire. People who like to show everybody they are rich cram their accommodation with expensive furniture, pictures, souvenirs and different things that cost much but have neither practical nor aesthetic value.

In my view, to live comfortably doesn't mean to live in luxury in a detached house, which contains all modern conveniences and appliances, which is well-furnished and nicely decorated. I'm convinced that the most important thing is the relaxing friendly atmosphere at home.

The flat my family lives in reflects our characters and shows our tastes. I'm proud to say that my home is the place where everybody understands, respects and loves me, where even the kettle sings from happiness.

There is a living-room, my parents' room, my sister's room and my room in our apartment. We also have a kitchen, a bathroom, a lavatory and a hall there. Our flat has a good layout. All the rooms are separate. The flat is nicely furnished. All its rooms look attractive.

I can say that there is a lot of likeness between me and my dad both in appearance and in character. My father is a very intelligent man, he is a cheerful person with a good sense of humour. He enjoys taking photos. So, there are a lot of photos in our flat which show different places we have been to, you can also see our relatives and best friends in them.

My mother is a quiet and charming person. She is very kind and she does a good job of being a mother. She likes to do up our flat with household china, souvenirs and plants. She takes care of the place we live in and teaches me to do household duties and tidy up my room. I know I can be a real pain sometimes, but I try to follow her wise pieces of advice and keep my room clean.

Now I invite you to my room. It's small but at the same time it's nice and comfortable. Everything in it is dear and precious to me. It gives me the atmosphere of independence and privacy. On the right there is my bed. You can see some posters and photos on the walls. They show my friends and me as well as famous people I admire. I am keen on music that's why I have posters of my favourite bands. You can also find a guitar in my room as I am learning to play it. On the left there is my desk with a personal computer on it. Here I do my homework, surf the Internet, watch films, listen to music and work with photos which I have taken. You can see piles of CDs on the shelves. They contain the latest releases made by the bands I am fond of and my favourite movies. There are also shelves with books where I keep my textbooks, especially English textbooks, fiction and magazines. You won't find toys or dolls here as I'm not a romantic person.

When you enter my room, you can easily guess what my hobbies are and what things I find important in my life. In a tiny wardrobe you'll find my clothes. There are mostly jeans, T-shirts and sweaters in it.

Frankly speaking, I'm not keen on tidying up either my room or our flat. But it's a necessity for me. I can't say that I am a messy person, but I am very busy during the week at school and with after-school activities. Every Saturday I do the room: I vacuum it, mop the floor and arrange books and CDs in their usual order. Although all that makes me a bit nervous, my room looks clean and attractive. My friends often come to my place and we like to get together in my room. They say it's a cosy place for a teenager to live in.

In conclusion, I'd like to recite a poem by Carol Fitchett which is called "A Home". In my view, it fully reflects what home means to any person.

To be lit with electricity of caring for all,
To be carpeted by friends from wall to wall,
A few moments of privacy and thoughts of love,
To be heated by the warmth of God above.
To be cleaned of bickerings every day,
To be furnished with an understanding way.
To be filled with the aroma of delicate food,
And then the happiness will become its mood!

2. What are your household chores?
3. What things in your room show your personality?
4. Imagine you are buying a flat/house. What questions would you ask?
5. If your parents were making a decision whether to buy a flat or a detached house, what would you suggest?

SITUATION 20

1. As a rule your parents provide you with some pocket money. What things do you usually spend this money on?

It goes without saying that people use money every day to pay for things they buy. They can pay either in cash or by credit cards or checks.

What makes money valuable? What use does it have for us? As the proverb says, "Money makes the world go round". There are four main things money does

for everybody. First, it makes possible exchange and trade. Second, money can be used to measure and compare the values of various things. Third, it's a storehouse of value. And fourth, it serves as a standard for future payments.

I don't earn money at present. I depend on my parents in food, clothes and all other things I need. I'm not keen on shopping at all and when my parents ask me to buy something I'm often reluctant to do it. My parents usually decide what clothes to buy for me and I have to go with them to the department store to buy necessary clothes. My favourite items are blue jeans, grey sweaters, black boots and so on. Most of all I like book and music shops. I can stay there for hours leafing through piles of CDs or books. So, I've bought a book of English idioms recently.

At school I spend money on buying food. My eating habits and drinking habits are quite reasonable. So, I usually buy salads, porridge, mashed potatoes with fish or meat at our school canteen. I like orange juice and apple juice. I seldom buy fast food or fizzy drinks as I consider them to be bad for my health.

I am happy to live in a united family. It's a big pleasure for me to save my pocket money in order to buy nice presents for my household. I often buy flowers, nice souvenirs such as key-holders, photo albums, pictures, stationery, funny toy animals and dolls for my family members. I feel happy when I can make my mum, dad and sister happy. As I appreciate hand-made presents, I often make toys, cards for my family members by myself. I often go to the stationery to buy some colored paper, glue, ribbons and fabric to make nice and creative presents.

I have a good friend. I buy and make different interesting things for her too.

So, having pocket money makes me feel confident and independent. Sometimes I wish I had more pocket money to buy nice presents. This summer I am going to try a part-time job to be more independent of my parents in money.

In my view, parents shouldn't give much money to their children as it may spoil them. A child should understand that his or her parents work hard to earn their living. It takes them a lot of time to earn money for children but some children can easily spend this money on the things they don't need at all. Some children keep asking their parents to give them much money to buy fashionable clothes and accessories or they spend a lot of money on entertainment. As for me it's not reasonable. I believe children should respect their parents' work and learn how to spend money. So, I try to think twice before spending my pocket money.

- 2. Are you satisfied with the amount of pocket money you are given?**
- 3. If you were rich, how would you use your money?**
- 4. Imagine you are talking to a celebrity who is very successful in business. What questions would you ask him/her?**
- 5. If your friend were looking for a part-time job, what would you advise him/her?**

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