

ОТКРЫВАЯ МИР С АНГЛИЙСКИМ ЯЗЫКОМ

150 ЭССЕ ДЛЯ ЕГЭ



ГОТОВИМСЯ К ЕГЭ

С.А. Юнёва

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**150 ЭССЕ
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Готовимся к ЕГЭ

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Пособие адресовано учащимся, самостоятельно готовящимся к ЕГЭ по английскому языку, а также учителям, которые могут использовать его на занятиях в классе и при подготовке учащихся к зачету, экзамену или олимпиаде. Оно включает в себя 150 эссе, составленных в соответствии со всеми требованиями, предъявляемыми к письменному высказыванию с элементами рассуждения. Основная цель данного пособия состоит в том, чтобы помочь учащимся блестяще справиться с написанием эссе.

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Уважаемые читатели!

Учебное пособие «Английский язык. 150 эссе для ЕГЭ» является дополнительным компонентом к учебно-методическим комплектам по английскому языку. Его основная цель состоит в том, чтобы помочь вам справиться с письменной частью ЕГЭ по английскому языку, а именно, с написанием эссе. Письменная часть Единого Государственного Экзамена является одной из самых сложных и требует тщательной подготовки.

Данное пособие предназначено для учащихся, которые самостоятельно готовятся к ЕГЭ по английскому языку. Оно также адресовано учителям, которые могут использовать его на занятиях в классе и при подготовке учащихся к зачету, экзамену или олимпиаде. Пособие состоит из 150 эссе, составленных в соответствии со всеми требованиями, предъявляемыми к письменному высказыванию с элементами рассуждения.

Многие учащиеся сталкиваются с рядом трудностей, когда перед ними встает задача написать эссе. Стимул для высказывания представлен утверждением. Учащиеся должны выразить свое мнение по поводу данного утверждения, привести аргументы и доказательства. При этом содержание должно отражать все аспекты, указанные в задании; стилевое оформление речи должно быть выбрано правильно. Учащиеся должны следить за тем, чтобы высказывание было логично; средства логической связи использованы правильно; текст разделен на абзацы.

Еще одна трудность заключается в том, что при оценивании заданий раздела «Письмо» следует учитывать такой параметр, как объем письменного текста, выраженный в количестве слов. Требуемый объем для развернутого письменного высказывания – 200–250 слов. Допустимое отклонение от заданного объема составляет 10%. Если в выполненном задании менее 180 слов, то задание проверке не подлежит и оценивается в 0 баллов. При превышении объема более чем на 10%, т.е. если в задании более 275 слов, проверке подлежит только та часть работы, которая соответствует требуемому объему.

Данное пособие поможет вам блестяще справиться с написанием эссе. Надеюсь, что работа с ним доставит вам удовольствие.

Желаю успеха!

Юнёва С.А.

FOOD

Fast food is very popular and saves time for busy working people. However, many experts say that it is not completely healthy.

Do you know a person who has never been to McDonald's? McDonald's is the leading global foodservice retailer serving millions of people in more than 100 countries each day. McDonald's restaurants sell what is called "fast" or "junk" food — hamburgers, chips and so on. Such food is very popular, especially with children and teenagers.

Personally, I adore hamburgers, cheeseburgers, apple pies, muffins and fruit cocktails. This food is tasty, cheap and ubiquitous. What is more, going to McDonald's saves much time and effort. I don't have to go to a supermarket, prepare meals and wash the dishes when I eat out. Besides, I like the holiday atmosphere of McDonald's. There I can relax, enjoy the food and celebrate some event with my friends and relatives.

But experts say that fast food makes people overweight and even obese and elevates the risk of diabetes and cancer. If your food includes hamburgers, chips, hot dogs, pizzas and fizzy drinks like Coke, Pepsi, Sprite and others, you are facing a serious problem threatening your health. Such food is full of chemical additives. For example, a can of Coke contains about eight teaspoons of sugar and artificial sweeteners. Moreover, there is a risk of food poisoning.

To sum it up, we should think more about our health. We should try to avoid fast food and eat more fruit and vegetables. Those people who don't care about what they eat may face serious problems. So let's remember about our health and make the right choice.

Some people say that genetically modified (GM) food is dangerous to their health. Others believe that it is absolutely harmless and has a number of advantages.

Nowadays people are getting more and more concerned about the food they eat as it is closely connected with the way they look and feel. That is why there are so many arguments about the safety of genetically modified food.

Genetically modified crops have been developed by changing the plant's genetic structure in order to help the plant resist against different diseases or produce larger crops. Personally, I try not to buy GM food as there is no scientific conclusion so far to prove its safety for human consumption. We don't know what unforeseen consequences there might be. I prefer not to risk my health because scientists are not sure if GM food is absolutely harmless or not.

However, a lot of people are not worried about the negative influence of GM food on their health. Besides, producers of this food say that it has a number of advantages in terms of price, durability and nutritional value. They also say there is no risk to human health, although possible side effects connected with the use of GM products have not been studied.

Can we trust producers of GM food? I don't think so. Unfortunately, in Russia the law does not prohibit the use of GM products. I believe that it's up to you to decide whether to buy GM food or not. Anyway, producers of this food must mark their products if they contain GM ingredients.

Some people say that food is our friend, while others think that it may become an enemy.

Can we live without food? The answer is definitely "no". Food is essential to our body which is continually wasting and requires new energy. Experts say that food has some special powers that can control our lives, for better or for worse.

To my mind, food is our friend if it is healthy and taken with due regard to the exercise and waste of the body. I believe that if you eat the right food, you can manage your mood and boost your brainpower. For example, when I feel blue, I treat myself to a bar of chocolate or an ice-cream and become more cheerful and energetic. When I am to take a test, I eat a handful of nuts or a banana because such food helps me concentrate.

However, sometimes food may become a real enemy. Unfortunately, some people don't pay attention to what they eat. If their diet includes fast food and fizzy drinks, they can do much harm to their health. People who are fond of hamburgers and Coca-Cola often suffer from diabetes, cancer and tooth decay. Moreover, they may become overweight and even obese.

To sum up, food that contains vitamins gives you a psychological lift and helps you improve your health. But food that has a hefty amount of chemical additives, fat, sugar or caffeine makes you fat and draws energy away from your brain. I strongly feel that if you take control of your food, you will be able to take control of your life.

Nowadays more and more people become vegetarians. Others say they can't do without meat or fish.

Being a vegetarian is rather popular nowadays. Some people say they don't eat meat and fish because it is healthy. Others follow the example of their favourite actor or musician. Is it worth becoming a vegetarian?

Personally, I think that people should eat both meat and fish. Our ancestors would not have survived if they hadn't hunted and fished. Meat and fish are nourishing and they contain vitamins that make us stronger. Besides, fish is good for our brains.

However, quite a lot of people say it is cruel to eat animals. They feel sorry for pigs, chickens or rabbits that are kept in cages. Vegetarians are convinced that killing animals is a crime. So their food consists of vegetables, fruit and nuts. They say that such a diet does much good to their health and contains all the vitamins, minerals and protein they need. But I think that if all people eat only plants, there will not be enough food for everybody. What is more, most fruit and vegetables are harmful because they are full of pesticides.

So it is up to you to decide whether to become vegetarian or not. Personally, I believe that we should eat different food but at the same time we should know where to stop.

FASHION

Most people believe that it's important to look nice. However, some people say that we place too much importance on appearance and fashion.

One will hardly disagree that it is pleasant to look at a person who is neatly and beautifully dressed. A person usually chooses clothes according to his or her age, social class, financial position and occupation. People also choose clothes according to their preferences and character.

To my mind, if a person wants to produce a good impression and to be successful, he or she must look nice. When people speak to you, they always pay attention to your appearance and your clothes. If you look sloppy and untidy, they will try to avoid you. There is a saying that "good clothes open all doors" and I quite agree with it.

But some people place too much importance on their appearance. They spend much money on expensive clothes and sometimes they look ridiculous trying to be fashionable. There are some styles that can surprise and even shock people such as punks, hippies or Goths. It looks strange when a person wears razor blades instead of earrings, dyes his or her hair bright red or purple or puts on shoes on enormous platform. Some teenagers are fond of bright make-up, black fingernails, scruffy long hair or baggy clothes. But I think it is silly to slavishly follow the current fashions.

In conclusion, I'd like to say that nowadays fashion becomes even more influential than it was in the past. It effects and moulds public taste. I believe that people should follow fashion and pay attention to their appearance, but it should never become a kind of obsession.

Some teenagers think that clothes make the man, while others don't care much about what they wear.

Nowadays the word "fashion" is a synonym for beauty, style and glamour. Every shop offers a wide choice of fashionable clothes and it is hard to resist the temptation to buy something new. But is it all right to put so much attention to clothes?

Personally, I am sure that there are more important things in life than fashion. To my mind, people speak too much about it and waste a lot of money on clothes. I have a pair of jeans and I wear them every day. I think jeans are comfortable and cheap. I never go for the latest styles or buy very expensive clothes.

However, most teenagers say that clothes show their personality. Besides, they are the first thing people see when they meet them. Teenagers believe that clothes help them produce a favourable impression and they say they feel better when they are dressed well. Young people also use bright make-up, cut and dye their hair and carry different accessories such as bags, purses, glasses, jewellery, hats or scarves in order to attract attention. Some youngsters are fond of experimenting with their look and mixing styles. But I don't think it is wise to become a fashion victim.

To conclude, I believe that clothes do not make the man. The main aim of clothes is to protect the human body from extreme weather, insects, chemicals and other hazards. The second aim is to attract attention and to indicate status. In my opinion, the main thing about clothes is comfort. As for beauty and style, they are less important.

The question of what pupils should wear to school rouses strong feelings on both sides. Some people give many reasons in favor of school uniforms. However, there are a lot of people who are against them.

The problem of school uniforms is discussed in every school. The majority of schoolchildren have a negative attitude to wearing a uniform. Nevertheless, there are arguments for school uniforms that should not be discounted.

To my mind, the school uniform has a lot of advantages. Firstly, some teenagers wear clothes that are not appropriate at school such as short skirts or clothes with vulgar language. Secondly, teachers say that uniforms help improve discipline and reduce peer pressure and bullying. It should also be noted that most pupils don't mind wearing uniforms. The wearing of school uniforms helps pupils realize that a person's unique gifts and personality traits go deeper than their clothes. What is more, the school uniform promotes equality because everyone has to wear the same.

However, some teachers believe that bringing in uniforms will not solve the school discipline problem. Clothes are not the main cause of bullying and therefore it will continue, regardless of dress policy. Most pupils are convinced that school uniforms interfere with their rights for self-expression. Some parents are also against uniforms because they are not cheap. But on the other hand, it is true that teenagers place too much importance on appearance and fashion. So pupils whose parents cannot afford to buy them fashionable clothes often become outsiders and suffer from bullying and emotional stress. So I think that a school uniform can prove to be a cheaper way of dressing children.

To conclude, school uniforms still remain a hot topic. I believe it is up to pupils, their teachers and parents to decide whether children should wear uniforms or not.

Some people like fur coats and hats, while others think that wearing fur is unacceptable.

Animal furs have long served to make clothes or to decorate them. However, the use of fur as clothing and decoration is considered controversial by some people.

Personally, I don't wear fur for several reasons. Firstly, the production of fur coats and hats involves cruelty to animals. Millions of foxes, rabbits, minks, beavers, chinchillas and other animals are killed on farms because of their commercially valuable fur. Many of these animals are raised in cages which leave them little room to move around. Most animal rights groups object to the trapping and killing of wildlife. The anti-fur movement involves celebrities who try to convince people that fur is not fashionable. Secondly, nowadays there are a lot of materials that will not let you freeze. Thirdly, fur is very expensive and I can't afford to buy fur coats and hats.

On the other hand, in some climates it is so cold that people can't do without fur. For some regions in Russia fur trade is the only business that gives people an opportunity to support their families. Besides, some people prefer furs to artificial materials because they are healthier and much more beautiful. Anyway, it is difficult to convince people not to buy fur.

To sum up, it is unacceptable to wear furs only because of their beauty. I strongly feel that fur must be worn only as a necessity.

Most fashion houses complain that producers of knockoff versions copy and sell their designs. Some people say that copies are much worse than the original. However, the knock-off industry brings some positive effects to trends and to the designers as well.

A lot of manufacturers copy famous designers and produce knockoff suits, dresses, jeans, bags and accessories. Some people can't decide whether the massive knockoff industry is a good or bad thing.

Personally, I think that the fashion industry is an expensive one. So it is no wonder the knock-off business is so successful. Ordinary people want to have access to the latest styles and trends as much as the wealthy do. Most middle class consumers cannot afford to pay 1000 euros for designer jeans, but they can buy a 100 euro imitation. As a rule everybody knows that they buy copies, and so there are no complaints about the quality. What is more, knockoff clothes can be in the shops within two or three days of a fashion show, before the original is available for sale.

On the other hand, the quality of most copies is extremely low. Poorly made knockoff suits lose colour; bags fall apart. Fashion houses say that they are losing sales because of the knockoff industry. Besides, knockoff versions have a negative effect on their image. But to my mind, knockoffs bring more good than bad to the fashion industry because they actually promote the brand or designer, which encourages consumers to buy fashion labels.

To conclude, the copying of brand names and logos is outlawed. However, the knockoff industry is thriving and producers of copies are becoming richer and richer. But in spite of the knockoff business, fashion designers have remained more than wealthy. Therefore, I believe that prohibiting knockoffs would be eliminating more good than bad.

A lot of young people cover their bodies with tattoos and decorate them with piercing. However, others say that body art has many drawbacks.

Tattooing and piercing are popular in many parts of the world and they are practiced for decorative, religious or other reasons. As the use of body art grows, it is becoming a controversial issue.

In my opinion, tattoos and piercing don't make people more beautiful. Most employers don't want employees to have tattoos and piercing because it gives them an air of unprofessionalism. Some people are asked to remove belly rings or tongue studs when they are at work. Employees often have to wear long sleeves and trousers to hide their tattoos. Sometimes young people are allowed to show their tattoos if they are not offensive, but most companies still prefer conventional looks. Furthermore, doctors warn people against possible dangers of tattooing and piercing including bacterial infection and allergic reactions. These procedures are painful and risky. Besides, one should remember that it is difficult to remove a tattoo. Some people have to pay much money to undergo laser erasure treatments.

However, some young people say that their tattoos and piercing make them feel attractive and rebellious. They also believe that body art gives them an opportunity to show their individuality. Anyway, when you are invited to a firm for a job interview, you can hide your tattoos and remove all jewellery. But I still believe that body art is unsightly.

To conclude, tastes differ. You may admire the huge dragon on your back, but your relatives, friends and colleagues may dislike it. If you want to improve your job prospects and to stay healthy, you'd better leave your body unadorned.

TRAVELLING

Many pupils go on school trips. Some people say they are interesting and educational. Other people say that they are a waste of time and children should learn in the classroom.

Most teachers are convinced that there is more to learning than lessons in the classroom. That is why they try to create memorable learning experiences with the help of educational school trips.

School trips include a wide range of outdoor educational and residential courses, designed to stimulate, educate and motivate pupils. To my mind, school trips help teachers inspire pupils and bring subject areas to life. School trips broaden children's mind, improve their knowledge of history and geography and make their lives interesting and eventful. Whether pupils want an educational school trip within their country or abroad their aim is the same: to enjoy sightseeing, to discover new things, to meet interesting people and to get wonderful impressions and learning experiences which educate, excite and inspire.

However, some parents don't think that school trips are essential. They believe that pupils can learn everything staying in the classroom. Other parents don't like the fact that they have to pay for most school trips. Moreover, Moms and Dads are often afraid of possible dangers and difficulties which may arise during any school trip. Nevertheless, statistics show that school trips are usually safe for children. But reasonable safety measures are still required.

To sum up, a school trip is a challenging, rewarding and always exciting experience. Pupils will have fun while learning new skills and capabilities. There is no better way to foster team building, positive attitudes and a sense of personal achievement. I think that school trips will certainly benefit pupils' performance back at school.

There are people, who think that the best way to travel in a town or in a city is on foot. However a lot of others prefer driving a car or using public transport.

Today everybody understands that time is money. We can't afford to spend much time on the road, so we use cars and public transport to travel faster.

On the one hand, we shouldn't forget that we can use our legs. In my opinion, when people travel on foot, they can see much more on their way and enjoy the sights of a town or a city. We can stop wherever we want and admire a beautiful church or monument or drop at a café or a shop. We won't be stuck in a traffic jam for several hours and we will certainly avoid road accidents. What is more, travelling on foot is much healthier than travelling by car or by bus. Walking is a perfect physical exercise that strengthens the immune system, improves mental health and helps prevent many diseases.

On the other hand, travelling by car or by bus saves much time and effort. A lot of people prefer driving cars as they have speed and comfort combined. When you travel by car, you don't depend on the weather. For example, if it rains you won't get soaked. If it is cold, you can turn on a heater. While driving, you can listen to music or the latest news on the radio. Public transport is not as popular as cars. Nevertheless, thousands of people use it every day of their lives.

To conclude, it's up to you to decide whether to travel on foot, to drive a car or to use public transport. As for me, I am young and energetic and I am for travelling on foot.

Many people prefer to travel abroad; others say that there is much to be seen in our own country.

Most people find travelling very exciting. It gives them an opportunity to enjoy sightseeing, to discover new things, to meet interesting people, to rest physically and morally and to get wonderful impressions.

For me there is hardly anything more interesting and exciting than a journey to a foreign country. I've been to London, Paris and Rome and it is the most wonderful experience in my life. Travelling abroad gives me a chance to feel thousands of miles away from home, to visit great cities and small villages, to admire foreign architecture, cuisine and culture, to make friends and what not. What is more, it is the best way to broaden your mind, to improve your knowledge of history and geography and to make your life interesting.

However, a lot of people are sure that there is much to be seen in our own country. Indeed, it is difficult to disagree with them. There are many places of interest in my native town: ancient churches, monuments, museums and parks. One can go to Moscow and visit its theatres, cathedrals, art galleries and what not. The Kremlin attracts thousands of tourists as it is the heart of Moscow and the centre of the Russian government. St. Petersburg, the former capital of Russia, is known for its magnificent palaces, famous museums, beautiful buildings and wide streets. Besides, there are many small towns and villages in our country which are definitely worth visiting.

To conclude, we should learn everything about our own country first of all. But if we want to learn more about the world around us and to expand the mind, we should travel abroad.

The car has become the most popular means of transport in the history of the world. However, some people say that the world would be better off without cars.

Nowadays, almost every family has a car. A lot of people say that travelling by car is very convenient, while others are sure that cars cause many problems.

In my opinion, the car is one of the most comfortable means of transport. Firstly, travelling by car is fast and it helps you save plenty of time. Secondly, it is comfortable because you don't have to buy any tickets and your car is always at your disposal. Thirdly, when you travel by car, you don't depend on the weather. While driving, you can listen to music or the latest news on the radio. And finally, you can stop where you want and have a snack or enjoy nature.

On the other hand, travelling by car has a number of disadvantages. First and foremost, it is bad for ecology and health. Cars produce exhaust fumes which make the air foul and destroy the ozone layer protecting the Earth from the dangerous rays of the Sun. The car is not a safe means of travel as there are a lot of car and bus crashes. Travelling by car is not very convenient if the trip is long. Besides, it is rather expensive as petrol is not cheap. What is more, when we travel by car, we may be stuck in a traffic jam for several hours.

To sum up, I think it is rather difficult to do without cars nowadays. But if we want to be healthy, we should sometimes ride a bike or walk.

Some people think that travelling by plane is very comfortable and convenient. Others say that it has a number of disadvantages.

Nowadays we can't imagine our lives without travelling. We tend to travel longer distances and at much higher speeds. Most people say there is nothing like travel by air for them.

Personally, I think that travelling by plane is very comfortable, quick and thrilling. It helps me save plenty of time and gives me an opportunity to visit out-of-the-way parts of the world. I don't have to worry about anything during the flight. I can relax, listen to music, read a newspaper or take a nap. The stewardess will take care of passengers during the flight and will help them get comfortable in their seats. I can always enjoy good service and tasty food. What is more, travelling by plane gives me a wonderful opportunity to look through the porthole and to admire beautiful landscapes.

However, some people don't like travelling by air. Firstly, they complain that it takes them much time to check in at the airport and to have their baggage weighed. Secondly, some flights may be delayed or cancelled because of unfavourable weather conditions. Thirdly, those people who are airsick will hardly find the flight very nice. Finally, aircraft engines emit noise and gases and contribute to air pollution and global warming. Besides, a lot of people doubt that travelling by plane is safe. They are afraid of plane crashes and terrorists. But as a rule much attention is paid to security: all luggage is screened and all passengers are carefully examined.

To conclude, it is up to you to decide whether to travel by plane or not. Anyway, all means of travel have their advantages and disadvantages.

Some people consider hitch-hiking to be the best way of travelling. Others think that hitch-hiking is dangerous.

Hitch-hikers travel by getting rides in other people's cars. When they want drivers to give them a lift, they stand on the roadside and raise their hand or put out their thumb. Most hitch-hikers also carry a sign with the name of the place they want to go to. But is it safe to travel in such a way?

Personally, I think that hitch-hiking is a unique opportunity to see different cities and countries. This way of travelling is for enthusiastic people who want to reduce their road expenses. If you want to travel but have no money, hitch-hiking is a single way out. Hitch-hiking will help you get where you want to go for nothing.

But nowadays hitch-hiking is less common than it used to be some years ago. There have been cases of hitch-hikers or the drivers who picked them up being attacked or killed. That is why people, especially young women, should avoid hitching alone. It is also necessary to be always friendly and polite with drivers in order to avoid conflicts. Besides, a lot of people say that hitch-hiking is not for those who like comfort. Sometimes you will have to walk, that is why you should travel light. You should also prepare for your trip beforehand. You should have a good idea of how to get where you are going and be informed about road conditions and weather forecast.

To sum up, hitch-hiking is both exciting and dangerous. Anyway, if you have decided to hitch-hike, you should consult other people and ask them to share their impressions.

Some people prefer travelling by train, while others say that it has a number of disadvantages.

Nowadays people travel more often than they did in the past. There are different means of travel that provide you with comfort and security, so passengers have a great variety of choice available for them. Travelling by train is very popular with many people, though it has a number of disadvantages as well.

I am fond of travelling by train because I have speed, comfort and pleasure combined. While travelling I can walk around, look through the windows to enjoy a splendid view of the whole countryside and sit where I can stretch my legs. If I am hungry, I can go to the dining-car and have a meal. Trains can run in bad weather. What is more, as trains are electrically-powered, they are considered to be less harmful to the environment than other forms of transport. The service is popular with passengers because it is fast, efficient, comfortable and quiet.

However, some people say that they don't like travelling by train. Firstly, they always have to stand in a long line in order to buy train tickets beforehand. Secondly, you cannot stop where you want. Thirdly, when you travel by train, you always have to get to the railway station first. Finally, travelling by train is not very convenient if the trip is long. Of course, travelling by train is not as fast as travelling by plane. But one of the latest inventions is a high-speed train that can run more than 200 km/h.

To conclude, it is up to you to decide whether to travel by train or not. Anyway, travelling by train has both advantages and disadvantages.

Medical travel is becoming more and more popular with many people. However, others say that it has many disadvantages.

Travelling abroad for medical treatment has been increasingly growing lately. But why do many people choose to go to foreign clinics and is medical travel as beneficial as it seems to be?

Medical tourists go to foreign countries for different reasons. Firstly, many patients want to undergo certain medical procedures for lower prices. For example, the cost of different operations in India, Thailand or South Africa is much lower than in the United States or Western Europe. Secondly, medical travel gives people the opportunity not only to receive first-rate care from highly qualified specialists, but also to have a holiday in an exotic country. Finally, many people go abroad in order to avoid long waiting periods. In such countries as the USA or Britain a person may wait for a certain medical procedure for a year or even longer. But in other countries a patient can receive the needed treatment immediately.

Nevertheless, some people say that undergoing treatment abroad may be rather risky. For instance, infectious diseases in such countries as Thailand or Malaysia are different from those in North America and Europe. Foreign diseases may be extremely dangerous to weakened patients. What is more, long flights should be avoided after certain medical procedures. Additionally, some holiday-related activities such as sunbathing or swimming may worsen patients' health. But to my mind, medical tourism is great because people can combine leisure with medical procedures.

To conclude, medical travel can save your money and give you an opportunity to rest and visit other countries. However, one should take all possible risks into consideration before making the final decision to go abroad.

Some people are fond of travelling to exotic countries, while others say that exotic travel is rather risky.

Many people dream of exciting travels to sunny, beautiful and interesting places in exotic countries. But every tourist must remember that there are a number of risks that they need to be aware of.

In my opinion, exotic travel gives you an opportunity to participate in exciting experiences. In exotic countries you can ride a camel or an elephant, enjoy modern cities or picturesque little villages, admire ancient temples and what not. Travelling to exotic countries many tourists would like to watch the daily life of local people, to see mountains, jungles and beaches. I believe that exotic travel is very rewarding because it can lead to totally new understanding of diverse cultures and lifestyles.

Nevertheless, arranging a perfect travel to exotic places is not an easy task. Travel agencies show tourists colorful catalogues with beautiful beaches and modern hotels. Most people find it difficult to explore this immensity of offers and spot the one that would let them admire a truly stunning seaside, good service, clean beaches and high quality hotels. Many tourists feel ill at ease when they go to an exotic country because they do not know much about its traditions and do not understand the language. Some tourists may dislike the local food. Furthermore, they have no natural immunity to foreign diseases. In addition, tourists may have problems with insects, public transport, thieves, insistent street vendors and so on.

To conclude, many people say that once you have tasted the excitement of visiting exotic destinations, you'll never want to stop. However, tourists must take precautions in order to avoid unpleasant situations and to remain safe and secure.

FRIENDSHIP & LOVE

Some people think that life-long friendship exists only in books and films. Others believe that it exists in real life.

Friendship is considered one of the central human experiences and for many people it may be as important as love. There are different types of friendship. People have close friends, pen pals or just acquaintances. Life-long friendship is a rare kind of friendship and a lot of people even doubt that it exists in real life.

I believe that life-long friendship exists not only in books and films. For example, my grandfather has a friend whom he has known from his childhood. They are devoted to each other and they have much in common. My grandfather and his best friend understand and support one another. Besides, they have similar tastes, interests and life philosophies. Grandfather often says that when they were young, his friend used to help him in times of need or crisis. They have always trusted each other and they have never quarreled.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of people who have no close friends. Some reserved and shy people find making friends rather difficult. What is more, it is really not easy to find a person with whom you can share strong interpersonal ties. Those people who have not found best friends are sometimes sure that real friendship exists only in books and films. But they shouldn't despair because they may find close friends in the future.

In conclusion, I'd like to add that it is very difficult to live without friends. Your friend is your helper, adviser and supporter. He or she gives you a sense of being protected, emotional comfort and moral support. As the proverb says: "A true friend is the best possession".

There is a proverb that says "a friend in need is a friend indeed". However, many people believe that a friend's success may ruin friendship.

Different people have different notions of what kind of person a true friend should be. Most of them think that a friend is a person who understands you, shows kindness and sympathy, has similar tastes, interests and life philosophies. You can always trust your friend and share your hardships with him or her. Besides, a true friend is always ready to help you and to support you in times of need or crisis.

I strongly feel that a real friend is a person who doesn't only help you and give you advice. A real friend should never envy you if you are more successful. And if he does, then he is not your friend. To my mind, friendship between people with different financial standing is rare, but possible.

However, a lot of people still believe that friendship is a union of the equal. They tend to make friends with the representatives of their own social circle and financial position. Most people are convinced that friendship will be ruined as soon as your friend is promoted or succeeds in some other way.

To conclude, I'd like to say that a real friend is not only a person who helps you in need, but the one who doesn't turn away from you in case you are luckier, richer or more successful than he or she is. Friendship must not end when success comes. So we can paraphrase the proverb: "A friend who never envies you is a friend indeed".

Some people say that love reveals our hidden talents, while others believe that it makes us silly.

There is so much talk about love. It is a major theme in philosophy, literature, music, poetry and cinematography. A great number of scientists have been trying to understand how love can influence people's psychology.

In my opinion, love is a great source of inspiration. A person who has fallen in love may suddenly have an urge to write poems or compose music even if they have never done anything like this before. When we are in love, we are capable of accomplishing feats, making discoveries, inventing new things and making something unusual. Many painters, writers and composers created masterpieces of art, literature or music thanks to this wonderful feeling. Love fills us with energy and enthusiasm.

However, people who are in love sometimes behave rather foolishly. They are often absent-minded and it is difficult for them to concentrate on their work and duties. All they can think about is the person that they love. Studies have indicated that brain scans of people who are in love resemble to those with a mental illness. Scientists say that love deactivates the brain regions associated with negative emotions, with social judgment and with judging other people's intentions and emotions. That is why people in love are often unable to make critical judgments. But I don't believe that love and madness are connected.

To conclude, even in this advanced age of science, when people conquer space, clone animals and transplant organs, they still don't fully understand the nature of love and the way it influences us. Anyway, I believe that love is the most wonderful feeling in the world.

Some people say that jealousy is quite natural and it often goes hand in hand with love and friendship. Others are convinced that jealousy wrecks people's relationships.

All people have experienced jealousy at some time of their lives. But is this feeling absolutely harmless and how can it influence people's relationships?

I strongly feel that jealousy is destructive. It usually arouses such negative emotions as sadness and anger as well as the feelings of anxiety and insecurity. Jealousy also involves suspicion about betrayal, distrust, uncertainty, fear of separation and low self-esteem. It makes us feel unhappy and left out. When we are jealous, common sense and rationality matter very little and our emotions get out of control. To my mind, having a jealous partner is exhausting. You will constantly have to answer his or her questions about what you were doing and where you were. What is more, jealousy can lead to aggressive reactions and violence. Sometimes jealousy leads to scandals, embarrassing scenes or separation and divorce.

However, some people believe that jealousy is a sign of love. They are convinced that the greater the love, the greater the jealousy. Researchers say that mild jealousy heightens passion towards partners and keeps a relationship alive. It can encourage people to appreciate each other. Small doses of jealousy can be healthy in a marriage. But I think that when jealousy becomes irrational, it can be rather dangerous.

To sum up, jealousy can destroy people's judgment and their love for each other. So it is important to try to overcome this feeling. You should trust and respect the person you love and share all your apprehensions with him or her.

MONEY

A number of people believe that pocket money teaches teenagers to be responsible. Others say that teenagers are too young to deal with money and that their parents should just buy them what they need.

Many parents wonder whether to give pocket money to their children and how much to give. Most Moms and Dads think that pocket money helps the child learn to handle money sensibly. However, pocket money may become a battleground if not handled correctly from the very start.

Personally, I think that by giving pocket money parents help children learn to manage money while they are young. It also helps them make choices and feel that they are important members of the family. Even a small amount can give a child the feeling of responsibility and independence. Parents can suggest the child keeping a little book in their money box to record ins and outs. This will help with their mathematics and will encourage them to save money.

But in some families children are given what they ask for and do not get pocket money. Some parents think that pocket money can cause a number of problems. For example, if children have a lot less than their friends they may feel depressed and may be tempted to steal. On the other hand, when they have much more it can cause envy and resentment amongst their friends. Besides, I believe that parents should never give pocket money to their children as compensation for not spending enough time with them and as a reward for helping around the house.

To conclude, I think it is up to parents to decide whether to give children pocket money or not. Anyway, parents should explain their sons and daughters that lots of money cannot buy love and happiness.

Some people think they can be happy only being rich, while others don't care too much about money.

It is rather difficult to imagine our lives without money. People consider money to be part and parcel of their everyday lives. They buy and sell different things, receive a fee, a pension or a subsidy, exchange currency and what not. People's attitude to money can be quite different: for some of them money is the most important thing in the world, while other people don't care much about money.

In my opinion, the life of rich people is not only luxurious. It is also dangerous. There are quite a lot of people who want to deceive the rich. Millionaires have to spend much money on security, but sometimes even such measures don't help. Rich people are often robbed, kidnapped and killed. Besides, they have to work much and that is why they spend very little time with their families and they often feel stressed.

But in spite of all dangers and difficulties, many people are sure that money and happiness are synonyms. They believe that money can make them powerful and independent. They dream of expensive cars and luxurious mansions. Some people think that we live in the world where almost everything can be bought and sold. They even make friends and marry for money. To my mind, money becomes a kind of addiction for such people.

To sum up, money is very useful as a medium of exchange, a unit of account and a store of value. But it becomes "the root of all evil" when it makes people take bribes, betray their partners or commit crimes. I think that "money is a good servant but a bad master."

A lot of people say that it is very important for everybody to own property. However, others are not so sure that property can make our lives better.

Everyone has some possessions. People own cars, buildings, land, money, bonds, stocks and so on. We are used to consuming, selling, renting, mortgaging, transferring or exchanging our property. But sometimes people attach too much importance to their possessions.

Personally, I believe that property is not the most important thing in our lives. It may arouse other people's envy and it is difficult to say whether people surrounding you are your real friends or they just like your possessions and want to make use of them. I strongly feel that having friends, parents, relatives, spouses and children who love and understand you is better than possessing money, houses or securities.

However, there are people whose desire to own things predominates over all other feelings. They often become "slaves of property". They usually try to make a commercial use of everything and the main aim of their lives is accumulation of their capital. They sometimes buy beautiful pictures and sculptures not because they admire works of art or derive inspiration from them, but because it is a way of investing money. But to my mind, a person who values only property is miserable because inanimate objects like cars, pictures or precious stones can't make you happy.

To conclude, I think that possessing property is not a sin, but one should remember the proverb: "Money can't buy happiness".

Some people say that making money with the Internet is reality, while others think it is a myth.

The Internet is not only a source of information and entertainment for many people. It can also help them make money from home. At the same time the Internet business may be hard to break into.

To my mind, the Internet gives people a great number of opportunities to make money. Some of them earn money building websites for different companies, organizations or businessmen. Many people use websites to sell different goods or services. Thanks to the Internet, e-learning industry which is estimated to be worth billions of dollars has developed. People also earn money by sending spam, creating computer viruses, putting advertisements on a web page and so on.

However, those who believe that the Internet can help them make millions in a few days may be disappointed. Even hard work does not always result in success. People usually have to invest some money to develop their online business. What is more, there is usually great competition on the Internet when thousands of other people are trying to sell similar goods or services. So if you want to succeed, you should be original in order to stand out from the crowd.

To sum up, the Internet may motivate people to earn money. I strongly feel that if you are not afraid of difficulties, if you are hard-working, energetic and persistent, the Internet business will help you become richer.

Some people say that high social status is very important for everybody. Others are convinced that it is better to have a high income.

In modern societies, a person's social status depends on many factors including their income, education, occupation, inherited wealth and position, ownerships, personal skills, abilities and efforts. Some people achieve high social status through education, occupation, and marital status. But statuses can also be inherited through family.

To my mind, it is difficult to say which is more important: high social status or a high income. Sometimes an individual's social positions have both positive and negative influence on their social status. For example, a teacher has a positive societal image which increases his status but may earn little money, which simultaneously decreases it. In contrast, a drug dealer, may have low social position though have a high income. There are a lot of professions that are not prestigious, but well-paid and vice versa. Personally, I would prefer having high social status to being rich.

Some people say that they would rather have low social status but earn much money. They are convinced that money can make them powerful and independent. Such people also say that we live in the world where almost everything can be bought and sold, even high social status. But I think that a person must be respected only for his or her individual merits and achievements.

To sum up, both a person's income and social status depend on him or her and may be changed in the course of his or her life. So if you want to be wealthy, respected and successful, you must work hard to achieve this goal.

LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES

Some people say that it is very important for everybody to have a hobby. Others do nothing but watch TV or listen to music in their free time.

Our lives would be hard without rest and recreation. People have quite different ideas of how to spend their free time. For some of them the only way to relax is watching TV or drinking beer. But other people use their spare time getting maximum benefit from it.

I strongly feel that hobbies make our lives much more interesting. There are different kinds of hobbies such as reading, cooking, knitting, collecting, playing a musical instrument, painting, photography, dancing, travelling, sports and many others. So you can always find an exciting activity which you will certainly like. Personally, I am fond of camping. To my mind, it is a great opportunity to get away from town life. What is more, camping is a cheap way to rest, to improve your health, to train yourself physically and to enjoy nature.

Nevertheless, quite a lot of people have no hobby. Most of them say that they are too busy or too tired to do anything in their free time. But I am sure that such people are lazy and passive and their lives are dull and uneventful.

In general, having a hobby is very important for everybody because it is a kind of self-expression and the way to understand other people and the whole world. A hobby makes you stronger physically and mentally, helps you escape from reality, improve your knowledge, broaden your mind, develop your skills and gain a better understanding of how the world works.

Many teenagers enjoy playing computer games. Some people, however, believe that teenagers should spend their free time doing more physical activities.

Computer games are extremely popular nowadays. A lot of teenagers play computer games in order to escape dull reality and to fight with horrible monsters or to save the world from hostile aliens.

Personally, I am fond of playing computer games. They give me an opportunity to plunge into exciting adventures: to overcome obstacles, to fly an aircraft or to pilot a spacecraft, to solve different puzzles, to look after a virtual pet, to build cities, to play sport games and even to control the lives of people. Computer games are constantly becoming more life-like and complex. New styles and genres appear. That's why I can't resist the temptation to buy new computer games every month.

But according to experts, computer games can be rather dangerous and they can harm teenagers' health. They say that computer games make young people unsociable and passive. They are absorbed in games without speaking to each other for a long time. A lot of teenagers can play for hours without eating, sleeping or learning. They sit in front of the computer screen exercising their fingers instead of doing physical activities. That's why the levels of obesity among teenagers are rising. Besides, computer games cause addiction.

To conclude, computer games have both advantages and disadvantages. Violent computer games make teenagers aggressive. But educational games help teenagers develop many skills. Anyway, it is necessary not to forget about sports as it helps teenagers to be healthy and to stay in good shape.

Some people prefer eating out. However, many people still like cooking meals at home.

Different people have different tastes. Some of them prefer eating out, while others enjoy tasty food at home. In the past people went to cafés and restaurants only on special occasions. But they are eating out more frequently now.

Personally, I enjoy eating out. Firstly, the choice of restaurants is great nowadays. You can try different foreign cuisines and you can always find something to your taste. There are Italian, Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Mexican, Turkish and many other restaurants in every city. Besides, you can go to bars, cafés or pubs. Secondly, many people work too much and have no time to cook meals at home. Thirdly, they go to bars, cafés or restaurants to meet with their friends or to celebrate a holiday. Finally, at a restaurant you will be able to relax and enjoy tasty food, good service and the atmosphere of festivity.

However, a lot of people prefer eating at home. Some of them say that it is too expensive to go to a restaurant. Others just enjoy cooking meals. What is more, some people are sure that home meals are tastier and more nutritious than food which is served at a restaurant or a café.

To sum up, eating at home is cheaper and more traditional. But if you want to relax and to feel a holiday atmosphere, you will certainly eat out.

Ecotourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors of the tourism industry today. Some people think that it teaches tourists to take care of nature and wildlife. Others say that ecotourism has a number of disadvantages.

Environmental pollution has disastrous effects on nature and wildlife. That is why nowadays many people try to damage the environment as little as possible. Ecotourism means travelling to natural destinations with rare flora and fauna. Its main goal is to conserve the environment and to improve the well-being of local people.

In my opinion, ecotourism gives us an opportunity to broaden our mind, to discover new ways of life, to meet interesting people and to improve our knowledge of history and geography. It provides funds for conservation and jobs to local people because tourists use local transportation, inns and markets. Besides, ecotourism helps people understand the environment around them, makes them respect different cultures and be careful with nature.

However, ecotourism has some negative aspects. The increasing number of tourists can damage the local environment. Some tourists pollute drinking water, pick up rare flowers and disturb wild animals. They often purchase souvenirs made from the skin of endangered animals or leaves of rare plants and scare away animals.

In conclusion, I think that ecotourism is for environment-conscious people who love nature, understand the negative influence of conventional tourism on the environment and want to minimize it. I strongly feel that it is an unforgettable experience which is rewarding at the same time.

Some people are ready to risk their lives in order to establish a record, while others say that it is rather silly.

Every year hundreds of people do rather dangerous and silly things in order to set up a record and to become famous. They swallow bugs, climb skyscrapers, cross the ocean on a windsurfing board and what not. Are these people heroes or fools?

To my mind, all these activities are just a waste of time, efforts and money. If people want to escape everyday monotony and to get their portion of adrenaline, I think they would better do something useful. What is more, record breakers are often inexperienced and sometimes they get into trouble when they climb Everest, sail across the Atlantic or do something of this kind. Thus, adventurers risk both their lives and the lives of the people who try to save them. Helicopter and ship crews are often wounded or killed when they try to reach people who lost their way in the forest, were stuck in the mountain or crashed into the sea. Such rescue missions are not only difficult and time-consuming. They also cost much money.

But in spite of numerous warnings, people continue doing silly and dangerous things. Most of them think that they are extremely brave, strong and hardy. They want other people to admire them and to follow their example. But I'd rather call these adventures foolhardy. To my mind, if they want to get the adrenalin going, they should try such professions as rescuers, pilots or firemen.

To sum up, the adventurer should think twice before he makes up his mind to risk his life and health. It is always useful to think about all possible consequences of your actions.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Technology is an important part of our lives. We use computers and other electric equipment at work and in the home. However, some people believe we rely too much on machines, and that the more technology improves, the lazier and weaker humans will become.

Technological advances are changing our lives very rapidly. Nowadays we can't do without such gadgets as mobile phones, PCs, digital tape recorders, air conditioners, fax machines and so on. Many people feel ill at ease without their laptop computers or GPS navigation systems.

In my opinion, technology facilitates our lives and saves our time. Computers help us do the most difficult sums and investigate complicated data. People do business, communicate and do the shopping via the Internet. It is much easier to do housework nowadays, thanks to electric equipment such as microwave ovens, washing machines and so on.

However, many people say that technology makes us lazier and weaker. For example, such technological developments as the telephone and the Internet have made communication much easier, but they can cause the loss of social interaction. A lot of people prefer communicating through a keyboard than face to face. That is why people don't meet as often as they did in the past. A lot of people are fond of watching TV and playing computer games. They spend hours in front of the screen. They have no time to read books or to communicate with their friends. They move less, speak less and they even think less. Of course, such way of life does much harm to their health.

To sum up, people should continue to develop technology, but they must do it wisely. Otherwise we may regret in the future.

Some people say that technical devices do more harm than good. However, others think that it is impossible to live without computers or mobile phones nowadays.

Nowadays people can't imagine their lives without different technical devices. Every day we use computers, laptops, mobile phones, i-Pods, digital tape recorders and so on.

I have always wondered if our lives could be better without these technical devices. Personally, I can't do without my computer as it helps me study. For example, it helps me prepare reports and create beautiful presentations. Besides, the computer is a great source of entertainment. I often play computer games, watch films or listen to music. The Internet helps me learn the latest news, access useful information, communicate with my friends and what not. A mobile phone is a vital part of my daily life. It gives me an opportunity to be reachable everywhere and to keep in touch with my friends.

However, many people say that technical devices enslave those who use them. Besides, they do much harm to our health. For example, if people spend much time in front of the screen, they have problems with their eyesight and sleep. They don't go out or exercise, they feel exhausted and depressed. Computer games can cause addiction and make people aggressive. As for mobile phones, they use electromagnetic radiation which can influence our health in a negative way.

To conclude, I would prefer a technological way of life to a natural one, though it has a number of disadvantages. In my opinion, modern society can't do without progress and technology. People can avoid the risk to human life and health if they use technological devices wisely.

Mobile telephones have become very popular nowadays. However, some people say that their use should be restricted.

Mobile phones have changed people's lives. They give us an opportunity to stay in touch and to be reachable everywhere. It is very comfortable, especially for the busy modern lifestyle. So, the mobile phone has become a vital part of our daily lives and it is difficult to imagine how people lived without mobile phones in the past.

In my opinion, the mobile phone is a very useful device. Thanks to it, I can access people I need to speak to and I can never miss anything important. If I need some help, I just call my friends and they rush to rescue me. If I have a meeting and I'm late, I can send an SMS with my excuses. It is very fast and convenient. What is more, with the help of my mobile phone I can access the Internet, send and receive photos and video, play games, listen to music and what not.

However, mobile phones have some disadvantages. Firstly, they deprive people of privacy and it is almost impossible to relax with your mobile phone on. Secondly, many people are worried about the harmful influence of mobile phones on their health. Mobile phones use electromagnetic radiation. Scientists say that there is no significant health effect from mobile phone radiation. But still it is better not to use your mobile phone too often.

To sum up, a mobile phone is very useful because it gives us the freedom of movement. It has made communication much easier. But we shouldn't forget that a face-to-face conversation is much better than just a telephone talk.

Most people are used to sending e-mails and SMS messages. But others still prefer traditional paper letters or phone calls.

Nowadays more and more people are sending e-mails and SMS messages, while others say that it may lead to the loss of social interaction.

Personally, I communicate with my friends through e-mails and SMS messages. To my mind, they have a number of advantages. Firstly, both e-mails and SMS messages are rather cheap and quick. Secondly, they are non-intrusive. In comparison with a call, they do not interrupt a person if he or she is in the middle of a meeting and can't answer you right now. Besides, there are no standard rules for writing e-mails and SMS messages, and a lot of words can be shortened. Their objective is to convey a comprehensible message as quickly as possible. That is why traditional rules of grammar, spelling and punctuation are largely ignored.

However, a lot of people say that sending an e-mail or SMS message is not the same as writing a letter. Paper letters are usually intimate and long. They give you an opportunity to tell your friends or relatives all the latest news and to express your feelings. As for e-mails and SMS messages, they are often short and impersonal. You can't see the sender's handwriting, you can't feel the crisp paper and you are not likely to re-read these messages. But I still believe that sending e-mails and SMS messages is more effective than writing letters.

To conclude, when we are short of time, e-mails and SMS messages are the best way of communication. But if we want to give or learn more detailed information, letters or phone calls are better.

The Internet has revolutionized the way people live and work. However, some people think it has more drawbacks than advantages.

The Internet is a great source of information and entertainment for many people. It has made possible new forms of social interaction and has become a major source of leisure.

Personally, I can't imagine my life without the Internet. Thanks to it, I have an opportunity to access news, documents, images, sounds, video, games and sports reports, to make friends, to book tickets and to purchase different things online. There are a lot of different sites for pupils, students, gardeners, engineers, bankers, people who are fond of music, cinema, sports and even for disabled people. What is more, the Internet has revolutionized the way people communicate. Sending electronic text messages is much faster and easier than writing letters. People use e-mail to stay in touch with friends worldwide.

However, there are still a lot of people who think that the Internet has too many disadvantages. Internet-addiction is a topical problem nowadays. Spending much time in front of the screen becomes a kind of obsession for many people. The symptoms of Internet addiction include sleep deprivation, decreased physical activity and social interaction with others. People who spend most of their time in the virtual world forget about the real one. They neglect their relatives and ruin their families. Besides, there is a lot of rubbish online and you can't always trust what you read on the web.

To sum up, the Internet becomes dangerous when it is misused. But if it is used wisely and moderately, it helps you work, study or entertain and saves plenty of time.

Internet dating is becoming more and more popular. However, many people say that meeting people online is dangerous.

Nowadays a lot of young people feel that meeting people online is just the same as meeting in a bar. Many of them make friends online and even fall in love with their virtual interlocutors.

To my mind, it is silly to trust a person you have never seen. You can never be sure that you communicate with the individual whose personal information and photos you see. For example, a "young" boy may turn out to be a 50-year-old man. Besides, it is very dangerous to give detailed personal information to complete strangers. Your online friend may be a swindler or even a murderer. So meeting such a person in real life may be extremely risky.

On the other hand, some people say that internet dating has many advantages. Firstly, it is easier for shy people to chat through a keyboard than face to face. Secondly, you can search the Internet when you are not busy. Besides, you can talk to lots of people at the same time and you can have several online boyfriends or girlfriends. One can list all his or her romantic requirements and then find exactly what he or she wants. But I still believe that face-to-face dating is much better.

To sum up, internet dating may help you find love. If you don't meet someone in real life, it seems a great alternative. But Internet daters must be cautious because you never know what you are going to get from online romance.

Various social networks have aroused great interest among Internet users. However, some people say that they have a lot of drawbacks.

Social networks are very popular among users of different ages and professions. But many people are concerned about the influence of social networks on their lives.

Personally, I think that social networks have a lot of benefits. Firstly, they link together users of the Internet who have common interests and give people an opportunity to look for old and new friends, to build communities, to send messages and to share news and pictures. There are other sites which allow classmates from school or university to keep in contact with each other. Secondly, many people use social networks to communicate and exchange personal information for dating purposes. Thirdly, social networks are being used by teachers and students. Teachers often help pupils with homework and post assignments, tests or quizzes. Social networks also serve to foster teacher-parent communication. Parents can ask questions without having to meet teachers face to face. Finally, some people search for job opportunities with the help of social networks.

However, some users are worried about data theft and viruses. The problem is that many people give out too much personal information that may be passed to third parties for different purposes. To protect user privacy, social networks allow users to choose who can view their profile or contact them. This prevents unauthorized users from accessing, adding, changing, or removing personal information and pictures.

To conclude, the popularity of social networks continues growing because more and more people find it easier to communicate digitally. What is more, millions of people use them for fun as well as for business and educational purposes.

Artificial intelligence performs quite a lot of jobs nowadays. However, many people are worried about computers doing the same things that people can do.

In the 90s and early 21st century artificial intelligence achieved its greatest success. Today clever machines are taught to think and make decisions. But is it safe that artificial intelligence is invading the world?

To my mind, computers and robots are very helpful. There are more and more jobs which humans leave to robots such as exploring another planet, defusing bombs or just doing boring household chores like cleaning. Computers can perform a lot of functions: they can control cars and planes, give us the news or compose music. Many factory jobs are performed by industrial robots nowadays. It has led to cheaper production of various goods, including automobiles and electronics. Artificial intelligence has successfully been used in a wide range of fields including medical diagnosis, stock trading, robot control, law, scientific discovery and toys.

However, there are some reasons to worry about robots. Firstly, the use of robots in industry leads to unemployment as many jobs are performed by machines. Secondly, industrial robots can be dangerous and cause harm to human workers. Besides, many people fear that highly intelligent robots may take over and destroy the human race. There are a lot of books and films about people losing control over clever machines that begin to kill their creators. But I believe that it is early to worry because robots are still clumsy and not very intelligent.

To conclude, artificial intelligence serves to help people and make their lives easier. That is why I think that we should promote research in artificial intelligence. But people must be careful and pay more attention to security.

People have different attitude to cloning. Some of them think that cloning opens new possibilities, while others are convinced that it is morally unacceptable.

Scientists have always dreamed of reproducing exact copies of animals and even human beings. They have already succeeded in this field and created Dolly, the first cloned sheep, and many other animals. But the question of cloning, especially human one, still remains controversial.

Personally, I think that cloning plants and animals is rather interesting and exciting. Cloned animals may be strong and healthy and they may produce more wool, meat or milk. Besides, cloning will help us preserve species that are on the brink of extinction. Moreover, cloning gives people new medical possibilities. Owing to it, scientists can create organs for transplantation and save people who need a new heart, liver or kidneys.

However, quite a lot of people are against cloning. They say that people must not interfere in the process of creating a new life because it is the duty of nature. What is more, scientists don't know for sure how clones will behave and what diseases they may transmit. As for human cloning, it seems to be dangerous and morally unacceptable.

To conclude, I think that science must develop in order to improve our lives. But people should be more careful when they use new technologies and investigate new phenomena. So to my mind, cloning must be used only when it is necessary to save lives and to solve important problems.

The Large Hadron Collider (LHC), the world's largest particle accelerator, is expected to advance humanity's understanding of the deepest laws of nature. However, a lot of people are worried about its existence.

The Large Hadron Collider has gained considerable attention of the scientific community, the mass media and the general public. Experts say that it could change physics and our understanding of the world. But why do many people worry that the LHC would be a problem?

Personally, I'm amazed by all the interesting theories surrounding the LHC. Scientists hope that the Large Hadron Collider will help us answer many of the most fundamental questions concerning the structure of space and time, extra dimensions, the nature of the dark matter and many others. There hasn't been any advance in fundamental physics for many years, but the LHC may help us understand how the universe works and discover new facts about it.

However, many people are against the LHC. The project costs much money and the LHC is considered to be one of the most expensive scientific instruments ever built. Moreover, people fear that the experiments at the Large Hadron Collider may be extremely dangerous and that it may swallow Switzerland or even destroy the planet. In his famous novel "Angels & Demons" Dan Brown describes antimatter created at the LHC which is used in a weapon against the Vatican. But according to scientists, the LHC presents no danger and there is no reason for concern. I strongly feel that the experiments at the LHC should continue because they are extremely interesting and nobody knows what is going to be found.

To conclude, I believe that the LHC may change the face of physics forever and help answer the questions that people have been asking since the beginning of time.

The use of polygraph still remains controversial. Some people think that this device helps detect a lie, while others are convinced that polygraph evidence is unreliable.

It is well-known that lying causes bodily changes. A polygraph, or a lie detector, measures the physiological stress a person endures while he or she gives statements or answers questions. The device measures the suspect's heart rate, blood pressure, breathing rate and respiration. If there is increased activity in these areas, the suspect might be lying. However, the accuracy of the polygraph has been contested almost since the introduction of the device.

Personally, I think that a polygraph is a very useful invention. If people believe that it can detect lies, they try to answer truthfully. In some countries polygraphs are used to interrogate suspects and screen new employees. Polygraph examinations sometimes help extract confessions from a defendant.

But experts say that the accuracy of this method is questionable. According to them, if you go into the test rested and relaxed, if you are cooperative and try to remain calm, you are likely to pass polygraph tests. There were some cases when polygraph failed to trap known spies. Conversely, innocent people have been known to fail polygraph tests. That is why polygraph results are not admissible as court evidence.

To conclude, I believe that no device or expert can detect a lie with 100% accuracy. To my mind, polygraph can make some people be honest, but it can also be deceived.

Some people think that science plays the most important role in the development of our civilization; others believe that our world would be impossible without poetry.

What does science have in common with poetry? Science is a product of people's intellect. Poetry is a product of their imagination and inspiration. Science deals with bacteria, atoms, electricity, magnetic fields and so on. Poetry deals with human feelings such as love, jealousy, hatred and others.

I believe that the world wouldn't develop without science. The aims of science are making discoveries and increasing human knowledge and understanding. Science deals with such areas as the theory of evolution, the method of creation of the universe and the Earth, the origins of life and many others. Science has already helped people answer a lot of complicated questions. With the help of the latest achievements of science and engineering we can solve many problems and make our lives better.

However, many people are not sure that all we need is science. Some of them are convinced that our lives would be dull without poetry. People's feelings are so intense, that they want to express them using beautiful language. Poetry serves to stir our imagination and to evoke emotional or sensual responses. While reading poetry we forget about our problems and experience the poet's deepest dreams and fears. A good poem often makes us laugh or cry. It also makes us think about other people's feelings.

In conclusion, I'd like to say that it's rather difficult to live both without science and poetry. Science helps develop technology and solve many problems. Poetry helps make our lives more colourful and romantic. Besides, it helps us not to forget about human feelings, values and beliefs.

Some people think that science has nothing in common with religion, while others are convinced that it is not so.

There seems to be an eternal conflict between science and religion. Religious people have disagreed or are still disagreeing with scientists in different areas. Does it mean that there is a great gap between science and religion?

To my mind, science and religion have little in common. Science is a product of people's intellect. Religion is a product of the mystical sense and it requires some unquestioned faith. Science is based on observation, research and experiment. Religious knowledge is gained from religious leaders, scriptures and personal revelation. Scientists are convinced that there must be explanations for all mysterious phenomena. It has already answered some complicated questions about bacteria, atoms, electricity, magnetic fields and many others. Religion deals with questions which science has not answered yet. What is the purpose of our life? Is there life after death? What happens to the soul?

However, many people say that science and religion are not as different as it seems to be. Many scientists dedicate their lives to solving the riddle of existence. But the more they learn about the world, the more complex and harder to grasp it seems to be. Many scientists such as Albert Einstein or Isaac Newton were devoutly religious individuals and worked to harmonize science and religion. What scientists call the Energy is called God by religious people. Besides, more and more scientists are becoming religious and they are beginning to use words like "God", "soul" or "spirituality".

To conclude, one day people may realize that science and religion have a common ground and that spiritual power is as important as scientific power.

YOUTH PROBLEMS

People say that youth is the most wonderful period in a person's life. Others are sure that young people face too many problems nowadays.

Many people are convinced that youth and happiness are synonyms. But an Arabian proverb says: "Youth is a kind of illness cured only by the passing years".

I have always wondered why many people believe that youth is the most wonderful period in a person's life. From the psychological angle, youth is a very complicated period when young people are undergoing the painful transition from childhood to independence. They are facing psychological problems that may cause aggression and lead to the rejection of adult values and experience. Socially, many young people suffer from such problems as poverty, unemployment, low incomes, or breakdown of the family. So alcohol and drugs may become a kind of psychological or emotional escape for young people.

However, it would be wrong to say that youth is the most awful period in a person's life. It is the time of parties, dates and entertainment. What is more, youth is the period of many happy moments, thrilling experiences and wonderful discoveries. Young people don't usually have as many responsibilities and duties as adults do. They don't have to work and they can spend their time on studies, hobbies and entertainment. Youth is the time to make friends and to fall in love. Besides, young people are usually active, enthusiastic and know what they want.

All in all, youth is a period which may be very complicated and happy at the same time. It is impossible to protect young people from all problems and difficulties that they have to overcome. However, it is necessary to support them and to help them use this period fruitfully.

Generation gap has always been a topical problem. Some people believe that parents and their children will never learn to understand each other. Others are convinced that generation gap can disappear.

There have always been great differences between people of a younger generation and their elders because of their different experiences, opinions, habits and behavior. Nowadays differences between the two generations grew significantly, particularly with respect to such matters as musical tastes, fashion, drug use, culture and politics.

In my opinion, you will hardly find a teenager satisfied with his or her parents. Neither will you find parents not grumbling over "younger generation" of their children. Pop music, ultra-modern clothes, noisy parties and children's wish to have more freedom become a stumbling-block on the way of mutual understanding between adults and teenagers. So it seems that in most families parents don't understand their children and children don't understand their parents.

On the other hand, the situation is not as bad as it seems to be. There are a lot of families where parents love and understand their children and help them cope with all difficulties. Many adults and teenagers have respect for each other's point of view. So it is possible to bridge the gap between parents and their children. To my mind, communication is the best way to solve the problem. The more time adults and teenagers spend together, the better they understand each other. Parents and children should talk and discuss different things. Besides, it is very important for both adults and teenagers to be selfless, patient and sincere.

To conclude, the generation gap can disappear. If we are a little wiser, we will find a key to the heart of our parents.

Many teenagers enjoy being in a collective and are united in different subcultures. Some youngsters, however, think that subcultures are for nothing.

Most teenagers are sensitive to what their friends think of them and they are ready to do everything to be like their peers. So many youngsters experiment with minor delinquency, inappropriate behavior and rebellion.

Sometimes young people express their protest forming different groups and clubs. They join these clubs according to their interests: music, style of clothes, racial views and so on. For example, the Skinheads are known for their intolerance to immigrants. They can be very dangerous as they attack and kill people of other nationalities. Adolescents often join a juvenile delinquent group to improve their status and to raise their self-esteem. There are various groups and subcultures in which deviant behaviour and violence play an important role and increase a youth's status. To my mind, the existence of subcultures leads to the increase in criminality. I strongly feel that if you want to protest, you must do it peacefully without doing harm to other people and to yourself.

On the other hand, the situation is not as bad as it may seem to be. There are many teenagers who don't belong to any subcultures. They are not involved in violent or criminal behavior and they spend much time and effort on their studies and part-time work. Such youngsters know what they want and feel that they are responsible for their future.

To sum up, young people's lives and happiness depend on our society: on the political and social situation in the country, on our culture and morality. I think that if adults pay more attention to teenagers' upbringing and education, there will be fewer subcultures and consequently fewer crimes.

Some people say that the main reason for juvenile delinquency is the family. Others believe that there are many other factors that negatively influence young people's development.

Nowadays the problem of juvenile delinquency is becoming more complicated and universal. In many countries rates of youth crime have dramatically risen. But why are more and more youngsters involved in criminal and violent behaviour?

There are a lot of reasons for juvenile delinquency. I think that first and foremost, the family is to blame. Many children and adolescents are neglected by their parents and some of them suffer humiliation, abuse and violence at home. The number of mothers and fathers deprived of their parental rights is increasing every year. Children who do not receive adequate parental supervision are more likely to engage in criminal activities, to truant from school and to have delinquent friends. Wishing to prove their maturity and independence some young people commit various offences, run away from home and use violence against their peers.

Other reasons for juvenile delinquency include poverty, unemployment, low incomes among the young, ineffective educational systems and so on. Many of the crimes committed by young people are related to excessive alcohol use and drug abuse. Besides, young people's behaviour is greatly influenced by their friends, neighbourhood and adults as well as by the social, economic, political and cultural conditions prevailing in a country.

To sum up, there are quite a lot of factors that may have a negative influence on youngsters' behaviour. I strongly feel that the prevention of juvenile delinquency is very important. More attention should be paid to leisure and youth development activities that prevent young people from committing crimes.

Some young people believe that while at school they should concentrate on studying; others think that working part-time has many advantages.

To work or not to work? That is the question which many young people ask themselves. What advantages and disadvantages do part-time jobs have?

Nowadays a lot of young people are happy to get some job, for the money or the experience. They work after classes, on weekends, or during vacations. To my mind, even part-time jobs can help them pick up new skills, which they can develop. Working as babysitters, waiters, cashiers or shop-assistants young people learn to be industrious, persistent, communicative and to value time and money. What is more, part-time jobs help develop such values as initiative, self-discipline, punctuality, practicality and many others. Besides, a lot of young people prefer earning money to asking their parents for some.

However, some teenagers and their parents are sure that work will interfere with their studies and may lead to falling grades. Besides, some young people think that it is too early for them to work. All they need is to enjoy their carefree lives. In some families young people don't work because their parents are rich enough and they do not need extra money they can earn. But I still believe that work is a valuable experience for teenagers.

To conclude, it's up to you to decide whether to work part-time or to concentrate on studying. Anyway, I think that work experience can help young people develop the skills which employers look for and realize their own abilities.

WORK & CAREER

Some people change their jobs every few years. Others say it is better to work for one company for a long period.

Almost everybody dreams of having a good job and making a career. Some people prefer sticking to one company for many years, while others, especially young people, are constantly looking for something better.

Personally, I think that if you stay with one company, you will have an opportunity to learn everything about it and to make a career. If you are devoted to your profession and work hard, you are likely to be promoted. What is more, you can make friends with your colleagues and earn your employer's respect. So, the company that you work for may become your family.

However, a lot of people have to change their jobs very often. If the employee thinks that his or her job is not well-paid or his or her career is not advancing at an acceptable pace, why not look for something else? Some people feel under impossible pressure at work. Others face situations that can lead to stress such as poor relationships with colleagues, an unsupportive boss, lack of consultation and communication, too much interference with their private, social or family lives, work that is too difficult or not demanding enough, poor working conditions and so on. If people feel that they will hardly achieve a higher position in this organization, they usually move to another company. In some cases employees feel that they have outgrown their jobs and they have a desire to find something more suitable to their personality and to develop in new directions.

To sum up, I believe that employees should decide for themselves what to do to make a career. Anyway, both options have advantages and disadvantages.

At present there is no difficulty in choosing a career. However, many people say that it is not so easy to find a really good job.

Nowadays young people have a lot of opportunities to receive good education and to find a well-paid job. In any city there are a lot of firms which need qualified specialists. So young people have a wide choice of career options, but many of them think that it is difficult to find something suitable to their interests and expectations.

Personally, I think that if you are clever, active and full of energy, you can easily find a good job. You can even stay at home and search the Web for vacancies. Just use e-mail, send your résumé to several companies and wait for their offers. Then you can be selected for a job interview and you will be asked some questions about your job history, skills, interests and so on. If you are suitable for the post, you will be offered a job. If not, you can go on looking for other variants.

However, making a positive career choice is a problem which worries many people. Some of them don't know what they are good at. When young people graduate from a University, they need to find a job and most of them understand that it is not an easy task. Many companies, offices, firms and factories demand work experience and that is why they don't want to employ people fresh from school. As a result, the percentage of unemployed youth is rather high.

In conclusion, I would like to say that if you are lazy, you are not likely to find a good job. But if you do your best to achieve your goal, you will certainly succeed.

Nowadays a lot of people work so much that they do not have time to do anything else. Some people say that workaholism is a key to success. Others are convinced that it is rather bad to be addicted to one's work.

Some people think that they will succeed only if they work a lot. If you are the first one in the morning and the last one to leave at night, if you take fewer vacation days and never take a sick day, you will do better than the people who don't do that. But is it really good to be a workaholic?

To my mind, workaholics often forget about work-life balance and suffer from the conflict between work and family. They often sacrifice their health and loved ones for their jobs. They are too much preoccupied with their careers and they have no time for rest, pleasure and spiritual development. As a result, constant fatigue, physical and moral exhaustion, monotony and impossible pressure at work and at home may cause stress. Consequently, it may result in a real breakdown of health. What is more, workaholism may lead to early death, often on the job.

However, working hard is greatly valued in many countries. For instance, there are many people who are addicted to their work in the USA. They always think about their work and feel frustrated if they are kept from it, even during weekends and holidays. But I believe that workaholism is not the same as working hard. I think that everybody should realize that being healthy and happy is more important than making a career.

To sum up, workaholism is a serious social problem. Workaholics' obsession with work is all-occupying, which prevents them from maintaining healthy relationships and outside interests. So it is better not to overwork and to protect your health.

According to some people, it is better to work abroad. Others say that they would prefer working in their own country.

As nowadays travelling has become cheaper and easier, more and more people have the chance to work in a foreign country. Millions of people are now working overseas. However, others are convinced that it is better to work in your own country.

On the one hand, working in a foreign country gives you a wider view of the world. To my mind, it gives you an opportunity to work on some international projects, to make friends with people of different nationalities, to learn more about foreign culture, to gain useful knowledge and experience and to learn foreign languages.

On the other hand, a lot of people say that it is rather bad when experienced specialists leave their motherland in order to work abroad. Our country needs good doctors, scientists, inventors, sportsmen, writers and so on. What is more, working abroad has a number of disadvantages. Firstly, it is rather difficult to get a work permit. Secondly, settling in can also be a problem. Thirdly, a lot of people say they find having to speak a foreign language 24 hours rather exhausting. But despite the challenges, many people find working abroad extremely interesting.

To conclude, I think that working in a foreign country can help you improve your knowledge, broaden your mind and make a career. If you give yourself time to settle in and discover new things, you will be able to realize your potential and to succeed. Anyway, you can always return to your mother country and work to improve its economy, politics or culture.

Some young people say that they want their future job to be well-paid. Others believe that the most important thing is to love what you do.

In their professional lives, many people have to choose between love and money – between doing a job they love that doesn't have great financial rewards, or doing a job that pays well but doesn't satisfy the soul.

Personally, I think that my future profession must be interesting, rewarding and challenging. If it is well-paid, but boring, I will hardly like it. I want to find a job that will give me an opportunity to travel to foreign countries and to meet interesting people. Besides, I would like to work on some international projects and to learn several foreign languages. My profession should help me develop in new directions and suit my character, skills and abilities.

However, some people don't take into consideration their interests and dreams when they look for a job. They think only about their future salary and they are even ready to do work that is too boring, difficult or not demanding enough if they are paid a lot of money. Such people don't care about poor working conditions or lack of support and communication at work. But to my mind, it is rather exhausting to do the work that you don't like and to look forward to the end of your working day. You will certainly feel stressed and dissatisfied.

To conclude, most young people lack work experience and seldom earn much money at the beginning of their career. However, if they work for one company for a long time, they are likely to be given several pay rises and to be promoted. Anyway, I think that your well-being is more important than your bank account.

Teamwork skills have become highly valued by employers. However, some people say that sometimes teams cannot work successfully.

Nowadays more and more employers demand teamwork skills. Good collaboration by team members helps achieve goals more easily. However, bad collaboration leads to unsuccessful performance. So what are the pros and cons of teamwork?

Personally, I think that the more people there are in a team, the greater productivity is. Team members can communicate, exchange their ideas and share their experience and skills with each other. If a company has a team full of creative people who complement one another, then achieving the goal is far more likely. To my mind, every team member should be able to make the right decision. A well considered decision will lead his or her team to success.

But not everybody can work effectively in a team. Some people put their own needs first and do not think of the common goal. Others cannot acknowledge and appreciate the contributions of other members of the team. Quite a lot of employees try to force their ideas upon others, or look down on other people. They are reluctant to cooperate or seek advice from other members. Furthermore, some people cannot maintain good relationships with their colleagues and handle criticism and complaints appropriately. As a result, such individuals find it difficult to work with other team members and the team will not be able to succeed. But I strongly feel that it is very important to develop one's teamwork skills because they can help employees make a career.

To conclude, I believe that the success of the team depends on every its member. That is why every employee must do his or her best to help the team succeed.

Some people think that to be a success you need talent; others believe that hard work can compensate for the lack of it.

What is success? People define this notion in many different ways. Success may mean the achievement of what one wants or intends, a high position in society, one's job, course or sport. Some people believe that success is connected with the amount of money they earn. But quite a lot of people don't know what they need to be successful.

To my mind, if you want to succeed, you must work hard. Even the most talented person will never be successful if he or she is lazy. All successful people face a number of challenges at the beginning of their career. They have to overcome many difficulties, but they don't give up. At last their persistence leads to success. Success always goes hand in hand with hard work and great efforts and one often faces a lot of obstacles, troubles, disappointment and failure on the way to success.

However, some people think that if a person is not talented, he or she will hardly succeed. As a rule ordinary people have ordinary lives. No matter how hard they work, they can never get results. People who are not talented, but industrious usually become good workers, but they are not likely to make great discoveries or to invent something that can revolutionize the world. But I still believe that one must be hard-working, patient, and strong-willed if one wants to be successful.

In conclusion, I would like to add that people are successful if they use all their talents and work hard in order to improve the world and to make it a bit better.

Some people say that it is impossible to work without inspiration. Others say that inspiration is not essential.

People of different professions have been looking for inspiration for centuries. But we still don't know what inspiration is and where it can be found. Many people wonder whether inspiration is important in our lives and what makes us feel it.

In my opinion, inspiration is part and parcel of the creative process. In this state we are capable of making discoveries, writing poems, inventing new things and making something unusual. Every masterpiece of art, literature, music or architecture has been created thanks to inspiration. This wonderful feeling has nothing in common with mediocrity, boredom or idleness. When I feel inspiration, I can work for many hours running and I never feel tired or bored. On the contrary, I am full of energy and enthusiasm.

However, some people say that they have no inspiration. They consider their lives to be monotonous and say that every day is exactly like the previous one. Working, saving, planning, bringing up their children, doing household chores – these are the daily aspects of their lives. But I think that inspiration is everywhere and it lives in every soul. Sometimes looking at the rising sun, falling leaves or smiling children we feel the desire to create. Many things can inspire us and fill our head with new ideas and thoughts.

To conclude, only love of their work and inspiration can make people create beautiful and unusual things. Inspiration is very important because it makes us work, think, search, create and express ourselves. In other words, it makes us live.

Some people think that the profession of a teacher is important and noble, while others claim it has lost its positions and it is not as respected as it used to be.

A teacher is a person who plays a very important role in children's development, upbringing and education. One should have some particular traits of character to be a success in this profession.

I strongly feel that the profession of a teacher is one of the most important professions in the world. A teacher is always responsible for his or her pupils. He or she should encourage their inner development, protect them from any negative influence and watch their progress carefully. A teacher's responsibility is not only to educate a child. He or she should also understand pupils' feelings and dreams, share their problems and give good advice. A real teacher is a person who can inspire his pupils with interest and love for his or her subject. What is more, a teacher may even become as important for children as their parents.

However, some people believe that nowadays teachers are not as respected as they used to be. Unfortunately, this noble profession is not well-paid and it makes some people think that it is not prestigious. Modern society respects money and power. That is why young people try to choose professions which can make them rich and influential. Everybody is eager to make a career and to become famous and successful. But good teachers do not strive for money or fame. Their only concern is children's welfare.

To conclude, we should have the greatest respect for teachers. They are deeply devoted to their job in spite of all problems and difficulties. We should be grateful to our teachers for their help, patience and professionalism.

MASS MEDIA

A lot of people are fond of watching TV. Others say that television is becoming a national disease.

Every day millions of people watch TV and find it the best way of entertainment. Why is television so popular?

Personally, I spend at least two hours a day watching TV. Thanks to television, I can learn about the latest international and local events, I "travel" all over the world and broaden my mind. Television gives me food for thought, introduces me to new ideas and activities. There is always a great variety of programs on TV: news and sports programs, talk shows and TV games, documentaries and feature films, concerts and theatre performances. Besides, there are a lot of excellent educational programs for children and teenagers. They help them improve their knowledge, transfer them to different places and develop their imagination and creativity.

However, there are a lot of silly programs and commercials on TV which stuff our heads with nonsense. Some people don't choose what they watch and they are glued to the screen the whole days. Watching television can be addictive as well as smoking or drinking coffee. This fact lets some people affirm that television is becoming a national disease. The other problem is that there is too much violence on TV. Every day we are reported about natural disasters, murders and robberies. We watch hits where people are killed before our very eyes. It dulls our sensitivity and makes us aggressive.

To conclude, it's up to you to decide what to watch and how much time to spend in front of the TV-set. All in all, television can be very dangerous when it is misused. That is why it is very important to choose programs that we watch very carefully and to limit our viewing time.

Some parents allow their children to watch TV the whole days, while other parents are worried about the negative influence of television on children's physical and mental development.

A lot of parents still don't know how television influences children's health and development. Is it all right to let children watch TV as much as they want?

In my opinion, it's not right that some parents use television as a babysitter in order to keep their children quiet. Besides, many of them don't care what films and programs their children watch. As a result, boys and girls watch hits, commercials, soap operas and programs which are not intended for them. As experts point out, television delays children's speech development. What is more, a lot of adults complain that they can't get their sons and daughters to leave the TV-set when they want to play with them or to take them to the zoo. Nowadays some children are so addicted to television that they are not interested in anything else: they don't read books, communicate with grown-ups and other children. They move less, speak less and they even think less. As a result children are becoming passive, lazy and dull-witted.

However, television has some advantages as well. There are a lot of good cartoons and feature films for children on TV. Besides, there are excellent educational programs and programs designed for schools. They help children broaden their mind, transfer them to different places and develop their imagination and creativity.

To some up, if a child's parents are clever enough, they will choose carefully what their son or daughter watches. It is very important to limit children's viewing time. Boys and girls should understand that there are a lot of other interesting and useful things to do besides watching TV.

Many people watch soap operas because they find them enjoyable and realistic. Others say that watching soap operas is just a waste of time.

I have always wondered why there is so much talk about soap operas. Most people either like or strongly dislike them.

Personally, I don't watch soap operas. I find them absolutely uninteresting and totally boring. As a rule events unfold rather slowly and sometimes actors' performance leaves much to be desired. Some soap operas have been running for several years. If I have some free time, I'd rather read a book, listen to music or go for a walk with my friends. I think soap operas are aimed at housewives and pensioners who have much spare time. To my mind, people who are fond of soap operas find their own lives rather boring. If a person's life is full of interesting events, he or she will hardly have a desire to spend hours in front of the TV-set watching other people fall in love, quarrel, separate and so on.

However, a lot of people say that watching soap operas gives them an opportunity to relax, to experience the main characters' feelings and to plunge into exciting adventures. People who like soap operas try to see every episode. And later they discuss what happened to their favourite characters with their friends or colleagues. Thanks to soap operas, they can learn about the lives of rich and glamorous people. Besides, watching soap operas is the best entertainment for old and disabled people who are confined to their homes and who lack communication.

To conclude, it is up to you to decide whether to watch soap operas or not. Anyway, tastes differ and what is interesting to you may seem totally boring to other people.

Some people are fond of reality TV shows, while others are against them.

Nowadays there are a lot of television programmes that put ordinary or famous people in different situations, film them over a period of weeks or months, and let the viewers watch what happens every day. Reality shows now dominate the TV schedules, but different people have different attitude to these programmes.

Personally, I think that watching reality shows is a waste of time. Most of them are boring and stupid. I don't care about celebrities eating bugs or police officers chasing after stolen cars. To my mind, there are too many reality shows on TV and all of them are exactly the same. What is more, reality shows have become more personal and even humiliating. They are full of awkward situations and they make people do silly things to please the masses. So I'd rather watch a good movie.

However, millions of people love watching reality shows. They say reality television gives ordinary people a wonderful opportunity to become national celebrities, at least for a short period. For some people watching reality shows is a great way to pass the time and they consider these programmes to be rather funny. Some viewers are addicted to reality shows and watch them for hours. But I think it is better to worry about your own life than the lives of other people.

In conclusion, I would like to say that television should give us food for thought, and introduce us to new ideas and activities. As for reality shows, they stuff our heads with nonsense.

Some people say that television, radio and newspapers have changed our lives for the better. However, others believe that the mass media has more disadvantages than advantages.

Nowadays the mass media actually rules the world. It has a lot of power because its tool is information and its aim is to make information available to ordinary people.

Personally, I can't imagine my life without newspapers, radio and television. They inform us of what is going on in the world and give us wonderful possibilities for education and entertainment. On every news-stand there are dozens of newspapers for businessmen, children and teenagers, sports fans and so on. To my mind, you can always find a newspaper which suits your interests. Television is the main source of news for millions of people. It gives us an opportunity to "travel" all over the world. Besides, it helps us relax and escape from reality. As for the radio, I like listening to it in the car, in the open air, or when I do something about the house.

On the other hand, newspapers, radio and television often inform us of dramatic events. Many people say it makes them feel depressed. One more disadvantage is that the media spreads gossip about different celebrities and their private lives. What is more, newspapers, television and radio have become major advertising media. Advertisements and commercials make people buy a lot of useless things. Moreover, they can be harmful. For example, cigarette or beer advertising can increase the consumption of these goods and cause problems with health.

To conclude, it is still an open question if it is good or bad that the media moulds public opinion. Anyway, I'm sure that people should not believe everything they hear, see or read about.

SPORTS, HEALTH & BEAUTY

Some of my friends think it's important to do sports regularly, while others would rather watch a sporting event on TV.

Nowadays people have to work more and they prefer to rest more actively. Therefore they need better health, more energy and endurance in order to carry out all activities efficiently and without fatigue. It's important to be in good shape and to stay healthy and attractive.

To my mind, physical exercises are essential for everyone. If you want to be strong physically and mentally, you can go to a fitness club, a sauna or a swimming pool. Physical exercises strengthen the immune system, improve mental health and help prevent different diseases and obesity. Exercising is also the best remedy for insomnia, depression and stress.

However, a lot of people say they have neither time nor opportunity to go in for sports. What is more, they feel too tired after a hard day's work. That is why all they can do in the evening is to watch sporting events on TV. But I think that if you don't have an opportunity to go to a fitness club, you can just buy a treadmill or a stationary bike and exercise at home. You can also do your morning exercises, jog, swim in summer, ski or skate in winter, play different sports games such as tennis, football, volley-ball, basket-ball and so on. At least you can dance and jump about your room to music for 10-15 minutes each day.

To conclude, if you want to be slim and strong, you must leave your comfortable armchair and exercise. It is not enough to watch other people doing sports. Only regular exercises will help you make your life longer and healthier.

Some parents think that Physical Education is a very important subject to their children. Others think that PE should only be optional at school because not everyone is equally good at sport.

There have been a lot of arguments if Physical Education should be on the curriculum in most schools. Some parents consider PE to be a very important subject, while others are convinced that it is up to pupils to choose whether to attend these lessons or not.

I strongly feel that Physical Education is essential for every boy and girl. Not every child has an opportunity to go to a fitness club or a swimming pool because it costs much money. But physical exercises are important because they strengthen the immune system, improve mental health and help prevent different diseases and obesity. All children and teenagers want to be in good shape and to stay healthy.

On the other hand, quite a lot of children have problems with their health and they can't attend PE lessons. Some boys and girls feel embarrassed when they can't do what their classmates can. They can't run fast, jump high or they don't play basketball or volley-ball well. What is more, such children often feel upset or even humiliated when they get bad marks. But I think that PE lessons are useful for everybody. To my mind, children who are weaker should do some easy exercises.

In conclusion, I would like to say that Physical Education is an essential part of the school curriculum as well as mathematics, literature or foreign languages. Of course, not everyone is equally good at sport. But not everyone is equally good at other subjects and it is not a good reason to make them optional. Anyway, PE lessons will help children become stronger, healthier and more energetic.

They say, excessive exercises are detrimental to health, but some people don't share this opinion.

In general, sport helps us to be in good shape, to become strong and to stay healthy and attractive. But can excessive exercises ruin your health?

Personally, I think that immoderate training is very harmful. Firstly, a person who exercises too much feels exhausted and depressed. He or she expands too much time and energy on doing sports. Such people feel great pressure and tend to exercise harder and harder trying to achieve better results. They stop taking breaks and lose touch with their own needs. Secondly, sportsmen often suffer different injuries which sometimes can be very serious. It usually takes them much time to recover. Finally, some professional sportsmen take a dope, a drug which serves to improve their performance. Such drugs do much harm to their health and they can even kill.

But in spite of all these dangers, many people go in for sports. Physical exercises strengthen the immune system, improve mental health and help prevent different diseases and burn calories. Exercising is also the best remedy for insomnia and stress. People who exercise regularly are productive, happy, efficient and calm. Exercise re-energizes them, improves their concentration and problem-solving.

To conclude, it is generally well-known now that there are many physical and mental health benefits that can be gained from regular exercise. But don't forget that exercises are very useful in case they are moderate.

The popularity of extreme sports has grown a lot for the last decades. More and more people are getting involved in this activity. Others are sure that it is silly of such people to risk their lives.

Extreme sports are becoming more and more popular. Some people say that they can't imagine their lives without them. However, others don't understand what compels some individuals to extreme sports.

In my opinion, extreme sports give one a wonderful opportunity to release stress, to escape everyday monotony and to get his portion of adrenaline. Those people who are involved in extreme activities say it gets the adrenaline pumping and makes them forget about all their problems. Besides, it is always great to take up something new. I believe it's really very difficult to think about ordinary things when you have to survive and to fight against environmental obstacles and challenges. It makes people feel strong and alive. What is more, it is also an unusual way of losing weight and keeping fit.

But some people think that taking up the extremist lifestyle is crazy as it often involves a high level of danger. They admit that they are afraid of diving from a plane or jumping from a bridge. Indeed, it is not a task for the weak hearted. It requires endurance and reliance on your own survival skills. Extreme activities often involve speed, height and physical exertion. Besides, you will need a certain amount of money to pay for highly specialized gear and a professional instructor.

To sum up, it's up to you to decide whether to risk your life or not. Some extreme activities are so dangerous that people compare them with virtual suicide. Others say that the experience is magical. But you should always remember that your life and your health are the most important things.

Surfing is becoming more and more popular nowadays. However, some people say that this sport is not for everybody because it is rather risky.

Many people admire muscular bronzed young men who ride a surfboard on the crest of a wave as it carries them towards the shore. Some people practice surfing as a recreational activity, while others think that it is the most important thing in their lives.

Personally, I believe that surfing is a source of inspiration for many people. It gives them a wonderful opportunity to display their strength and agility, to release stress, to escape everyday monotony and to get their portion of adrenaline. Surfing is an excellent sport for those who are ready to risk their lives and to take up something new. It will certainly help you become stronger and healthier. Anyone at any age can learn to surf.

However, many people say that surfing is very difficult. Most beginners are not able to catch the wave at all. Surfers should be able to control their board in challenging conditions, to ride challenging waves, and to execute different maneuvers. Besides, the equipment and sportswear for surfing are rather expensive. Moreover, one should not forget that surfing is extremely dangerous. Trapped inside a high wave surfers can become totally disorientated. One of the main dangers of surfing is drowning. Some professional surfers have drowned in extremely challenging conditions. Collisions with sand bars, rocks, reefs or surfboards can sometimes cause injuries and even death. Such animals as sharks or jellyfish can also present a danger.

To sum up, if you have made up your mind to become a surfer, take all pros and cons into consideration first.

Parkour is a sport that is extremely popular with young people. However, traceurs (parkour practitioners) say that it is rather difficult and dangerous.

Today parkour has developed throughout the world. It is especially popular with young men who are eager for new experiences. Parkour teaches them to move quickly and efficiently and to overcome obstacles such as concrete walls, high fences, hedges or rocks. But every parkour practitioner must remember that there are a number of dangers that they need to be aware of.

Personally, I think that parkour gives you much energy and helps you develop physical fitness and coordination as well as determination, endurance, agility and courage. You can learn to trust yourself and to be strong. It's a sport that teaches you to control your body and to move without being hindered by obstacles. To my mind, it is a natural method to develop strength, speed and power. Thanks to parkour, traceurs learn how to surmount both physical and mental obstacles.

However, parkour is a difficult discipline to train. One of its main dangers is falling. Young people usually practice in parks and abandoned structures. Of course they try to avoid injuries, but everything happens. Some reckless people who assume too much about their physical abilities and do not take full account of the risks may be seriously injured. So parkour requires cool-headedness, prudence, good self-control and the ability to be observant.

To conclude, parkour teaches young people to overcome everyday difficulties and to approach problems differently. It pushes the limits of the human body and mind. Parkour also gives you an opportunity to explore the potential offered by your body. I believe parkour can change your life and your attitude to everything.

A lot of people dream of being slim. They follow a diet trying to lose weight. But others say that weight-loss diets can be very harmful.

Turning over the pages of glossy fashion magazines we see pictures of beautiful women and handsome men with ideal figures and we want to be like them. In chase of health and beauty a lot of people follow different weight-loss diets. But they often forget how awful the consequences might be.

Personally, I never follow any diets. To my mind, the best way to lose weight is to exercise. Physical exercises help you to be in good shape and to stay healthy and attractive. Running and swift walking help me to burn calories. I often go to a fitness club and a swimming pool. Besides, I try to avoid fast, fried and fatty food.

However, a lot of people are keen on weight-loss diets. Many of them stop eating anything thinking that starvation will lead to the best results. But dieting may have such side effects as fatigue, irritability, depression or fainting and it may result in such eating disorders as anorexia or bulimia. I think that if you want to lose weight and to preserve health, it's better to begin with smaller portions of food and some substitutions. For example, you can replace a cup of tea and a cake with a glass of juice. Anyway, one should remember that a person needs 2,000 calories a day, but it depends on age, weight, physical activity and other factors.

To conclude, it is great to be slim, but never forget that "health is the best wealth". All in all, if you want to go on a diet, you'd better consult a doctor or a nutrition expert first.

Some people think that physical attractiveness is important to every person. Others say that it is inner beauty that really matters.

People have admired beauty since ancient times. It gives us a sense of pleasure and inspiration, keeps up our spirits and makes us accomplish feats. But there is a kind of beauty that is not observable. It is called inner beauty. So which is more important: a pretty face or a kind heart?

Personally, I believe that inner beauty is much more important than an attractive appearance. People have always valued honesty, kindness, sincerity, devotion and tenderness. In the history of mankind there are a lot of examples when a person fell in love with an absolutely unattractive or even ugly man or woman because of his or her wonderful traits of character. Every child knows the famous story "Beauty and the Beast". It is about a charming girl who fell in love with a frightening monster because he possessed inner beauty.

However, others believe that physical attractiveness make people happy. A person who has large eyes, a slim figure, long legs, thick hair and regular features is usually admired by everybody. Beauty can help people become successful and even famous. Beautiful people receive more attention, find romantic partners more easily, get better jobs and promotions and even earn more money. Some historical individuals have become icons of beauty, including Cleopatra, Sophie Loren and Marilyn Monroe. But I think that most beautiful people are capricious, light-minded and faithless.

To sum up, both physical attractiveness and inner beauty are important to a person. But I strongly feel that it is better to have a good character than a beautiful face. Anyway, appearances are deceptive.

Plastic surgery is becoming more and more popular. Some people think that it can help them become happier and more attractive. Others are convinced that there are too many risks which must be taken into account.

In modern society personal image and appearance play an important role. Now it is fashionable to be young and attractive. Both men and women are afraid of getting old. That is why they use plastic surgery procedures to conceal the signs of aging.

In my opinion, the possibilities of plastic surgery are huge. It can help you change the shape of your nose, correct sticking-out ears, reduce a double chin and what not. Successful plastic surgery can lead to an increase in self-esteem and confidence. Studies show that beautiful people are considered to be more intelligent, successful and capable. Besides, they often have increased romantic opportunities and it is easier for them to make a career and to find friends. Young and beautiful people are more likely to succeed and they are usually happier and more satisfied with their lives.

However, plastic surgery has its own risks including the body's rejection of an implant, allergy to anesthesia, post-operation pains, prolonged regeneration and others. Some people have lost their lives and suffered disfigurement and scarring as a result of plastic surgery gone wrong. And even if you feel good after an operation, you may be dissatisfied with results. Surgeons can never guarantee a 100-percent success. That is why I think that plastic surgery should be used only to remove or correct physical defects.

To conclude, it's important to understand that while plastic surgery has a number of advantages, it will hardly change your life or solve your problems. Think about all the possible risks before making the final decision to have a plastic operation done.

THEATRE, PAINTING, MUSIC & CINEMA

Some people say that the theatre is likely to disappear, while others believe that it will continue attracting large audiences.

The theatre has existed since 2000 BC. Greek theatres were huge, open-air structures that were able to seat thousands of viewers. Nowadays there are many types of theatres: a comedy theatre, a drama theatre, a concert hall, a musical theatre, an opera and ballet house, a dance theatre and others. Some theatres are famous all over the world such as the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow or la Scala in Milan.

Personally, I am sure that the theatre is not likely to disappear. I am a real theatre-goer. To my mind, a good play stirs spectators' imagination, makes them smile and cry, fills them with joy and excitement, makes them forget about dull reality and carries them away to a fantastic country. The theatre is a small world with its own rules, its own life and feelings. Going to the theatre is always an exciting event for me.

But nowadays a lot of people prefer watching a movie to going to the theatre. Some of them even say that the theatre will not last long. Firstly, a lot of people prefer to watch TV sitting in a comfortable armchair at home. Secondly, tickets for a good play are rather expensive. Finally, they should be bought beforehand and one will have to stand in a queue for a long time. But I believe that those people who say that they don't care about the theatre have never seen a good play.

To conclude, I think that the theatre will exist as long as people love art and enjoy a special fascinating atmosphere that reigns in the theatre.

Some people compare painting to literature and music. Others say that it is boring to look at pictures.

Millions of people admire pictures by great artists and pay a lot of money to become their owners. Other people don't understand why some paintings are spoken about and valued so much. Some people are fond of going to art galleries, while others consider it a waste of time.

Personally, I am fond of examining paintings by well-known artists. I think that a good picture always provokes some mood. It is either cheerful if the colours are bright and festive, or wistful if the artist uses dull and oppressive colours. The artist tends to depict wonderful scenes of life – the grand beauty of old pines, the formidable power of a storm or the delicate colours of flowers. Painting gives me aesthetic experience, stirs my imagination and makes me think about something serious and elevated.

However, some people say that they feel bored when they look at pictures. In contrast to books which tell us an interesting story, a picture always shows a transient moment. So the viewer should guess what happened before that moment and what will happen later. But I strongly feel that a great artist is like a writer. But instead of words he uses a canvas, a brush and paints. The pictures of talented artists can really "speak". Through their pictures artists tell us about their thoughts and feelings and open their inner world to us.

To conclude, the masterpieces of painting, like the masterpieces of music and literature transform experience. People will admire a beautiful painting if they learn to understand the language of the artist.

A lot of young people think that music serves only for dancing. However, others say that the aim of music is not just to entertain us.

There is hardly a person in the world who does not like music. Most young people can't imagine their lives without it. But what is music? Is it just a pleasant combination of sounds or a far more complicated notion?

Personally, I think that music is a universal language understandable to everybody. People compose music in order to express their feelings and emotions. The composer speaks to us without using any words. Music can fill us with energy and make us happy. It's known that classical music makes us feel delighted and relaxed. And on the contrary, rock music and heavy metal arouse hatred, violence, irritation and rage. Some sounds even have a healing effect on people and can normalize heart rate and soothe them better than any pills.

But some young people think that music serves only for entertainment. They like pop music, rap, dance music and heavy metal. These musical genres help them relax and have fun. Most teenagers are not ready to listen to such serious music as symphony, opera or chamber music. To my mind, musical compositions by such outstanding composers as Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, Tchaikovsky or Shostakovich should be listened to attentively and brooded over.

To conclude, the aim of music is not just to entertain us, but to give us aesthetic pleasure, to develop our taste and love for beauty. That is why everybody likes listening to music, dancing to it, visiting concert halls, singing or playing musical instruments. Music plays a very important role in our lives and it has the power to unite people all over the world.

Some people say that they are used to working or studying to the sound of music, while others are convinced that music is a distraction.

Parents often complain that children listen to their favourite records while doing their homework. Some employees cannot imagine their working day without music. But is it all right to listen to music and to work or study simultaneously?

Personally, I think that listening to music will hardly help you when you are studying mathematics or physics or preparing for an exam. But music is fine when you are doing something that is quite automatic. Many people, especially teenagers, claim that having music on while they study or work can help improve their concentration. Besides, it makes the task seem less boring. Some teenagers even like to do their homework to the sound of heavy rock.

However, for many people, it would be difficult not only to work with heavy rock music playing, but with any kind of music at all. They say that music does not help them concentrate, and therefore study or work. Most people need total silence to be able to work. If there's any background noise, they get distracted and annoyed. But to my mind, loud chatter, whistle or rustle disturb us more than music.

To sum up, it is up to you to decide whether to listen to music while you study or not. I think that it is a matter of personal preference. But it is not always good to have music playing in the office or workplace. While it improves concentration or provides relaxation for some people, for others it may be a distraction and even an irritant.

The silent film disappeared when the era of the talking film began. A lot of people say that modern movies are much better than the early ones. However, some people are sorry about the disappearance of the silent film.

Movies are truly the art of our time. Nowadays there are quite a lot of interesting films among which we can find westerns, horror films, hits, comedies, science fiction films, thrillers, romance films and many others. But why do some people still admire the first black and white films?

Personally, I am fond of modern cinematography. Nowadays films are skillfully made and contain a lot of special effects. They attract people's attention with absorbing plots, stunning visual and sound effects, exciting scenes and complicated scripts. One of the latest inventions is 3-D films. To my mind, it is amazing to look at objects which seem to have length, depth and height. Besides, modern movies have become easily accessible.

However, many people like early films that have picture but no sound. They say that modern movies have lost something. Silent films were understandable to everybody without any words. They were like a universal language and they united people of all nationalities. But now films have to be translated into different languages and dubbed. They make our imagination work no more and sometimes they don't help us relax and forget about our everyday problems as there is too much violence, filth and horror in them. What is more, some people say that a lot of modern films are stupid and uninteresting. But I believe that most of them have a successful run. They are watched, discussed and admired.

To conclude, I think it is difficult to compare modern movies to silent films. They are absolutely different and have their own charm. Anyway, tastes differ and everybody can choose what to watch.

Some people are fond of 3D films and they are convinced that 3D will take over the cinema in the future. Others are against 3D films.

Nowadays production companies are putting many films in 3D. Some people wonder if it will enhance or ruin the film they want to see.

Personally, I think that watching a 3D movie is a great fun. It gives you a wonderful opportunity to interact more with the film. To my mind, 3D movies prove that the technology can enhance not only the experience, but the storytelling too. People perceive the world around them with depth. So it would be natural to see films that are given more depth to the scene instead of flat images.

However, a lot of people say they were disappointed with 3D films. Firstly, some of them did not have a feeling that they got their money's worth because of the lack of effects. Secondly, some movies have 3D graphics added later. It makes films darker and 3D effect is often not very good. Thirdly, some people believe that when we see 3D we lose the artistry of the film. They also say that 3D movies are made for amusement rather than for aesthetic pleasure. In addition, tickets are expensive and it is a great disadvantage for people who are tight with money. They believe that 3D films are not worth the extra cost and they are just a way for companies to boost profits. But I am convinced that a skillfully made 3D movie is worth seeing.

To conclude, most people think that someday every movie will be released in 3D. But you still have a choice today. If you do not want to watch movies in 3D you can choose the 2D version of a film.

Some people think that graffiti is an art form, while others think that it is vandalism.

Nowadays graffiti can be seen in the subway and on the walls of many buildings. Some people, especially teenagers, enjoy examining these drawings. But not everybody likes graffiti and recognizes it as an art form.

I think that graffiti is definitely art. It is so popular nowadays that it can be seen in some museums and art galleries. Graffiti varies from simple written words to elaborate wall paintings. One can see graffiti on many websites, in fashionable magazines and even on clothes and toys. Some graffiti artists get thousands of dollars for their paintings. To my mind, graffiti gives young people an opportunity to express their feelings and to demonstrate their skills.

However, a lot of people say that graffiti is the work of vandals. According to them, it is silly and aggressive and it makes cities ugly. Graffiti is sometimes revolutionary. It often has a reputation as part of a subculture that rebels against authority. Besides, graffiti is still illegal in many places and punishable by fines that is why most graffiti artists choose to remain anonymous. But in my opinion, if the artists were given some place to practice their art, the attitude to graffiti would be different.

To sum up, nowadays graffiti has the status of "street art". Some paintings are really skillfully made, while others are unsightly. Personally, I like graffiti, but I wouldn't like to see it everywhere.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

Some people say that we should invest money in ecology projects, while others believe that nature is doing well by itself.

The earth is the only planet that people can live on, but nowadays they seem to be doing everything to make their home unfit for living. Industrialization has brought us into conflict with the natural environment. Our planet is in danger: air, water and land pollution have disastrous consequences which threaten human life on Earth.

I strongly feel that the more money is invested in ecology projects, the better our lives are going to be. People have technologies to make our planet cleaner: we can control pollution, recycle waste materials, protect rare animals and plants and install antipollution equipment. We need more disaster-prevention programs in order to control environmental pollution, fight the destruction of wildlife and preserve woodlands. There should be more organizations like Greenpeace that will help protect the animal world and stop environmental degradation. Such organizations influence public opinion and help form a correct attitude to nature. There should be more newspaper articles, TV-programs and science-popular films about ecological problems. They help people become environment-educated.

However, many people still believe that nature is doing well by itself. They use natural resources and pollute the environment, but they don't think how awful the consequences may be. I'm sure that nature can't do without our help. If we want to breathe fresh air, to drink clean water and to eat healthy food, we must stop polluting the environment.

To conclude, ecological problems concern everybody and there are ways to solve them. People must always remember that the earth is our home and it depends on us what it will be like.

Many people think that they can't solve the world's environmental problems on their own and that the government and big companies must care about these problems. However, others say that individuals can do much to help the environment.

Our planet is in danger: air, water and land pollution have disastrous consequences which threaten human life on Earth. Most people are convinced that something must be done to stop pollution, but they don't know if they can help.

In my opinion, much can be done by an average citizen. People have to be smart about such things as driving a car or using electricity. Whenever we drive a car, we are adding greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. To make our planet cleaner and to use less energy we can try carpooling. That is when three people ride together in one car instead of driving three cars to work. We can also use public transport, ride a bike, or walk. People can save electricity by turning off lights, our TV-set and computer. We can use less washing up liquids to keep the water clean. We can also plant trees, collect litter and recycle cans, bottles, plastic bags and newspapers. Besides, we can buy products that don't use much energy.

But a lot of people still think that there is little they can do to help the environment. They are sure that it is the duty of the government and big companies to make our planet cleaner: to recycle waste materials, to protect rare animals and plants, to install antipollution equipment and so on. But they are wrong. Everybody must take part in reducing pollution.

To conclude, if we want to be healthy, to drink clean water and to breathe fresh air, we should take care of the environment and help improve our lives on Earth.

There is a lot of discussion about the destruction of rain forests. Some people don't care about this problem, while others feel that the rain forest must be preserved.

Nowadays rainforests occupy a relatively small area. One can find them in South America and Indonesia, in Thailand and Sri Lanka. Worryingly, rainforests are disappearing at an alarming rate owing to deforestation, river pollution and soil erosion. Quite a lot of people still don't know what effect the destruction of the rainforest may have on the world climate.

To my mind, tropical rainforests are very important for our planet because they are home to a great variety of plants, insects, birds and animals. Tropical rainforests are called the "world's largest pharmacy" because a lot of natural medicines have been discovered there. More than half of the world's species of plants and animals are found in rainforests. They also offer a way of life to many people living in and around the forest. What is more, rainforests are the lungs of our planet because they produce a significant amount of the world's oxygen.

Unfortunately, rainforests continue disappearing. Some people say that we need more land for agriculture and more trees for timber. They continue killing animals and picking up herbs and rare flowers. Rainforests also have value as tourism destinations. But the increasing number of tourists may damage the local environment. I strongly feel that people must be careful with nature.

To conclude, if people want to be healthy and to live happily on Earth, they must preserve rainforests. I think that governments must work together with environmentalists to fight deforestation and to prevent the disappearance of "the lungs of our planet".

Everybody understands that we should recycle our waste. However, most people continue disposing of it in the usual way.

Recycling is an important issue nowadays. Unfortunately, people have always polluted their surroundings. The development of big industrial cities has led to the concentration of huge amounts of waste into small areas. Disposal of waste has become a major problem. When rubbish is burnt, this pollutes the atmosphere. When it is buried in landfill sites, it can cause pollution of water supplies. So the obvious solution of this problem is recycling.

I strongly feel that everybody can help recycle waste by collecting litter and by sorting rubbish into different categories. Paper, glass and plastic can be sold to recycling companies. Recycled waste can be made into new products and it can help save natural resources. Some waste can also be used to produce electricity or to make soil for growing fruit and vegetables. In my opinion, it would be great if recycling centres paid people for the rubbish they brought in.

But in spite of all the advantages of recycling, there is still a lot of waste everywhere. Many people don't want to sort their rubbish. Some areas still have plenty of landfill space and no recycling centres. They find it rather expensive to transport materials for recycling to big cities. To my mind, there must be more recycling centres not only in big cities, but in small towns as well. Besides, people should be educated about the importance of recycling.

In general, recycling is good for the environment. What is more, it is an interesting and profitable business. If everybody made a small effort to improve their local environment, pollution would be reduced gradually and the global situation would improve.

FAMILY PROBLEMS

Some people like big families, while others think that small families are better.

As someone has rightly said: "The family is the nucleus of civilization". A person's upbringing and education starts in his or her family and it is in the family that values, norms and ideas are communicated from generation to generation. Families can be big and small. Some families consist of parents and their only child. But there are families where several generations live together and where there are a lot of children.

In my opinion, big families are better than small ones. Firstly, when there are two or more children in the family, they are used to helping each other and sharing responsibilities. They learn to live in a "community" where every member is equal. Secondly, when a child has brothers and sisters, he or she is not likely to become egoistic because parents share their love and attention between all their children. And finally, it is difficult to feel lonely when one has a big family.

However, some people say that they would prefer to have a small family. First and foremost, one needs less money to support a small family. Parents who have only one child don't have to work much and therefore they can spend more time with their son or daughter. Besides, when several generations live together, there is often misunderstanding between older and younger people because of their different experiences, opinions and habits.

To conclude, it does not matter if the family is big or small. The most important thing is that it should be happy and united. That is why it is essential to maintain harmony and the atmosphere of love, mutual respect and understanding in the family.

Nowadays quite a lot of young people choose to conclude marriage contract. Others say that it is an absolutely useless thing.

Unfortunately, nowadays a lot of marriages break up. For many men and women divorce turns into a nightmare because it is often connected with quarrels and partition of property. Sometimes a wife and a husband can become real enemies arguing about who will take the flat or the car after their separation. If they have small children, everything becomes even more complicated and painful.

Personally, I am convinced that it is wise of young people to conclude marriage contract. Marriage contract is a mutual consent about mutual rights and duties before marriage, in marriage and after it. The contract takes effect on the date of the civil marriage ceremony. It regulates property relationship between spouses and determines their rights and duties. What is more, marriage contract can determine property rights and duties of spouses as parents. It is very convenient that spouses can change their marriage contract during their marriage. They also have the right to cancel it.

However, some people say that a person who concludes marriage contract shows that he or she does not trust his or her spouse. And if there is no trust in the family, it is likely to break up. Besides, when young people are going to get married, they should think about love, not money. But I still believe that both men and women should be responsible and they should think about their future.

To conclude, it's up to you to decide whether to conclude marriage contract or not. But in my opinion, it makes people's lives easier in case of divorce and helps avoid quarrels.

In modern society old people and their grandchildren usually live separately and don't communicate too much. Some people say that it is quite natural, while others think that the old and the young should spend more time together.

Nowadays there are few families where several generations live under the same roof. Children and their grandparents don't see very much of each other. But is it good or bad for both the old and the young?

Personally, I think that children and their grandparents should spend more time together. Children always need much attention, but their parents usually work too much. But pensioners always have time for kids. Old people feel useful and needed when they have somebody to take care of. They also become more active and more interested in life and their physical and psychological health improves. What is more, grandparents can pass their knowledge, skills and experience to kids. At the same time the young can show the old how to use a mobile phone or a PC.

But unfortunately, there is less and less contact between children and their grandparents nowadays. Some families live in small flats where there is no room for grandparents. Other families leave for big cities and have neither time nor opportunity to visit their ageing relatives. As a result, many old people have no contact with children and feel lonely and depressed. Children who are separated from their grandparents also suffer from lack of attention, love and support. So I think parents should do their best to bring the old and the young together.

To conclude, the advantages are enormous for both the old and the young. If grandparents and children spend more time together, they will learn to understand and respect each other; consequently, there will be less conflict in society. Besides, there will be fewer lonely old people and more happy kids.

Nowadays a lot of people adopt children from overseas. Others are sure that there are many children who need parents in our country.

A typical family usually consists of a couple with their children. However, some people can't have their own children for different reasons and they choose to build a family through adoptions. In recent decades international adoptions have become increasingly popular.

Nowadays the growing number of men and women adopt children from foreign countries including Third World countries. Every time a Hollywood celebrity adopts a child from overseas, more and more ordinary people want to follow his or her example. To my mind, it is not right to adopt children from abroad only because it is fashionable and because other people say that it is good.

On the other hand, many people believe that adopting children from foreign countries has a number of advantages. Firstly, children's biological parents will hardly interfere in their lives. Secondly, people think that international adoptions help build bridges between communities and create a culturally diverse society. Personally, I think that it is not wise to adopt children from foreign countries when there are thousands of orphans in our country. They also need loving families and permanent homes.

In general, it is a good deed to adopt a child either from abroad or from your own country. Anyway, people must be responsible and they must take care of children who need their love and attention.

Some parents think that young people would better live independently, while others believe that it may spoil the relationships between children and parents.

All parents dream of raising responsible and self-reliant children. But when their nice little kids grow older and demand independence, most parents don't know what to do. Moms and Dads can't stop wondering if they should let their sons and daughters live independently or if young people would better live with them.

To my mind, young people should live on their own. I believe that children's job is to try their wings and parents' job is to let them fly away. For example, in the USA young people usually move out of their parents' house at the age of 18. A grown-up person who is still living with his or her parents may be considered "immature", or "tied to the mother's apron strings". Young people who live far from their parents and try to earn their living are usually more responsible and emotionally mature.

Some Moms and Dads want their children to be independent so much, that they stop influencing their lives. As a result, young people completely forget about their parents' existence and visit them only once or twice a year at the best. Some parents feel unhappy and lonely because they have to live in an old people's home where they miss their children and grandchildren. I strongly feel that parents ought to love, protect and guide their children in order to avoid such a sad situation. And children ought to take care of their aging parents in their turn.

To conclude, I believe that lifelong bonds between parents and their children are extremely important. No matter how old you are or where you live, you must never forget about your parents.

Some parents think that if their children are disobedient, they should be stricter with them. Others say that love and understanding will help solve the problem.

Have you ever met an ideal child? I don't think so. Small children are very active, inquisitive and sometimes naughty. There are kids whose behaviour can be called notorious and unbearable. They constantly give a headache to their parents and teachers. Why does it happen and what should parents do in such a situation?

Personally, I think that if parents want their sons and daughters to be cheerful, self-confident and socially successful, they must be loving, caring and attentive to their children's wishes and needs. Grown-ups ought to show warmth and affection towards their children. Of course, sometimes parents should be strict, but they must always remain fair. They should use punishment and praise appropriately. I love and respect my parents because they prefer discussions and explanations and value compromise.

However, some Moms and Dads are still convinced that if they spare the rod, they will certainly spoil the child. They think that if they punish their children, their sons and daughters will grow into well-behaved adults. Such parents choose to be very strict with their offspring. As a result, adults achieve the contrary effect: their son or daughter becomes estranged and feels rejected. I believe that pressure and fear are the worst methods of upbringing.

To conclude, it is parents' duty to make their child happy. Many psychologists say that there are no problem children, there are only problem parents. Mothers and fathers should be wise, loving, considerate and consistent. As soon as children feel that their parents love, understand and support them, they will have a desire to please them and to improve their behaviour.

SHOPPING

Some people are fond of shopping. Others consider it to be a waste of time.

Different people have different attitude to shopping. It is usually considered that all women love shopping, while all men hate it. In reality there are women who are indifferent to the process of purchasing things and there are men who find shopping to be the best entertainment.

Personally, I like shopping. To my mind, it is a wonderful leisure activity. I often go shopping just to pass the time, to get pleasure or to plan a later purchase. Besides, sometimes I make purchases online. It is very fast and convenient. You have access to the information about the particular product and you can look at it. What is more, you don't even have to leave your house. It helps you save much time and effort and encourages you to purchase more products.

However, some people hate shopping and consider it to be a terrible waste of time and money. It drives them crazy to look for the things they need and to wait in long lines to buy them. They prefer to purchase everything they need in the nearest supermarket. Sometimes they buy clothes in the sales without paying attention to their quality and price. Such people take the first thing that falls into their hands and don't try to look for something cheaper and better as they can't stand the process of exploring shop-windows and counters. But I think that department stores and supermarkets save plenty of time and make our lives easier.

To conclude, shopping is a part of people's daily lives. But it's up to you to decide how much time and money to spend on shopping.

Some people like supermarkets and shopping centers. However, others say that they have too many disadvantages.

Nowadays there are a lot of shops, supermarkets and shopping centers in every city. Some of us are fond of spending our free time there. But the increasing number of supermarkets and shopping centers worry a lot of people.

Personally, I am fond of supermarkets and shopping centers. A supermarket usually offers you a wide choice of goods and you can buy food, clothes, toys, books, disks and electrical goods under a single roof. Nowadays everything is done in order to make shopping more convenient. Many shops work 24 hours. So food and drinks are available at night. Some supermarkets offer extra services such as cafés, pharmacies, banks or children centers.

However, many people prefer small shops to big ones. There are usually crowds and long lines in supermarkets. So there is always noise and hustle there. Perhaps, there are too many supermarkets and shopping centers nowadays. They make us buy more and more goods. Quite a lot of people can't resist the temptation to buy things that they don't need when they see bright wraps and reduced prices. Shops attract the buyer with advertising, discounts and lottery. A lot of supermarkets use the so-called psychological prices: a little less than a round number, for example \$ 9.99. Some people are addicted to shopping. They get great pleasure from buying things and they often make useless and unplanned purchases.

To sum up, I think that supermarkets and shopping centers are very useful. But when you go there, you should try to be economical and buy only the things you need. Otherwise, you risk spending too much money.

Some people enjoy buying different things, while others say that our lives would be better if we bought fewer goods.

To buy or not to buy? That is the question. Modern society is often called consumer society, because buying goods and services is considered to be very important. What people need depends on their age, character, way of life and other factors. But do we really need as much as we buy?

Personally, I am fond of shopping. I often buy things which I don't really need, but which make my life a little happier such as an MP3 player, designer jeans, beautiful postcards or a bar of chocolate. There is always a wide choice of different goods in every shop and supermarket and when I see beautifully shaped bottles and bright wraps, I can't resist the temptation to buy things.

However, some people say that if we bought only what we needed, there would be enough for everybody. If we buy fewer goods, we will become "conservers" because it will help save natural resources. Some products have too much packaging, creating more rubbish and causing pollution. Besides, if we don't buy so many things, we won't have to work so much. We will reduce our working day and we will have more spare time. It will give us an opportunity to go in for sports, to travel and what not.

To conclude, when we go shopping, we should think about what we really need to buy. It is also useful not to take much money with you and to make a list of goods you need, so that you will not be influenced by advertisements, discounts or promotions. Our lives may become happier and healthier if we buy less.

Some people think that excessive shopping is a hobby and the way to spend your free time. Others say that shopaholism is a disease with its specific symptoms.

Many people, especially women, consider shopping to be a leisure activity. They go shopping to pass the time and to get pleasure. However, love for shopping is all right until it turns into addiction.

To my mind, shopaholism is becoming a global problem, with the growth of advertizing and online trading. It can be compared with smoking, alcoholism or drug abuse. People who are addicted to shopping say that the act of buying gives them a high like a drug. Shopaholics often feel satisfaction when they are in the process of purchasing. Shopping gives them a sort of euphoria and excitement. It helps them forget about their sorrow. But there is usually a feeling of disappointment afterwards, followed by guilt. Shopaholics feel either regretful or depressed when they get home. Some people become so ashamed of their problem that they may commit suicide. Furthermore, shopaholism leads to emotional, social and financial problems. The consequences also include ruined relationships, health problems, extreme levels of debt or even theft.

Nevertheless, some people do not realize how destructive the nature of shopaholism is. They don't take any measures when their friends or relatives spend much time and money on buying useless things. But they must understand that shopaholism is not just love for shopping. I think that people who are addicted to shopping must receive treatment for shopaholism.

To conclude, shopaholism is a serious disorder which can lead to numerous problems. That's why it is essential to notice early signs of this addiction. If you catch the trouble early, the problem may be easy to fix.

EDUCATION

Education plays an important role in our life. However, some people consider it only a necessary step in getting a job so they do not want to go to university after leaving school.

"Knowledge is power" as the famous proverb says. It is transferred from generation to generation and comprises different facts, skills and information. Through learning people get knowledge and experience accumulated by their ancestors.

Of course, higher education is not compulsory, but I strongly feel that going to university is very important to everybody. In my opinion, higher education gives great opportunities and opens all doors. Only an educated person can get a good job and be promoted. Nowadays employers demand perfect knowledge. Education helps cultivate skills and provides mental, moral and aesthetic development. Personally, I prefer communicating with an intelligent person who knows a lot of interesting facts and who can share his or her ideas with me.

However, some of my friends say that they do not want to go to university and they would better get a well-paid job soon after leaving school. It will give them an opportunity to get work experience and some useful skills. But I doubt that they will be offered a really good job and that they will be able to succeed without higher education.

In general, owing to education highly industrialized cities are built, new information technologies are developed, important discoveries are made. Without education society would become primitive as it used to be long time ago. To my mind, everybody must realize the importance of education as it is the guarantee of the development and well-being of our society.

Home education is becoming more and more popular. However, some people say it has a number of disadvantages.

Most parents send their sons and daughters to school, but some of them choose home education for their children for some reason or other. Instead of going to school children are educated by their parents or professional tutors. Thousands of families in the UK are now practising home-education.

Personally, I think that home schooling is an excellent alternative to traditional education. To my mind, it has a lot of advantages. Firstly, it is very convenient because you do not need to observe school hours, days or terms. Besides, you do not need to have a fixed timetable. Parents can provide a more personalized and adaptable learning environment for the child. Secondly, the family can spend more time together. Thirdly, children who have special educational needs are home educated when school cannot meet the child's needs. In general, home schooling gives you an opportunity to work on just what you want and when you want.

However, a lot of people are sure that the aim of any educational establishment is not just to give knowledge but to help their learners develop communication skills and team spirit. Children's interaction with pupils of their age influences their character building. School is not only a place for the imparting of knowledge, but it's a place for the creation and development of the child's personality.

To conclude, home schooling has its pros and cons and it's up to the child's parents to decide which kind of education is better for him or her. Anyway, parents must provide their children with full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude.

Some people say that online education is an excellent alternative to traditional education. But other people believe that virtual education cannot substitute traditional one.

Online education is rapidly increasing thanks to the development of computer technology. It is intended for those who can't attend classes and communicate with the teacher face to face. Education is delivered via the Internet, multimedia resources or videoconferencing. Teachers and students communicate by exchanging electronic media or in real time.

Personally, I think that online education is especially convenient for disabled people and for those who want to work and receive higher education simultaneously. You don't have to attend classes and you can plan your day as you want. In my opinion, receiving education online may be rather interesting. Some universities offer online student support services, such as online advising and registration, e-counseling, online textbook purchase, student governments and even student newspapers.

However, a lot of people think that online learning is not as effective as traditional education. Firstly, students don't have an opportunity to communicate with their teachers and group-mates face to face. If they want to ask a question or to receive some additional information, they have to send an e-mail and wait for the teacher's answer. Secondly, it is rather difficult for teachers to control students' knowledge, to evaluate their progress, to appreciate their abilities and to find an individual approach to everybody.

To conclude, I think that online learning is a wonderful opportunity to receive higher education for some people, although computer-based activities will hardly be able to replace practical or classroom-based situations.

Some people think that self-education is not very effective, while others say that it is the only productive way of learning.

Is it possible for people to educate themselves without help or support from others? Can self-taught people become famous and successful?

In my opinion, people can learn without schools and tutors. You can read books, speak to educated people or spend a lot of time in libraries or on educational websites. Self-education has a lot of advantages. Firstly, self-taught people are not dependent on others for knowledge. Secondly, self-education can help you to be anything you want to be or to do anything you want to do. Finally, it usually costs nothing and it does not require fixed life style. Many famous and influential writers, artists, architects, actors, musicians and even scientists were self-educated. They thought that working was also learning and self-education was associated with creativity. For example, Leonardo da Vinci, an Italian painter, sculptor, architect, musician, scientist, mathematician, engineer, inventor and writer was self-taught.

However, some people depend on teachers and tutors for guidance. They want someone to help them and to show them the way. Others admit that they are too lazy to choose self-education. Indeed, most people need somebody who will constantly make them study and encourage their efforts to learn. So I think that self-education is only for hard-working, persistent, diligent and curious people.

In conclusion, I would like to say that if we learn the art of self-education, we will have an opportunity to improve our knowledge and acquire new skills whenever and wherever we like. I believe that the options of self-education are very flexible and the opportunities are unlimited.

Some people think that when they don't go to school, college or university, they don't learn. Others say that we learn as long as we live.

Today a lot of people realize the importance of lifelong learning. In the course of our lives we acquire attitudes, skills and knowledge from daily experience, from family and neighbours, from work and play and from other sources. Lifelong learning means building, development and improvement of skills and knowledge throughout people's lives and it comprises both formal and informal learning opportunities.

To my mind, when people leave school or graduate from university, their learning continues. It takes place at all times and in all places. Lifelong learning is a continuous process, going on from birth to the end of our lives. It begins with learning from families, educational institutions, workplaces and so on. Social organizations, religious institutions, the mass media, information technologies, environment and nature can also play a role in our learning. I strongly feel that both children and adults need continuous development of intellect and capability. Even elderly people never cease to learn. They can learn a great deal from such activities as art, music, hand-crafts or social work. Lifelong learning helps people adapt to the modern life which is constantly changing.

However, there are many unintelligent and ignorant people in the world. Most of them lack willingness and motivation to learn. Some people are not ready to invest time, money and effort in their education or training. Lifelong learning must be self-motivated because people usually take responsibility for their own learning.

To conclude, I think that lifelong learning is extremely beneficial because it helps adapt to changes, develop natural abilities and open the mind. It increases our wisdom and makes our lives more interesting and meaningful.

Some people believe that exams are the best way to check the student's knowledge. Others are convinced that exams don't always accurately measure the level of knowledge.

Most people have to get through exams at certain points of their lives. But what is the real purpose of taking exams? How important are they and do students benefit from them?

I strongly feel that examinations are extremely useful because they make all students face an intellectual challenge and test their knowledge, skills and abilities. Exams encourage young people to improve their knowledge of the subject and to revise information which has been learnt over a period of time. Students always know that they are to take exams at the end of the term and learn the new material little by little so that they won't have to cram later.

On the other hand, young people who often miss classes sometimes receive passing grades as easily as those who have attended classes regularly. When such students perform well on exams, it is obvious that they have crammed or figured out a way to cheat. Besides, while for some people taking exams is no big deal, most of us feel stressed. If a student looks confused and worried and can't answer the teacher's question, it may be the result of his or her nervousness. Unfortunately, exams cannot determine stress factors and tell honest students from cheaters. But of course it does not mean that exams must be abolished. Though exams are not always the best method of evaluating the student's knowledge, they have a lot of advantages and help teachers understand whether students are ready to be promoted to the next level.

To sum up, I think that examinations are important because they are a step toward students' future success.

Many people think that homework is essential for every pupil. Others believe that it is of little educational value and it may have a negative effect on learning.

Some people think that homework is rote work which takes up children's time, without offering any benefit. But others say that though boring, homework is going to benefit pupils later in life.

Personally, I think that homework plays an important role in the pupil's education. Firstly, it teaches children to be responsible and hard-working because it fosters independent learning. Secondly, homework helps reinforce what pupils have already learnt, prepare them for upcoming lessons and extend what they know. So homework assignments make children learn more and revise the material that they have learnt at school. Thirdly, homework provides an opportunity for parents to participate in their children's education.

However, too much homework is not good as children also need some time to relax, exercise and play. Homework takes a lot of time and effort. Some pupils sit up and do their homework all night. It is a well-known fact that lack of physical exercises and good sleep leads to stress, heart attacks and obesity. What is more, some pupils do not have good dictionaries, encyclopedias, computers with a good internet connection and parents who can help them. As a result, children have great difficulty in doing their homework and begin to hate it. But I believe that if pupils were not given homework, they would spend their free time having fun or even doing something illegal.

To sum up, teachers need to know what their pupils understand and can do independently. Therefore, they give pupils homework assignments. I am convinced that homework gives you an opportunity to increase your knowledge, to improve your abilities and skills and to grasp new concepts.

Most people think that it is very important to be literate. However, some of them say that literacy is not essential.

The 21st century is the age of information and technological advances. However, millions of people all over the world remain illiterate. Even in developed countries a lot of people have low literacy levels.

We live in a society where most people are literate. That is why a person will feel ashamed and ill at ease if he or she can't read or write as well as others do. As a rule such a person is considered unintelligent and ill-bred. To my mind, people who make a lot of spelling and grammar mistakes and who can't pronounce words correctly find it difficult to find jobs, even when reading and writing are not necessary for the work. What is more, statistics show that illiterate people are poorer and have worse health.

But in some families children don't have an opportunity to go to school for different reasons. Such situation is wide-spread in Third World countries. In some families parents don't read books and never write letters or postcards. Reading and writing don't play a big part in their lives. Such people make a lot of mistakes when they speak, but it does not necessarily mean that they are stupid or ignorant. They can be good workers and they can have much experience and worldly wisdom.

To conclude, I think that literacy is very important for everybody. It helps us communicate with other people and find a good job. However, the ability to read and write doesn't make people happy.

Some people are convinced that holidays, traditions and rituals play a very important role in education. Others don't find it necessary to observe traditions at school.

Traditions, holidays and rituals link the present with the past, help pass the knowledge, experience, wisdom, skills, habits and practices of the older generations to the new ones. So it seems necessary to make them part and parcel of the process of studies.

I strongly feel that children, teenagers and young people should know and observe the traditions of their country. Holidays, traditions and rituals help pupils learn more about the history and culture of their country. Celebrating national and local holidays makes young people united and has a great impact on their character-shaping. To my mind, children should also know the origins of some holidays and the way they are celebrated in other countries.

However, some people are convinced that while at school pupils should concentrate on such subjects as mathematics, physics, chemistry or foreign languages. Most parents don't find it necessary to overburden children with additional information when they have so much homework to do. Besides, they don't understand how schools can integrate traditions, holidays and rituals into the curriculum. But I think there are many interesting ways to do it. For example, teachers can prepare lessons devoted to some public holidays or local occasions such as celebrations of birthday anniversaries.

To conclude, our future depends on the younger generation and adults must teach them to preserve the holidays, customs, ceremonies, traditions and rituals that have become part and parcel of our existence. We should adopt other people's experience and wisdom. And it is well-known that holidays, traditions and rituals hold them in full measure.

Some people think that creativity is an essential ability which must be taught at school. Others say that creativity is not very important.

Teaching creativity is becoming a topical issue nowadays. But many people still doubt if this ability is essential for modern life.

To my mind, teaching creativity is extremely important because school leavers and university graduates face a lot of challenges in real life. Nowadays employers demand not only perfect knowledge and work experience, but different qualities including creativity. If you want to become a good specialist, you should be able to produce new and original ideas and to use your imagination and inventiveness. Creative people do their work faster and without much difficulty, while a person who lacks creativity does it under pressure, forcing his or her brain. So creative individuals are more likely to succeed, that is why teachers should focus on creativity rather than conventional skills.

On the other hand, creativity is not always encouraged at school. When pupils are given different tasks, they are often supposed to do them following examples and the teacher's directions. There is too much control at school and too little freedom. Besides, many tasks are not interesting and they don't teach students to solve problems and to make decisions. If teachers want to develop pupils' creativity, they should let them make mistakes, experiment, express their ideas and look for unusual ways of problem-solving. Children should be taught to be original. They should also be taught to think, to make suggestions and to rely on personal judgment rather than actual facts.

To sum up, creativity is an engine of success. In my opinion, both pupils and teachers must work hard to develop children's creativity because it will help them realize the full extent of their own gifts.

Some people say that punishment should be used in class to achieve discipline and to make pupils study hard. Others are convinced that punishment does not motivate pupils to study well.

There is still a lot of argument if punishment must be used in schools. Traditionally pupils are punished for poor progress, cutting lessons, lying, untidiness or rudeness. But some parents think that schools have very strict rules and that teachers sometimes demand too much.

Personally, I think that if pupils don't work hard enough and behave inappropriately, they should be punished. For example, if the pupil receives bad marks, the teacher can phone his or her parents and tell them about their child's poor progress. As a rule, Moms and Dads know how to punish their son or daughter. Parents can forbid their children to watch TV, play computer games or leave the house during the free time in the evenings. To my mind, it is useful to give pupils some extra work such as writing an exercise or an essay, copying out a paragraph from a textbook, learning a poem by heart and so on. It will help pupils improve their knowledge and it will certainly teach them a lesson.

However, some people believe that any kind of punishment humiliates pupils and makes them fear and suffer a shame. Such people say that it is better to use awards to motivate boys and girls to study hard and to behave well. According to them, good marks or praise show pupils how much their work is appreciated and valued. But to my mind, teachers should use both punishment and awards.

To conclude, there are plenty of ways for teachers to control academic progress and to discourage pupils from breaking school rules. Anyway, I strongly feel that strict systems usually work well.

GLOBAL PROBLEMS

It is reported that billions of dollars are spent on space exploration projects every year. Some people believe that this money should be used to solve problems on Earth.

People are explorers by nature and space has always attracted them. But is it wise to spend so much money on space exploration projects when we have so many problems on Earth?

In my opinion, space exploration is very important to mankind. Firstly, satellites are used for radio, television, and other electronic communication. Satellite television provides us with a great number of channels, mobile phones facilitate communication, GPS that uses radio signals from satellites can show you your exact position on the Earth. Secondly, thanks to space equipment we can learn the weather forecast and predict different cataclysms. What is more, people have always dreamed of reaching other planets and finding other forms of life. So I think that the more money is spent on space exploration projects, the more people learn about the universe and their own planet.

On the other hand, a lot of people say that it is better to solve the problems on Earth first of all. Unfortunately, we face a great number of problems nowadays: environmental pollution, the greenhouse effect, global warming, acid rain, ozone depletion, overpopulation and many others. People pollute lakes, rivers, seas and oceans. They destroy forests, kill rare animals, pick up herbs and flowers, envenom soil and make the air foul. The world's population increases faster than the food supply. Each year millions of deaths occur from starvation, especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

To conclude, I think we must solve problems on Earth first. To my mind, people can do without satellite television, but they will hardly be able to live without food, clean drinking water, fresh air or electricity.

Some people approve of multiculturalism. However, others have a negative attitude to it.

The modern world can be called multicultural due to racial, cultural and ethnic diversity. Through the process of globalization and immigration modern society has become a mixture of different nations and cultures. However, different people have different attitude to multiculturalism.

Personally, I believe that multiculturalism supports the ideals of a democratic society in which every person is free and equal in dignity and rights. It leads to understanding, friendship and respect among racial and ethnic groups. All people are equal which enables them to participate fully in the social, cultural, economic and political life irrespective of their race, religion, colour of skin or origin. What is more, thanks to multiculturalism we can enjoy foreign goods, food, music, ideas, technologies and practices. To my mind, the positive attitude to multiculturalism plays a very important role in the fight against all forms of extremist action.

But unfortunately, some people have a negative attitude to multiculturalism as they believe that it erodes social stability. People's prejudices and fears may lead to racial discrimination, social conflicts and violence. I strongly feel that it is wrong to think that one's own race or ethnic group is more important than others and that its culture is superior to the culture of other groups.

To conclude, people should be understanding and tolerant of multiculturalism because it helps us create a united and harmonious society where every member enjoys equal rights.

Our grandparents say their way of life was much more secure. However, young people have more life opportunities nowadays.

A lot of elderly people like talking about good old days and they often say that life in the past was much better than life today. But is it really so?

Personally, I think that modern life is more satisfying than the life in the past. Firstly, nowadays there are different technical devices that make our lives easier and save our time. Every day we use computers, laptops, i-Pods, digital tape recorders, GPS navigation systems and so on. The mobile phone and the Internet have made communication much easier. Secondly, travelling has become faster and more convenient. Thirdly, young people have more opportunities to receive good education and to find a well-paid job nowadays. In any city there are a lot of educational establishments and a great number of firms which need qualified specialists. Besides, there is a wide choice of entertainment in a big city.

However, modern life is full of dangers. The Internet causes addiction and the loss of social interaction. Technical progress harms the environment. People suffer from acid rains, the greenhouse effect, ozone depletion, the extinction of rare animals and plants and other calamities. Overpopulation is another reason for environmental problems as the more people there are on Earth, the more they pollute. Thousands of people are infected with AIDS and other incurable diseases every day. What is more, modern life is full of stress.

To sum up, modern life has its advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it is eventful and it gives us more life opportunities. On the other hand, it is rather dangerous and full of problems. Anyway, I prefer the excitement of the present.

Everybody knows that smoking is dangerous and it must be banned. However, more and more people smoke today.

It is not a secret that smoking ruins people's health. However, statistics show that millions of men, women, teenagers and even children practice smoking.

I have always wondered what makes people light up a cigarette. Smoking is extremely dangerous. Nicotine is a drug that causes addiction like heroin. Smoking causes a lot of serious diseases such as many forms of cancer, heart attacks, asthma, bronchitis and many others. People who smoke have yellow teeth, bad breath, dry skin and premature wrinkles. What is more, smokers do harm to the health of those people who surround them.

But in spite of all warnings, people continue smoking. Some of them say that they like the taste or smell of cigarettes or because it helps them steady their nerves and think. Others say that it helps them make friends and feel relaxed in a company of smoking people. For many children and teenagers smoking is the first step out of childhood. But I strongly feel that it is silly to begin smoking in order to show off.

To sum up, smoking shortens people's lives. That is why there must be more restrictions, bans and anti-smoking advertising in every country. Smoking must be banned in public places, including offices, restaurants, bars and night clubs.

Our life is full of stress. Some people say that they feel stressed almost every day, while others think that it is possible to cope with stress and to relax.

There are a lot of stressful events in our lives. Losing a job, having difficulties at home or at work or just moving to a new flat may cause stress. Besides, we may feel stressed because of constant fatigue, physical and moral exhaustion and monotony. Some people say that it is impossible to avoid stress. But is it really so?

It is a well-known fact that stress may result in a real breakdown of health. That is why it is very important to try to avoid stress or at least to minimize it. In my opinion, one of the best ways to cope with stress is to keep a sense of humor in difficult situations. I think laughter is the best medicine for all diseases. Besides, if you feel depressed, you can try some relaxing hobbies such as yoga, swimming, bicycling, painting or gardening.

Of course, people react to stress in different ways. Some of us are more vulnerable to it than others. A lot of people don't know how to cope with stress. They begin overeating, smoking, drinking, and even taking drugs. But junk food, cigarettes, sleeping pills and alcohol don't help. On the contrary, they make things much worse. I believe that the best way to cope with stress is to forget about your problems, to take breaks and to be enthusiastic.

Unfortunately, stress is inevitable. It may have a negative influence on our physical and mental health. But sometimes stress helps us develop and makes us stronger. To my mind, the main thing is not to lose control and to stay positive.

A lot of people believe that it is impossible to get rid of poverty. Others say that poverty can be reduced.

Nowadays millions of people live in poverty. They are deprived of common necessities such as food, clothing, shelter and safe drinking water. They also suffer from the lack of access to opportunities such as education, information, health care and employment.

I have always wondered if it is possible to get rid of poverty. I strongly feel that it is not fair that the rich live in luxurious houses and drive expensive cars, while the poor lack access to health services, suffer hunger and experience mental and physical health problems. All people are born equal. So why do they live in different conditions? To my mind, there must be more poverty reduction programs as well as institutions dedicated to tackling poverty. In politics, the fight against poverty must be regarded as the most important goal. Besides, developed nations ought to help developing countries.

However, it is not so easy to fight poverty. Poverty may be caused by different factors including geographic factors, unemployment, overpopulation, war, discrimination and many others. So if we want to reduce poverty, we must solve quite a lot of global problems first.

To sum up, the problem of poverty remains unsolved nowadays. In my view, governments must take some urgent measures to fight poverty because it often goes hand in hand with crime and it may destroy society. Anyway, poverty must be reduced for reasons of justice and security.

Most people are worried about the problem of overpopulation. Others think that the situation is not as terrible as it seems to be.

At the present time the earth accommodates more than 6 billion people. The world's population is growing so fast because people live longer owing to better medical care and nutrition. Besides, more babies are born, especially in developing countries. But how can overpopulation threaten people's life on Earth?

In my opinion, overpopulation makes the standard of living worse. The world's population increases faster than the food supply. Each year millions of deaths occur from starvation, especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America. If the world's population continues growing, it will be very difficult to produce enough food and goods. More people need more water, minerals, shelter and clothes. Population growth is another reason for environmental problems as the more people there are on Earth, the more they pollute. They drive cars, throw away litter, cut down forests, use electricity, build roads and plants and deplete the planet's resources.

On the other hand, in many European countries the average woman has only one child. In many big cities fertility rates are falling because some people think that it is rather expensive to have a child. Most young women dream of making a career. So they say they have much to lose by becoming mothers. As a result, families are getting smaller and smaller.

To sum up, the real situation is not so bad. To my mind, the problem of overpopulation can be solved if there is population control in some countries. Anyway, nobody knows what will happen to the human race in ten or twenty years.

Some people are convinced that the concept of pacifism may become reality, while others say it is a kind of utopia.

Humans have always been competing for better life. Pacifists believe that war and violence are always wrong. But is it really possible to create the world where nonviolence, love and patience rule or is it just a dream?

I strongly feel that since nuclear weapons appeared, people have understood that war cannot be used to settle confrontations. To my mind, the costs of war are so substantial that better ways of resolving disputes must be found. Fortunately, some countries have already adopted pacifism to conduct foreign policy. They reject war and stick to a neutral role. Some pacifists say it is necessary to establish a world government in order to prevent and control international aggression.

In theory, people are creating a "peace-loving" society. In practice, there are still some military conflicts and tension between different countries. Civilization is still far from establishing a world government. What is more, the modern world is not perfect enough to avert wars. But I'm convinced that nonviolent action is morally superior and more effective.

To conclude, everybody wants to live in a peaceful world. That is why people must reduce regional and international conflicts and avoid all attributes which could tend to war. I believe that international disputes can and must be peacefully resolved. All in all, any violence is morally wrong.

Some people say that gambling is just entertainment, while others are convinced that it ruins gamblers' lives.

For centuries people have spent a lot of money trying to beat the laws of probability. Some of us find gambling quite innocent. But most people believe that gambling is one of the worst temptations that exist in this world. This problem is taking on greater proportions as gambling, especially online gambling, becomes more popular.

I have always wondered what makes people risk their money or possessions. Of course, everybody hopes to gain an income. Some people even succeed in winning additional money or material goods. Others consider gambling to be a form of recreation. They enjoy gambling for the thrill of it, and they both have fun and earn a little money.

But while some people enjoy the entertainment value of a horse track or casino, others can become addicted to gambling which threatens their financial and family's well-being. Many gamblers are possessed by the idea of getting rich quick. They often continue risking their money even after repeated losses. In my opinion, an addiction to gambling is like an addiction to any other thing. However, since it does not have any physical signs, most people discover that their relatives or friends are addicted only when it becomes too late. What is more, many people say that casinos contribute to crime because some gamblers resort to stealing.

To conclude, gambling must be banned or at least heavily controlled. Unfortunately, quitting gambling is just as hard as quitting smoking or taking drugs. I believe that gambling addicts must receive medical treatment. Otherwise they may ruin their lives and the lives of their nearest and dearest.

Some people say that in the modern world we are losing our sense of spirituality. Others are convinced that people still need faith.

In the past faith played a central role in people's daily lives. But the situation is quite different today. A lot of people never attend religious services of any kind and some of them say they have no religion at all. But what could have brought about such a dramatic break from tradition and how can it influence our way of life?

I have always wondered what role faith plays in our lives. In my opinion, faith can help people cope with difficult emotions or moral decisions. When everything goes wrong and you feel extremely unhappy, faith can help. I think that a person who believes in God has courage, hope, confidence, calmness and assuring trust that all will come out well. Faith helps people overcome all difficulties and remain optimistic whatever happens.

Unfortunately, scientific advances have made many people question their religious beliefs. The terrible events of the 20th century have also made others question the existence of God. A lot of people say that science is more important than religion because it tries to solve the problems connected with reducing pollution, protecting biological diversity, saving energy and natural resources and many others. But I strongly feel that if we want to resolve the global crisis and to improve our cultural, social, economic and political systems, we need faith and spirituality.

To conclude, people need to change their attitudes, values and beliefs. Faith can help us become kinder, more generous and responsible. I believe that it will make our lives much happier.

Some people prefer to escape from boring reality from time to time. Others say that escapism cannot help them solve their problems.

People have always tried to escape from reality in one way or another. They try to forget about bad or boring things with the help of different activities and entertainment such as reading books, going to the theatre, travelling and so on. But does it help people change their lives for the better and what are the possible consequences of escapism?

To my mind, people escape from reality for different reasons. Some of them are dissatisfied with their lives and don't know how to improve the situation. Others have dreams that they think will never come true because these people lack self-confidence and have low self-esteem. I strongly feel that if people are dissatisfied with their lives, they must do something. To forget about your problems and to solve them are two different things.

Nevertheless, some people prefer to follow the line of least resistance and never to take risks. If something goes wrong, they usually give up and never make one more attempt. They prefer to forget about all bad things that happened to them. Some philosophers say that escapism is not exclusively negative. It is just a different reality. But I believe that escapism is only for weak and indecisive people.

To sum up, those who escape from reality don't want to accept themselves as they are. They often feel depressed and unhappy because they are unable or reluctant to connect with the world. I think it is better to face the reality and try to solve your problems and overcome difficulties. Anyway, it is impossible to escape from something all the time.

Some people say that capital punishment should be allowed, while others are convinced that it is unacceptable in a human society.

Capital punishment has been used for a wide variety of offences since ancient times. Nowadays many countries have already abolished the death penalty, but it is still used for certain crimes in the USA, China, Japan and many Asian and Middle Eastern countries.

Personally, I am not sure if capital punishment should be allowed. To my mind, it is morally wrong to kill criminals, no matter what they have done. The death penalty runs counter to the principles of humanism. There is also a possibility that innocent people will be executed and that there will be no way of compensating them for such injustice. Opponents of the death penalty are convinced that it is needlessly cruel and that life imprisonment is a more rational alternative.

However, some people believe that capital punishment is morally right if it is used for punishing murderers. Firstly, capital punishment removes the most dangerous criminals from society and should prove much safer for the rest of us than long term or permanent incarceration. Secondly, the fear of death penalty may prevent many people from committing crimes. Besides, some people think that it is wrong to keep criminals in prison at the expense of taxes. The government would better spend more money on the old, the young and the sick rather than on murderers. But can we deprive a person of his or her life? Do we have the right to murder? I don't think so.

To conclude, I believe that the death penalty removes our humanity. In the case of the worst criminals, this may be acceptable but it is more questionable in the case of less awful crimes.

The problem of xenophobia is discussed by many people nowadays. Some of them say that it is important to be tolerant, while others disagree with this point of view.

I have always wondered why some people have strong fear or dislike of those from other countries. The problem of xenophobia is very topical nowadays. It is especially widespread in large cities with multinational population.

Tolerance is a respectful attitude to people who differ from us. To my mind, it is prejudice to think that some races are superior and some of them are inferior. I strongly feel that it is primitive and silly to divide people into types and classes. In my opinion, we should treat another person as an equal.

However, in reality some people have a feeling of distrust and aversion to something or someone different and unusual. They are used to understanding those people who have the same traditions and who speak the same language as they do. And that is why people of other nations seem strange. Unfortunately, people's intolerance may lead to racial discrimination, social conflicts and violence. So we must develop mutual understanding and respect. Besides, we should learn to make a compromise.

To conclude, tolerance is a very important element of our lives, culture and communication. It is another word for humanity, equality and fairness. Tolerance is very important if we want to have happy future and global security.

It seems that people of different nationalities will never understand each other. However, others believe that countries can work together to improve tolerance.

Today we live in the world of racial, cultural and ethnic diversity. People differ in appearance, colour of skin, way of thinking, customs and behaviour. Every race has its own culture and its own beliefs. That is why there is often some misunderstanding between people of different nationalities. So the question arises if anything can be done in order to improve tolerance.

To my mind, governments can do much to improve tolerance. Some international conferences and meetings can be organized in order to discuss the most vital problems of people of different nationalities and to exchange experience. I think it is very important to work out educational programs for universities, colleges, schools and even kindergartens. We must teach children, teenagers and young people to be patient, respectful and tolerant. And of course we mustn't forget that family upbringing is of great importance for any child, that's why countries should think about special educational programs for parents.

However, many people say that some misunderstanding between people of different nationalities will always exist. Watching the latest news on TV we can always learn about military conflicts and racial strives. People are accustomed to cruelty and their behaviour becomes aggressive and uncontrollable. And if they feel angry and depressed, they want to find somebody to blame for their troubles. So they blame people of other nationalities and vent their anger and vexation on them. But I think that in spite of all this, we must co-exist peacefully.

To sum up, if there is tolerance among people, we shall live in harmony. But it will be possible only if we plunge into the culture, religion, traditions and language of other nations.

Disabled people are often considered to be miserable. However, some people believe that the disabled are much happier nowadays.

Most of us think that disabled people are extremely unhappy because they are confined to their homes and cannot perform the same functions that we do. But others are convinced that it is just a stereotype.

To my mind, the lives of disabled people are easier nowadays. Firstly, in many European countries public buildings have ramps and toilets big enough for wheelchairs. Secondly, many companies are not allowed to refuse a person a job on the grounds that he or she has only one leg, or cannot speak. Thirdly, thanks to different things like the Para Olympics disabled people's self-esteem has risen enormously. Today they have realized their ability to compete with everyone else. Finally, new technology works wonders. For instance, artificial limbs enable people to walk and run as fast as everyone else. Cars are adapted so that people can drive them with only one leg, or even no legs at all.

However, in many developing countries there are no facilities for disabled people. What is more, it is fashionable to be beautiful and healthy in modern society, so a handicapped person may become an outcast. Most disabled people suffer from loneliness and lack of communication. Some of them become burdens on their families because they are unemployed and depend on their relatives. But I think that many disabled people are very talented. They can work, support their families and contribute to society.

To conclude, I strongly feel that disabled people have rights just like everyone else. They are part of society and they must never be forgotten or left behind.

ANIMALS

In Western countries, people spend a lot of money on their pets. They buy special food and toys for their cats and dogs and often pay high fees for medical treatment. Some people think this is a waste of money, and argue that pets are dirty and dangerous.

In many Western countries people are fond of keeping pets. However, others say that pets are often dangerous and aggressive.

Personally, I think that people can benefit from pets in many ways. First of all, animals are usually devoted to their owners and love them. You will hardly feel lonely and depressed if you have a pet. Secondly, pets help people stay healthy. For example, doctors have found out that people who have high blood pressure feel much better when they stroke pets and talk to them. What is more, pets encourage their owners to get out and exercise. Dog owners usually spend much time walking which helps them improve their overall health. It is a well-known fact that people who have pets are happier and live longer than those who don't.

But many people say that they are too busy to take care of animals. Others think that it is too difficult and time-consuming to keep pets. Cats, dogs, birds, fish, hamsters and other creatures require not only human love and kindness but also food, medical care, training and shelter. You must feed them regularly, keep them clean, go to the veterinarian for their yearly checkup and so on. It takes much effort and causes extra expenses. It is also obvious that animals make a lot of noise, may look untidy and disturb the members of your family.

To conclude, it's important to realize that owning a pet is a great responsibility and additional work. However, for most people, the advantages of having a pet outweigh the disadvantages. Anyway, everybody must remember that all pets need love and care just as people do.

Some people believe that animals without owners should have the right to live on the streets in cities. Others say that they could be dangerous and should be collected and found new homes, or even put down.

Unfortunately, many cats and dogs suffer abandonment, cruelty and neglect nowadays. Some of us think that it is quite normal and there is no need to change the situation. But others are convinced that some urgent measures must be taken in order to improve the lives of homeless animals.

To my mind, the lives of homeless cats and dogs are full of hardships: they starve, catch different diseases and suffer from cold and people's cruelty. Furthermore, they may be rather dangerous because people may get infection from them. Besides, stray dogs may attack people and even kill them. In my opinion, living on the street is not a right, but a necessity for poor creatures that have no choice. I think that volunteers should catch homeless animals, provide them with food and medical care and try to find home for them. But I am against killing homeless cats and dogs because I find it inhumane.

On the other hand, some people believe that many owners cannot provide good homes for their pets and the full lives that they deserve. Living in our homes animals must obey commands and can only behave how people allow them to. Dogs, cats, or birds want to be free, but they are confined to a house, yard or cage. But I think that domesticated animals are not able to survive on their own in the wild and it is cruel to throw them out on the streets.

To sum up, people must be responsible for both domesticated and wild animals. I believe that homeless animals are a serious social problem that must be solved as soon as possible.

Some people keep exotic animals as pets nowadays. Others say that it is difficult and dangerous to take care of unusual pets.

Today some people keep rare and unusual animals in their houses. But do alligators, tigers, crocodiles, snakes or raccoons feel comfortable living with people? And is it safe to keep such animals as pets?

Personally, I think that owners of exotic animals are going to have many problems with them. Firstly, many professionals, including veterinarians and zoologists strongly discourage the keeping of exotic animals as pets, as their needs may be difficult to meet by the average owner. Providing appropriate environmental conditions, housing and diet for an exotic animal may be rather difficult. Secondly, unlike cats and dogs, exotic animals have not been domesticated and remain wild. Even if they are raised by humans, they may be unpredictable, aggressive and dangerous, especially as full-grown adults. Finally, some animals are known to carry diseases that can affect humans.

However, some people say that having an exotic pet is funny and "cool". They are fond of showing their pets to their friends and relatives who cannot stop admiring these rare animals. Besides, the information about many commonly kept reptiles, birds and small exotic mammals is widely available through literature, Internet websites and discussion forms. Although having an exotic pet is sometimes challenging, it is generally very interesting and rewarding. But I believe that most animals feel much better in their natural homes where they have the right climate, food and exercises that meet their needs.

To conclude, most countries have the laws that forbid people to keep exotic animal as pets. To my mind, the government must strictly control the trade of some exotic animals around the world in order to prevent any threats to their survival and ecological damage.

Many people enjoy visiting zoos. Others believe that animals should not be taken from their natural surroundings and put into zoos.

A lot of people, especially children, are fond of going to the zoo. There they have an opportunity to look at wild animals, exotic birds, insects, reptiles and fish. When we come to the zoo, we can see animals that we would never have a chance to see in our country. But is it right to keep animals in the zoo?

Personally, I think that animals should live in their natural habitats. Animals that live in zoos are confined within enclosures and displayed to the public. It is difficult to create ideal captive environments for some species and sometimes animals have to live in bad conditions and look miserable and untidy. They may suffer from lack of space, comfort and good food. Some wild animals feel stressed in captivity. Sometimes they are kept in such small cages that they are unable to turn around. Besides, in spite of prohibition many visitors give animals food that may do harm to their health and cause different diseases.

However, some zoos keep fewer animals in larger, outdoor enclosures, rather than in cages. For instance, safari parks allow visitors to drive through them and come in close contact with the animals. What is more, most modern zoos display wild animals primarily for the conservation of endangered species, as well as for research purposes and education, and secondarily for the entertainment of visitors. But I still believe that animals feel much better without people's control.

To sum up, I think that the conservation and educational role of zoos should be strengthened. All zoos must be inspected and licensed, and all animals must be provided with a suitable environment.

Most people are convinced that a digital pet cannot substitute a real one. Others suggest that digital pets are preferable for a number of reasons.

Some children keep digital pets instead of real ones for companionship or enjoyment. But a lot of people doubt that the relationship with robotic animals can have a good effect on a child.

I strongly feel that digital pets can never be compared with real cats, dogs and other animals. They do not even have concrete physical form. Instead of a cute little kitten or a funny puppy, you have a palm-sized computer with a small screen. I doubt that feeding, washing or playing with the digital pet may be interesting and rewarding. Nevertheless, some children believe that their digital pets are really alive and they feel extremely unhappy if their virtual cats and dogs fall ill or die. In addition, it is quite possible to become addicted to the digital pet. Some children play with them when they should be doing something else, for example, their homework.

But some people believe that digital pets have a number of benefits. Firstly, a relationship with the digital pet teaches children that their desires cannot always come first. It can also teach boys and girls to be responsible because the digital pet requires constant attention, otherwise it will "die". Secondly, having a digital pet is a good training before adopting a real animal. Finally, digital pets can successfully substitute real ones for children who cannot care for a real pet, such as those who suffer from allergies.

To sum up, digital pets are usually predictable and they cannot give us as much joy and satisfaction as real ones. Anyway, parents should take into consideration all advantages and disadvantages before buying a digital pet to their children.

BOOKS

Some people are fond of reading, while others consider it to be a waste of time.

Different people have different attitude to reading. Some of them have dozens of books in their houses and consider reading to be their favourite pastime. Other people prefer watching TV to reading books.

Personally, I get a lot of enjoyment out of reading books. Our family loves gathering in the sitting room in the evening and reading books: fairy tales, novels, detective stories, thrillers, fantastic stories and what not. It has become a tradition and I'm sure it makes our family united. To my mind, books are our best teachers and friends because they have the power to educate and entertain us. When I'm tired, I like reading detective stories and thrillers. When I want something more serious and instructive, I take an encyclopedia or read some philosophical works. I love reading when I'm travelling, when I'm having meals, when I'm bored or just for relaxation.

However, a lot of people read very little or don't read at all. They say they have stopped reading books due to their busy way of life. According to some people, reading is a waste of time. They prefer getting all the information they need from television, radio, and the Internet. A lot of people read everything online and check the news on the websites. Besides, some of them think that the fewer books they buy, the more trees they save. But I believe that it is rather sad that many people read much less nowadays. I'm sure that reading is the best learning.

To sum up, I think that our lives would be dull without books because reading stirs our imagination, broadens our mind and entertains us.

Some of my friends say there's nothing better than reading a good book, while others would rather watch its film version.

Can people live without books nowadays? Is it possible that books will be replaced by television and cinema in the nearest future?

Personally, I'm fond of reading. Books educate and entertain us, bring past centuries to life and help us understand our deepest dreams and fears. 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 of years ago. Through reading books we hear their voices and understand their thoughts and feelings. Reading stirs my imagination, creates colourful pictures of the described characters and events in my mind, transfers me to other countries, continents or even to other worlds, introduces me to amazing people who live exciting lives, makes me laugh and cry. I can travel to wild jungles and deserts, to hot Africa and cold Arctic or wherever I like staying at home.

However, some of my friends don't read at all or read very little. They say that they are too tired after school and can do nothing but watch TV. Some people say that they have little spare time and that is why they prefer watching a film to reading a book. What is more, watching a film is much easier than reading a book because you don't have to use your imagination.

To sum up, it's up to you to decide whether to read a book or to watch its film version. But I'm sure that no screen version can be better than a book itself and it can't substitute a special silent conversation with the author.

Most people are fond of detective stories. Others say that reading detective stories is just a waste of time.

There is hardly a person in the world who has never read detective stories. This literary genre has always been extremely popular with the reading public. But of course there are people who dislike detective stories.

Personally, I find most detective stories rather puzzling and exciting. They arouse the reader's curiosity and keep him or her in suspense. To my mind, the popularity of detective stories lies in the fact that most people like unravelling complex puzzles. The detective story is like an intellectual game. The reader is given exactly the same information that the detective uses to find the criminal. Most readers treat the story as a battle of wits between themselves and the detective. Others read detective stories for pure relaxation.

However, some people say that all detective stories are the same. In most detective stories, the crime is murder and the clues lead to or away from the solution. Furthermore, it is quite possible to become hooked on reading detective stories. Some people read them when they should be doing something else, for example, work or study. In addition, there are a lot of bad detective stories in many bookshops and I think that reading them is just a waste of time. A second-rate detective story describes unreal people and situations, has poor construction and a boring narrative style. Sometimes the reader can easily guess who the criminal is from the very beginning.

To conclude, it is up to you to decide whether to read detective stories or not. Anyway, a good detective story can do you nothing but good.

Some people say that business books can help them become successful, while others think that they are completely useless.

In any bookshop you can find a lot of books about business. Many people wonder if these books actually help them succeed in their professional careers and if they are really vital for the modern workplace.

Personally, I think that if you want to become a successful businessman, it is not enough to read a couple of books on this subject. What you really need is a lot of experience, persistence and a wish to work hard. To my mind, business books have become a business in themselves. They are just a way for publishers to make money. The more books are sold, the richer they become. Most books that claim that they can revolutionize the way you do business and make you rich and successful have little practical use. Moreover, some business books are so boring that they sit on the shelf unread.

However, some business books are truly worth our investment of time and money. They may become essential tools for students of business at any level. Biographies of successful business people can hold valuable lessons and interesting ideas and they can inspire others to go into business. Some books can give you helpful advice and tell you how to make other people believe you, how to read and use body language, how to make yourself a better manager and how to become richer. Nevertheless, many experts are convinced that most of business books complicate the world of business.

To conclude, don't buy a book unless you can use it in your work right now. Try to find something really useful and to avoid needless purchases.

Some people say that we don't need libraries any more. Others are convinced that libraries are not going to disappear.

Library is a place where print, audio, and visual materials are collected and arranged to serve people of all ages and interests. Some people say that traditional libraries are not so popular now as they used to be some years ago. But does it mean that libraries are going to disappear?

Personally, I think that libraries are very useful. Nowadays, besides books, libraries keep manuscripts, documents, newspapers, magazines, CDs, DVDs, video games, e-books and many other electronic resources. Modern libraries are equipped with computers and they store enormous amounts of information that can be checked immediately. People go to the library to read, look, listen search, inquire, discuss, learn, think, relax or while away the time. Anyone can become a member of the library and it usually costs nothing to borrow books.

However, some people say that traditional libraries are useless nowadays. Most young people have become used to retrieving information from the Internet. It may be more efficient and time-saving than visiting a traditional library. But the information that people find online may not be as in depth as the information from other resources such as the books available at a physical library. Besides, libraries are intended for use by people who don't have a PC, who cannot afford to purchase books and magazines, who need material no individual can be expected to have, or who require professional assistance with their research.

To sum up, I think that libraries play a very important role in the cultural development of any country. Modern libraries help people get unrestricted access to information in many formats and from many sources.

Electronic books are becoming more and more popular. Some people say that e-books are going to replace traditional books in the future, while others are convinced that print books will never disappear.

E-books are making their way onto the world's markets. A lot of people, especially children and teenagers, who are accustomed to computer screens, have already embraced e-books. But does it mean that if the popularity of e-books grows, paper editions will soon die out?

Personally, I think that e-books are so popular with readers for several reasons. Firstly, they are easy to use because they are light, compact and can store up to thousands of pages. Secondly, e-books have a touch-sensitive screen which can be used to call up a dictionary, to increase the front size and even to add notes in the margin. Thirdly, the bright backlight gives you an opportunity to read in the dark. Finally, people can read e-books in public without having to display the covers.

However, most people still prefer traditional print books. They say that the device for reading e-books is rather expensive and one needs access to the Internet to download them. E-books may cause problems with eyesight because it is rather tiring to read from the screen. Some people say that one of the main disadvantages of e-books is that the battery must be recharged and that e-books can be easily broken. What is more, so far there is only a limited selection of e-books being published. But I think it is very convenient to put a lightweight e-book into your bag when you are leaving for holiday.

To conclude, people will always continue buying, collecting and displaying beautiful paper editions with the sole purpose of possessing them. To my mind, e-books will co-exist with traditional print books. Anyway, we'll have to wait and see.

MISCELLANEOUS

Some people prefer to live in a big city, while others would like to live in a small town or in the country.

Those people who live in a big city and those who live in a small town or in the country lead different ways of life. We choose where to live according to our preferences and character.

There are a lot of advantages of living in a big city. Firstly, people have more opportunities to receive good education and to find a well-paid job there. In any city there are a lot of educational establishments and a great number of firms which need qualified specialists. Besides, there is a wide choice of entertainment in a big city. One can visit concert halls, theatres, museums, art galleries, cinemas, clubs, restaurants, cafés, discos and what not. To my mind, a big city gives people all modern conveniences and cultural opportunities.

However, it is well-known that citizens suffer from a great number of problems such as traffic jams, huge crowds of people, dirty public transport and many others. Living in a big city is dangerous to your health. Factories emit tons of harmful chemicals; cars exhaust toxic gas and the air is so dirty that it is hard to breathe. That is why a lot of people prefer living in the country to living in a big city. In a village one can enjoy fresh air, beautiful nature and the quietness of provincial life.

To conclude, it's up to you to decide whether to live in a city or in the country. But I think that if you are tired of noise, illumination and crowds, you can always leave a city and have a rest in the country to improve your health or just for a change of scene.

Some people say that it is impossible to feel lonely in a big city. However, others believe that quite a lot of citizens suffer from loneliness.

It is rather difficult to live in the world of strangers, that's why people need friends. They give us a sense of being protected, emotional comfort and moral support. But is it easy to make friends when you live in a big city?

To my mind, loneliness is a wide-spread problem nowadays. Living in a big city many people often feel that they are not noticed because of the fast pace of city life. You can stand on the street for several hours and nobody will pay attention to you. Sometimes you feel as if you suddenly became invisible. A big city is a place where millions of people live and work, but still it is very difficult to find a devoted friend in this indifferent crowd. City life absorbs people and makes them forget about such essential things as rest, recreation or friendship. So you can feel lonely even if you are surrounded by hundreds, thousands or millions of people.

On the other hand, the city offers you a wide choice of places where you can relax and meet somebody. You can visit clubs, restaurants, cafés, discos, theatres, museums, art galleries, libraries, cinemas, parks, health clubs and what not. A sociable person can easily communicate with other people and make friends with them. So if you are a good mixer, if you are always optimistic and have a sense of humour, you will hardly feel lonely.

To sum up, I think that a big city gives you a lot of opportunities, but sometimes it can be cold, remote and indifferent. The main thing is not to despair, but to try to find friends.

Some people believe that English should be the only foreign language taught at school. Others think that German, French and Spanish should continue.

There are 6000 languages spoken throughout the world. Some of them including English, French, German, Spanish, Russian and Arabic are considered to be languages of wider communication around the world.

I think it is very difficult for an average pupil to learn two or more foreign languages because there are a lot of other subjects at school. To my mind, only English should be taught at all schools because it has long been accepted to be a global language. It is the language of science, culture, international politics and economy. Besides, it is the language of most international business deals and organizations. If you speak English fluently, you can communicate with people of different nationalities. I believe that it is better to know one language perfectly than to speak in broken German, French and Spanish.

But nowadays many people learn two or more languages. Some of them find it necessary to acquire a second language for practical purposes such as business. Other people are just interested in foreign languages. Furthermore, learning foreign languages has a great number of advantages. People who learn foreign languages expand their horizons and improve their thinking abilities. They enjoy social and employment advantages and they have the chance to get a better job than people who speak only one language. In addition, a person who speaks several languages sees the world from two or more perspectives.

To sum up, it's up to you to decide whether to learn one or several foreign languages. Anyway, if you speak several languages, you have more chances to make a career and to be successful.

Most people say that the English language should be learnt in England. Others believe that one can easily learn English in one's country.

People have always tried to find the fastest and easiest way to learn languages. Is it better to go to the country whose language they study or to stay at home and read textbooks?

Nowadays millions of people learn English because it has become a global language. Personally, I think that it is easier to learn and improve your English in England. Firstly, you will not have an opportunity to speak your own language and you will enjoy "total immersion". You will meet different people and have a lot of speaking practice. To my mind, speaking to Englishmen or listening to their speech is absolutely different from sitting in the classroom with a tape recorder and headphones and repeating some phrases after the speaker's monotonous voice. What is more, while in England you will be able to see many places of interest and to learn more about the English traditions and lifestyle.

However, a lot of people don't have an opportunity to go to England. So they have to learn English in their own country. Nowadays everybody can use the Internet to make friends with people from English-speaking countries and to write e-mails. It is also very useful to watch TV programmes and feature films in English. Besides, you should not forget about English books, magazines and newspapers.

In conclusion, I would like to say it is up to you to decide where to learn English, but if I had an opportunity I would certainly go to London to reinforce what I have learnt from books and to put it into practice.

A number of people believe that a country is successful if it is ruled by a clever politician. Others say that an only person doesn't make the image of a country.

I have always wondered if an individual can create the image of a country. There were quite a lot of clever politicians in the world's history, but it is difficult to say whether an only person can cause important changes in ordinary people's lives.

In my opinion, the politician who rules a country has quite an impact on its politics, economy and culture. Every country needs a wise, powerful and intellectual politician at the head. There is no doubt that the leader of each country holds a lot of power in his hands. That is why he can make significant changes in different spheres of people's lives such as education, health services, business and many others. What is more, the leader of a country plays an important role in foreign policy. He carries on negotiations with other politicians, maintains diplomatic relations with other countries, signs treaties and what not.

However, a lot of people are convinced that an only person can't make the image of a country because every leader must take the opinion of his assistants into consideration and work in a team. Besides, even the cleverest politician can't rule forever. For example, in our country the leader is elected every four years. But I think that if the leader of a country is a charismatic person, he has good chances to make ordinary people believe him and admire his personality.

To sum up, I believe that the image of every country doesn't only depend on its leader, but also on many other people. And of course, it depends on ordinary people who take part in elections.

Some people don't care about advertising, while others say that advertisements and commercials may be very harmful.

Nowadays advertisements can be seen everywhere: in newspapers and magazines, on the sides of buses, walls of buildings, shopping carts, subway platforms and trains. Advertisements are often placed anywhere people can easily see them. Recently television, radio and the Internet have become major advertising media.

Personally, I seldom pay attention to advertisements and commercials. But some commercials are skillfully made and resemble short films. Consumers, TV stars, industry professionals and scientists are often asked to share their opinion about the product which is advertised. Broadcasters don't want the public to switch the channel during commercials, that's why they are becoming interesting and entertaining. However, no matter how tempting they are, ads and commercials will hardly win my confidence and make me buy some product.

Quite a lot of people find advertising rather obtrusive and annoying. Indeed, it is very unpleasant when your favourite film or soap opera is constantly interrupted by commercials. They reach and motivate large audiences and make people buy a lot of useless things. Advertisements and commercials can even be harmful. For example, cigarette or beer advertising can increase the consumption of these goods and cause problems with health. In the USA food advertising targeting children was an important factor in the epidemic of childhood obesity. As a rule children believe all advertisements as they can't determine the truthfulness of the message. Some ads are untrue or even offensive.

To sum up, advertising is necessary for economic growth, but the government must regulate the content and the influence of ads and commercials. Advertising must be legal, decent, honest and truthful.

Some people prefer buying pirate CDs and DVDs. However, others say that piracy must be banned.

Nowadays selling pirate CDs and DVDs is a profitable business. Producing compact discs and digital video disks brings criminal dealers a lot of money.

To my mind, selling pirate CDs and DVDs is a kind of theft because people who sell them exercise one of the exclusive rights of the copyright holder without authorization. Legal producers of CDs and DVDs suffer considerable losses. Buying pirate production consumers support the seller's unauthorized actions. What is more, the quality of these disks usually leaves much to be desired. So if you don't want to waste your money and to lose your good spirits, you'd better not buy bad production. I am sure that it is necessary for governments to provide criminal sanctions for selling pirate CDs and DVDs.

On the other hand, disks of good quality are usually rather expensive and not everybody can afford to buy them. Besides, pirates sell the latest records and so we are able to watch new films or listen to new songs. That is why a lot of people continue buying pirate CDs and DVDs. However, I think it is better to go to the movies or to buy qualitative CDs and DVDs if you want to enjoy good films or music.

To conclude, if we don't buy pirate disks, their producers will not get a profit; bad CDs and DVDs will disappear and it will improve the country's economy.

Some people are sure that if we want to build relationships successfully, we must have good manners. However, others say that nowadays good manners are not as important as they used to be.

If you don't live on a desert island, you meet different people and communicate with them every day of your life. Everybody wants to build good relationships with his or her relatives, friends and colleagues. However, not everybody knows how to behave in order to win other people's love and respect.

Personally, I think that it is very important to be well-bred and to behave properly in different situations. A person who has good manners always produces a good impression. Politeness and the ability to understand other people will help you build good relationships and they will make your life easier. To my mind, nobody wants to communicate with people who are always late, who can't cope with their negative emotions, who don't respect other people's point of view and who are constantly irritated and moody. We should always remember that our words and behaviour may be offensive to other people and may hurt their feelings.

However, some people do not know how to behave well. What is more, they prefer to ignore the rules of etiquette. They often interrupt their interlocutor, speak on a cell phone during a meeting, point or stare at people and yawn in somebody's presence. In my opinion, if a person is ill-bred and often forgets about politeness and punctuality, he or she is not likely to command other people's respect.

To sum up, people should never think that the rules of etiquette are useless and unnecessary. Everybody is expected to have good manners. In this case our lives will become simpler and more pleasant and social interactions will run more smoothly and successfully.

Some people think it is important to be honest, while others say that there is hardly a person in the world who has never told a lie.

Lying is quite natural and people often do it in case of emergency, intentionally or even without any reason. Is it all right to tell a lie or must we be honest all the time?

I believe that a person who always lies, cheats and deceives other people will never have any real friends. At the same time it is very difficult to communicate with people who are very direct and say exactly what they think. Sometimes telling the truth may hurt other people's feelings. For example, your friend has had her hair done and asks what you think of her hair-do. To your mind, she looks terrible. But I think that in such a situation it would be better to tell a white lie because it does not harm anyone. One may also tell a lie with the intention to help another person or even to save somebody's life.

But unfortunately, most people lie to save their face, to derive some benefit or to avoid a punishment. Sometimes their dishonesty can be criminal. For instance, some people tell a lie after promising to tell the truth in a court of law. But lying often makes things worse, especially after it has been discovered. Discovery of a lie may spoil one's reputation or lead to social or legal sanctions. Besides, you can't lie all the time.

To conclude, if you want to be trusted and respected, you should be open and sincere. But in some cases truth may be blunt and rude, so it is better to tell a white lie in order to remain tactful and polite.

Some people have a lot of wishes and plans, but they think they will never come true. Others say that you must believe in yourself and success will come to you.

Does success come to a person or does a person go to success? A lot of people believe that if you want to succeed, you must work hard. But sometimes it is not enough to be industrious and persistent.

Personally, I believe that self-confidence and the ability to convince people are necessary for every successful person. Even if you try to persuade people that your dog is cleverer than any human, you must be so sure about it that you can make everybody believe in what you are talking about. Belief in yourself is very important. If you stammer and look confused, if you doubt your own knowledge, skills and abilities, you will hardly succeed.

Many people want to make a career, to win fame, to invent something that will change our lives and to make the world a little better. But they think these are only dreams and they don't believe that they are meant to be great. In other words, they don't believe in their own success. Such people think that famous scientists, sportsmen, politicians and celebrities have achieved success because they are super-talented. But to my mind, they are not super humans. The most common thing about all well-known people is that they all have incredible belief in themselves. In my opinion, everybody has the potential to become whatever they want, but people have to do a lot to achieve their goal.

To conclude, you are the one responsible for whether or not you will succeed. You should develop your inner confidence because nobody can give it to you. And when you have developed it, nobody can take it away.

Some people think that time management skills are not important for success in both their work and home life. Others are convinced that it is essential to make good use of their time.

According to some estimates, people waste about 2 hours per day. Others waste even more time and feel disappointed and dissatisfied. They find it difficult to keep appointments, meet deadlines or show up on time for personal engagements. Such people do not know how they can make their time more productive.

To my mind, time management skills are essential for personal and career success. If you don't use your time wisely, you can never get it back. When you are late for an appointment, it can reflect badly on your reputation. What is more, poor management of your time can result in lost promotions, failed job interviews, constant fatigue and stress. Many people failed to make a career because they did not find the time to do it.

However, some people still think that learning time management techniques is difficult and unnecessary. So they continue wasting time on unimportant activities such as gossiping, watching TV, playing computer games, writing messages to their friends, taking coffee breaks and so on. As a rule it adds nothing to their lives and prevents them from doing things that are really important to them. I strongly feel that such activities are just a waste of time and energy.

To sum up, time management skills help you use the time that you have in better ways. They can also help you reduce wasted time and energy and become more creative and productive. Consequently, you will have more balance and fulfillment in your life. Remember that "time is money".

A sense of humour is usually considered to be one of the most important human features. However, some people say that humour is not always good.

The ability to understand and enjoy funny things is called a sense of humour. A person's understanding of humorous things and situations depends on his or her age, gender, nationality, education, intelligence, culture and mood. Many people wonder if we can live without humour.

I think we can't. When you are in a tight corner, when you feel tired or irritated, when the atmosphere becomes tense and it is necessary to break the ice, the best way out is to joke. Jokes will help you settle a conflict, reduce tension between people and change something horrible into something funny. It is always interesting to communicate with a person who has a sense of humour. He or she can tell you an amusing story, an anecdote or a joke. What is more, there is an old saying that laughter is the best medicine. Scientists have found out that it can reduce the risk of heart disease and it makes the body release pleasure chemicals. So people who often laugh are healthier, happier and live longer.

However, humour is not always appropriate. A joke may provoke a quarrel and hurt other people's feelings. Sometimes jokes can point at a problem better than any serious statement. In some situations humour may be completely misunderstood. Some jokes are silly, rude and even offensive. What is more, a bad joke may even turn best friends into sworn enemies.

To sum up, a sense of humour is important for everybody. People who lack it are often dull and grumbling. To my mind, humour makes our lives more interesting and helps us cope with many difficulties and problems.

Some people believe in luck, while others say that it doesn't exist.

We often wish each other "Good Luck!" Some of us believe that there is the power which is supposed to be the cause of all events. At the same time many people say that it is silly to believe in luck.

Personally, I think that certain objects or rituals can bring me luck. I often wear a "lucky" sweater to attract fortune, use a special pen during tests or cross my fingers. It helps me to be more optimistic and to have better moods. I also believe that some people are luckier than others.

But a lot of people are rather skeptical. They say that it is silly to wait for something good to happen. According to them, it is better to work hard and to listen to your intuition if you want to be happy and successful. Besides, you should be optimistic and have a relaxed attitude to life. If you don't think about bad things, everything will be all right. In my opinion, it is good to rely only on our own powers, but it is very exciting to believe in some supernatural power that may change your life for the better.

To conclude, it is up to you to decide whether to believe in luck or not. Anyway, you should "put your trust in God and keep your powder dry".

Some people say they don't care about philosophy. Others are convinced that it helps us to live.

Philosophy is the love of wisdom. It deals with general and fundamental problems. A lot of famous writers, poets and scientists were philosophers too. However, nowadays some people say they don't understand why we need philosophy. So is philosophy really important and could we live without it?

I strongly feel that philosophy is an essential part of people's lives. Most of us have a philosophy on life. Everybody has an idea of what is right and what is wrong. A lot of people believe somebody else's philosophy. We often share the ideas of some religious or political leaders. Some people are true philosophers: they want to know what we live for; they spend much time thinking and asking questions.

But philosophy can also cause misunderstanding and conflict between people. Some of us choose one philosophy to believe, while others choose a different philosophy. As a result, people begin arguing and try to make others change their mind. It prevents them from working together and slows down progress. But I believe that the existence of different philosophical schools proves that people have always tried to gain a better understanding of nature and the essence of life.

To sum up, philosophy helps us understand ourselves and other people better. In my opinion, it encourages people to think, to understand different subjects more deeply and helps them make right decisions.

Some people say that one should analyze the situation before making a decision. Others believe that it is better to rely on one's intuition.

Intuition has been the subject of study in psychology, as well as a topic of interest in the supernatural. Many people wonder whether it is worth relying on their intuition.

I strongly feel that the guiding role of intuition should not be ignored or underestimated. It helps us pattern our behaviour and make right decisions in uncertain situations and unknown areas. People of different nationalities, professions and ages use intuitive judgment. Minor or major decisions are often made based on instinct and feeling, even when the reason for the feeling is unclear. We sometimes have an impulse that we should or shouldn't do something. And these sudden decisions that are difficult to explain turn out to be the best ones. Besides, in some situations intuition can save people's lives.

However, not everybody recognizes and trusts his intuitive information. Some people don't believe that it is worth relying on intuition. They think that it is eccentric and irrational. Of course, there are many situations where analysis and rationality are superior to intuition. For instance, intuition may not be helpful in determining another's personality. The situation may not give the observer an opportunity to see the traits that would indicate the personality. But to my mind, there are many situations when our intuition can help us find the right answer to the most complicated question.

To conclude, I think that people should listen to their inner voice which is sometimes an excellent guide. We should also develop our intuition and try to understand how it operates and analyze the situations when it helped us.

Some people say that ambitiousness is a wonderful quality, while others believe that it is not so good to be ambitious.

Ambitious people have a strong desire to gain a particular objective. They want to succeed or to gain fame, power and wealth. In the history of humankind there are many examples of people who were extremely ambitious, for better and for worse.

Personally, I think that society cannot survive without ambitious people. Ambition implies work and discipline to achieve goals. Ambitious people always know what they want and work hard in order to succeed. For instance, such people as Bill Gates, Condoleezza Rice or Tiger Woods have become famous, rich and powerful because they are ambitious and hard-working.

On the other hand, it is considered that the ambitious person ignores the collectivity. Such people are socially detached, they are on their own. They wish to rise above other people. The ambitious man or woman sees the world as a battle. Rivalry is his or her principal emotion. Ambitious people sometimes believe that what they want for themselves is good for everyone and that the satisfaction of their own desires is the most important thing. The ambitious individual is also convinced that the rewards of ambition — wealth, success, power — are worthy of the sacrifices made on ambition's behalf. But I believe that a person should not sacrifice his or her family or health for distinction or material goods.

To conclude, it is difficult to imagine the world without ambitious people. Our lives would probably become better: without disappointments, conflict, anxiety, tension and stress. People would be healthier and they would live longer. Time would stretch on and on, with ambition long departed from the human heart. And our life would become extremely boring.

A lot of people would like to become famous actors, singers or musicians. Others say that publicity can be a terrible thing.

Most people dream of being famous. They admire different celebrities whose photographs are published on almost every page of many newspapers and magazines. The mass media has created "the cult of celebrity". But is it really wonderful to be well-known?

On the one hand, famous people have expensive cars and luxurious houses. They spend their time travelling, meeting interesting people and having crazy parties. They lead exciting and glamorous lives. Besides, celebrities enjoy everybody's admiration. In my opinion, it is rather pleasant to be recognized by ordinary people and to receive much attention.

On the other hand, if you are a star, you can forget about privacy. Paparazzi follow famous people around, newspapers and magazines publish unreliable information and spread rumours. The life of celebrities may be spoilt by fans that get their telephone numbers, wait for them after concerts, send messages and love-letters to them and follow them everywhere. Famous people often have to disguise themselves and spend much money on security. What is more, celebrities often get tired of their stressful lifestyle and feel depressed. That is why they begin smoking, drinking and taking drugs.

To sum up, publicity doesn't only lead to success, admiration and richness. It is also the reason for envy, stress, extreme fatigue and the impossibility to escape public attention. Many stars would like to become common people at least for one day so that not to be recognized in the streets.

Most people admire glamorous celebrities and want to lead the same lives they do. However, others say that glamour is not as magical as it seems to be.

Nobody heard anything about glamour some years ago. But the situation has changed drastically lately. Today many women and girls buy fashion magazines and dream of becoming glamorous and alluring. But is glamorous life as wonderful as it seems to be?

When I hear the word "glamour" I think about a person who is beautiful and extremely fashionable and who excites everybody's admiration. To my mind, glamour is the power of attraction, fascination and enchantment. Hollywood movie stars are often seen as particularly glamorous. I admire their beauty, elegance and style. Stars wear expensive clothes and jewellery, drive luxurious cars and live in wonderful mansions. They lead glamorous lives: travel all over the world, meet famous people, dine in the best restaurants, go to expensive beauty salons and spas and have crazy parties.

However, a glamorous person produces an impression which is usually better than the reality. Most stars wear bright make-up, fashionable hairdos and clothes that make them more attractive, but many of them are not so beautiful in real life. These glittering social butterflies only pretend to be glamorous. Their beauty is artificial and some of them don't really like their image. When their fans and paparazzi don't see them, celebrities put on plain jeans and a T-shirt and you will hardly recognize them if you run into them in the street. Nevertheless, most ordinary people envy celebrities and their way of life.

To conclude, glamour is a by-product of show business. A glamorous life may be not as dazzling as we think. Some celebrities are really tired of their glamorous lives.

ПОРЯДОК ПОДСЧЕТА СЛОВ В ЗАДАНИЯХ РАЗДЕЛА «ПИСЬМО»

При оценивании заданий раздела «Письмо» (C2) следует учитывать такой параметр, как объем письменного текста, выраженный в количестве слов. Требуемый объем для развернутого письменного высказывания C2 – 200–250 слов. Допустимое отклонение от заданного объема составляет 10%. Если в выполненном задании C2 менее 180 слов, то задание проверке не подлежит и оценивается в 0 баллов. При превышении объема более чем на 10%, т. е. если в выполненном задании C2 более 275 слов, проверке подлежит только та часть работы, которая соответствует требуемому объему. Таким образом, при проверке задания C2 отсчитываются от начала работы 250 слов и оценивается только эта часть работы. При определении соответствия объема представленной работы вышеуказанным требованиям считаются все слова, начиная с первого слова по последнее, включая вспомогательные глаголы, предлоги, артикли, частицы. При этом:

- стяженные (краткие) формы *can't, didn't, isn't, I'm* и т. п. считаются как одно слово;
- числительные, выраженные цифрами, т. е. 1; 25; 2009, 126204 и т. п., считаются как одно слово;
- числительные, выраженные словами, считаются как слова;
- сложные слова, такие как *good-looking, well-bred, English-speaking, twenty-five*, считаются как одно слово;
- сокращения, например *USA, e-mail, TV, CD-rom*, считаются как одно слово.

КРИТЕРИИ ОЦЕНИВАНИЯ ВЫПОЛНЕНИЯ ЗАДАНИЯ С2

Баллы	Решение коммуникативной задачи (содержание)	Организация текста
	K1	K2
3	Задание выполнено полностью: содержание отражает все аспекты, указанные в задании; стилевое оформление речи выбрано правильно с учетом цели высказывания и адресата; соблюдены принятые в языке нормы вежливости.	Высказывание логично; средства логической связи использованы правильно; текст разделен на абзацы; оформление текста соответствует нормам, принятым в стране изучаемого языка.
2	Задание выполнено: некоторые аспекты, указанные в задании, раскрыты не полностью; имеются отдельные нарушения стилевого оформления речи; в основном соблюдены принятые в языке нормы вежливости.	Высказывание в основном логично; имеются отдельные недостатки при использовании средств логической связи; имеются отдельные недостатки при делении текста на абзацы; имеются отдельные нарушения формата высказывания.
1	Задание выполнено не полностью: содержание отражает не все аспекты, указанные в задании; нарушения стилевого оформления речи встречаются достаточно часто; в основном не соблюдаются принятые в языке нормы вежливости.	Высказывание не всегда логично; имеются многочисленные ошибки в использовании средств логической связи, их выбор ограничен; деление текста на абзацы отсутствует; имеются многочисленные ошибки в формате высказывания.
0	Задание не выполнено: содержание не отражает те аспекты, которые указаны в задании, или не соответствует требуемому объему.	Отсутствует логика в построении высказывания; формат высказывания не соблюдается.

Баллы	Лексика	Грамматика	Орфография и пунктуация
	К1	К2	К3
3	Используемый словарный запас соответствует поставленной задаче; практически нет нарушений в использовании лексики.	Используются грамматические структуры в соответствии с поставленной задачей. Практически отсутствуют ошибки.	
2	Используемый словарный запас соответствует поставленной задаче, однако встречаются отдельные неточности в употреблении слов, либо словарный запас ограничен, но лексика использована правильно.	Имеется ряд грамматических ошибок, не затрудняющих понимание текста.	Орфографические ошибки практически отсутствуют. Текст разделен на предложения с правильным пунктуационным оформлением.
1	Использован неоправданно ограниченный словарный запас; часто встречаются нарушения в использовании лексики, некоторые из них могут затруднять понимание текста.	Либо часто встречаются ошибки элементарного уровня, либо ошибки немногочисленны, но затрудняют понимание текста.	Имеется ряд орфографических и/или пунктуационных ошибок, которые незначительно затрудняют понимание текста.
0	Крайне ограниченный словарный запас не позволяет выполнить поставленную задачу.	Грамматические правила не соблюдаются.	Правила орфографии и пунктуации не соблюдаются.

Примечание. Критерий «Орфография и пунктуация» в разделе «Письмо» оценивается в 2 балла. При получении экзаменуемым 0 баллов по критерию «Содержание» все задание оценивается в 0 баллов (www.fipi.ru).