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**My first journey**

For some people there is nothing so exciting as traveling, and I’m not an exception. And I’m happy that I have traveled a lot and I hope that my first journey wasn’t the last one.

First I bought a ticket for plane. Many people think, that nothing can be compared with traveling by air, because it is the most comfortable, and, of course, the quickest way of moving. There is none of the dust and dirt of a railway or car journey, none of the trouble of changing from train of another to streamer and then to another train. But booking tickets in summer is a problem. The air-fare is quite expensive and not all people can afford it.

Then I continued my way by the train. This kind of transport has also many advantages. With a train you have a comfort and speed combined. From a comfortable corner seat of a railway carriage you have a splendid view of a countryside. If you are hungry you can have a meal in the dinning-car and if the journey is long one can have a bed in a sleeper.

But I believe that there is no travel so fine as by ship. It’s wonderful to feel the deck of the ship under the feet, to see the rise and fall of the waves, to feel the fresh sea wind blowing in the face, hear the cry of the sea-gulls. Of course, the voyage isn’t exciting for those who are sea-sick when the sea is a little bit rough.

Many people say: “Give me a walking tour any time”. And it is not surprising. The walker leaves the dull, broad highway and goes along little winding lanes where cars can’t go. He takes mountain paths through the heather, he wonders by the side of quiet lakes and through the shades of woods.

He sees the real country, the wild flowers, the young birds in their nests, the deer in the forest, he feels the quietness and calm of nature. And besides, you are saving a lot of money by traveling on foot. No one can deny that walking is the cheapest method of traveling.

**My work at the foreign trade company**

Hello, my name is Maxim Sviridov. I work as a manager at the “Star tour” company. It is Russian company which works on the business travel market. Two weeks ago I was sent by the administration of our company to London where I studied the English travel companies, their traditions, their marketing and management. Now my business trip is coming to the end and I want to share with you my impressions of English business world. First of all English businessmen are well known all over the world for their honesty and decency. If an Englishman gives you his word he will keep it in any case. Besides that, nothing can prevent him from refusing the once taken decision. Of course, there are some exclusions, but they are so rare that nobody should put attention on them.

During the last two weeks my working day was approximately the same. Early in the morning I took a taxi to my hosts’ headquarters, which is situated in the City – the business heart of London. First of all I usually asked Ms. Lapital – my secretary if there were any letters or cables for me. Then she gave me my correspondence and fresh newspapers and I followed to my office-room. There I studied all documents that had come for my name and wrote a short report about previous business day and then faxed it to my native company in Vladivostok. After that I went to Mr. Forsberg’s office-room to get tasks for the new day and ask some questions about their company, its history, traditions, clients, and so on. After that I usually did what Mr. Forsberg asked. My usual job was meeting with potential clients, discussing their rest plans and offering the services of Mr. Forsberg’s company. I usually met with 10 or 12 people a day. They were representatives of different social groups and communicating with them increased my knowledge of England and Englishmen, their psychology greatly. This business trip was a great chance for me and I hope I used this chance fully. Now I know a lot about Western business world, about travel business and this knowledge will, of course, help my in my future career.

**My breakfast**

It is not a secret that our meals influence much on our health and our mood. That’s why I consider breakfast to be the most important meal in the day as it is the first our meal and it can put us in good spirits or it can’t. Now I shall tell you about my breakfast.

In the morning I usually have porridge. I often start my breakfast with a cereal which is not cooked, it is something dry, ready to be eaten or muesly – some grain or porridge which is not cooked with dried fruit, nuts and so on.

I also like eggs (cooked in different ways). I don’t practically eat butter, I prefer soft margarine – made of vegetable fat, which is not heavy and creamy. I don’t eat jam at breakfast, I eat marmalade which is not sweet, there is slight bitterness; it’s rather pleasant.

I usually don’t have substantial breakfast on weekdays, I do it on weekends when I get up late. Very often I have just tea or coffee with sandwiches. Tea is usually taken by me with milk. I like very strong tea without sugar.

Sometimes when I am in hurry I don’t have time to have proper breakfast and I go to the university being hungry. In such case I usually buy something like “Snickers” or “Mars” on my way to the Alma Mater.

My district and my flat

As you know, Vladivostok, the capital of the Primorsky region, occupies the peninsula of Murav’ev-Amursky which is washed by Amur and Ussuri gulfs. One part of this peninsula, called Egersheld (it was named after one of the explores of Russian Far-East), is my native district. Egersheld is known from the foundation of Vladivostok. More then one hundred years ago the first houses for the seamen appeared in it. Since that time Egersheld is known as the working center of the city. Now, for example, the territory of the commercial port is situated in this district. Egersheld is the most environmental friendly district in the city as it is open to strong sea winds which blow out all harmful substances in the air and clouds of dust. Of course, this has a negative side – the average temperature in the district in winter is lower than in the other parts of Vladivostok. As my native district occupies very special geographical position (in fact, Egersheld – is a small peninsula of Murav’ev-Amursky peninsula) so its citizens may admire beautiful sea scenes every evening when the sun is hiding for the horizon. These seascapes are really breathtaking and very often you may see dozens of artists trying to carry this wonderful sight to paper or canvas.

Now about my flat. I live in Sipyagina, 31. Our flat is not very large, its double-roomed. If you know the word “khrushovka”, you may imagine what is our flat looks like. Besides these two rooms we also have a kitchen and a bathroom. I think there is no any outstanding thing in our flat that is worth describing. We have a TV set in one of the rooms, two wardrobes, two working tables, and small bookcase where our home library is kept.

**Culture in Great Britain**

It you're staying in London for a few days, you'll have no difficulty whatever in finding somewhere to spend an enjoyable evening. You'll find opera, ballet, comedy, drama, review, musical comedy and variety. Most theatres and music-halls have good orchestras with popular conductors. At the West-End theatres you can see most of the famous English actors and actresses. As a rule, the plays are magnificently staged - costumes, dresses, scenery, everything being done on the most lavish scale.

The last half of the XVI and the beginning of the XVII centuries are known as the golden age of English literature, It was the time of the English Renaissance, and sometimes it is even called "the age of Shakespeare".

Shakespeare, the greatest and most famous of English writers, and probably the greatest playwright who has ever lived, was born in Stratford-on-Avon. In spite of his fame we know very little about his life. He wrote 37 plays. Among them there are deep tragedies, such as Hamlet, King Lear, Othello, Macbeth, light comedies, such as The Merry Wives of Windsor, All's Well That Ends Well, Twelfth Night, Much Ado About Nothing.

**Customs and traditions**

I am going to tell you about English customs and traditions. First of all, it concerns United Kingdom political system. In Great Britain there is no written constitution, only customs, traditions and precedents. After the English Revolution of Great Britain is a constitutional monarchy headed by King (now Queen, Elizabeth the second). Traditionally the Queen acts only on the advice of her Ministers. She reigns but she does not rule.

Englishmen have traditions not only in political, but in social life. For example, London, the capital of England, is traditionally divided into three parts: the West End, the East end, and the City. The City is a historical, financial and business center of London. The East End is the district inhabited by the workers, and the West End is a fashionable shopping and entertaining center. English people like to spend their free time in numerous pubs where they can have a glass of beer and talk about different things with their friends.

The English are traditional about their meals. They eat eggs and bacon with toasts for breakfast, pudding or apple pie for dessert. Every English family has five o'clock tea. A typical feature of an English house is a fireplace, even when there is central heating in the house.

English people like domestic animals. Every family has a pet: a dog, a cat or a bird.

Politeness is a characteristic feature of Englishmen. They often say "Thank you", "Sorry", "Beg your pardon". Russian people, I think, have to learn this good custom.

Englishmen have many traditional holidays, such as Christmas, St.Valentine's Day, Mother's day, Easter and others.

**Education in GB**

I know English boys and girls begin to go to school (it is called "infant") at five; at seven they go to junior schools or departments; at eleven they go to secondary schools. (After selection procedures at the age of eleven they can study at different types of secondary school: grammar schools which provide an academic education oriented towards university entry; secondary modern schools which were originally designed to give a general education with a practical bias (ÕËÌÏÎ); a few secondary techniques schools offering a general education related to industry, commerce and agriculture; and schools providing all three or any two types of education, in separately organized streams known as multilateral or bilateral schools).

These schools consist of denominational and non-denominational schools. I'd like to yell you about non-denominational school. One must study there for 6 years. It's open to all boys and girls. There are the six years in this school. During the first year all classes receive the same basic core of subjects namely English, maths, history, geography, science, French, art, music, P.E., technical subjects & home economics. Toward the end of the second year pupils are asked to make their subject choices for third and forth years. Decisions on this stage are only taken after interviews involving parents, staff and the pupils themselves. The curriculum in 3rd and 4th years consists of compulsory section (ÏÂÑÚÁÔÅÌØÎÏÅ ÒÁÚÄÅÌÅÎÉÅ) which includes English, math and an options section made up of those subjects chosen by the pupil at the end of the second year. Optional courses are designed to give a sound basic education.

The system of higher education in Britain includes universities, colleges of education and advanced courses at various colleges.

There are more than 44 universities in Britain. But not all universities are equal. They differ from one another in history and tradition. The oldest and world-known universities are Oxford and Cambridge.

A university usually consists of colleges. The departments of the colleges are organized into faculties. In the university students have a series of lectures, seminars, tutorials and laboratory classes. Lectures are given to large groups of students while seminars are much smaller than lectures. Lectures and seminars are all one hour in length, laboratory classes last 2 or 3 hours. The academic year divides into 3 terms. First two terms last for 24 weeks; the 3rd term is reserved for classes and examinations and lasts for six weeks.

After three years of study a university graduate will leave with the Degree of Bachelor of Arts or Science. Student can continue to take his Master's Degree and then the Doctor's.

**Education in Russia**

Citizens of Russia have the right to education which is guaranteed by the Constitution. The public educational system in our country incorporates pre-school, general school, specialized secondary and higher education.

Pre-school consists of kindergartens and crèches. Children there learn reading, writing and arithmetic. But pre-school education isn't compulsory - children can get it at home.

Compulsory education is for children from 6(7) to 17 years of age.

The main link in the system of education is the general school which prepares the younger generation for life and work in modern production. There are various types of schools: general secondary schools, schools specializing in a certain subject, high schools, lyceums and so on. Tuition in most of them is free of charge, but some new types of schools are fee-paying. The term of study in a general secondary school is 11 years and consists of primary, middle and upper stages. At the middle stage of a secondary school the children learn the basic laws of nature and society at the lessons of history, algebra, literature, physics and many others.

After 9th form pupils have to sit for examinations. Also they have a choice between entering the 10th grade of a general secondary school and enrolling in a specialized secondary or vocational school.

Persons who finish the general secondary school, receive a secondary education certificate, giving them the right to enter any higher educational establishment. Entrance examinations are held in July and August. Institutions are headed by rectors; the faculties are headed by the deans. One has to study in the institute for 5 years. Higher educational institutions train students in one or several specializations.

Sports in our life

Sport is very important in our life. It is popular among young and old people. Many people do morning exercises, jog in the morning, train them self’s in clubs and different sections. Other people like sport too; they only watch sports game on TV and listen the sports news. Whey prefers reading interesting stores about sports men but they do not go in for sports.

Physical training is an important subject in school. Pupils have physical training twice a week. Boys and girls play volleyball and basketball at the lessons. There is a sport ground near our school and school children go in for sports in the open air. A lot of different competitions are held at school. A great number of pupils take part in them. All participants try to get good results and become winner.

Sport helps people to keep in good health. If you go in for sports you don’t catch cold. Children and grown-ups must take care of they health and do morning exercises regularly. There are some popular kinds of sport in our country: football, volleyball, hockey, gymnastics, skiing and other. Athletic is one of the most popular kinds of sport. It includes running, jamming and others.

My favorite sport is swimming. I go to the swimming pool twice a week. I prefer to rest by the lake or river and swim there. My friend goes in for boxing. He is a good boxer. His hobby helps him in his every day life.