**Communicative skills assessment**

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| **Science and Technology** | **Do you agree with the statement: “Technology is a useful servant but a dangerous master”? Give reasons and examples to support your answer.**  1. What do you think technology will be like in the future?  2. Do you think you are addicted to technology, like social media or  smartphone?  3. Some people say you can learn almost everything from the internet  nowadays. What do you think? |
| **What would life be without modern technology? Give reasons and examples to support your answer.**  1. Do you think some people find it easier to learn new skills than others? Why? / Why not?  2. Do you prefer to text people or to phone them?  3. In what ways do you think the current generation’s working lives are likely to be different from those of their parents and grandparents? |
| **Speak about the role of science and technology in our life.**  1. Can you imagine your life without the Internet? 2. How do you think technology will develop in the future? (Why?) 3. Do you think the future lies in mobile phones or another device will take its place? |
| **Houses and Homes** | **Home is where the heart is.**  1. What makes you feel proud of your home? 2. How do you think the place where you live will change over the next few years? 3. What would your life be like without modern appliances? |
| **“Home is not a place. It’s a feeling.” Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer.**  1. If you could change one thing about the place where you live, what would it be?  2. What electrical things do you have in your house? Do you know how common appliances work?  3. How much time do you spend at home? What do you do there? |
| **“There is nothing more important than a good, safe, secure home.”**  **Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer.**  1. How can you make a house secure? Is security important?  2. What does ‘homesick’ mean? Have you ever been homesick?  3. Is your house environmentally friendly? |
| **Learning foreign languages** | **Speak about the role of the English language in your life.**  1. What are the things you have had difficulty with in learning or communicating in English? 2. Are there any aspects of life where English is or will be the only language used? 3. How are you going to use the knowledge of foreign languages in your future career? |
| **Agree or disagree with following statement: “Learn a new language**  **and get a new soul.”**  1. Is it rude to speak your own language around people who can’t  understand?  2. Would you like to move to other countries to learn languages faster?  3. What three languages would you really like to speak? Why? |
| **Agree or disagree with following statement: “The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.”**  1. Would the world be a better place if everyone spoke English? Why? / Why not?  2. For what purposes might a knowledge of foreign languages be useful?  3. How important do you think it is to study grammar when you’re learning a language? |
| **Travelling** | **Do you agree with the statement: “The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page”? Give reasons and examples to support your answer.**  1. Where would you go if you had a month’s holiday and a lot of money?  2. Which areas of countryside would you recommend to visitors to your country? Why?  3. Why do you think some tourists take so many photos? |
| **Do you agree with the statement: “The best education you’ll get**  **is travelling. Nothing teaches you more than exploring the world and**  **accumulating experiences”? Give reasons and examples to support**  **your answer.**  1. What’s more important to you when you travel – comfort and relaxation,  or stimulating new experiences?  2. How do you pass the time when you have to wait for a bus, train or plane?  3. Do you take a lot with you when you travel? |
| **Education** | **“Education is the key to unlocking the world, a passport to freedom.”**  **Give your opinion on the role of education in our society.**  1. How difficult do you think it is to work and study at the same time?  2. Would you like to learn to play an instrument? Which one?  3. How important is it to enjoy the experience of learning? |
| **Education is a matter between the person and the world of knowledge; school or college has little to do with it.**  1. How do computers open up new roads in education? 2. Do you think learning will ever take place without teachers? 3. Do you think you learn more on your own or when you study with a friend? |
| **“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” Give your opinion on the role of education in our country.**  1. Why are evening classes popular with people who work during the day?  2. What do you find the most interesting aspect of learning another language? Why?  3. What study advice should schools give to young people who are about to go on to higher education? |
| **Shopping** | **Do you agree with the statement: “If shopping doesn’t make you happy, then you are in the wrong shop”? Give examples to support your answer.**  1. How enjoyable is it to shop in large department stores?  2. Some people say TV ads make us buy things we don’t need. What do you think?  3. Why do you think people buy clothes in a boutique? |
| **Do you agree with the statement: “Happiness is not in money, but**  **in shopping”? Give examples to support your answer.**  1. Have you ever bought second-hand goods?  2. How can you keep your spending under control when you are shopping?  3. Have you ever returned an item you bought online? |
| **Speak about advantages and disadvantages of different ways of shopping.**  1. Do you like shopping online? What do you usually shop for? 2. Do you bargain when you buy things in the market? 3. Could you recommend a good place for shopping in Minsk or in your native town? |
| **Books and Reading** | **Do you agree with the following statement: “A book is a gift you can open again and again”? Give examples to support your answer.**  1. What is your favourite quote from a book?  2. Did anyone read to you when you were a kid?  3. Do you judge a book by its cover? |
| **Do you agree with the following statement: “If you don’t like to read,**  **you haven’t found the right book”? Give examples to support**  **your answer.**  1. How do you choose what books you want to read?  2. Have you ever read a book that made you cry?  3. Do you prefer to read one book at a time or several at once? |
| **Doing sports** | **Do you agree with the following statement: “Take care of your body, it’s the only place you have to live”? Give reasons and examples to support your answer.**  1. Do you prefer playing or watching sport?  2. How much exercise do you do every day?  3. Do you think winning is important in sport or taking part is enough? |
| **Do you agree with the following statement: “Those who think**  **they have not time for bodily exercise will sooner or later have**  **to find time for illness”? Give reasons and examples to support**  **your answer.**  1. How does confidence help us in our performance?  2. Have you tried yoga? Why do some people prefer yoga to other forms  of exercise?  3. Which is better for motivation: working with a group or with a personal  trainer? |
| **Agree or disagree with the following statement: “A champion is afraid**  **of losing. Everyone else is afraid of winning.”**  1. Do you think famous sportspeople are good role models for children?  2. Do you think people in our country exercise enough? If not, why?  3. How can sports bring people from different countries closer together? |
| **Speak about sport as part of our national culture**  1. What type of sport appeals to you most? 2. What features of character does sport cultivate in people? 3. Do you think sport creates good will between nations? |
| **Speak about benefits of sport. Give reasons and examples to support your answer.**  1. Have you ever been to a gym? Did you like it?  2. What is the best time of day to do some exercises?  3. Do you think sportsmen deserve the highest salaries? Why? / Why not? |
| **My hometown** | **“If I could travel the world, I would start it by visiting**  **my hometown.” Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer.**  1. What did you like about your hometown when you were a child?  2. What kind of jobs do the people in your hometown do?  3. What social problems do you think we have in our society? |
| **Speak about outstanding people of Belarus.**  1. How great is the influence of famous people on the public life? 2. Whom of the famous people would you like to take after? 3. Would you like to be popular and famous? |
| **“Be proud of your hometown. It’s a big part of what makes you the person you are.” Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer.**  1. How do you think the place where you live will change over the next few years?  2. Is it easy to travel around your hometown?  3. Apart from your home town, where would you most like to live? Why? |
| **School and studies** | **“I am always ready to learn although I do not always like being taught.”**  **Speak about your school and your studies.**  1. How long does it take you to get ready for school every day?  2. Have you or your friends ever changed schools? If yes, how was it  different from the old one?  3. To what extent does the best way of studying change according to what  subject is being studied? Why? |
| **Speak about the most important factors for success at school.**  1. How can young people benefit from school activities outside the classroom? 2. Do you prefer studying with other people or on your own? Why? 3. To what extent should students be able to choose what they study at school? |
| **Speak about your school life. What do you like and dislike about it?**  1. Does your way of studying change according to what subject is being studied? 2. How often do you use the Internet to study? 3. Have you ever ‘burnt the midnight oil’ before an exam? If so, how useful did you find it? |
| **What traits of character help people realize their talents?**  1. Does school prepare young people adequately for the world of work? 2. What is more useful for a young person, going to university or getting practical work experience? 3. Do you consider ambition to be a positive or a negative quality? |
| **“The road to freedom – here and everywhere on earth – begins in the classroom.” Speak about your school and your studies.**  1. What is the most important subject for children to study at school, in your opinion?  2. Do you prefer studying with other people or on your own? Why?  3. To what extent should pupils be able to choose what they study at school? |
| **My perfect holiday** | **Speak about your idea of a perfect holiday.**  1. Do you prefer to travel independently or go on a package holiday where everything is arranged for you? Why? 2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of a holiday spent on your own? 3. How will people be spending their holidays in ten years from now? |
| **Food** | **How do you understand the following English saying: “One man’s meat is another man’s poison”?**  1. Do you try to avoid food containing additives? 2. Is it necessary for people to take vitamin supplements? 3. What places in your native town or city do you usually choose to eat out? |
| **Do you agree with the statement: “You are what you eat, so don’t be fast,**  **cheap, easy, or fake”? Give reasons and examples to support your answer.**  1. Why is organic food so expensive?  2. Do you think that a person’s eating habits affect how long they will live?  3. Have you ever bought take-away food? How good was it? |
| **Do you agree with the statement: “Eat healthy – feel healthy”? Give reasons and examples to support your answer.**  1. Is eating healthy food important for you? What is your favourite food?  2. Do you like cooking for your friends? What dishes do you cook?  3. How could students eat a healthy diet on a small budget? |
| **Healthy lifestyle** | **Speak about the importance of a healthy lifestyle.**  1. How health conscious are you? 2. What unhealthy habits do you have which can affect your health in the future? 3. What do young people do to relax in Belarus? |
| **Family problems** | **A happy home life gives you a base from which you can go into the world with confidence.**  1. Can you easily discuss your problems with your parents? 2. Does such a problem as “the generation gap” really exist? 3. How important is it for families with children to spend time together? |
| **Your everyday problems** | **Speak about your everyday problems and describe how you cope with them.**  1. Should parents impose time limits on a child's use of the computer? 2. How has the way you spend your free time changed in the last few years? 3. How well do you organize your time? |
| **Customs and Traditions** | **Speak about the importance of following the customs and traditions of your country.**  1. What public holidays do we celebrate in Belarus? 2. Do you have any special family holidays or celebrations? 3. What religious holidays do people celebrate in our country? |
| **Do you agree with the statement: “Tradition is not the worship of ashes,**  **but the preservation of fire”? Give reasons and examples to support**  **your answer.**  1. If a group of people just came to your country from overseas, what  advice would you give them?  2. What are some strange foreign customs that you have heard of? Are there  any customs in your country visitors might find strange?  3. Have you ever been in a situation where you felt you had to “do as the  Romans do”? |
| **Do you agree with the statement: “You have to know the past**  **to understand the present”? Give reasons and examples to support**  **your answer.**  1. If someone visited your country from another country, what advice  would you give them?  2. What is one tradition or holiday you don’t want to keep as an adult  yourself?  3. Is there any music that defines your culture? |
| **Music** | **Speak about your tastes in music.**  1. What would your life be like without music? 2. Is there any musical instrument you wish you had learned to play? 3. Would music be better or worse if computers hadn’t come along? |
| **Hobbies and interests** | **Hobbies brighten people’s lives, don’t they?**  1. What hobbies are popular in Belarus? 2. Do you think some people become too obsessed with their hobbies? 3. Is it possible for a hobby to become a profession? |
| **Agree or disagree with the following statement: “Find something**  **you are passionate about and keep tremendously interested in it.”**  1. How do people choose some out of the many interests to pursue?  2. What are the benefits and drawbacks of choosing a career based on  your interest?  3. Do you think there is a difference between hobbies and interests? |
| **Do you agree with the statement: “Boredom is a choice”? Give reasons**  **and examples to support your answer.**  1. Are there any hobbies you can do in other countries, but not your own?  2. Have you attended any classes to help you learn a new hobby? If not,  would you like to?  3. What hobbies used to be popular, but aren’t common now? Why have  they gone out of fashion? |
| **Do you agree with the statement: “No man is really happy or safe without a hobby”? Give reasons and examples to support your answer.**  1. Has your choice of free time activities changed over the years? In what way?  2. Do you like going to parties? Why? / Why not?  3. Can you play any board games? Who do you usually play with? |
| **Culture** | **Speak about the attitude of young people to cultural knowledge.**  1. Do you like traditional art forms or cutting-edge ones? 2. When did you go to a museum, picture gallery or exhibition last? 3. Do you have a favourite singer? Which of his songs do you love most? |
| **Do you agree with the statement: “The nation’s culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people”? Give reasons and examples to support your answer.**  1. How different are holidays in the countryside from those in a city? Why?  2. What is considered rude in your culture?  3. Have you ever experienced a cultural misunderstanding? |
| **Environmental protection** | **“Save the environment. The future is in your hands.” Do you agree**  **with this?**  1. Do you think it is easier to learn about environment when you are a child  or when you are older?  2. Do you think people should be encouraged to use public transport more?  3. How easy do you think it is to help your local environment? |
| **Protecting our planet starts with you. Do you agree with this?**  1. Some people say we should avoid unnecessary travel in order to protect the environment. Do you agree? Why? / Why not?  2. What things can affect life in a rural area the most?  3. What would you do if you wanted to raise money for a good cause? |
| **Family** | **Do you agree with the statement: “The bond that links your true family**  **is not one of blood, but of respect and joy in each other’s life”?**  **Give reasons and examples to support your answer.**  1. What is one of your most cherished memories from childhood?  2. Do you think your friends talk to their parents?  3. Does your family like spending time together? When? |
| **Do you agree with the statement: “My family is my life”? Give reasons and examples to support your answer.**  1. In what ways do you think that people’s characters are influenced by being an only child?  2. What special occasion have you celebrated with your family recently?  3. How can parents encourage their children to be generous and help other people? |
| **“The most important thing in the world is family and love.” Do you agree with this?**  1. When you were a child, what was the most difficult thing you had to learn to do? Why was it difficult?  2. Why do young people sometimes need their family’s support?  3. What’s the best present you’ve ever received? Why was it so special? |
| **Friends**  **(Friendship)** | **Do you agree with the statement: “The most beautiful discovery**  **true friends make is that they can grow separately without growing**  **apart”? Give reasons and examples to support your answer.**  1. Are you and your friends competitive with each other? In which areas  do you compete?  2. Do you have any friends who are much older or younger than you? Is age  important in friendship?  3. How do young people communicate with their friends nowadays? |
| **Do you agree with the statement: “Each friend represents a world in us”? Give reasons and examples to support your answer.**  1. Who would you turn to for advice if you had a problem?  2. How important is it to have friends who share the same interests as you?  3. Do we share too much personal information on social media websites? |
| **“Truly good friends are hard to find, difficult to leave, and impossible to forget.” Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer.**  1. How do you like to be comforted when you are sad and upset?  2. Out of all your family members, who are you closest to?  3. If you had three wishes, what would you wish for? |
| **Future career** | **Do you agree with the statement: “The only way to do great work is**  **to love what you do”? Give examples to support your answer.**  1. What opportunities are there for young people in our country to get jobs  or continue their studies after secondary school?  2. Do you think it is a good idea for teenagers to do work experience?  3. What practical skill would you most like to learn? |
| **Do you agree with the statement: “Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life”? Give examples to support your answer.**  1. What are the advantages of working for a small company rather than a large one?  2. Do you consider ambition to be a positive or a negative quality? Why?  3. What should employers do to help employees enjoy their work? |
| **Describing yourself** | **“Primary greatness is on the inside. It’s about character.” Do you agree**  **or disagree? Explain your answer.**  1. If you could change any aspect of your personality, what would it be?  2. How important does money appear to be for achieving happiness?  3. Do you think creative people are born or made? |
| **“Clothes and manners do not make the man. But when he is made,**  **they greatly improve his appearance.” Do you agree or disagree?**  **Explain your answer.**  1. How often do you check your appearance in the mirror?  2. How are people’s appearances today different from those 100 years ago?  3. Is appearance more important in politics or show business? |
| **“Your character is so much more important than your looks.” Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer.**  1. Do you think you can communicate easily with children?  2. Are you somebody who enjoys talking? Who do you mostly talk to?  3. Do you like sharing photos with people you know? Why? / Why not? |
| **Speak about the things and events that make you feel happy.**  1. Are you an optimist or a pessimist by nature? 2. Can you say that happiness equals success? 3. What do you do to cheer yourself up? |
| **Volunteering** | **“Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth.”**  **Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer.**  1. Do people around you view you as a role model?  2. Is volunteering worth the cost to you?  3. What would the world be like if no one volunteered to do anything? |
| **“Volunteers don’t get paid, not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.” Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer.**  1. What has been your favourite part of being a volunteer?  2. Do you prefer to work with a team or by yourself?  3. Are you interested in working with animals? Why? / Why not? |
| **Entertainment** | **“The entertainment industry is vast and it is a reflection of the society**  **we live in.” Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer.**  1. What traditional form of entertainment has survived up to the present?  2. What do you do for entertainment when you are on vacation  that you don’t usually do?  3. What are some seasonal entertainments in your country? |
| **Agree or disagree with the following statement: “Boredom is the price one pays, for not enjoying everything.”**  1. Have you seen any good films lately?  2. Where do you and your friends go to see live music?  3. Do celebrities deserve the admiration they receive? |
| **“Entertainment and information work well together.” Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer.**  1. How might the music affect the way people feel?  2. Why do you think people enjoy watching cooking shows?  3. What do you think would be the disadvantage of a celebrity lifestyle? |
| **Parenting** | **“Parenting is a life time job and does not stop when a child grows up.”**  **Do you agree with this?**  1. Is it better for mothers to stay at home with their kids or go to work?  2. Do you think that children should help with chores around the house?  3. How often do you go on family trips? |
| **Do you agree with the statement: “My key to dealing with stress is simple: just stay cool and stay focused”? Give reasons and examples to support your answer.**  1. Do you think young people are better able to deal with problems than older people?  2. How important is reading in your life?  3. What would you do if you suddenly won a lot of money? | |