**20. Towns and places**

1. Important places in my life (birthplace, place of my studies, place where I spend my weekends and holidays)
2. Travel agency representative (welcome, basic information about the stay)
3. Places of interest for tourists (castles chateaux, spas, caves) and towns
4. Places suitable for relaxation and for entertainment
5. My dream place

The place where we are born is called **a place of birth**/**birthplace**. It is written on our birth certificate (rodný list), our ID card (občiansky preukaz) and passport. The place where we grow up strongly influences our character and **behaviour** (bɪˈheɪvjə(r) – správanie). Many important **relationships** (vzťahy) are created there. The place of our studies *is often not identical* (nie je často identické, totožné) with our place of birth. Nowadays, most young people choose to study in a different town (or even country). It allows (to im umožňuje) them to be more independent, to learn to take care of themselves and meet new people. However, some students prefer to study in their hometown for financial reasons (z finančných dôvodov).

There are many beautiful places in the world where people would like to live or spend their holiday. Some people like **pure** (čistý, pravý**) nature** and **peaceful countryside** (pokojný vidiek). Others prefer the **hectic life** in **crowded** (preplnený) **towns** and cities.

A **town** is larger than a village but smaller than a city. Its population ranges from few hundred to several thousands, it offers basic services and shops. A **city** is larger than a town and usually consists of areas where people live, industrial and business areas. Skyscrapers (mrakodrapy), housing estates (sídliská), business and shopping centres are built in all major cities. Infrastructure (infraštruktúra), such as roads, streets and **public transport routes** (trasy hromadnej dopravy) (**underground/tube/subway** – metro, **bus, trams, trolley-bus**) are usually well-developed (dobre rozvinutý) too. A **global city**, also known as a world city, is the main centre of trade, banking, finance, innovations and markets. The four traditional global cities are London, New York, Paris and Tokyo. A **suburb** (predmestie) is the place with houses and other buildings (church, school, pub, a few shops) situated **on the outskirts** (na okraji, na periférii) of the city (e.g Dolné Hony, Devínska Nová Ves are the outskirts of BA). A **village** is larger than **hamlet** (small settlement, osada) and smaller than a town. It is usually found in **rural areas** (vidieckych oblastiach) outside a town or a city where people live.

During their life people move from place to place from various reasons for example jobs, studies and marriage. Moving is connected with personal and social life and therefore adaptation to a new place may take some time. There are also people who spend all their life in one place because they do not have any social or financial needs to change their home.

We all leave our homes when we travel for holidays. There are many beautiful, exciting and inspiring places in the world that offer a lot of excitement (vzrušenie), possibilities for sightseeing (pozeranie pamätihodností), shopping in luxurious shops, going to restaurants and clubs. The most beautiful cities are Prague, Barcelona, London, New York, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, San Francisco and others. Those people who look for the exotic and relaxation prefer the Hawaiian Islands, the Seychelles and the Pacific Islands. To the most beautiful wild places belong the Antarctica, Amazon, Grand Canyon, Canadian Rockies and Sahara.

Slovaks can spend their holidays either in Slovakia or abroad. When they choose to go abroad they often contact a **travel agency** (cestovná kancelária). They choose a **destination** (usually a **seaside resort** – prímorské letovisko) from a **catalogue** and the **travel agent** gives them all the necessary information and during the holidays they usually communicate with a **guide** who represents the travel agency. He/she welcomes them, gives them information about their stay (o pobyte), accommodation (ubytovaní), trips organized by the agency, and basic information about the resort and country).

Slovakia also offers many interesting places for **relaxation** (oddych). Beautiful **towns, castles, chateaux** (zámky), **caves** (jaskyne), **roaring waterfalls** (hučiace vodopády) and **vast plains** (rozľahlé planiny) attract many domestic and foreign ˈ/fɒrən/ zahraničných tourists. The High Tatras and Low Tatras are great for spending active holidays during the whole year (hiking, skiing, snowboarding, cross-country skiing /bežkovanie/, cycling, horse riding (jazdenie na koni), and swimming in water parks). Tatranská Lomnica offers many attractions for tourists for example horse – racing track, fitness centres, **ski slopes** (lyžiarske svahy), discos and casinos.

Thousands of patients visit **open air spas** (vzdušné kúpele) in the mountains of Štrbské Pleso and Nový Smokovec. The most famous **spa** is in Piešťany, with **mud bath procedures** (bahenné kúpele). Slovakia also offers many interesting places for **sightseeing**. There are beautiful castles in Orava, Spiš, Zvolen and Bojnice. The town Levoča is famous for its **wooden altar** made by Master Paul of Levoča. Kremnica and Banská Štiavnica are famous for their **mining** (maɪnɪŋ -banícku) history. Slovakia also offers many cultural events to tourists such as **folklore festivals** in Východná, Detva and Myjava where folk groups dance and sing folk songs dressed in folk costumes.

**Bratislava – the capital of Slovakia**

* It is the largest town in Slovakia with about 5OO OOO inhabitants
* It´s situated on the banks of the River Danube, in the heart of Europe, on borders of three countries- Slovakia, Austria and Hungary. It also lies (leží tiež) at the foothills (na úpätí) of the Little Carpathian Mountains.
* It is the seat (sídlo) of the president, government (vlády), parliament and many other institutions. A lot of international companies have their offices in Bratislava.
* It consists of (skladá sa z) 5 parts, the oldest part is called The Old Town. There are many museums, churches (kostoly), palaces and beautiful buildings
* It is an ancient (starobylé) city, the first settlement (osídlenie) dates back (pochádza) to the Stone Age.
* **St. Martin’s Cathedral** is built in gothic style. It is situated in the historical city centre below (pod) Bratislava castle. It is one of the oldest churches in Bratislava and it is the largest one. In the past it was a coronation (korunovačný) church of Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy. 11 kings and 8 queens were crowned (boli korunovaní) here including Maria-Teresa of Austria. At the top of its tower (na vrchu veže) there is a huge gold Crown of St. Stephen. It weights 150 kg. There is a coronation festival called Korunovačné slávnosti held since (konané od roku) 2003 which simulates coronation of one of the king. You can follow the steps of kings and queens and walk along the coronation path.
* **Bratislava Castle** is situated on the Castle hill (hradnom vrchu). Originally it was built of stone, then rebuilt to a palace but at the beginning of 19th century it was destroyed by fire. It was renovated in the 20th century and today it houses (je domovom) historical exhibitions (výstav) of early settlements of The Slovak National Museum. The Medieval Hall of Knights (stredoveká rytierska sála) is used for various ceremonies, artistic (umelecké) and scientific (vedecké) expositions (výstavy).
* **Old Town Hall** (stará radnica) is situated on the Main Square. The oldest part – the tower – is the original house of Mayor Jakub. It was built at a time when the city was not yet protected by massive stone fortifications (hradby), ruins of which we can see renovated today. It houses exhibition of the Bratislava City Museum.
* **Michael’s Gate –** is the only preserved gate of medieval (stredoveký) city fortification. There is a statue of St. Michael placed on the top of 51-metre high tower. At present, the tower houses exhibition of the Museum of Weapons. It also offers a very nice view of the old city.
* **Academia Istropolitana –** the first and the oldest university in Slovakia was founded (bola založená) by Mathias Corvinus in the 15th century.
* **Good shepherd’s house –** one of the narrowest buildings in BA. It houses collection of historical clocks.
* **Primatial palace –** where the so-called Peace of Pressburg was signed between Napolen and Austria in 1805. It is the seat of the mayor (starosta) of the town. It houses a unique collection of tapestries of the 17th century depicting tragic love of Hero to Leandros from an English royal weaving factory (tkáčovňa) at Mortlake.

Other places of interest: Devín Castle, Pálffy Palace, the Presidential Palace, Mirbach Palace, Slavín, historical building of The Slovak National theatre, Ganymedes fountain, Maximilian fountain, Schone Náci, Čumil

1. What places in Slovakia would you show to foreign tourists? What does Slovakia offer to tourists?
2. What country would you like to live in? Why? If you could choose a new place to live, where would it be?
3. Where would you like to spend your summer holidays? Why?
4. Why do people move from place to place? What are the reasons for some people to move to a new place?
5. What is the difference between a town and a city? What are the disadvantages of life in towns and cities?
6. Name 3 examples of world cities.
7. How does life in countryside differ from life in towns?
8. Which world places would you recommend nature lovers to see?
9. Why do people go to spa resorts? Do you know any places with curative/healing springs in Slovakia?
10. Where do you spend your weekends?
11. Where do you spend your holidays? Describe the best holiday you have ever been.
12. How can you spend your holiday in Tatras in winter/summer?
13. How can you spend your holiday at seaside resort? Where would you like to spend your summer holiday? Why?
14. How would you compare New York/London and Bratislava?
15. Some people prefer to spend their holiday in ancient/big cities such as Prague, Paris, London, New York. What can they do during their stay? Which cities of the world would you like to visit? Why?
16. What can Bratislava offer to tourists? Name some of its attractions, museums, monuments, galleries, historical buildings and place of interests. (Bratislava castle, St. Martin’s Cathedral, the New Bridge, the Old Town Hall, the Main Square with Maximilian fountain, Michael’s gate, Academia Istropolitana, Good Shepherd’s House, the Slovak National Theatre, the Slovak National Museum…)
17. What do you know about town Bojnice? Why is it a favourite place to visit for many tourists? (castle, the Zoo, healing springs, festival of ghosts, beautiful park surrounding the castle, falcon show)