10. Human relationships

**a)** Interpersonal relationships (family, school, neighbours, generations)

**b)** Friendship and love (value systems (hodnotový system), attitudes (postoje), gatherings (stretnutia), celebrations (oslavy))

**c)** Social issues (spoločenské problémy) (how communities and individuals relate to the disabled, the addicted and homeless)

**d)** Negative phenomena (aggression, vandalism, egoism, indifference (ľahostajnosť, nevšímavosť))

**e)** Methods of solving conflicts

**Relationship** [rɪˈleɪʃənʃɪp] (vzťah) describes the way (spôsob) people get on with each other, talk and behave [bɪˈheɪv] (správajú sa) towards each other, feel about each other. We can have a good, close (blízky) relationship with some people, with the others we can have a polite [pəˈlaɪt] (zdvorilý) and friendly relationship and sometimes there are people we just can’t stand (ktorých nemôžeme vystáť) and we avoid (vyhýbame sa) their company (spoločnosti). It depends on whether [ˈweðə] (či) we like them or not, on how long we have known them, on how old they are, how well we get on with them etc. Today, human relationships are very complicated. Many people are stressed, busy (zaneprázdnení) and tired, spend too much time at work and do not have time for their friends, families and children. So their relationships with other people weaken (slabnú) and often break up (rozpadávajú sa). But there are things you cannot buy for money and one of them is a **genuine** [ˈdženjuɪn] (ozajstný, pravý) **friendship** or **love**.

When two people or groups are friendly towards each other and work well together we say that they have a good relationship. Personal relationships are like sunshine, the weather or temperature – being friendly is like warmth, and being unfriendly is like cold. Relationships are also like physical connections. A good relationship is like being joined to the other person or group, ending a relationship can be like losing a part of yourself. A lot of people believe that a broken friendship can be repaired, but only like a torn thread (roztrhnutá niť) in which a knot (uzol) will remain (zostane) forever. Or maybe like when a broken vase is glued (zalepená) back together but the crack never go away.

Relationships are created between parents, children, married couples (manželskými pármi), friends, men and women, employees (zamestnancami) and employers (zamestnávateľmi) etc. The quality of relationships with others reflects (odráža) our own personality [ˌpɜːsəˈnælɪtɪ] (osobnosť). It is our choice who we talk to, how we treat [triːt] (správať sa k niekomu) other people, how much time and energy we are willing (sme ochotní) to spend with them.

**Family**: Family is a basic social unit (rodina je základnou jednotnotkou spoločnosti) in which **informal relationships** (neformálne vzťahy) are formed (sú formované). Perhaps the closest relationship is between parents and their children, or between two people who are in love. One of the most important roles of parents is **to raise** (vychovávať) their children in accordance with (v súlade s) social models and patterns (vzormi) of behaviour. Parents teach their children what is good and what is wrong, they teach them to differentiate [ˌdɪfəˈrenʃɪˌeɪt] (rozlišovať) between good (dobrom) and evil [ˈiːvəl] (zlom), how to solve problems in life, how to become (stať sa) an independent person and take care of others, how to help others and how to help at home.

Parents should talk to their children and respect (rešpektovať) their opinions (ich názory). On the other hand, there are parents who set (stanovia) strict [strɪkt] (prísne) rules and *do not look for* (nehľadajú) compromises [ˈkɒmprəˌmaɪz] (kompromisy). Some give their children too much freedom without limits (bez obmedzení). But there are also parents who are **over-caring** (príliš starostliví) and **overprotective** (príliš ochraňujúci), they give too much love to their children and their children are usually **spoilt** (rozmaznané) and **dependent** (nesamostatné, závislé) and have problems to set up (založiť si) their own families. Children observe how their parents talk, behave to their relatives, friends, colleagues and strangers (cudzí ľudia). Children copy behaviour [bɪˈheɪvjə] (správanie) of their parents and then, they behave in the same way in their adulthood [ˈædʌlthʊd] (v dospelosti). Parents teach their children basic social rules (spoločenské pravidlá) and behaviour, they teach them to be polite, always ask for things, greet older people in a polite manner saying “Good morning/afternoon/Good bye” and not “Hi/Hello/See you”, always say “thank you”, “please”, “here you are”, “you are welcome”, to offer a seat to an older person on a bus/tram, to cover their mouth when coughing [kɒfɪŋ] (pri kašľaní), yawning [jɔːnɪŋ] (zívaní) or sneezing (pri kýchaní), not to use vulgar words, not to chew with open mouth, not to make unpleasant noises (nevydávať neslušné zvuky) such as belching (grganie) or farting (prdenie), not to sip (nesŕkať) when eating a soup, to show respect (prejavovať) respect (úctu) to older people, etc. If parents shout at (kričia na) each other, if they quarrel a lot, if their rows are too noisy, if children see their parents to fight (they see violence at home) they are likely to treat their partner and their children in the same way when they get married and have children. It is important to show and tell children that it is wrong to tell lies (klamať), that it is better always tell the truth (vravieť pravdu), that it is wrong to steal (kradnúť) and that they always have to ask (vypýtať si) for things they want, that they must not swear (nesmú nadávať), that it is wrong to fight (biť sa) with other children, bully [bʊli] (šikanovať) classmates at school, play truant (blicovať), argue with adults, drink alcohol, take drugs, cheat (podvádzať) in exams, use cheat sheets (používať ťaháky) in tests. Parents should show their children how to cope with (zvládať, poradiť si) difficulties (ťažkosti) and problems, how to solve their problems in a correct way (ako riešiť problem správnym spôsobom).

**School**: children at school learn more social rules (spoločenské pravidlá), they have to follow school rules, they make new friends and meet new people and they have to show respect to their teachers. At the beginnings of each lesson students stand up to greet their teacher. When they see their teacher for the first time that day they greet him/her in a polite way saying “good morning” or “good afternoon”. In Slovakia students deal with (sa zaoberajú) social issues in special lessons - in a subject called civics [ˈsɪvɪks] (občianska náuka) or ethics [ˈeθɪks] (etika). At school children learn to cooperate with other children, express their opinions, they learn to accept others’ views (názory), and majority of them like being with their classmates and their classmates often become their friends. On the other hand, there are some negative phenomena [fɪˈnɒmɪnə] (javy) at school such as **bullying** (stronger pupils/students frighten, hurt, fight, threaten (vyhrážajú sa) weaker pupils/students, so these weaker ones often play truant (chodia poza školu, blicujú) or steal things and money at home because they are afraid of being hurt in case they do not bring to school things the bad guys want them to bring.

**Neighbours**: nearly all of us live in a house or a flat in towns, cities or villages. People who live next to us are our neighbours. As children we were told to greet them and not to make too much noise and always be polite and reply to their questions. It is not always easy to get on with our neighbours, because they might be noisy, or have a dog that is barking (šteká) all night long or a canary that is singing when you want to sleep or they are messy (sú bordelári) and throw litter (smetie) on the stairs (na schodisko), smoke in the lift or have noisy parties when you want to sleep. Sometimes it is difficult to tell them to stop doing things that annoy (ktoré vám vadia, otravujú vás) you.

**Generations**: The relationships between the old and the young generation are often talked about. Puberty, the age of revolt, often leads to conflicts between the generations, called a **generation gap** [gæp]. It is natural (je prirodzené) that each generation of young people differs from the one before it. Our grandparents lived in totally different conditions (podmienkach) which influenced (ovplyvnili) their behaviour, attitude [ˈætɪˌtjuːd] (postoj) towards society [səˈsaɪətɪ] (voči spoločnosti) and values. Nowadays we are still talking about generation gap (generačná priepasť, generačný rozdiel) between young people and their parents and grandparents. **Generation gap** – is a lack (nedostatok) of comprehension [ˌkomprɪˈhenšən] (porozumenia) and understanding (pochopenia) between older and young people, usually between parents and their kids. It can be frustrating for both sides. Kids often quarrel (hádajú sa) about money, behaviour, fashion, knowledge, experience, future. The older ones always think they know everything best, because they have more experience (skúseností). They want their kids to respect them (aby si ich deti vážili) and accept and follow their rules (a aby prijali a riadili sa ich pravidlami).

Children think about their parents that

* They are too conservative, they stick to (pridŕžajú sa) traditions, don’t understand problems of young people,
* They don´t give kids enough freedom, want to know everything, interfere (miešajú sa, zasahujú) too much,
* They are always criticising young people, don’t like their clothes, hairstyles, music, hobbies and friends
* They often say kids are lazy, easy-going, not willing to work hard
* They underestimate (podceňujú) kids, do not respect their personality and individuality
* They would be satisfied if their kids spent more time on studying and helping them with housework
* They do not give them enough pocket money (vreckové)

Parents think about their children that they

* Do not respect (nevážia si) older generations,
* Think they do not need any advice,
* Are only interested in music, fashion, friends, mates and love,
* Do not study enough, do not think about their future
* Spend too much time with friends, on the Internet, chatting on social networks,
* Text too much, make too many phone calls, are lazy and don’t want to help at home,
* Listen to horrible music, wear awful clothes and have dreadful hairstyles
* Disturb (vyrušovať) others with their music

**Friendship and love**: Two people who have a romantic relationship normally get married when they want to spend their whole life together. A happy marriage represents (predstavuje) the ideal human relationship in which both partners are able to discuss their problems openly, do not hide (neskrývajú) any secrets from each other, are able to solve their problems without quarrelling (bez hádania sa). If they have a problem, they discuss it and each partner explains why he or she is mad while the other one listens with respect. Long-term (dlhodobé) happy couples also tend to argue calmly (majú tendenciu hádať sa pokojne). Loss of control, yelling (revanie, kričanie) or sobbing (vzlykanie) seldom helps to solve problems. They often share similar values, ethnic backgrounds (etnické pozadie), interests, religion and lifestyle and have similar IQs. Couples who can discuss honestly [ˈɒnɪstlɪ] (úprimne, otvorene) things that are important to them – including their relationship – are happier and their love lasts for a long time. On the other hand, some couples might break up (rozísť) because there are no more reasons why they should be and live together – because their love has disappeared [ˌdɪsəˈpɪə] (zmizla), there is a lack [læk] (nedostatok) of faith [feɪθ] (viery) and trust [trʌst] (dôvery) between them, they might have financial problems and one of the most common (najbežnejších) reasons (dôvodov) is a dependence (závislosť) on alcohol, drugs or gambling (hranie hazardných hier).

When people who have a romantic relationship like in a marriage or dating situation (keď spolu randia) break up we can also say they “split up”. If a married couple is separated (žije oddelene), it means they’ve stopped living together. If they decide to officially end the marriage they get a divorce.

**Friendship** (priateľstvo) is a relationship between people who have something in common (niečo spoločné), they have similar values (hodnoty) and attitudes (postoje) towards life, think and solve problems in a similar way, spend a lot of time together, support and help each other when necessary. Friends usually laugh together, speak about everything and share secrets (majú spoločné tajomstvá). True friends are people who are always there for you. The saying “**A friend in need is a friend indeed**” shows the full value of friendship. A friend is someone who always gives you advice (radu) when you need it, someone you can tell everything, someone who brings you homework when you are ill at home, someone whose company you really enjoy, someone who gives you support when you need it, someone who wipes your tears when something goes wrong or when you break up/split up with your boy/girlfriend. A friend is someone you can spend hours with without talking, and you are happy just because you are with him/her.

For young people, friendship is very important. They spend a lot of time with their friends and they often argue with their parents because of it. It’s understandable (pochopiteľné). Parents know that friends can often have a bad influence (vplyv) on their children and that is what worries (znepokojuje) them a lot.

We make friends during all life stages. Some friendships last a short time, others for our whole life. If we want to keep our friends, we must work hard on the relationships. We should keep in touch (byť v kontakte), send e‑mails, call them, send occasional cards, and find time to go out for lunch with them when possible. Friendship can be easily lost when friends stop contacting each other or because of unresolved (nevyrešené) arguments (spory). When there is a conflict, it should be resolved (vyriešený) by confrontation (konfrontáciu) or talking it out (prediskutovaním).

Friendship can change into love if people fall in love with each other. Some people don’t believe that a man and a woman can be true friends and that if they say they are “just” friends, one of them must be suffering by (trpieť čím) suppressing (potláčaním) his/her real feelings.

The **relationship between men and women** in society was not always like what we see in today’s modern society. The women’s movements of the past hundred years have tried to change the way women are treated by men and by society in general. Compared with the past, women today have better jobs and educational opportunities, and are paid and treated more equally (rovnako). They have become equal in chore distribution at home and in the raising of children. Women still do not have equal political power, but they are becoming more influential and also have responsible jobs in business. There is still an invisible “glass ceiling” (sklenený strop), however, which prevents successful women from getting the most powerful jobs in an organization.

**Visits/get togethers/gatherings** – there are various [ˈveərɪəs] (rôzne) reasons for visiting other people and relatives. Usually it is a birthday, anniversary (výročie), some religious or public holidays (cirkevné alebo štátne sviatky), weddings, funerals, graduation ceremonies or name days when families get together. People in Slovakia love to celebrate their birthdays with their friends and family. Young people often do not have to have a reason to come round, they love spending time with their friends and they often make parties just because they want to spend some time with their friends. Young people often pop in (zastavia sa) for coffee just because they want to see their friends and talk to them. When you visit somebody it is polite to bring a present – usually a bottle of wine, bunch of flowers (always an odd number), box of chocolates or bonbons. When somebody visits us, we usually offer coffee and a light snack (sandwiches, cookies, crisps, nuts).

  Besides (okrem) informal relationships such as friendship, marriage (manželstva) and parent-child relationship, there are other sorts of formal relationships formed among people at school, work and in the streets. Formal relationships are not very deep (hlboké) and open. They are formed among people of different social positions: teachers and students, employers and employees, doctors and patients, neighbours, etc. Such relationships require (si vyžadujú) respect (úctu) and a higher level of formality and politeness (zdvorilosti).

**Social issues** (spoločenské javy, problémy): Society often faces relationship problems between people of different races, religions and social classes. These negative ralationships are usually based on prejudice (predsudkoch), illiteracy (negramotnosť), intolerance and closed-mindedness (predpojatosť, zaujatosť). Sometimes people are just rude because they know nothing about the other person or group of people and are suspicious (podozrievaví).

There are many problems our society has to face (ktorým musí naša spoločnosť čeliť) such as **vandalism** [ˈvændəˌlɪzəm] (vandals are people who destroy public or private property (majetok) or spray and paint graffiti on the walls of buildings and houses) and **violence** [ˈvaɪələns] (násilie) based on racism. Groups of young people with **racial prejudices** [reɪšəl predžudɪsiz] (s rasovými predsudkami) such as Skinheads regularly (pravidelne) provoke conflicts in many countries. They are aggressive (agresívni) and beat people of different colour of skin just because they think that people of white colour are better than the others. In Slovakia, members of skinhead movements often attack Romani people and people of different colour. **Addiction** [əˈdɪkšən] (závislosť), such as alcoholism, taking drugs and gambling, is another **consequence** [ˈkonsɪkwəns] (dôsledok) of frustration [fraˈstreɪšən], family conflicts or unhappy relationships. These people are sent to special hospitals where doctors try to help them to get rid of their addiction. There are also lots of homeless people especially in bigger towns and cities who gather (zhromažďujú sa) in public places. Some of them sell Nota Bene magazines and they earn some money by selling this magazine, others just drink alcohol and beg (žobrú) passers-by (okoloidúcich) for money. In Bratislava, there is a special place (homeless shelter [ˈšeltə] – útulok pre bezdomovcov) where they can have a shower and sleep but the problem is that they mustn’t be drunk and have to be sober [ˈsoubər] (triezvi).

Many societies have a certain prejudice (predsudok) against the disabled (zdravotne postihnutí ľudia). In recent years, however, there has been a great improvement (zlepšenie) in people’s attitudes: their ignorance has been replaced by information, their fear has disappeared and has given way to understanding and their pity (ľútosť, súcit) has been replaced by positive practical help. The most positive headway (pokrok) has been that most people today now see the person before the disability (postihnutie), while in the past they used to see the disability before the person. Some disabled people are brilliant thinkers, people like Dr. Stephen Hawkin, the scientist, researcher and author who lectures at Oxford University. He is physically helpless (bezmocný), totally dependent on his mother for all his daily needs and on his computerized chair for all communication and movement. Some are great craftsmen (remeselníci) and artists, actors and performers, and even sportsmen, as can be seen every four years at the Paralympics Games. The disabled people are people with some form of physical handicap. These people are often integrated within normal society and live at home, if possible or live in special medical institution. They attend special schools and there are community centres where they meet and spend their time. There are special parking places reserved for them, special toilets and each public institution should have a wheelchair access (bezbariérový prístup).

**Egoism**: – There are more and more people who think and care just of themselves. They pay attention only to their own interests and needs, are selfish, not willing to help others. If they do something good, they usually expect something in return. They do not want to see problems around them and do not want to deal with them.

Vypracovať otázky:

1. What is your relationship with your parents like? Do you get on with your parents?
2. Name the qualities of real friends.
3. What are pros (klady) and cons (zápory) of living with grandparents?
4. How would you characterize behaviour of young people?
5. How would you characterize behaviour of older/elderly (over 65) people?
6. What was the relationship between children and adults like in the past?
7. What is the relationship between young and older generation like in the present?
8. How would you characterize friendship?
9. How would you characterize love?
10. Describe the qualities of your best friend.
11. Describe the quotation “Truly great friends are hard to find, difficult to leave and impossible to forget”.
12. What social issues are often discussed nowadays?
13. How can society help homeless, disabled/handicapped, drug addicts?
14. What qualities do you value most?
15. How do you greet your friends/older people/relatives?
16. What do you bring to your host when you are invited for a dinner?
17. What would you like to get for your birthday?
18. What does a typical birthday party look like?
19. When do families in Slovakia get together? For what reasons?
20. When do we send cards?