**MINSK**

Minsk is the capital of Belarus, an ancient and beautiful city with a long and exciting history. It was first mentioned in chronicles in 1067 in connection with the battle of the Nemiga River during which it was completely destroyed. It was destroyed, burned, mined by the conquerors many times during its 950 year history: by the Crimean Tatars in 1505, French troops in 1812, German occupants in 1919-1920, fascists during World War II. But each time it rose from the ruins and ashes as the mythical bird Phoenix. Many conquerors have passed through Minsk because it is situated on the cross-roads of the busiest trade-routes connecting the Baltic and the Black seas, the East and the West. Thus, this advantage often turned into disadvantage.

But nevertheless Minsk steadily increased in importance first as a provincial center after 1793 and later as an industrial center after the building of the Moscow – Warsaw and Liepaja – Romny railways through Minsk in the 1870s. In 1919 it became the capital of the Byelorussian republic and remained the capital when Belarus gained independence in 1991. The same year the city became the administrative center of the CIS.

Minsk stands on the Svisloch river in a picturesque place. The present-day city is almost entirely of new construction. It is the city with broad streets and avenues, modern architecture, shady parks and some churches which have survived as relics of the past.

Minsk is the major industrial center of Belarus. The economy is based on machine-building, particularly the manufacture of trucks and tractors. Other products include electric motors, bearings, machine tools, radio and television equipment, refrigerators, watches, textiles and foodstuffs.

The city is also a major educational and cultural center with the Academy of Sciences of Belarus, the Belarusian State University founded in 1921 and numerous institutions of higher education and scientific research. It's the city where you can find the best pieces of Belarusian cultural heritage: museums, exhibitions, theatres and so on.

The best way to explore the city is to make a tour. But the shortest way to get acquainted with our city and its people is to walk down Independence avenue from Independence square to Yakub Kolas square. This is the most beautiful and the busiest part of the city.

Tourists can see the most famous places of interest here: the Government House, the State University, the Catholic church, the Russian Academic Drama Theatre, the Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus, Y. Kupala Belarusian Drama Theatre, Oktyabrskaya Square, the Palace of the Republic and a zero kilometer mark, the State Circus, the Opera and Ballet House, the embankment of the Svisloch, Victory Square with the Obelisk and the Eternal Flame, the Palace of Arts, Philharmonic Society, the monument to Y. Kolas, beautiful parks and gardens and everything what our city is rich in. And then the guests of our city will understand why our city is considered to be so beautiful, clean, green, calm, optimistic and hospitable.

**Answer the questions:**

1) Do you know anything from the history of Minsk?

2) When was it first mentioned in the chronicles?

3) Where is Minsk situated?

4) Why do we say that the geographical position of Minsk was an advantage which often turned into a disadvantage?

5)Enumerate the most famous sites of Minsk, then choose one of the sites and describe it.

6) Do you personally like Minsk? Why?

7) What is your favorite place of rest in Minsk?