

## TEENAGER

I'm writing an essay. For school. The title is: Who am I?

My name is Nace. I live in a yellow house with my mum, dad, my younger brother and two younger sisters. There are a lot of us and so the house is always untidy. There are toys and books everywhere. Mum gets annoyed because we don't tidy our things away. Toys and books don't bother me. But mum's yelling bothers me a lot.

I was born in the last millennium. I'm eleven years old. So I'm a teenager.

I have lots of different qualities. Three-quarters of them good. Now I'm being very good, because I want to get top grade. That would make mum very happy.

My favourite subject at school is maths. I find sums easy. Just occasionally I muddle up plus and minus. I do the sum correctly, but the answer is still wrong.

I've got brown hair and skin. In the summer I turn into a chocolate cake.

I love water. Just like my dad. We like to go to rivers and streams. We explore, play in the sand and play ducks and drakes. Dad skips the stones so well they reach the bank on the other side. I can already throw pretty well, but my brother is only just learning. One day he'll throw as well as me and dad. In the summer we go to the River Soča almost every day. It doesn't bother us if the water is cold. We're like otters.

When I'm grown up I'm going to sleep in. No one will wake me up early. I'll decide myself when I get up.

I haven't decided yet what I'll be. Maybe an archaeologist. I'm interested in the pyramids in Egypt. I'd also like to be a pilot. But I'm often sick in the car, so that probably won't work out. A pilot can't be travel sick.

When I'm grown up I'll get married and become a dad. The only thing that bothers me is the idea of wiping children's bottoms. That seems to me the worst thing my parents have to do for my little sister.

I don't know what else to write. I hope this is enough for an A.

Nace

## JUMPING

Besides going to school (which unfortunately I have to do), I play guitar and play basketball. I'd like to turn the day round. Until lunch time I'd play basketball and guitar, then in the afternoon I'd go to school for an hour or two, enough to learn what really interests me. But I can only dream about that.

So until lunch time I'm stuck in school, stuffing a couple of kilos of new words into my head, and in the afternoon all these words flit from my head. Because I jump so much.

As soon as I get home from school, I'm jumping. In the hall we have a stand full of winter jackets, anoraks and coats. (Although my family is really too big for one coat stand.) On the lower hooks my sisters and brother hang their jackets. As the oldest, I hang mine at the top, on the highest hook. But because I can't reach that high I take a short run, jump and throw my jacket on the stand as if I was throwing a basketball. Because I enjoy this so much I do it a number of times. With the next jump I take the jacket off again. Then I run up, jump, hang the jacket, run up, jump, take it off, run up, jump, hang it, and so on.

I make my bed in a similar way (I sleep in the top bunk). I take the blanket off, fold it, lift it over my head and throw it onto the top bunk. With the next three or four jumps I straighten it a bit.

Later, when I'm doing my homework, it's only my brain that is jumping. But not always with the same enthusiasm. It only jumps when the homework is interesting. It doesn't move at all when I'm colouring in pictures in my workbook. How dumb that is! If I buy a workbook the pictures should all be finished! Why should we school kids have to colour them in? That's the most boring thing in the world! My brain lies down, yawns and goes all miserable when I have to do colouring. My head hurts. When I'm grown up I'll ban colouring in school!

Later I jump outside. With my brother or on my own. We have a basketball ring on the house. I jump and throw the ball in. When it's not raining I climb the horse chestnut tree and then jump down.

When I come inside I jump at the coat stand again. Sometimes the jackets and coats fall on top of me. That means more opportunities for jumping, because I have to put them all back again. My mum closes the door so she doesn't have to watch me. She says her hair stands on end when she sees how I hang them. "Do what you want, as long as they're put back," she says before she closes the door.

Then it's time for guitar. Twice a week dad takes me to music school, the other days I practise at home. It's nice to see how my fingers are making progress. I like music. Whenever I manage to learn a new song, I jump for joy.

If I could spend the time I use for colouring things in my workbook playing the guitar or basketball, my brain would never yawn from boredom. I would keep jumping, jumping, jumping.

## STOP WHINING

My little brother knows how to win at games, but not how to lose. Whenever we play Ludo, as soon as I knock one of his pieces off he starts whining. That's no fun!

This afternoon, when he started crying again, I banged the table and said: "I've had enough of this! I'm not playing anymore!" Then he howled!

"Please, please play with me. Just don't knock my pieces off!"

"What?! I won't play, that's no fun at all. You knock my pieces off and I don't whine about it!"

"But I'm so sad when you knock my piece off..." he explained.

"I don't care!" I said firmly. "You should never whine when you're losing a game."

"Okay, fine, I won't cry anymore," he said, upset. "But try not to knock my pieces off and upset me..."

"I won't do that, because then the game's boring!"

Oh, what crying! As if someone had died! I'm not playing anymore and that's that!

Half an hour or so passes. I'm reading a book at my desk. I get the feeling that someone's standing behind me. I look round... and see my brother, his face all blotchy, looking at me so gently that I feel sorry for him.

"What?" I say.

"Play Ludo with me. I've decided I won't cry. I'll grit my teeth when you knock one of my pieces off," he says.

"Okay. Your last chance," I reply.

We go to the kitchen. The game is still on the table. My brother takes the yellow pieces, I the blue. Like always. We start. Of course, he goes first. He throws three times, but doesn't get a six. Then I throw three times, but no six either. Then him again... Six! In the next round I also throw a six. We're playing well. He's got two pieces out, me one. I'm after both of his. One is three squares ahead, the other three. I throw. Hooray, a four! One, two, three, four. I knock his piece off.

We look at each other. My brother swallows. He blinks. I see he's trying hard to keep his promise. His chin is trembling, but he takes a deep breath and says:

"I'll manage."

"Cheers, little brother. Let's play on," I shout, feeling proud of him.

The game is tense. I've got all four pieces out, my brother three. One of mine is almost home. A yellow piece is hot on its heels. Oh no, my brother has thrown a

two. One, two, he knocks my piece off. Good! We play on. Another yellow piece is just behind my second one. One, two, three, four. Yellow knocks blue off. No problem. Now I knock one of his off, but he throws a six straight away and is out again. He goes after my pieces mercilessly. Suddenly all four of his pieces are out. I can barely believe it when all my pieces are back at the beginning! My brother is racing along, throwing sixes and quickly getting near home. Finally, I also throw a six. I chase his pieces but don't catch any. Before I know what's happening my brother has all four pieces home. He has won!

There's a strange lump in my throat. My brother's eyes are sparkling as if he'd won at the Olympics. If I sang him the national anthem he'd cry for joy! I control myself. I'm the older brother and not long before I was telling him how to behave.

"Well done," I say and offer him my hand.

"Thanks," he says triumphantly and is so full of himself that he doesn't notice how hard it is for me.

"I'm going back to my room. I want to read..."

And I flee. As quick as I can, I slip inside and close the door behind me. Only when I'm alone and no one can see me, do I snivel a bit. To relieve myself. Just a bit. Just enough to get rid of the lump in my throat.

## NO SYMPATHY

“I don’t feel very good. My head hurts,” I said to my dad when he came to wake me for school.

“My head hurts, too, when I hear the alarm,” he replied. No sympathy for his child, I’m telling you! He doesn’t pay much attention, but throws the cover off me (and off my brother) and says: “Good morning, boys. When comes the spring, the sparrows will sing!” Then he goes to wake my sisters.

He repeats this rhyme about the sparrows every morning, regardless of the season. He has no sympathy, he never feels sorry for me! If mum was home, she’d be very upset that my head was hurting. She’d feel my forehead and think three times before sending me to school. But mum was already at work. And dad was saying: “Come on, come on boys: jimjams off, clothes on!”

“But dad, I don’t feel right...”

“Slippers on! A wee, a wash, breakfast.”

“But dad, my head!”

“We’ll see. If after the first class you still don’t feel right, go to the secretary’s office and call home. I’ll come and get you.” For him, the problem was solved. He stuck us in the car and delivered us: school kids to school, my little sister to nursery.

My head didn’t hurt at school, I have to admit. Or maybe it did and I didn’t notice. After school mum was waiting for us outside. I could hardly wait for her to comfort me.

“Yes, I know already,” she said. That means dad told her over the phone.

“My head was throbbing.”

“My head often hurts in the morning. Dad made the right decision. If you were really ill you could have called from school, couldn’t you?” she said. Like a parrot! Repeating what dad said!

After lunch I quickly did my homework. (That’s one thing I’m good at, I don’t waste time over it.) I went out to throw the basketball, but it didn’t go very well. Then I rode my bike round the village, but I somehow didn’t feel like it, as if I had no strength. I went back home and said to mum: “I don’t feel right.”

“Oh dear,” she said (finally with a bit more sympathy). “I hope you’re not really going to get ill. Take a book and rest on the couch.”

“I thought... considering I don’t feel well... I could watch a cartoon... uncle lent me a whole heap of DVDs.”

“No, no,” she interrupted. “If you watch cartoons the other three will come in and then you’ll all be gawping at the television. It would be a shame: look how nicely they’re playing.” She went to the window and pointed to the sand pit.

“They really are playing nicely,” I said. “They’re as dirty as pigs.”

“So don’t start going on about cartoons. If they hear the TV they’ll dash straight inside...”

“I could put the headphones on so they don’t hear...”

“Oh no, you won’t. You’ll ruin your hearing.”

Oh, again no sympathy! I lay down on the couch and read. My head was hurting more and more.

“Mum,” I said. “I’m really ill. I can’t even read any more. I could just watch cartoons.” Mum brought the thermometer.

After ten minutes she established that I had a temperature. I was quite pleased. She would finally realise that a child with a temperature can do nothing more than lie in front of the television.

“You really are ill,” she said.

“Can I watch now?”

“Definitely not!” she replied, shocked. As if I had proposed I don’t know what.

“A child with a temperature can’t watch television. Get your pyjamas on and to bed!” And in a moment she was all concern. She squeezed some orange juice, made tea with honey and looked in the fridge for a lemon... She was prepared to do anything for me – apart from what I wanted.

## HELMET BOY

A cycle helmet is one of the ugliest things in the world! I'd rather wear a mole on my head than my black helmet. We're always arguing about it. I managed to persuade mum that my kid's helmet was too small and smelled mouldy because I had sweated in it so often. But what did she do? Bought me another! She brought it home like a prize and expected me to jump for joy and immediately put the ugly thing on and ride round the village for all to see. If she only knew how my friends and the other kids at school tease me about it! "Helmet boy! Helmet boy!" they shout after me. And what am I to do? Tell them I wear it because of my mum?

I soon found a way of outwitting my parents. Whenever I went to school on my bike, I left home with my helmet on. But round the first corner I stopped and put the helmet in my bag and then rode on. So my school friends didn't see me wearing it. But then what happened. Once I forgot to put my helmet on before the last corner when I was coming home. And I met dad outside the house. "Where's your helmet?" he asked in that grim voice that I hate. "In my bag," I replied truthfully, but my dad wasn't impressed with my honesty. He threatened that I wouldn't be able to go to school by bike any more if I didn't wear my helmet. He's got no idea what friends mean to me.

Mum wasn't home when dad and I quarrelled. I told her all about it over the phone, but she didn't feel at all sorry for me. She even sided with dad. She said she wouldn't let me on the road without a helmet! But why only me? I'm always something special! Mummy's boy

When mum came home I pulled a face and let her know I felt downtrodden. But she already had a proposal ready. She said: "Leave home with the helmet on and ride almost to school. Before the last corner, take your helmet off and then ride nice and slowly the rest of the way. When you're coming back, ride as slow as you can to the first house, put your helmet on and then ride home at normal speed. Okay?" Okay. We shook hands on it.

Now the following ending would suit my story best: I'm going downhill, I fall on my head, the helmet breaks but my head stays in one piece! Yes, yes, I know that all mums and dads want such an ending. And then they'd say to their poor kids: "You see, Nace's parents were right! If Nace hadn't been wearing a helmet, he could have been killed!" But no, I won't give them the pleasure. I didn't fall. Something else happened. Something that almost gave me a heart attack!



I rode to school, properly protected by my helmet, of course, and when I came round the last corner but one I saw, just before the home straight, my schoolmate Tadej. The one who shouts the most when he sees me in my helmet. He was riding towards school and on his head he had... you won't believe it... a shiny black helmet with orange lines on the side. Just like mine!

I slowed down so that he wouldn't see me. I watched him from a distance. I saw (you'll hardly believe this) how he stopped before the last house, got off his bike and sneaked round the corner. What he did round the corner I couldn't see, I could only guess. And I guessed right: Tadej appeared without his helmet, threw his full bag over his shoulder, got on his bike and slowly, very cautiously, he rode towards school.

## LONG LIVE THE HERBARIUM!

I had a month... One month to collect plants, dry them and make a herbarium. Four Sundays, four Mondays, four Tuesdays and so on... Plenty of time, I thought. Time like flies, I said to myself. I can make eleven herbariums, not just one.

I could already see what I was going to produce, as if it was there in front of me. I could hear the words of praise and amazement; I looked at myself in the mirror and gave a modest nod; I could even see the A in my grade book. What I didn't reckon on was that four Sundays would fly past like my brother on his rollerblades going downhill...

The first Sunday we went to the hills. I rushed uphill and ran down. I overtook my brother and so I forgot about plants. I've got enough time, I told myself. On Monday I went to music school. On Tuesday it rained. On Wednesday I spent the whole afternoon doing maths homework... On Thursday, Friday and Saturday I practised my English – every day almost fifteen minutes with breaks.

The next Sunday we went to the cinema. I was excited, I didn't think about plants, which in any case don't grow in cinemas... On Monday I had music school again. Every day I rode my bike and played football... On Friday there was a terribly strong wind blowing. The book I borrowed from the library was so interesting I couldn't put it down.

The third Sunday we visited a cave. No plants there. The third week passed and the fourth Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday arrived.

“Tomorrow is the day for the herbariums,” said the teacher on the Thursday. I thought I'd have a heart attack... The day for the herbariums! Had so many days really gone by?! I counted on my fingers, but I ran out of them twice. Probably the teacher had calculated correctly. How had the time gone so fast? I hadn't forgotten about the plants, I'd just had too many other things.

What was I going to do? What was I going to do?

After lunch I went into the woods. I collected some oak, beech and hornbeam branches. I also broke off some acacia branches. Then I went to the meadow. I picked a bunch of oxeye daisies, clover, flowering grasses and salsify. If anyone saw me, they'd probably think it was my birthday. In the garden I pulled up some carrots as I went past and carried everything together the house.

Mum put her hands to her head when we met on the stairs.

“I’m making a herbarium,” I told her. “We have to give it in tomorrow.” I was a bit nervous, because I know she doesn’t like such interesting situations...

“What? Tomorrow?!” She got agitated, as I knew she would. “With a herbarium like that you can go and feed the neighbour’s cattle! Plants don’t dry in one night!” she said.

“Can’t you iron them?” I asked.

“Don’t be ridiculous! If I iron them, they’ll be burnt.”

I felt as if I’d been ironed and burnt. Even my mum didn’t want to help me! I carried the branches, grass and vegetables into my room. I sat on the bed and thought how to save myself. To begin with, I stuck my head under the pillow so I could think more easily: your brain works better when it is warm. And when I felt warmed through I got my first idea: I could get sick, have a temperature and vomit. With my head under the pillow I really did begin to feel sick, so I went for a bucket but I couldn’t throw up, I only managed a belch.

I dropped the first idea and began to look for another. It took quite a while, but I found one.

I took a large sheet of drawing paper and folded it in half. I started making a cover. I put a lot of effort in. I wrote in big letters MY HERBARIUM. I drew a wood, a meadow and a garden. And then on smaller sheets of paper I drew the branches, grass, flowers and a carrot. Each one separately. Next to them I wrote their names. For those I didn’t know I looked in the book that I’d had ready all month. Then I put the small sheets in the cover, made four holes at the edge and fastened them all together with string. A bit like an exercise book.

And what did I do with the plants that I’d brought from the woods, the meadow and the garden? I fastened them together in a big bunch of branches, flowers and grass. I put the carrot in the middle, but upside down so that the orange colour livened up the bunch. I put it in the bucket I’d brought for throwing up into, added some water and took my herbarium down to the cellar.

At dinner mum asked me how I’d got on.

“It’s okay,” I said, and after we’d eaten I invited her to come and look. I waited to see what she would say. I looked at her and saw her frowning slightly...

I was completely calm. What I’d produced was really something special. The others had dried flowers, but I’d watered them! The others had killed them, but I’d brought them back to life!

Today is Friday and I’m walking to school in my new sandals, carrying my herbarium. Maybe whoever who saw me yesterday would think they’d got it wrong and that it was my teacher’s birthday. Or that the head teacher was

getting married. I'm singing a folk song from our music book: "There must be a posy, green or blue." Bees are buzzing round me and it might happen that a rabbit will appear from the long grass when it smells the vegetables. I'll shout "Long live my herbarium!" and throw it a carrot.

## I CAN'T BE BOTHERED

I'm always being ordered around: "Tidy up after yourself. Lay the table. Clear the table! Put your slippers on! Put your bag away! Make your bed!"

I'm exhausted from all these orders. Always the same ones. When I've had enough of everything, I say: "I can't be bothered!"

Then I wait to see what the reaction will be. It depends who I say it to, mum or dad. Dad goes ballistic, but mum goes quiet.

"I can't be bothered, so there!" I say again, when I'm in a particularly bad mood.

Yesterday, when I responded to every order by saying I couldn't be bothered, something strange happened. Mum and dad looked at each other and said nothing. I shut myself in my room and sulked.

After a while, I came out and asked mum to fix me a snack, because I was hungry. You know what she said? You can probably guess: "I can't be bothered," she said.

Feeling sad and lonely, I peeled a banana and went outside. Then I asked dad to get me the ball from the high shelf, because I wanted to throw baskets.

"I can't be bothered," he said and carried on with what he was doing.

Towards evening, I asked mum to help me sharpen my crayons and she said she couldn't be bothered... I was really upset and sulked as much as I could.

In the evening, without being told, I got my bag ready for the next day and tidied up my room a bit (not too much, because I was feeling down). Then I washed my hands, went to the table and waited to see if I'd get anything to eat. Mum said: "Can you get the cutlery and serviettes out?" I wanted to say "I can't be bothered," but I bit my tongue. I did what she asked me. And when she put a tasty looking pie on the table, I asked: "Will you sit with me a bit when I do my English?"

I was afraid she would say "I can't be bothered."

But she didn't! She said: "If you quickly get washed and into your pyjamas, if your room's tidy and your bag ready, then I will."

Mum didn't know that my bag was packed and my room already half tidied. I quickly put away the building blocks and tidied my desk, got washed, put on my pyjamas and then we did English together for a while. At nine, before she turned the light off, I told her a joke that she'd already heard a hundred times, but she still laughed.



## THE FUNERAL JUMPING DISPLAY

My brother and sister have been playing funerals all day. This morning they found a dead bee and a dead butterfly. They made such a big thing out of this, you wouldn't believe. They laid the bee in a matchbox and the butterfly in a soap packet. They wrapped both coffins in gift paper. (Can you imagine? You find a box, wrapped like a present and inside is a dead insect!)

After lunch we went to the river. They put the coffins in a rucksack. They also took with them a little rake and spade. When we got to the water, they quickly changed into their swimming costumes. They didn't even waste any time going in the water, but immediately started digging graves in the sand.

Of course, I did other things. When we got the river I was so hot that I threw my clothes off and went straight in the water. But my mum was watching how I got undressed and so I had to come straight back.

"Fold them nicely and put them in a pile," she says. (These heaps are a threat to my freedom! Everything has to be in neat piles! Clothes, exercise books, plates... As if piles were the whole point of life!)

"Yes, mum," I reply and come out of the water to make a neat pile. Of course, I notice that my brother and sister have also thrown their clothes on the rocks. I feel like pointing to their twisted underpants, but I think better of it. So that mum doesn't interrupt their funeral, I fold their things too.

I go back into the water. I dive in head first. I splash my little sister, who is playing by the water. We both laugh. My brother and sister who are still digging graves turn towards us. My brother says:

"Quiet! There's a funeral taking place here."

The two of them slyly watch and giggle at what the funeral directors are doing. They put the coffins in the holes, fill them in and make a border with white stones. They also make a cross. My brother calls to me:

"Are you coming to mass?" Oh no, that as well! Oh alright, I go to mass.

"Are you coming, as well?" I ask my little sister. She's immediately in favour. We agree that I'll be the priest and my brother the ministrant.

We do it very quickly, because I'd like to go back in the water. My sister makes up a funeral march, but we don't feel like singing for long.

"I'm going in the water," I say. "I've had enough of this ceremony."

My brother and sister throw themselves into the water. Me, too. We jump in feet first, head first, dive-bomb... This is no longer a funeral, it's a noisy jumping display, with yelling and screaming!

Even my little sister, who is just watching, is standing on the riverbank shouting and enthusiastically applauding us – but me most of all, I think.



## SCHOOL AGAIN

At the end of the holidays, mum can hardly wait for school to start. She says the holidays are too long. Once she also said that we needed fields, pastures and livestock. According to her, during the holidays, kids should be out picking potatoes and raking hay, and no one should be lazing around the house without work to do. Of course, I don't agree with her. .

But the first day of school finally arrived. It started. What a pain! It's almost dark outside and we're forced to get up. And then all that rush, a queue outside the toilet... My sister has again got water in the toothpaste tube and it has splashed everywhere... Oh dear. It'll be like this every day. My brother falls asleep on the toilet. I haven't pushed him off all summer because there was never any hurry, but now I have to. We have to get to school. He's already whining and has gone back to bed, all offended. Dad will soon sort him out!

Today I'm taking just my schoolbag and pencil case. Above all, I must not forget my bag. We'll get about three kilos of paper from insurance companies. Every year they offer my parents money in case I have an accident! Can you imagine my mum sitting at the table studying all those tables? So much for a broken leg, if I end up in a wheelchair a bit more and if I die a lot more! Yuck! That really makes me angry – as if money helps if anything happens to anyone. If my mum died my heart would break. And if anything happened to me, my mum and dad's hearts would break. Would money help mend them? Anyway, I'll bring all the paper home. That's why I'm taking my bag. When I get home I'll put it on the table, next to the heap from my brother and the one from my sister. And Mum will take the whole lot to be recycled. (Wouldn't it be nice if everything in the recycling bin turned back into trees?)

It's already five to eight. We're pushing and shoving in the hall. My sister, who is happy to be going into year one today, stands on my foot. By accident, so I won't do it back to her. Let her first day at school be a happy one.

We get to school at the last moment. Now I'm in year six.

We have to listen to a whole lot of rules and instructions. We get, as I've already said, a mountain of paper. Because I've nothing else to do, I decide what is for recycling and what I will read. I choose a magazine about animals, then look through all the ads, but I put them in the recycling pile because I know my parents won't buy any of that stuff. The teacher says to me: "Nace, have you been listening?"

"No," I reply. (My parents say I should never lie.)

“Great,” says the teacher. “Ask the others. They can tell you what you have to bring with you tomorrow.”

“Okay,” I reply.

“Anyone got any questions?” asks the teacher.

I wonder what I might ask. Aha. I put my hand up.

“Yes, Nace?” the teacher says to me.

“What time are we finishing?” I ask. (My parents have taught me that I should never be afraid to ask a question.)

## SNOW MINER

It's so funny that in the winter the schools, nurseries and shops are all decorated with snowflakes out of paper and snowballs out of cotton wool. For it's a long time since we saw any real snow. At New Year we were all muddy when we went out to play. But on the cards we got there were pictures of snowy spruce trees and happy sledgers. It makes me feel like crying!

But then a miracle happened. And on the first Monday after the winter holidays! We had just copied some sums from the board when I looked through the window and saw real snowflakes falling from the sky! The kind that melt if you take your glove off and catch them in your hand. I nudged Tine who was absorbed in calculations. "Look outside," I whispered to him. Wow, how his eyes bulged! He forgot completely where we were. He yelled at the top of his voice: "Snow! Look, it's snowing!" Maths fell apart. I looked at the teacher, who was saying something, but no one could hear her. Suddenly, we were all at the window.

My dad came to get me an hour early from after school care. At home, I quickly got changed, put on some boots and ran with my brother and sister towards the woods. It was still snowing. The snow was already up to our bottoms (if we sat down, of course). "Let's make a big snowball and roll it towards home," I suggested. "Yes, let's!" shouted the other two. So we made a snowball among the trees and then started to roll it down the path. As well as snow, it contained leaves, grass, bits of branches, pine cones, sand and animal droppings. We rolled this mixture towards our house until it became so enormous that we couldn't shift it any more. I rushed home to get dad. He was in an unusually good mood and immediately prepared to help. (He's not always like that. Sometimes he's as annoying as a dried-up marker pen.) He put his winter jacket on and hurried with me up the path. With our combined efforts, we rolled the ball into the yard. Then we found just enough snow around the house to make another two balls, which dad put one on top of the other on the giant snowball. We managed to give the snowman only one arm, as there wasn't enough snow for two.

And that's how our snowman came about. He wasn't snow white like the ones on Christmas cards, but looked like he worked down a coal mine, even though he was from real snow.

Although during the night he almost tipped over because of the temperature rising, we were very pleased when we came out in the morning to look at him. The snowman miner cheerfully winked at us with the one eye he had left; I know that he was thanking us for his short, but real life.