

Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Fashion ideas for school uniform

Many schools around the world don't actually require their students to wear uniform. For various reasons, principals have decided that it is better to allow the children to wear their own choice of clothes. However, if a school does require a uniform, the world of fashion may have a few tips for the world of education about ways of improving students' attitude to wearing one.

According to some recent fashion graduates from a local university, students would enjoy wearing a uniform if it was designed better. Kandy Ho and Duncan Lau are trying to influence principals in the region to follow their fashion advice in order to promote a better atmosphere in schools. Using the knowledge they gained during their fashion course, Kandy and Duncan have come up with ideas for making school uniforms more interesting and more comfortable than they are at the moment.

Kandy and Duncan consider the fabric, colour and design of current uniforms to be outdated. They believe, for example, that the traditional design of the *cheong sam* actually affects the child's attitude to learning because it is so uncomfortable to wear. These tight-fitting dresses for girls, and the collars and ties for boys, all contribute to a physical discomfort which is unnecessary and can be avoided. With this in mind, the designers have experimented with modern fabrics and have suggested a number of changes to school uniforms which allow for more movement and a cooler, more casual feel, while still looking smart.

'A looser fitting uniform made of modern fabrics will make students feel more relaxed and positive,' says Duncan. 'Principals could look at what young people wear outside of school too – for example, trousers and cool shorts are a good idea for both boys and girls.'

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

In an effort to encourage a better learning attitude in your school, your principal has asked for ideas from students and teachers on what changes could be made to improve the working environment.

You and your classmates have been asked to come up with some ideas which will allow regular classes to be taught within a different working environment or atmosphere. You should also explain why you think these ideas may help students learn better.

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Candidate B

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Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

How colours make you feel

The effect that colour has on our lives is probably underestimated. Particular colours remind us of certain things and in some situations may influence our moods or attitudes. 'Colours are associated with a number of ideas and feelings which affect our behaviour and the way we respond to our environment,' explains Doctor Jennifer Lee, a local psychologist. 'We already know that smells, tastes, touch and sounds all cause emotional reactions. It now seems that colour is another such stimulus which creates an emotional response in our minds.'

Psychologists have recently made some interesting discoveries. Seeing the colour red stimulates the heart and nervous system. Therefore, red could be used to help people with low blood pressure. Green and blue are generally relaxing, peaceful colours which could be used to promote a calm atmosphere, but dark tones of greens and blues cause sadder, more serious emotional responses and should be avoided. White is bright and

puts pressure on the eyes, but, mixed with strong colours, it can lessen the effect they have.

People such as designers are making use of this knowledge to benefit the general public. When deciding on the interior designs of public buildings, they have started to choose colour schemes that will stimulate positive feelings, such as a sense of comfort and relaxation. Libraries, bus stations and schools are all obvious places where colour could make a positive contribution to the environment. For example, a classroom which is painted light green or blue is a more motivating place to study in than one which is painted in darker colours.

'Hospitals are another place where colour can be used to good effect,' says Dr Lee. 'Rooms can be decorated with different colours to help patients cope with different medical conditions.'

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

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Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

The power of music

There is a popular theory that plants and flowers grow quicker and stronger when people talk to them. Some people even sing to their plants, flowers and trees. While this idea may sound crazy, you might be surprised to learn that one Australian farmer has developed it into a successful business.

Clive Bonnard believes that music can help his grains, vegetables and fruit grow. The Queensland farmer has started a company called 'Sonic Bloom'. The company produces specially-prepared taped music which, when used with ordinary fertilizers, improves the growth rate and health of any plants. There have been extensive tests on several farms measuring the effectiveness of the new method. Some crops were left to grow normally, given only the usual fertilizers and treatments of modern farming methods, while other crops in nearby fields were given the 'Sonic Bloom' treatment.

Once the fields had been sprayed with the fertilizer, sound systems were set up around the fields so that the crops could be exposed to music. The music tapes were played at quite a low volume for several hours a day over a number of weeks. The crops which were left to grow normally without music acted as a control group. After a couple of months the growth rate of all the crops was measured. It was discovered that the crops exposed to music had grown up to 10% more than the control group.

The success of music in farming has given ideas to experts in other areas of work. Educationalists in Australia are now measuring the effects of playing music to students in classrooms as they study. While it seems unlikely that music will cause them to grow quicker, it may help them concentrate better and improve their academic performance.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

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Candidate D

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Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

‘Learning Through Landscapes’

In 1994 a survey was conducted in the UK into the link between school environments and students’ academic performance. Not surprisingly, the study confirmed that an unpleasant classroom environment affects the students who work there. A classroom with no views except for concrete or high walls is a depressing place to work, and depressed students will obviously not function to the best of their ability during lessons.

As a result of the study, a project called ‘Learning Through Landscapes’ was set up. Its purpose was to experiment with ways of improving the learning atmosphere for students by creating enjoyable lessons away from the usual classroom setting. The idea, which is still being explored today, involves taking children outside to study the real world in action, instead of studying only through books in classrooms.

For instance, science classes could study different

types of plants, and such things as the theory of gravity and how water moves, in the school grounds. Maths lessons based on measuring, and geography projects based on map-reading skills could also be easily adapted to out-of-class settings. Of course, if a day field-trip can be arranged there are hundreds of possible places for learning, but the project stresses that no extra money should be spent. All that is needed is just a little imagination and a change of scene, even if that means only using the steps outside the classroom.

The successful results of such creative changes of learning environment have already proved beneficial. Students who have taken part in the scheme in the UK have shown an increase in their attention span during lessons in all subjects and their motivation has improved. Educationalists are now looking at ways of implementing the scheme in Hong Kong, though they admit that the lack of space and greenery is a big problem.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

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Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

China's only-children

China's one-child policy is of great interest to the rest of the world. It is a bold experiment in controlling the problem of over-population. When this policy came into effect a number of people voiced their concern and now, over 10 years later, the world is watching to see how the only-children in China are growing up.

The children born under the one-child policy are now teenagers and they live in a country which is more open than when they were born. When their parents were young, life in China was extremely hard. Many people lived in poverty and hunger. Now that these people have a child of their own, it seems they are doing everything possible to give them a better life than the one they experienced. Parents are providing their children with more food and clothing, better schooling, and imported luxuries to compensate for their own lack of childhood comfort.

However, some parents are now worrying that they may have spoiled their children by giving them too much. There have been examples of children behaving in an extreme way if their parents ignore their requests. Recently, a teenage boy threatened to jump from the roof of a building because his mother had refused to cook his favourite dumplings for breakfast. It seems that some only-children do not like to be told 'No' and will resort to violence and even murder to get what they want.

David Wu, a social scientist at the University of Hong Kong, believes it is too early to say what these children will be like when they grow into adults. 'There are many possible outcomes. The children may grow into rebels who will throw out the Chinese Communist Party, or, equally, they could become even more nationalistic and extreme in their communist views.'

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

The Drama Club at your school has decided to put on a play about families. Students have been asked to think of some ideas for the drama.

You and your friends want the story-line to be about the problems most families face and how children may be affected by them. Along with these issues, you may also wish to talk about how you will present the drama.

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Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Are youngest children different?

The position you were born into in your family may have a very strong influence on your personality, according to American social scientist Doctor Frank Sulloway. For more than 20 years the doctor has been working on a study of the lives and families of over 6,000 famous people.

Doctor Sulloway's research seems to suggest that the youngest children in families are more hardworking and more prepared to accept new and different ideas than their older brothers and sisters. The results of his studies indicate that, because a person is born the youngest in the family, he or she has to fight and adapt in order to survive. Consequently the personalities of these children are affected by this early experience of competition with their older siblings. They have the ability and the motivation to try and find their own route through life.

In all areas of life, the youngest will try to do things differently from the older children in the family. This could be because they are not as good as their brothers and sisters in certain areas. Perhaps, for example, a younger sister has tried but failed to play the same sport as her older sister. This failure may have prompted the younger sister to choose a totally different sport in order to succeed. More likely though, she knows it will be safer not to even attempt anything which her older sister is already successful at.

Some famous youngest children in Hong Kong families include Emily Lau Wai-hing, a politician who has spent many years fighting for democracy and human rights. She is the eighteenth child – her father married twice. Also, Canto-pop singer Josie Ho is the youngest daughter in her family and is famous for her outrageous stage shows.

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Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

First-born children

If you are the oldest child in your family, you might be interested to hear what some psychologists say about being the first-born. These psychologists have developed theories about how people's personalities are shaped by their position in the family. Apparently, the first-born is likely to be the most similar to its parents. When the child grows into an adult it may share similar views on the world to its parents and possibly even have the same occupation. For example, it is very common for the first child of a teacher to become a teacher as well.

For the first few years of life, it is the parents who have the greatest influence on the child. Even when there is a domestic helper or grandparent in the home, research shows that the parents will still have the strongest effect on the child's personality. In fact, many psychologists now believe that a child's basic personality is formed by the age of three, so the later influences of

school, college and work, however important, will do little to change the character of a child.

Perhaps it is not surprising that the oldest child grows into a younger version of its parents. Firstly, there are no older children in the family to copy or learn from. The first-born child's only role model at home is its parents, who demonstrate every day, deliberately or unknowingly, their views on the world, their sense of style, taste in food, clothes, humour and other things.

Another important factor, of course, is that the mother and father are experiencing and experimenting with their new roles as parents, which must have an effect on the first-born child. By the time the second child is born, parents are generally more relaxed and experienced at the job.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

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Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

One-parent families

Not everybody grows up in a home with both parents. There are more one-parent families around than you might imagine. In fact, there are many situations which can arise causing either a mother or father to be left alone to take care of the children at home.

Some parents separate and divorce, leaving the children with only one parent. It's not always the mother who becomes the main child-carer, sometimes the father looks after the children. Alternatively, the parents could share the responsibility so that the children spend an agreed amount of time in each of their respective homes.

It is not unusual in the modern world for one parent to live and work abroad. Many families are split because one of the parents has to take a job overseas. The children have to adjust to living without one of their

parents for long periods of time. In Hong Kong there are many Filipinas who have left their children at home in the Philippines with their fathers. Hong Kong Chinese fathers can also be away from home for months at a time if they work on the Mainland. Holidays may be the only time when the whole family is reunited.

Perhaps the saddest situation is when one parent dies and the children are left with the surviving parent. For local teacher Robert Chan it was a tragic shock when his wife became ill with cancer. She died within months and suddenly Robert and his two children became a single-parent family. Robert chose to leave his teaching job because it meant he didn't see enough of his children, and he started writing books from home. Now he spends a lot of time with his children and fits in his writing work when they are at school or asleep.

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

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Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Power Rangers – too violent?

It is very difficult for children to grow up in Hong Kong today without knowing about the characters called Power Rangers. *Power Rangers* is a live-action TV programme which was first shown in Japan in 1992 and has since become extremely popular with children all over the world. Now, numerous products and merchandise are sold with pictures of the Power Rangers on them.

The Power Rangers are five young people with special powers who have various adventures fighting bad guys and saving people who find themselves in trouble. Although the original production was actually Japanese, an American company has now bought the rights to it. The company is making hundreds of videos and selling thousands of souvenirs and toy versions of the characters.

The main feature of the programmes is the fighting scenes. The young people, who change into super-heroes when the bad guys approach, use

special powers to frighten or kill them. These five heroes, three men and two women, spend most of their time karate fighting, or attacking alien monsters with huge war machines. Young viewers are particularly excited by the extensive use of special effects to create such things as explosions and imaginative alien monsters.

Today, in many countries around the world, *Power Rangers* dominates children's TV programmes and games. Children can often be seen pretending to be the Power Rangers as they act out fighting scenes. This has worried some parents, who feel that the programme is too violent. One European country, Turkey, has actually decided that the programme should not be seen by young children. The Turkish government controls the national and satellite TV companies and it has decided that the particular company which shows *Power Rangers* will not be allowed to broadcast until it agrees to remove the programme from its schedule.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

Recently there was a particularly violent fight at your school between some younger students who were pretending to be super-heroes. The teachers think there has been an increase in violent play because of the popularity of super-hero TV programmes and video games.

You and your classmates have been asked to design a questionnaire to distribute to younger students on the matter of violence in children's programmes. You may wish to discuss what questions you want to ask, as well as how you could present the results – for example, as a talk, a video or an exhibition.

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Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Power Rangers excites and educates

The world famous Japanese TV action series *Power Rangers* has often been criticized for being too violent. Fighting and killing feature very strongly in the stories and children love to act out the fights themselves. Many parents around the world don't allow their children to watch *Power Rangers* and one European country has even closed down a satellite TV company for showing the programme.

The American company which now has the rights for *Power Rangers* recently responded to fears about the programme being too violent and cut out 95% of the violent scenes from the original Japanese series. The company then re-filmed most of the fighting scenes so that they are now less violent. The re-filming added to the actual production cost but enough money has been made through selling *Power Rangers* videos and toys to pay for the new versions.

The company also believes that it can use the popular appeal of *Power Rangers* as a way of educating the children who watch it. In the most recent *Power Rangers* stories there is more emphasis on educating young TV viewers on important social issues such as violence and cultural differences. For example, some of the new programmes show that violence does not solve all problems. They also show people from different ethnic groups in leading roles – for example, the leader is a black man.

In addition, *Power Rangers* is one of the few children's TV programmes which has strong female characters. Too often the women's roles in TV drama are passive and weak, but in *Power Rangers* the girls fight just as well as the boys. The producers believe that *Power Rangers* therefore shows that there can be sexual equality in society, when most TV programmes represent a society dominated by men.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

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Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Japanese cartoon crisis

Japanese cartoons are very popular amongst young people all over the world today. They can appear in the form of comic books, video games and TV programmes. This year, however, a new cartoon story was created for TV which caused a number of unexpected problems for its young audience.

The cartoon is about a group of super-heroes with special powers. One of them is a boy who has special flashing eyes that act as weapons. The eyes send out strong lights, like lasers, which flash on and off at very high speed, instantly killing his enemies. Unfortunately, when the new cartoon series was recently shown on British television, more than 700 children were taken to hospital suffering from strange physical reactions. Children complained of eye problems, headaches and, more seriously, some had convulsions which made their bodies shake uncontrollably.

In Japan more problems occurred when the series was used as a basis for a new video game. Many children who played the game suffered from the same worrying side-effects. The flashing lights from the eyes of the super-hero made the children feel sick and dizzy and, again, in some cases children had to be taken to hospital for treatment.

In Britain, guidelines have been issued to help prevent the physical problems caused by watching such fast-moving cartoons. Health specialists now advise children to sit at least two metres away from the television. A stronger response to the problem has come from the Japanese government. It has banned the game version and is encouraging research to find out how it is possible for video images to cause such terrible physical reactions in children. The results will hopefully provide further guidelines for producers of cartoon TV series and video games, so that similar problems can be avoided.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

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Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Mighty Weenie Pathetic Rangers

Most young people love comic books, cartoon stories and super-hero adventures. *Dragonball Z* and *Batman* are just two of the programmes which are popular on TV in Hong Kong. But, as an alternative to the traditional good guy and bad guy stories, some TV producers are trying to make new programmes which make fun of super-heroes and their enemies.

One American company has been particularly successful with its recent production called *Mighty Weenie Pathetic Rangers* which makes jokes about the famous Japanese TV series *Power Rangers*. The characters in this new show can't be described as traditional heroes at all, as they are very little and rather stupid. Whereas the original *Power Rangers* are strong, karate-fighting champions, the *Pathetic Rangers* do not have any special powers. They try to be heroes but instead end up being silly failures who never manage to do anything right.

Other TV series with a similar theme have also proved to be popular with audiences in America. These include *Batfink*, a failed Batman, and *Superblooper*, a Superman who is never able to help people because he is either in the wrong place or takes the wrong weapon.

The producers of these new programmes believe that young audiences are losing interest in the traditional super-hero shows. The children are starting to realize that heroes don't really exist and that nobody is totally good or totally bad like the characters in most children's programmes. In these new style adventures, people make mistakes, have accidents and do things that ordinary children do all the time. The producers suggest that the future of children's TV programmes is likely to be more true to real life – no heroes, no bad guys, just ordinary people having to deal with difficult situations.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

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Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Christmas in Beijing

It was ‘business as usual’ on 25 December last year in most of China. Schools and offices were open as normal. The government newspapers and television stations made no mention of the Christian festival of Christmas. However, shops, restaurants and hotels were all specially decorated, and shopkeepers were offering bargain prices to attract customers. Christmas was also a time for many young people in Beijing to go out with friends to parties or to discos.

The Chinese government says that there are about ten million Protestants and four million Catholics in China practising the Christian religion. They attend churches across the country which are officially recognized by the state. But churches also attracted other people during last year’s Christmas celebrations. On Christmas Eve, trendy Beijing teenagers also managed to spend a few moments at church too, in between visits to discos and nightclubs. Crowds of colourfully-dressed

young people attended the capital’s seventeen Protestant and eight Catholic churches as part of their night of fun ‘on the town’.

‘We’ll go to a restaurant to eat, then we’ll go to a disco,’ said 17-year-old Wang Jie, as he and his friends rushed out of an early evening service at a church in central Beijing. ‘But we’re going to come back for the service at midnight. This is my first time inside a church and I think the atmosphere is really romantic,’ he added. Regular members of the church estimated that only about a third of the people at the Christmas services were actually believers – the rest were just curious observers.

‘I don’t believe in God,’ explained Wang Jie. ‘I’ve only come to this church with my friends to find out what is happening here. For us young people, Christmas is really more of an opportunity to get together and have a good time.’

Part Two – Group Discussion*(Total time: 12 minutes)*

There is going to be a series of assemblies at your school focusing on religion and young people. The principal has asked students to prepare wall posters to raise the school’s awareness of different attitudes to religion around the world.

You are meeting with other members of your class to decide on what to put on the posters. You might want to talk about your own feelings about religion as well as the feelings of any other young people you have read about.

You do not need to come to a final decision or to reach a conclusion to your discussion. You should try to discuss both the content and procedures involved in your discussion task. You cannot take notes or write during the discussion.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Return to Buddhism

Pol Pot and his army controlled the country of Cambodia for only four years in the 1970s. However, during this period over three million people died or disappeared. Pol Pot wanted to destroy everything modern or foreign – for example, cars, money, hospitals and schools – and he forced people out of towns and cities and made them live in the countryside. Families were separated and people had to break all links with the past. Buddhism had been the main religion in Cambodia for centuries, but even this was forbidden by Pol Pot and nearly two thousand Buddhist temples were burnt down.

Today, twenty years after this terrible period in Cambodian history, the country is still recovering. In the capital, Phnom Penh, there is now a restored Buddhist temple which is also a teaching centre. Local people come to learn again about their traditional religion. One of Cambodia's most important monks, Maha Ghosa, has also set up a centre for peace there. 'I

want to remind the world about living together in harmony,' he explained. 'Hate can never destroy hate; only love can destroy hate.'

Buddhism, once the heart of Cambodian life, is again playing an important role in the reconstruction of this badly-damaged civilization. Temples are some of the first institutions to be rebuilt. They are being used to provide a basic education for a generation of people who were denied an education because Pol Pot wanted the people to be peasants. In fact, at that time, many people were killed simply because they were educated.

Since 1992, Maha Ghosa has organized annual peace walks through his country. 'Cambodia has a generation of children who have never known peace,' he said. 'The walks allow these children to learn what peace really means and to hear some Buddhist teachings, perhaps for the first time.'

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

There is going to be a series of assemblies at your school focusing on religion and young people. The principal has asked students to prepare wall posters to raise the school's awareness of different attitudes to religion around the world.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Helping people in poverty

In Manila, the capital of the Philippines, there are large areas of illegal housing. Thousands of people live in shacks – homes they have built for themselves from pieces of wood and metal. They live in very difficult conditions without running water or proper toilets. Their poverty is easy to see: whole families live in a tiny, dark room with their few possessions and their home-made furniture.

People have lived like this in Manila, and in other cities around Asia, for a long time. And some international charities have been working to help them for many years too. Rosie Caliso was born in a shack in a poor area of Manila about twenty years ago. She spent her early teenage years looking after her younger brothers and sisters while her parents went out to look for work. Now she is working for a charity called Christian Alliance, which is based in the United States.

‘One day some foreigners came to our area and told us about their work,’ explained Rosie. ‘They wanted to help poor people like us and they were looking for young men and women to go on a training course.’ Rosie decided she was interested and spent two weeks learning a wide range of useful skills, from basic first aid to how to register babies for government medical care. Now she receives a small monthly wage from Christian Alliance and helps the other people in her neighbourhood.

Rosie likes working for a Christian organization. ‘I can help people in a very practical way because of the training I’ve had,’ said Rosie, ‘but I can also talk to them about what I believe and explain Christian teachings to them. For me, it is very important to help others, but even more important to share my faith.’

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

There is going to be a series of assemblies at your school focusing on religion and young people. The principal has asked students to prepare wall posters to raise the school’s awareness of different attitudes to religion around the world.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

A normal Tibetan life

Dashi Gyatso, an 18-year-old youth, lives a normal life, at least according to his view of the world. However, his lifestyle will probably seem unusual to many people. Dashi is a Buddhist monk and he lives in a monastery in north-east Tibet. His parents took him there at the age of 10. It is traditional for a second son to become a monk; Dashi's older brother lives in the country with the rest of the family and looks after the animals. Several of Dashi's relatives are also monks at the monastery – uncles, some cousins and now a younger brother too.

For Tibetans, becoming a monk is a positive step. Monks spend their lives in the service of others – they pray for the whole world. Their families support them (with food and other necessities) and they do this as a charitable act for all of society. Much of the Tibetan way of life is linked to the people's religious beliefs.

Therefore, for parents in Tibet, sending children to live in a monastery is as normal as parents of other cultures sending their children to school.

Dashi's day starts when the sun comes up. 'First I study a religious text,' he explained. 'As part of my studies, I have to memorize many books. Then I go to the prayer hall with the other monks.' In the afternoon he visits his teacher for lessons with others of his age, and then he has to do chores around the monastery. In the evening he might call on friends in the monastery or cook dinner for his teacher or the older monks.

Dashi did not choose his way of life but he does not find this at all strange. He has simply followed centuries of Tibetan tradition and dedicated his life to other people.

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

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Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Ozone problem

The well-known environmental problem, the holes in the ozone layer, keeps coming up in news stories, and it will only get worse if humankind does not do anything about it. Holes in the ozone layer, the thin layer of gasses which protect the Earth from the sun's radioactive rays, were discovered by scientists in 1985. In the 14 years since then the holes have increased in size so that their combined area is equal to that of China.

Without the protection of the ozone layer there will be an increase in serious life-threatening diseases such as cancer and immune deficiency, and other problems such as food shortages. Until recently people have thought that the problems caused by the holes in the ozone layer were something for future generations to worry about. However, many people have already been affected.

For example, two out of three people in high-risk

areas in Australia already suffer from skin cancer caused by radiation from the sun. This exposure also causes blindness, and a further 1% decrease in the ozone would result in 150,000 people losing their sight. Higher radiation levels also cause problems with the body's natural immune defence system, in a similar way to AIDS. In addition, world food shortages will result from poor crop production as the climate gets hotter.

This problem is being made worse by industry. Common appliances such as air-conditioners and freezers use dangerous chemicals called CFCs which go straight into the air and destroy the ozone. Most countries have so far not accepted that they have a responsibility to stop using such chemicals and develop new methods to keep us cool which will not harm the environment. In fact, the environmental group *Greenpeace* has invented a safe coolant called *GreenFreeze* which does not produce CFCs. Unfortunately it is not yet widely used.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

Greenpeace China has organized a photographic competition on the theme of man-made environmental problems. Participants have been invited to take photographs of the causes and results of environmental problems in the SAR, as well as good practices that help protect the environment.

You and your friends have decided to enter the competition. You will need to decide where you could go in Hong Kong to take photographs which will illustrate environmental problems and/or protective measures. You may also wish to discuss how you could present the photographs to the competition organizers.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Global warming – the Earth gets hotter

In Japan last year there was a United Nations conference on world climate change which aimed, amongst other things, to come up with some ideas on ways of reducing the level of carbon dioxide around the world. The conference speakers were keen to stress the importance of educating young people. Because today's young people will be choosing the governments of the future, and possibly even working in decision-making jobs which may affect the environment, they are the key to finding acceptable solutions.

Most young people know the basic facts. That is, while we breathe in oxygen, we breathe out the gas known as carbon dioxide. More importantly, modern machinery also gives off this gas in bigger quantities. There is now an excess of carbon dioxide which is actually making our world hotter. The connection between the way we live and the changing world

climate is not totally clear, but experts, politicians and educators hope to increase our awareness of this matter.

The effects of the world getting hotter may seem very distant from our daily lives, but one thing which is already happening is that the ice-caps at the North and South Poles are beginning to melt. Also, a gas called methane, which is trapped in the ice, is being released into our atmosphere. This methane gas itself is another factor which contributes to climate change, rather like carbon dioxide. The problem is therefore growing.

So far not many people have been affected by the warming. However, as the world's ice-caps melt, the sea-level will rise. Because of this, many more countries around the world will soon be affected and will need to prepare some sort of protection for their coastlines. Some low-lying islands could easily sink into the sea.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Forest fires

In the last few years there have been a number of worrying forest fires in and around Asia. Last year in particular the fires were extremely dangerous, causing widespread destruction of land and massive air pollution which affected many countries across the region. Ordinary people wore masks in the streets of Singapore because of the smoke, flights were cancelled in Indonesia because visibility was poor, and homes were burnt down in Australia. Other parts of the world have been suffering similar environmental problems.

One of the worst-affected countries is Brazil, the largest country in South America. Brazil has more tropical forest than any other country in the world. In 1997 the number of forest fires there increased by 50%. That means over 5 million hectares of forest were destroyed by fire.

There are several possible causes for these fires

but the most important one is the weather, in particular, the famous weather system known as *El Niño*. This is a very strong, moving weather system which can cause severe droughts (or dry weather), violent storms and extreme heat. The combination of these conditions make fires more likely. *El Niño*, which seems to be getting more powerful every year, affects different countries around the world and this year Brazil suffered more than others.

Experts now suggest that a cycle of events is beginning to emerge. The cycle can be described in this way: *El Niño* causes extreme dry weather, the dry weather leads to forest fires, the resulting smoke from the fires pollutes the atmosphere with gases and these in turn help to create the next *El Niño*. Now that the cycle has been identified, experts hope to be able to predict more accurately when the next *El Niño* will occur and therefore prepare more effectively for its arrival.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Fires – man-made disasters

There are a frightening number of forest fires in Asia every year. Some of these fires are the result of natural causes, but to varying degrees the blame can also be put on people. More could be done to stop the activities which cause these fires.

In Hong Kong there are fires every April when the earth is very dry before the rains come. The fire risk is particularly high around the time of the Ching Ming festival. This is when large numbers of people go to the graves of their ancestors, clear the area and light joss-sticks. All it takes is a careless person to drop a burning cigarette end, or a sudden gust of wind to blow sparks from a burning joss-stick onto the dry grass around the area and then there is a fire. In such conditions a small fire can spread quickly and within minutes it may be necessary to call out the emergency services. Fire engines and helicopters pouring water over the land are a common sight in April.

Dry earth conditions were also responsible for much larger fires which burned in other countries in Asia last year. In Indonesia, for example, extensive forest clearing programmes involving the felling (cutting down) of trees produced conditions which were a fire risk. The resulting fires were so huge that international pressure was put on Indonesia to limit its tree-felling operations.

Of course, it is difficult to ask people not to light joss-sticks for their ancestors, just as it is difficult to ask a country to reduce its trade in wood, in order to save the environment. However, forest fires, big or small, affected so many countries around Asia last year that most of the region's governments realized that they needed to do more to protect the environment.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

Greenpeace China has organized a photographic competition on the theme of man-made environmental problems. Participants have been invited to take photographs of the causes and results of environmental problems in the SAR, as well as good practices that help protect the environment.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Personal digital assistants

The speedy development of the technological world is amazing. Every two years we need to upgrade our computer systems in order to keep pace with the latest hardware. Some shops are trying to sell cheap computers which are only two years old, but people will not buy them because they are outdated. In Hong Kong especially, it is common to see computers thrown away in the rubbish!

Before too long, the idea of working with a desk-top or lap-top computer will be old-fashioned too. The newest computer to be designed in Japan is the 'personal digital assistant' or PDA. It has a five-inch colour screen and is so small that it can be comfortably held in the palm of your hand.

The PDA is really just the next step on from lap-top computers. However, the added advantage is that the

PDA can be plugged into a mobile phone which provides access to the Internet. The PDA therefore enables the user to connect to a regular computer anywhere and anytime. People can access files stored on the hard disk in their main computer at work just by dialing the office. You can use it to check your appointments calendar, answer e-mail, send and receive faxes, and even digital photos. You can also get information from Internet sites all over the world.

All the top computer manufacturers are involved in the race to get the first personal digital assistant into the shops. There are various company names for the PDA, for example, 'Zaurus' and 'Genio', and the advertisements are designed to make us think of the machine as a type of electronic secretary or personal assistant. In fact, at a cost of US\$700, it is cheaper in the end than hiring a 'real' secretary!

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

A local science magazine has organized a competition for young people to produce an article. The article should be about how technology is changing our lives on a personal level both at home and in society. The winning entries will be published in a special edition of the magazine.

You and your friends have decided to enter the competition. You will probably want to discuss the current developments in technology, how they have been adapted for personal use and what their advantages and disadvantages may be. You may also want to talk about how you will make your article interesting to read and attractive to look at.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Personal video system

For many years personal radio sets have been very popular amongst people who wish to keep up to date with the news, horse-racing and football results. In the 1980s, the world of personal entertainment changed forever with the invention of the Sony Walkman. Since then, every electronics company has copied the idea of a personal hi-fi and made its own version. Now there are many varieties of personal entertainment systems like the Walkman.

The next big personal entertainment breakthrough was the personal CD player. It was not so popular at first because CDs couldn't be played whilst in motion, for example, in a car or when walking along. But now, after recent improvements, they can be played anywhere.

Only 20 years after the first portable entertainment system was developed, you can now buy a personal video system. The equipment is comprised of a

video CD player and a special headset. Attached to the headset are earphones and a screen. The screen is about the size of a pair of swimming goggles. People can then watch CD videos while listening to the soundtrack on the earphones. You wear the CD machine on your belt in the same way as the original Walkman. At present the cost is US\$1,000, so most people will probably prefer to wait a few years for the cheaper versions to be developed.

It is difficult to imagine when people would actually have time in their daily lives to use such an invention. This is because watching something requires a great deal more concentration than simply listening to it. However, it will probably be popular on long journeys when people have a couple of hours of free time. International business travellers could well be the first buyers of the personal video system.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

A local science magazine has organized a competition for young people to produce an article. The article should be about how technology is changing our lives on a personal level both at home and in society. The winning entries will be published in a special edition of the magazine.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Interactive TV

Imagine being able to watch your favourite movies or any music video of your choice whenever you like, go shopping in your own living room or even take care of your bank account business without leaving the flat. All this and more will be possible because of Interactive TV (iTV).

In Hong Kong, this amazing new service will be provided by Hongkong Telecom. The various options include Video on Demand, Music on Demand, Home Shopping and Home Banking. The video and music options allow viewers to choose whatever they desire without any time limitations. You don't have to rely on the availability of video cassettes or cinema seats and, of course, there is no queuing for tickets. The shopping and banking services allow viewers to do their daily transactions at home, saving them a journey into town.

The local shops which plan to use the new service

to sell their products include supermarkets like Wellcome, and City Super, and other shops like Rainbow Children's Bookstore. TV viewers simply look at the 'Home Page' of the shop at their leisure and follow the instructions to view the things for sale. They can then make purchases at the touch of a button.

The iTV system is already being piloted in Hong Kong homes and its implementation is set for the near future. The experiment seems to have been successful and is very popular with those families trying it out. Critics of iTV say that it encourages laziness. They claim that in the USA, where such services as Home Shopping are already in use, people are wasting too much time using iTV and are spending their money unwisely. However, Hongkong Telecom argues that the long-term plans for the system will include more educational and other useful services such as government information programmes.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

A local science magazine has organized a competition for young people to produce an article. The article should be about how technology is changing our lives on a personal level both at home and in society. The winning entries will be published in a special edition of the magazine.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Digital TV

Bill Gates, the owner of the Microsoft computer company, is probably the richest man in the world. He is a fan of anything that is new and modern and his home has been built and fitted out with the latest technology in every room. The most impressive equipment he has is a new digital TV system which has been installed all over the house.

The manufacturers claim that digital TV has the world's finest picture quality. Another of its major selling points is the shape. Unlike a regular TV, which has a box-shaped container for the screen, a digital TV is completely flat. In fact, the new system is so flat that the screen can actually be hung on the wall like a picture or mirror.

In his home, Bill Gates has taken this idea to the extreme. In every room there is a flat screen hanging on

the wall and on this screen is a picture of some sort, maybe a Picasso painting or a photo of Mount Fuji. With the use of a remote control, he can change the picture to another of his favourite paintings, switch onto the regular TV programmes showing at the time, or watch a video of his choice.

Perhaps the most amazing feature of the system is that it is possible to programme the digital TV screens. Gates can select a series of his favourite pictures or videos, or plan his TV viewing for the day and the screens will show him these choices as he walks into the room. All he needs is a code number to activate his selection. He simply taps out his code number when he starts the day and the screens detect his presence around the house, displaying the selected pictures as he walks into each room.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

A local science magazine has organized a competition for young people to produce an article. The article should be about how technology is changing our lives on a personal level both at home and in society. The winning entries will be published in a special edition of the magazine.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Making friends at sports centres

A year ago Jenny Cheung, a 17-year-old student, was feeling very lonely after her best friend had left to live in Canada. 'I thought I'd never meet any new friends after she went and so my uncle took me to an indoor games centre one evening and I had a good look around.' Jenny signed up for a beginners' course in table-tennis and then started playing in team competitions. Now she has made a new circle of friends and often arranges to meet other young people from the sports centre.

Jenny's case shows that even if you are not particularly sporty, you could benefit from going to a sports centre or games hall. Obviously, practising a sport every week will benefit your overall fitness and improve your health in general. But, as with Jenny, the attraction of joining a team for many teenagers today is

that you get to know lots of new people without having to sit and talk to them, which many shy people find difficult.

Nearly all sports centres organize matches and competitions between members and you can put your name down to be part of a team. After that, all you have to do is turn up on time and play. You get to know people quite easily while you are playing a sport because the focus is not on you as a person, but as a player in the game.

However, there are plenty of opportunities to get to know your teammates on a more personal level when you feel more confident. If you have time to eat and drink before and after the matches, you can spend more time with your new friends since all sports centres are equipped with cafés, and many have pleasant restaurants and bars too.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

The school counselling service at your school is planning to produce a booklet for new students entitled 'How to make friends'. The counselling service wants sixth-form students to give their suggestions and ideas on what to include in the booklet.

You have been asked to join a discussion group to come up with ideas for the booklet. You may want to talk about what attracts people to each other and the different ways in which people can meet and make friends. You may also want to discuss in what form the information could be presented in order to make the booklet attractive and user-friendly.

You do not need to come to a final decision or to reach a conclusion to your discussion. You should try to discuss both the content and procedures involved in your discussion task. You cannot take notes or write during the discussion.

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NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY

Candidate B

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Who chooses your friends?

Many teenagers feel that the most important people in their lives are their friends. They believe that their family members, and in particular their parents, don't know them as well as their friends do. In large families, it is quite common for brothers and sisters to fight with each other and friends can seem to be the only escape.

Whether you have one special friend or a circle of friends you will understand the importance of having someone who is close to you and yet who is not part of your family. Even when teenagers are not together with their friends, they will most likely spend a lot of their free time talking to them on the telephone. This communication is a very important part of growing up as friends can normally discuss things which are difficult to talk about in the family setting.

Adolescents are changing from children into

adults, so they have a lot of experimenting to do. Amongst their peers, teenagers can try out new things, change their appearance, their opinions and their interests almost every month. Teenagers feel the need to 'play' at being adults and explore adult issues and feelings without actually having the responsibilities of work and family.

However, parents often interfere with these teenage experiments and will try to choose their children's friends for them. The parents may even prevent their children from meeting some of the people they like. The question of 'choice' is an interesting one. Social scientists are examining the ways in which teenage friendship groups evolve and they hope to draw some conclusions about whether you choose your friends or your friends choose you, why certain people feel comfortable together, and why some people stay friends with people their parents don't approve of.

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

The school counselling service at your school is planning to produce a booklet for new students entitled 'How to make friends'. The counselling service wants sixth-form students to give their suggestions and ideas on what to include in the booklet.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Computers don't help with dating

More and more young people these days are using computers to communicate. There is e-mail, a similar service to faxing but faster and more efficient. Then, of course, there are the chatlines on the Internet, where you type in your opinions on any subject you are interested in. Many people use the Internet to chat to old friends as well as make new friends, especially girlfriends or boyfriends. It's easy to 'meet' people with similar interests who live all over the world just by tapping out a few words.

In fact, many people don't actually meet their new friends at all, and this is what is worrying social scientists today. Apparently, the advance of new technology in the field of personal communication has actually limited normal human interaction. Experts claim that young people who grow up with the new communication technology don't speak as much as they should and are not learning the usual social skills and

language associated with making new friends and developing relationships. E-mail and the Internet are being blamed for causing young people to be less sociable in general.

The main problem area seems to be when it comes to meeting a member of the opposite sex. Young people who overuse the Internet and e-mail to talk to new boyfriends and girlfriends, are so shy when they actually meet in person that the relationship never really gets started.

'American Singles' is one organization which is helping today's shy computer addicts to cope with real life. The organization runs classes where young people learn how to talk to the opposite sex face-to-face without feeling embarrassed or shy. Since the classes began last year, many teenagers have enrolled, hoping to make new girlfriends or boyfriends as a result.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

The school counselling service at your school is planning to produce a booklet for new students entitled 'How to make friends'. The counselling service wants sixth-form students to give their suggestions and ideas on what to include in the booklet.

You have been asked to join a discussion group to come up with ideas for the booklet. You may want to talk about what attracts people to each other and the different ways in which people can meet and make friends. You may also want to discuss in what form the information could be presented in order to make the booklet attractive and user-friendly.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

What's your blood type?

People who are looking for boyfriends or girlfriends often turn to superstition for help. In Japan, many people believe that one's personality can be largely determined by one's blood type, and that someone with the same blood type will be a perfect match.

There are several types of blood you could be born with, but the basic categories are blood types 'A', 'B' and 'O'. The blood type you have is determined by your parents' blood types and there is nothing you can do to change it. Medical experts claim there is no scientific evidence to prove that your blood type can determine your character and shape your personality. However, many people in Japan believe otherwise.

In Japan it is said that if you have blood type 'A' you will probably be fussy and very organized. People who have blood type 'B' are noisy and likely to

need a lot of freedom. Blood type 'O' probably means you are ambitious and competitive, and you may try to dominate in group situations too. It is possible to have a mixed blood type, like 'AB' or 'AO', and the theory is that those people will be confused and full of contradictions, but are also likely to produce original ideas.

Some Japanese marriage agencies believe in this theory so strongly that new couples are sent out on dates on the basis of their blood type. If you are looking for a boyfriend and future husband you will be asked to state your blood type, as well as your age and what your hobbies are, as the basic information needed to find a good match. The personal data of new celebrities, such as pop singers, which is often published in teenage magazines, regularly shows the blood type of the new stars.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

The school counselling service at your school is planning to produce a booklet for new students entitled 'How to make friends'. The counselling service wants sixth-form students to give their suggestions and ideas on what to include in the booklet.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Travel tips

Raymond Wan is an office assistant. His company offices are in Queensway near Admiralty station. Raymond lives with his parents in Tsuen Wan, and like millions of people who live in large cities, he travels to work on public transport.

Raymond works fairly normal hours, from 9 am to 6 pm. This means that he needs to get to work and go home at similar times to most other workers. In fact, a huge number of people travel during the morning and evening rush hours. While the transport system in Hong Kong is well designed and can cope at these peak times, it is often very crowded with so many people trying to use buses and trains at once. Because of this, many commuters try to find ways of making their journey more comfortable.

‘I travel on the MTR to work every day,’ explained Raymond. ‘Because the train starts in Tsuen Wan, I always get a place to sit on the way to work. Finding a seat is harder coming home because so many people get on the train at Central Station that there is nowhere left to sit by the time it reaches Admiralty. And it’s a long journey to stand all the way.’ Raymond’s solution is to go the wrong way! At Admiralty, he takes a train to Central and then just sits down and waits on the train until it starts off again for Tsuen Wan. ‘It adds a few minutes to my journey but it’s much more comfortable,’ said Raymond.

Raymond also knows exactly which doors to use to get off the train so that he is near the escalator to the exit. ‘Being a bit ahead of everyone else means I don’t have to queue so much and I can get home more quickly.’

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

The various public transport providers in Hong Kong (such as Citybus, the MTRC etc.) are interested in finding out what young people think about public transport and whether they have any ideas for improving the service. They have invited groups of local teenagers to give their opinions at a consultation meeting.

You have been asked to join one of these groups. You will need to decide with the other members of the group what issues you would like to bring up in the meeting. You may also wish to discuss what problems you think there are with public transport and make suggestions for how to improve the situation.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

No change for travellers

For a visitor to Hong Kong, the different ways of paying on public transport can be confusing. You pay as you get onto a bus but only as you get *off* a tram. You need to buy plastic tickets to operate special gates to get onto the train network. And, although you are given change when you buy a ferry ticket, you have to pay the exact fare on buses and trams.

Having exactly the right money for your bus fare is not just a problem for visitors. Shirley Wong is spokeswoman for the Transport Users' Group, an independent organization representing Hong Kong's passengers. 'Although public transport is generally quite cheap here compared with other cities, people still feel that they are getting an unfair deal,' said Shirley. 'It has always been difficult for passengers to have the right change, particularly with the recent shortage of small coins, like 10 cent and 20 cent pieces. And, of course, you always have to pay more rather than

less.' A recent survey found that one bus company was earning an extra HK\$470,000 daily from passengers who did not have the correct change.

The Users' Group also has a complaint about Octopus cards. These are travel cards which you can store credit on and then use to pay for trains and buses. The cards are actually very efficient and user-friendly but some passengers object to their cost. To get an Octopus card you have to pay a \$50 deposit. As most people in Hong Kong need one of these cards, these deposits create a very large sum of money indeed.

'With the "no change" problem and these deposits, we are giving additional money to our transport providers,' explained Shirley. 'Now passengers are demanding to see this money being used to improve services and facilities.'

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

The various public transport providers in Hong Kong (such as Citybus, the MTRC etc.) are interested in finding out what young people think about public transport and whether they have any ideas for improving the service. They have invited groups of local teenagers to give their opinions at a consultation meeting.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Hold tight!

Most Hong Kong residents rely on public transport to get around. The transport network is well developed and it is surprisingly easy to get from one side of the SAR to the other, although places are often separated by sea or mountains. Millions of people travel by train, ferry, bus and minibus every day. Therefore, passenger safety is vitally important.

Recently, there have been several accidents involving buses and minibuses. People are becoming increasingly worried about their safety as they travel. Kevin Tam takes a long journey by minibus to get to school in the New Territories. 'I'm frightened that one day I'll be injured in an accident,' he said. 'I don't know how to drive yet, but I'm still very aware that sometimes the bus drivers take big risks.' Kevin realizes that great skill and risk-taking are often closely related to each other. However, he feels that drivers aren't doing their job properly if their passengers don't feel safe.

'Although they know the roads well, minibus drivers often go too fast as they rush to pick up the next passengers before their competitors do,' Kevin explained. As a safety precaution, he now tries to sit towards the middle of a minibus. 'As there aren't any seatbelts, in a crash I could easily get thrown through the windscreen if I'm sitting at the front. On the other hand, there is always the danger of another vehicle crashing into the back of the bus too.'

When he takes double-decker buses Kevin sits downstairs because he recently read a newspaper article that said this was safer. In accidents where buses have fallen over, the passengers upstairs generally suffered worse injuries. 'I hope I'll never be involved in an accident,' said Kevin, 'but taking these simple precautions could save my life.'

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

The various public transport providers in Hong Kong (such as Citybus, the MTRC etc.) are interested in finding out what young people think about public transport and whether they have any ideas for improving the service. They have invited groups of local teenagers to give their opinions at a consultation meeting.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Polite behaviour

On trains in Hong Kong you can now be fined HK\$2,000 for sitting on the floor. The Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) has announced that people without seats have to stand during their journey. Passengers who sit on the train floor are a ‘nuisance’ and put other travellers at risk. This is just one example of how transport companies try to regulate their passengers’ behaviour.

By law, smoking is now banned on most public transport in Hong Kong. This ban is generally accepted because cigarette smoke affects all the other passengers in the restricted space of buses or train compartments, as well as the smokers themselves. Eating and drinking are also prohibited and, though this might seem rather unfair, there are good reasons for the ban. ‘Apart from the smell of other people’s food, we have big problems with people dropping food onto seats and the floor,’ explained Serena Yip, Customer Services Manager of the KCRC.

‘Passengers may be unable to sit down because of the mess left by others. It’s very hard to clean up this kind of rubbish quickly so it’s just easier not to allow people to eat or drink while they’re on the move.’

The KCRC is also preparing a new advertising campaign to encourage polite behaviour while getting on and off trains. It emphasizes the benefits of people letting passengers get off the train before trying to get on themselves. ‘As well as being politer, it is also safer,’ said Serena, ‘because people can watch out more easily for the gap between the platform and the train.’

A further stage of this campaign will remind passengers to give up their seats for elderly and disabled people and pregnant women. Serena hopes that this will also be a success, not least because she is expecting a baby herself!

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

The various public transport providers in Hong Kong (such as Citybus, the MTRC etc.) are interested in finding out what young people think about public transport and whether they have any ideas for improving the service. They have invited groups of local teenagers to give their opinions at a consultation meeting.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time*(Total time: 10 minutes)***Part One – Individual Presentations***(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)*

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Street music

A common sight (and sound) in many cities around the world is a person making music at the side of a busy street or in a pedestrian subway. These musicians who sing or play their instruments in public are called buskers. They hope that the people walking past will give them some money – usually a few coins – for their performance.

One of the most important things for a busker is to find a good ‘pitch’, that is, somewhere to play. It needs to be a busy place where there are enough people passing by, but also where the busker doesn’t get in anyone’s way or block their path. If buskers cause a nuisance like this or if their music disturbs people in the neighbourhood, the police usually have the power to move them away, make them pay a fine, or even arrest them.

In Vancouver, Canada, the city council is thinking about introducing new regulations to restrict the number of buskers, particularly if they are bad. ‘Many buskers are talented and their performances add life, colour and vitality to our streets,’ states an official report. ‘However, loud, repetitive and lengthy performances by buskers with little talent can be a source of annoyance and distraction to those who live and work nearby.’

The council is suggesting that buskers should buy a permit to play and then limit each performance to an hour. However, Vancouver’s buskers are not impressed. They think the proposals are intended to keep local shopkeepers happy, because the shopkeepers believe buskers take money which people would otherwise spend in their shops. ‘I’ve been playing on this pitch for thirteen years,’ explained one street singer in the city, ‘and in all that time I’ve only ever had one complaint from a member of the public.’

Part Two – Group Discussion*(Total time: 12 minutes)*

A local radio station is planning a programme called ‘Music in everyday life: nuisance or pleasure?’ The producer of the programme wants young people to discuss the two sides of the issue.

You and your friends have been invited to take part in the programme. You are meeting with them to think of ideas and arguments you could use in the programme. You should remember to think about both the positive and negative effects of the examples you choose. You may also like to talk about how to present your ideas effectively in the programme.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Public music

Even if you chose never to listen to music and you had no radio, television or hi-fi system, you would still hear music every day. Music is an unavoidable part of life because it is frequently played in public areas, for example in shopping malls, in lifts and on public transport. Music is with us all the time.

Stephanie Luk, who works as a building consultant in Hong Kong, has studied how music is used in public spaces. 'We all realize that music affects how we feel, and building designers want to affect our moods as well,' she explained. 'In London's stations, for example, different music is played at different times of day to the thousands of commuters. In the morning, lively music is played to get office staff marching quickly off to work, while in the evening, more relaxing music is played to calm people down after a hard day at the office.'

Music in lifts is meant to prevent us from getting nervous, and the next time you go for a dental check-up, you'll probably notice that your dentist is playing soft music too. In shops and supermarkets music has a different purpose. Fashion boutiques choose the music they play carefully to attract exactly the right type of customers for their products. Research has also shown that playing music in supermarkets encourages shoppers to stay longer and consequently spend more.

However, Stephanie realizes that music can also be annoying for people and may drive them away rather than attract them. 'Some people hate to have this constant distraction,' she said. 'Music used in public areas is often specially written as "easy listening" music, but for some people it is just boring and irritating and they can't wait to get away from it.'

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

A local radio station is planning a programme called 'Music in everyday life: nuisance or pleasure?' The producer of the programme wants young people to discuss the two sides of the issue.

You and your friends have been invited to take part in the programme. You are meeting with them to think of ideas and arguments you could use in the programme. You should remember to think about both the positive and negative effects of the examples you choose. You may also like to talk about how to present your ideas effectively in the programme.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Private music

Travelling on public transport nowadays, you can't fail to notice that many passengers are wearing earphones. They may be listening to music on a CD-player in their bag or perhaps a programme on the radio. While young people probably have the most up-to-date machines, personal stereo equipment is not used only by them – it is normal to see people of all ages with portable players and earphones as well.

Mary So, a typical commuter, travels for about an hour to get to work every morning. She usually listens to pop music on CD while she is on the bus. 'I find music relaxing and, because I have my own player, I can choose what to listen to and not worry about disturbing other people,' she explained. 'I live with my family in a small flat and have to deal with customers all day. My bus journey is almost the only time I can call my own.' Mary uses her music to create a private environment

which she can relax in.

While listening to a personal stereo like this may seem a harmless occupation, there are other occasions when it can be dangerous. If you are driving a vehicle or riding a bicycle, it is essential that you know what is happening around you. For example, you need to be able to hear the siren of an ambulance coming along the road behind you or the engine of a car that is about to overtake you. However, you won't notice these sounds if they are hidden by music from a personal stereo.

Therefore, people need to know when and where it is sensible to use their portable stereos. Listening to music can be a great way to pass time, as Mary demonstrates, but it should never distract the listener from other more important tasks.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

A local radio station is planning a programme called 'Music in everyday life: nuisance or pleasure?' The producer of the programme wants young people to discuss the two sides of the issue.

You and your friends have been invited to take part in the programme. You are meeting with them to think of ideas and arguments you could use in the programme. You should remember to think about both the positive and negative effects of the examples you choose. You may also like to talk about how to present your ideas effectively in the programme.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Background music

Different people work in different ways. Some like to be surrounded by ‘creative mess’ – piles of papers and books which may help them think in an original way. Others can only work well if everything is organized and tidy. These different approaches are also reflected by the aural environment people choose for themselves to work in; that is, the sounds and background noise that people feel most comfortable with.

Many people need silence in order to concentrate properly and so they find sharing offices with other people difficult. For others, a little background noise is useful as it forces them to concentrate more on what they are doing and so prevents them from daydreaming. Some people prefer to work to music, either having the radio on as they read or listening to music through headphones while they use a computer.

Chris Wu is a student who is convinced that

having music playing helps him concentrate on his studies. ‘I was introduced to the idea by a teacher at school,’ he explained. ‘My science teacher was very interested in classical music and believed it created a good atmosphere for studying. So he always played music during lessons if we were writing or working quietly.’ Although this may seem a strange idea, research shows that students who listen to music like this tend to perform better in tests than others who have no music.

Now, Chris often listens to music as he studies. ‘But I don’t have the same taste in music as my teacher,’ he added. ‘I prefer slow romantic songs as I work.’ Meanwhile, Chris has also discovered that a musical background doesn’t suit everyone. Some of his friends complain when they study with Chris because they feel they can concentrate better without music playing. Chris respects their feelings and uses his headphones.

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

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You and your friends have been invited to take part in the programme. You are meeting with them to think of ideas and arguments you could use in the programme. You should remember to think about both the positive and negative effects of the examples you choose. You may also like to talk about how to present your ideas effectively in the programme.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time*(Total time: 10 minutes)***Part One – Individual Presentations***(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)*

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Parents can help stop overeating

Last year a Californian mother was charged with child abuse when her daughter died in the family home. Although she was only 13 years old, the daughter, whose name was Jodie, died of heart failure because she was extremely overweight, and her body could no longer function carrying so much fat. Her mother had allowed her to grow so big that she could not leave the house. Jodie spent most of her days lying on a mattress on the living room floor.

Jodie's mother claimed she had tried to give her daughter healthy food every mealtime, but that she didn't seem to be interested in eating much of this. Instead, Jodie stole and ate snacks and sweet things which her mother, who was also extremely overweight, had stored secretly around the house.

This news story is shocking because it is rare for young people to die from overeating. However, the

tragic tale has raised new questions on the subject of parental responsibility and the influence that parents have over their children. In the case of diets, several recent studies published in British medical journals provide evidence to support the theory that children of overweight parents are likely to eat too much themselves.

Results of recent research also seem to suggest that verbal advice given by parents doesn't have much effect unless it is reinforced by example. Parents may avoid serving fatty foods and sweets and serve only healthy meals to their children, but if these parents eat badly themselves, their children won't take any notice of what they say. The youngsters will still eat what they see their parents eating. Equally, if the children *don't see* their parents eating certain foods, such as green vegetables, for example, then they will not eat them either.

Part Two – Group Discussion*(Total time: 12 minutes)*

As part of a sixth-form social development course, your teacher has asked your class to discuss how parents affect their children's personalities. She wants you to think about both positive and negative effects.

You and your classmates have decided to draw up a list of points that you would like to make in the discussion. You may wish to use your own observations as well as what you have read about the issue when drawing up the points you think are important.

You do not need to come to a final decision or to reach a conclusion to your discussion. You should try to discuss both the content and procedures involved in your discussion task. You cannot take notes or write during the discussion.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Health worries passed on by parents

Mother of two, Carla Wong, is a self-confessed hypochondriac – someone who worries about her health and fears that every slight cold or fever is the beginning of a life-threatening disease. Carla has always worried about her health, but her condition became worse when she had children.

Carla has two young children. When they were babies she constantly worried that they were sick. Every time they cried for too long she was afraid that there was something seriously wrong. She was continually checking their temperature and their breathing, watched over them while they slept and was alarmed by every cough or sneeze. Of course, as the babies grew and started to move and walk, Carla worried about them falling over and hurting themselves.

Carla has taken both her children to the emergency services in the local hospital several times in

the past few months for various reasons. Once she took her son to hospital because she thought he had stopped breathing and another time she took her baby daughter to the emergency ward because she thought her fever was very high. Neither case proved to be an emergency. In fact, they were simple childhood illnesses which could have been easily treated at home without a doctor's assistance. After several more unnecessary midnight visits to the hospital, Carla was instructed to call her local doctor before rushing to the hospital at the first sign of illness.

Now Carla is concerned that her son, Tom, is showing signs of worrying about his health too. He has started to develop a fear of doctors and often complains of feeling unwell. Carla is making an effort to help Tom before he develops similar problems to her own. She is now taking advice from a psychologist about learning how to worry less.

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

As part of a sixth-form social development course, your teacher has asked your class to discuss how parents affect their children's personalities. She wants you to think about both positive and negative effects.

You and your classmates have decided to draw up a list of points that you would like to make in the discussion. You may wish to use your own observations as well as what you have read about the issue when drawing up the points you think are important.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Worrying affects children

All parents worry about their children. Perhaps the fact that parents worry is actually nature's way of making sure that we care for our children. 'It's natural to worry,' parents tell their children, 'our concern just shows that we love you!' However, now psychologists believe that it is possible that parents' worries actually harm the child in some indirect way and may even cause illness.

Many psychologists claim that parents who show too much concern actually pass on their worries to the child. The child, in turn, shows the stress in the form of an illness. So, although the child may not actually appear to worry about any particular problem, he or she may start to develop an illness which is, in fact, a symptom of worrying too much. The worries which many parents have can be very different. For instance, many parents worry about their children's health, their academic results, or how well they get along with their friends. Also, it seems that parents may even

pass on their concerns about other things such as money or work-related problems, despite trying not to mention these things to the children.

However, no matter what the reason for the parental concern, the health problems that children show seem to be quite similar. Typical problems that may develop in children in this situation are allergies, headaches and asthma. They may also become overactive. These illnesses are real, but they are the result of a mental state rather than a physical cause.

Of course, once a child develops a problem such as asthma, the parents' worries will increase. This means that they will fuss over the child more and thus the child will continue to express the worry through the illness. It then becomes a cycle of events which repeats itself.

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

As part of a sixth-form social development course, your teacher has asked your class to discuss how parents affect their children's personalities. She wants you to think about both positive and negative effects.

You and your classmates have decided to draw up a list of points that you would like to make in the discussion. You may wish to use your own observations as well as what you have read about the issue when drawing up the points you think are important.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Physical punishment teaches the wrong things

Until quite recently it was legal for teachers to beat their naughty students in class. Now it is against the law to hit children at school, although some teachers disagree with the new regulations. There is no law that bans such physical punishment at home, however, and many parents regularly hit their children in order to teach them how to behave properly. Child psychologists claim that these ‘well-meaning’ actions of parents could be giving violent messages to their children.

From the way they behave, pre-school children may seem to be aggressive. As a three-year-old doesn't have the language or the mental abilities to communicate in other more advanced ways, the child will often respond to situations in a physical rather than a verbal way. The result is a lot of pushing and hitting and tears.

Some parents will punish their children with a quick slap across the legs when they see them behaving

in what they consider to be an aggressive way. This type of physical punishment is widely seen as the best method of teaching that child about the right and wrong way to behave. All over the world and throughout history parents have hit children when they have done something wrong.

Child psychologists now claim that worries about aggressive behaviour and bullying are usually unfounded at this young age. They have also suggested that physical punishments do not teach children the correct way to behave. Parents who regularly hit their naughty children are actually teaching them that hitting solves problems and that physical aggression is an acceptable response. Parents need to think carefully about the messages they are giving to their children if they punish them by slapping or hitting them, at the same time as telling them that physical violence is wrong.

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

As part of a sixth-form social development course, your teacher has asked your class to discuss how parents affect their children's personalities. She wants you to think about both positive and negative effects.

You and your classmates have decided to draw up a list of points that you would like to make in the discussion. You may wish to use your own observations as well as what you have read about the issue when drawing up the points you think are important.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time*(Total time: 10 minutes)***Part One – Individual Presentations***(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)*

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

The attraction of guns

Last year tourists, schools and businesses in Hong Kong cancelled trips to Macau because frightening gun-fights in public places were reported in the news. Gangs of triads and other people involved in the casino business in Macau were shooting at each other in hotels, restaurants and bars because of arguments over money. Several innocent people have been killed during these gun-fights, raising public concern about the increase in the use of guns in the region.

In America too, in recent years, there have been many stories of fatal shootings. In some of these cases the killers have been very young people indeed. Several shocking news stories involved teenagers killing schoolmates, teachers and even parents because of small disagreements. One of the most recent cases involved a five-year-old who killed his primary school teacher because she sent him out of the room for being naughty in class.

Whether the killers have been adults or children, the reasons for the increase in the use of guns have to be examined. Many people blame TV programmes for making guns look glamorous and exciting. Others criticize both the way in which guns are marketed as attractive toys and how they play a part in most video games and computer games in the USA. Another reason could be that guns are easily available nowadays.

Social scientists argue that today's social problems, such as poverty in cities and unemployment, can make people very depressed and mentally unstable. When young people are brought up in a world with little opportunity for success in school or work, their self-esteem may be low. Their family life may be stressful, and they may release their emotions through violence. If guns are easily available for these young people, the next step of using one in a fight may not be far away.

Part Two – Group Discussion*(Total time: 12 minutes)*

Your school has entered an inter-school debating contest on the motion that, *'All guns should be banned'*.

You are a member of a team that has been chosen to enter the debating contest, but at this moment you do not know whether you will be asked to argue *for* or *against* the motion. You and your team will therefore need to prepare arguments for both sides. You will probably want to decide how to organize and present your arguments.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Gun fever in the Philippines

It is not unusual to see security guards armed with guns around Hong Kong. These uniformed men move cases of money between banks and security vehicles. In addition, jewellery shops often have guards with shotguns at the door, hoping to prevent armed robbery.

In Manila, the capital of the Philippines, armed guards are also a common sight. Every hotel, office block, bar and casino has a security team outside. These teams don't just carry ordinary handguns, some have rifles and semi-automatic weapons which can fire many rounds of bullets per minute. Perhaps more surprising is that even places like McDonald's have uniformed guards armed with pistols. This kind of security is necessary in Manila because of the shockingly high crime rate in the country. Armed robbery is one of the most common crimes in the Philippines and violent gun-fights are reported in the newspapers every day.

Unfortunately, it is not only the criminals and security guards who feel the need to have weapons. According to government statistics, over 40,000 ordinary people are licensed to carry guns in the Philippines. If you count the number of illegal guns, the figure would probably be at least double that amount.

Guns are so much a part of everyday life now that some sections of society don't feel comfortable without them. There are advertisements in daily newspapers selling 'Toys for the boys', and 'Guns for the good guys', and guns are sold at special reduced prices for Christmas. The love of guns is growing, and so too is the number of accidental shootings and killings. To avoid having any more victims who just happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, like one Chinese tourist and a baby girl shot last year, perhaps it is time to bring in restrictions.

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

Your school has entered an inter-school debating contest on the motion that, '*All guns should be banned*'.

You are a member of a team that has been chosen to enter the debating contest, but at this moment you do not know whether you will be asked to argue *for* or *against* the motion. You and your team will therefore need to prepare arguments for both sides. You will probably want to decide how to organize and present your arguments.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Gun culture in the USA

There have been many news stories recently on the subject of American gun-owners. Because of an increase in the number of deliberate and accidental killings, the issue of whether ordinary people should be allowed to own guns is an ongoing debate. Recently, the British government passed a law effectively banning the use of guns in the United Kingdom. Now, many Americans, as well as people from other countries all over the world, are calling for new legislation that will follow the British example.

However, a large group of people in the USA continue to protest against a ban on guns because they believe that most owners use their guns sensibly. They argue that people living in American states where there are isolated rural areas have always used guns for hunting. Such people cannot imagine life without guns, and they also feel that incidents where hunting weapons are used to kill people are not very common.

Thus, they argue, the misuse of guns is not a good reason to ban them.

Gun-owners also claim that guns played an important part in history when modern America was founded 200 years ago. The first European settlers were explorers and travellers in an unknown, dangerous environment, fighting for survival against nature and the native Indian tribes. The law was often enforced at gun-point at that time, and a gun was an essential tool in everyday life.

Today, many Americans still believe that it is a basic human right to own and use a gun in self-defence. They point out that this right was written into the US constitution 200 years ago. The actual document states that people have '*the right ... to keep and bear arms (guns)*'. Therefore, in order to ban all guns the constitution would have to be changed.

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

Your school has entered an inter-school debating contest on the motion that, '*All guns should be banned*'.

You are a member of a team that has been chosen to enter the debating contest, but at this moment you do not know whether you will be asked to argue *for* or *against* the motion. You and your team will therefore need to prepare arguments for both sides. You will probably want to decide how to organize and present your arguments.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

‘War Park’

If you are bored of places like Ocean Park and feel that Disneyland is too childish, you may like to try a new type of ‘entertainment’ venue in Asia. A businessman has recently opened a new ‘War Park’ in Cambodia. It’s a museum for tourists who want to look at real tanks and weapons, plus pictures from books, CD-ROMs, videos and books all about guns and war. But the most amazing feature of this new place is that tourists can actually test out real weapons.

For around HK\$60 a day people can try out all kinds of guns, grenades and rocket launchers in the new park. The owner, Mr Kamh, claims it will appeal to people who are new to weapons as well as the professionals who want to practise their skills. ‘We want to create something a little bit more exciting. Normally tourists go to see boring war memorials and empty battlefields where nothing happens, but the ‘War Park’ brings war right into the tourists’ lives.’

Mr Kamh spent US\$800,000 creating this unusual form of entertainment, in spite of protests from local officials, who feel that war is not a suitable subject for a theme park. Mr Kamh does not seem to mind that Cambodia has suffered from many years of armed conflict. He claims that people have a good time using any of the 30 types of weapons available and says that the activities are very safe.

Mr Kamh first became interested in guns when he opened a nightclub in Cambodia several years ago. He found that he had to employ security staff to collect the guests’ guns and explosives at the door. ‘The guests always arrived with weapons in case of trouble,’ Mr Kamh explains. ‘For Cambodians, machine guns are part of their lives and they sleep with one nearby every night.’

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

Your school has entered an inter-school debating contest on the motion that, ‘All guns should be banned’.

You are a member of a team that has been chosen to enter the debating contest, but at this moment you do not know whether you will be asked to argue *for* or *against* the motion. You and your team will therefore need to prepare arguments for both sides. You will probably want to decide how to organize and present your arguments.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time*(Total time: 10 minutes)***Part One – Individual Presentations***(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)*

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

‘Successful intelligence’

Most people do not realize that there are many different types of intelligence. Experts from the fields of science and education say that traditional examinations only test about 10% of these. The experts point out that in order to do well in most school exams, the most important thing a student must have is a good memory. Therefore, students who have good memories, but who may not necessarily be intelligent in other ways, are at an advantage.

The other important forms of intelligence which have been identified are the ability to analyze, be creative, and be practical. Students are analyzing when they compare two pieces of art, evaluate a book or contrast two ideas. When students discover facts and use their imagination to go beyond the information given, they are showing their creative abilities. When they do things like organizing extra-curricular activities, they are demonstrating their practical skills. Many students who

appear to be ‘stupid’ in traditional tests may possess one of these forms of intelligence.

The experts have invented the term ‘successful intelligence’ to describe the abilities mentioned above when they are applied in the world outside school. ‘In order to develop successful intelligence,’ says Dr Frank Barnes of the University of California, ‘firstly you need to decide what your own personal strengths and weaknesses are. You should then build on your strengths and try to overcome your weaknesses.’

Dr Barnes believes that too much emphasis is placed on memorization in schools. He is convinced that when students leave school the information they memorized in order to pass their exams is quickly forgotten. He would like tests to be designed so that they focus on all the abilities that make up successful intelligence. These abilities are much more long-lasting and useful in the world outside the classroom.

Part Two – Group Discussion*(Total time: 12 minutes)*

You and your friends have recently read a number of articles about different methods of testing a person’s intelligence. You have decided to make some suggestions to your principal about the possibility of using some of these methods in your school.

You will need to talk about what methods you think will be useful and how they could be implemented. You may also wish to discuss why you think these methods may be better than the ones which are already used in your school.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

IQ tests

The first formal test of a person's intelligence was invented by a Frenchman in 1905. Intelligence Quotient, or IQ, tests have been updated from time to time, and the most recent occasion was in 1960. Nevertheless, many people question the reliability of traditional IQ tests. The tests mainly concentrate on a person's knowledge of language, but, nowadays, this knowledge is not seen as the only indicator of a person's intelligence.

Generally, 50% of a country's population will get between 90 and 110 on traditional IQ tests and an 'average' person will score 100. But what exactly does 'average' mean? The people who are tested come from many different backgrounds. They may be intelligent in some areas of knowledge, but not in others. It would therefore seem impossible to establish a worldwide standard for such tests.

In addition, the testing conditions can affect the mood of the person taking the test. The time of day, the environment, the health of the person taking the test, and any recent emotional experiences in the person's life can all make a difference to the results.

We should therefore take care not to place too much value on IQ tests. In fact, some states in America have passed laws regarding the use of IQ tests in schools. One of these is that the results of IQ tests must only be used to define one part of a person's ability. Such tests are not allowed to determine whether a person should or should not be able to go to college or get a particular job. Also, what makes an 'average' person must now be clearly outlined so that test results can be properly representative. Differences such as place of birth, social class, nationality, educational background and living environment should also be taken into account when using IQ test results.

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

You and your friends have recently read a number of articles about different methods of testing a person's intelligence. You have decided to make some suggestions to your principal about the possibility of using some of these methods in your school.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Artificial Intelligence

There are many books and movies about computers taking over the world and controlling the lives of human beings. But are these ideas pure science fiction, or could computers one day be ‘smarter’ than the people who use them?

Everyone knows that computers can store huge amounts of information, but whether computers can actually think for themselves is still a matter for debate. ‘Artificial Intelligence’ is the scientific term used to describe the idea of giving computers the power to ‘think’. It means that a computer is programmed to respond to the person who uses it in the same way as another human being would. Many scientists believe it is possible to reproduce the functions of the human brain in a machine. To some extent, some computer programs already do it. For example, computers can play card games, teach users how to do such things as type, and interact with the user in other ways. More advanced programs can give advice about health and other issues.

In the field of education, another step towards artificial intelligence is a program which allows a computer to test its user. During the test the computer gives feedback on individual points and, at the end, gives an assessment report with advice about how the user can improve on his or her performance. The test can be adapted to suit the abilities of the user while the user is actually doing it. Information processing is another development of artificial intelligence. For example, computers can now understand written or spoken instructions, and ask for further information before making suggestions.

Nevertheless, some scientists argue that programs like this do not represent true ‘intelligence’. They say this is because it is actually the person who programmed the computer who is providing the responses, not the computer itself.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

You and your friends have recently read a number of articles about different methods of testing a person’s intelligence. You have decided to make some suggestions to your principal about the possibility of using some of these methods in your school.

You will need to talk about what methods you think will be useful and how they could be implemented. You may also wish to discuss why you think these methods may be better than the ones which are already used in your school.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

IQ or EQ?

If you know anything about intelligence tests, you will probably know that the traditional way of evaluating intelligence is by using an IQ test, which stands for ‘intelligence quotient’. If you don’t do very well in this test, don’t be surprised or upset because the idea is nearly a hundred years out of date. Modern educators prefer not to use such an outdated test and there are many new tests emerging.

Recently, a book was published in America by a man called Doctor Goleman. He claims we should not think about how clever a person is academically, but how able they are emotionally. Doctor Goleman has invented the term ‘emotional quotient’ or EQ. He believes that people can be successful in the modern world without having what experts call ‘intelligence’ in the traditional sense of the word. Old-fashioned intelligence was based on the written word and the ability to understand and express yourself through language. Modern life involves much more than books, he claims.

If you have emotional intelligence, you are able to make decisions based on many more things than academic information. Doctor Goleman values emotions such as fear, anger, sadness and nervousness. He says that a person who is in touch with their emotions and who has some understanding of other people’s emotional behaviour will be successful in life. EQ helps you assess a situation and react to it.

Doctor Goleman believes that people can be good managers, successful students, happy children and satisfied family members if they are able to understand the complex workings of human emotions. He suggests that such things as common sense and feelings should be valued more than academic ability. He says that academic people are often unsuccessful in their private lives purely because they lack the emotional intelligence he describes.

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

You and your friends have recently read a number of articles about different methods of testing a person’s intelligence. You have decided to make some suggestions to your principal about the possibility of using some of these methods in your school.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time*(Total time: 10 minutes)***Part One – Individual Presentations***(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)*

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Encouraging family sport

‘Families who play together stay together.’ This saying tells us that a family becomes stronger and closer if its members have the same hobbies and interests. But if this is true, it seems that Hong Kong is in trouble. A survey recently carried out by a research team from the University of Hong Kong found that, at least with regard to sports, only a minority of people take part in activities with their close relatives.

The study shows that only about one person in six takes part in any kind of sporting activity with another member of their family. About a quarter of the one thousand people questioned said they chose sporting activities which they could do alone, like running or going to the gym. But more than half of the people said they did not take part in sport at all – many said they simply had no time for it.

Rebecca Tong, development manager for the Sports Awareness Council, wants to encourage families to play sports together. ‘We want more people to take part in sport on a regular basis. We believe that if a person can join others in their family to play, they are more likely to enjoy the activity and to keep it up.’ Parents can introduce their children to a sport and then they can play together. The older generation can also join in, as coaches or referees, making sure that nobody breaks the rules. In this way, age difference is no longer a problem.

Rebecca suggests badminton and swimming as the most suitable sports for all members of the family, with tennis and hiking also being popular. ‘Sport has several roles today,’ she explained. ‘It keeps people healthy, it improves relationships between the participants, and it gives everyone a feeling of achievement.’

Part Two – Group Discussion*(Total time: 12 minutes)*

Your school principal would like to organize a sports and fitness day. She would like to include activities which are different from the sort of running races and swimming competitions that usually make up a school sports day, perhaps also involving students’ families and friends.

You are a member of the students’ sports committee which has been asked to think of some ideas for this alternative event. You might like to discuss some unusual competitions you have heard about, or plan a totally different kind of sports day. You may also want to discuss who should participate, how to avoid injuries and what facilities you will require.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Preventing injury

One reason why people take exercise is to keep fit. However, a significant number of people are injured each year while taking part in various sporting activities. The gym and the games field can be dangerous places for people who do not exercise regularly or know how to use sports equipment properly. If you push yourself too hard to improve your physical performance, it is easy to put a lot of strain on your body.

Dr John Lau is a specialist in sports injuries who spends time each week treating and advising the athletes at the Hong Kong Institute of Sport in Shatin. He believes that, for sports injuries, prevention is far better than cure. 'Once you have damaged your knee, for example, it will never recover the strength it had originally,' he explained. 'It will always be a weak spot. Knowing that it's time to stop *before* any damage is done is the best solution.'

People who do sports for fun need to be aware of their limits. They should not push themselves further than their level of fitness or muscle strength can tolerate. 'Even relatively minor injuries can mean that you are unable to play your favourite game for several weeks, and injury obviously has an effect on your everyday life as well,' Dr Lau said. Back injuries are among the worst because they can severely restrict people's ability to do even basic things, like getting into and out of bed, or just sitting for long periods.

The doctor's advice for the amateur sportsperson is to stop if you think you are straining your body. Continuing to play even when you are in pain is the worst thing you can do – damage caused in five minutes may take months to repair.

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

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Candidate C

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Dancing to health

Tommy Leung, a 17-year-old student, has been in the news recently. He is the youngest member of the team which will represent Hong Kong this year at the 'World of Dance' Competition in Singapore. Most of his team-mates are experienced dancers who are famous locally and who have already won prizes overseas. Tommy is a newcomer but, according to the team's coach, he shows great potential for the future.

Tommy's parents were well-known dancers when they were younger. It was natural for them to encourage him to learn to dance and Tommy soon showed he had a natural talent for it. Although his school friends used to make fun of him because of his unusual hobby, Tommy knows that many of them are now envious of his skills. 'We had a disco at school recently and I wasn't short of dancing partners all evening,' he laughed.

As well as knowing the steps for different dances, a serious dancer has to be very fit. Everyone knows how much energy people use up while dancing for fun at the disco. But for competitive dancing, a high level of control over your movements is also necessary, and this requires strong muscles, especially in your stomach, legs and arms. 'I used to do a lot of gymnastics,' explained Tommy, 'and now I've started using the exercise equipment at my dance studio.'

Tommy is delighted with the opportunities his dancing has given him. However, he doesn't want to become a professional – a career in dancing is too insecure. 'I just hope to keep dancing as my hobby,' he said. 'As well as being great fun, it is also very good for me – my parents are fit and healthy because they still dance regularly, and I'd like to feel the same when I'm their age.'

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

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You are a member of the students' sports committee which has been asked to think of some ideas for this alternative event. You might like to discuss some unusual competitions you have heard about, or plan a totally different kind of sports day. You may also want to discuss who should participate, how to avoid injuries and what facilities you will require.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Catching them young

Two-year-old Aaron Poon may not yet be able to walk confidently, but he already knows how to swim. Every week his mother, Vickie, takes him to their local pool, where they swim together for about half an hour. Aaron loves being in the water and has never been afraid. He happily swims underwater, with his eyes open so he can see his mother and with a big smile on his face. Although he may not grow up to be a champion, he will definitely become a capable swimmer.

Vickie is fascinated by the amount of pleasure her son gets from swimming. She first heard about the babies swimming club when Aaron was about nine months old. 'I was a bit doubtful about the whole idea at the beginning because I thought Aaron wouldn't like it,' she explained. 'But now I think all parents should be encouraged to go swimming with their babies – it's a lovely experience for the family.'

Vickie has heard about several other schemes to introduce various sports to the very young. These schemes often involve special equipment which is designed to be more easily held and controlled by children. For example, for tennis there are smaller, lighter rackets for young children to use and a bigger, softer ball. That means that children as young as four or five can start developing the skills that are so important in this game. Several of today's tennis champions started their training in this way.

Some parents involved in these schemes dream that their children might be sports stars in the future. However, most parents simply want their children to develop an interest in sport. 'I'd like Aaron to spend his time doing something active when he's older, and not just sit in front of the television,' said Vickie.

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

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You are a member of the students' sports committee which has been asked to think of some ideas for this alternative event. You might like to discuss some unusual competitions you have heard about, or plan a totally different kind of sports day. You may also want to discuss who should participate, how to avoid injuries and what facilities you will require.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time*(Total time: 10 minutes)***Part One – Individual Presentations***(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)*

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Cargo ship cruises

Many people's idea of a dream holiday is to travel round the world on a ship. Glamorous ocean liners can be seen in Hong Kong harbour all the time. These ships have restaurants, casinos, swimming pools and luxury rooms. Passengers can enjoy the comfort of a five-star hotel as they sail from country to country, calling in at exotic ports.

People who want the same sort of holiday-on-the-move for a budget price can now travel on cargo ships. The huge container ships that carry products all over the world are now allowing a few passengers on board too. Most ships will take between two and twelve paying passengers, although ships have been known to take up to 60. There are single or double cabins, some with private bathrooms and even kitchens.

Apart from being much cheaper, the advantages

are that you can travel to destinations off the tourist route, stopping at unusual ports you may never have heard of. Voyages can take anything from a few days to a few months and may go back and forth across the oceans. A 60-day voyage starting in Hong Kong and ending in New Zealand will cost about HK\$30,000 for a basic cabin with meals, and may stop in places as far away as Sri Lanka and Saudi Arabia.

The disadvantages are that these ships usually don't have such things as swimming pools or fitness centres, nor is there any organized entertainment. And of course, the cargo will always be the first priority, so if bad weather causes a delay while unloading, then you will have to wait until the job is done before you move on. There is often no doctor on board either, so this type of holiday is only advisable for the experienced and physically fit traveller.

Part Two – Group Discussion*(Total time: 12 minutes)*

You and your friends have recently won a prize in a competition held by a local newspaper. The prize is a two-month trip to a number of countries of your choice, using one or more forms of transport. Your task is to write an article about your journey for the newspaper.

You will need to decide which countries you would like to visit, which methods of transport would best put you in contact with the local communities, and whether your article should have a special focus.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

‘The Climate Train’

In 1998 a very unusual train left Britain for Japan. Its journey took it through many countries in Europe, including Germany, Poland and Russia. Later it travelled along the famous Trans-Siberian railway taking its passengers to Beijing, before heading on to a boat connecting it to Japan. The destination was the city of Kyoto, where a special United Nations conference on the problem of global warming was being held. The purpose of taking the train there was to publicize the conference on the way, as well as to educate young people about the serious implications of the world’s changing climate.

On its journey towards Asia, ‘The Climate Train’, as it was called, stopped to pick up scientists and environmental experts who were going to the conference. The people on board the train then had the opportunity to meet others from different countries and discuss their concerns before the conference began.

The travellers also found time to prepare special lectures and educational talks. When the train stopped in various cities, they took the chance to speak to young people on the subject of climate change. The aim of these talks was to give advice, as well as to give practical explanations as to how ordinary people can make a positive contribution towards protecting the planet. ‘We need to explain how it is possible to buy, consume and invest in ways that do not damage the planet,’ said Doctor Mary Connors, one of the experts on ‘The Climate Train’.

Reports indicated that the audiences across Europe and Asia responded positively. They felt more informed on the subject and motivated to learn about what contributions they could make. People on the train and those who attended the lectures and talks agreed that the idea of a ‘moving’ conference was very successful.

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

You and your friends have recently won a prize in a competition held by a local newspaper. The prize is a two-month trip to a number of countries of your choice, using one or more forms of transport. Your task is to write an article about your journey for the newspaper.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Holidays by canoe – now in Hong Kong too!

In Hong Kong harbour there are many different types of boats and ships, but you seldom see a canoe being paddled across its waters.

A canoe is a small, narrow boat, weighing about 30 kilograms. It can carry up to four people. There is a small hole for you to get in and sit down and your legs are covered. You need a paddle or an oar to push it along because there is no engine. Another similar style of boat is called a kayak. This is smaller and lighter and can be folded and packed so it's easy to carry. Canoes and kayaks are very stable, so even in rough weather they are unlikely to tip over. That's why they are often used for travelling down difficult stretches of water like rivers with rocky sections.

Holiday companies around the world have been

offering canoeing and kayaking holidays for many years and now a local company is offering similar adventure trips around the islands and shores of Hong Kong and the New Territories. The trips begin with a lesson on how to handle the boat and the safety equipment which is provided. The company also insists that anyone joining the trips should be able to swim 50 metres fully dressed to ensure they will be able to get to the shore in case the boat happens to overturn. Waterproof containers are provided to protect food, clothes and cameras from the splashing water. The canoes may be safe but there is no way you can prevent yourself from getting wet!

As a spokesman for the company explained, 'The advantage of canoeing and kayaking is that it allows you to see parts of the coast that are impossible to get to by other means.'

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

You and your friends have recently won a prize in a competition held by a local newspaper. The prize is a two-month trip to a number of countries of your choice, using one or more forms of transport. Your task is to write an article about your journey for the newspaper.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Bike tours – a way to see the world

It has taken cyclists Mike Rooky and Carol Fenton five years to travel over land and sea from Alaska, into Eastern Russia and down through Japan and the Philippines until they reached Indonesia. They planned to cycle along what is known as the 'Rim of Fire', a route which follows a line of active and extinct volcanoes from North America into Asia.

In fact, Mike and Carol have had so many amazing experiences doing this trip that they plan to write a book and sell photographs of their journey. They met the local people of each country as they slowly made their way through busy cities, across mountains and into remote villages. Of course, this sort of bicycle tour is not suitable for everyone. Mike and Carol are very fit, experienced sportspeople who trained in all kinds of weather conditions and different environments to prepare themselves for the expedition.

Yet there is a way for ordinary people to enjoy a taste of such a holiday. Many tour companies have begun to offer bicycle tours. The tours are becoming more popular now since modern design technology has made bicycles more comfortable and easier to ride. In fact, now there are even tours that enable beginners and families with small children to experience the outdoor thrills of holidays-on-the-move.

One company in Singapore offers tours in the hills of Indonesia, across tropical beaches in Malaysia, in African wild-life parks and through Europe moving from country to country over a period of a few weeks. The tours have professional bike mechanics who deal with any breakdowns and problems. There is even a nurse available on large tours for any medical emergencies. Other attractions include a variety of accommodation, from camping in tents to staying in five-star hotels.

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

You and your friends have recently won a prize in a competition held by a local newspaper. The prize is a two-month trip to a number of countries of your choice, using one or more forms of transport. Your task is to write an article about your journey for the newspaper.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time*(Total time: 10 minutes)***Part One – Individual Presentations***(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)*

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Out of focus

Helen Chow, a 17-year-old student, became concerned when she realized that she was getting headaches most days. Her school exams were approaching but she found that she couldn't study for as long as she wanted to. Although medicine helped make the headaches go away, Helen felt that she had to find out what was causing them. Her father suggested she went to the optician's to have her eyes tested.

'The optician was very thorough,' said Helen, 'and she explained what she was looking for with each of the tests. She was soon able to tell me that I was short-sighted – that means I can only see things properly when they are close up.' The optician decided that Helen had been straining her eyes at school trying to read the blackboard from her seat at the back of the class. 'I also read a lot at home and I now realize that I don't have a bright enough lamp in my bedroom,' added Helen.

Studying like this without appropriate lighting is one of the principal causes of eye-strain. Also, many people use computers these days and eyesight can be seriously affected by spending long, uninterrupted periods concentrating on a screen. In Hong Kong, school textbooks have also been blamed for damaging students' eyes because the Chinese characters used are too small. This means students have to work particularly hard to distinguish between complicated characters.

Although Helen was glad to find the reason for her headaches, at first she wasn't very enthusiastic about having to wear glasses. 'I was sure people at school would laugh at me – you know, the old jokes about "four eyes" and so on. But then, when I thought about it, I realized that half of my classmates wear glasses already, so in fact I didn't stand out at all.'

Part Two – Group Discussion*(Total time: 12 minutes)*

A popular newspaper in Hong Kong is planning to add a new column called 'Teen Health' to its daily supplement for young people. The journalists who will be involved are interested in finding out what health issues are currently on teenagers' minds so they have invited groups of students to take part in an open discussion.

You are a member of one of the groups that has been invited. You are meeting for the first time with the rest of your group to discuss what suggestions you would like to make to the journalists. You may also want to talk about how to present your suggestions as well as what you want the newspaper column to look like.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Trouble spots

Spots are a minor but unavoidable irritation for most teenagers. Boys' and girls' bodies change quickly during their adolescence – the period of development from childhood to physical maturity – and pimples on the skin are a sign of this change, at least for the majority of young people. While some fortunate individuals are never troubled by spots, others seem to get more than their fair share.

Nicky Tam is now 17. He started getting spots on his face when he was 13. 'I know this sounds like a made-up story,' he laughed, 'but I just woke up one morning and there it was – a huge pimple on my chin. I was really embarrassed and spent the whole morning at school trying to hide it behind my hand. My classmates soon noticed of course and started making fun of me.' Although Nicky can laugh about this now, he remembers feeling hurt by the names his classmates called him.

'Teenagers can be very sensitive about their image and so it is easy to tease each other about it.'

Nicky found out about spots in a reference book in the school library and knows what to do to keep them under control. 'You have to lead a healthy life,' he explained. 'A good diet, enough sleep and plenty of exercise are important. And you know, you're more likely to have spots if one of your parents had them when they were an adolescent too,' he added.

Nicky still occasionally gets spots but doesn't pay attention to what people say about them any more. 'It's just a normal part of growing up,' he said. 'My father had spots when he was a teenager but now of course they're gone. He told me he never allowed himself to feel embarrassed by them, and nor will I.'

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

A popular newspaper in Hong Kong is planning to add a new column called 'Teen Health' to its daily supplement for young people. The journalists who will be involved are interested in finding out what health issues are currently on teenagers' minds so they have invited groups of students to take part in an open discussion.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Feeling low

According to a well-known saying, schooldays are the happiest days of our lives. Many older people would support this view, remembering a time without responsibilities when nobody made any real demands on them. However, in contrast to this attractive image, today's schoolchildren often find themselves under a lot of pressure. This can come from parents who want their children to do well at school so they can get a good job.

David Lui is a Secondary Six student who admits he feels under a lot of pressure. He wants to do his best for his parents but thinks that their goals are impossible. 'I am happy to be with my classmates and enjoy the subjects I'm taking. But my parents want me to study medicine at university, and it's not really my kind of subject. Even my teachers agree.' While David knows it is important to prove what he is capable of academically, he feels his parents are asking too much of him.

David would like to train as a musician. However, while his parents have always encouraged him to play the violin for pleasure, they don't want him to choose music as a career. This is currently the source of much conflict in David's life. 'I love my parents and respect their opinions, but they can't know what I want from life,' he explained. 'I feel very low when I think about what I should do, and this worrying affects me physically too.' David has problems sleeping and often finds it difficult to stay awake during lessons after a sleepless night.

David has several good friends who support him when he is depressed and he knows that eventually his problems will sort themselves out. Nevertheless, he doesn't think it's very likely that he will remember his own schooldays as being particularly happy.

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

A popular newspaper in Hong Kong is planning to add a new column called 'Teen Health' to its daily supplement for young people. The journalists who will be involved are interested in finding out what health issues are currently on teenagers' minds so they have invited groups of students to take part in an open discussion.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

A big issue

Statistics show that the population of Hong Kong is getting larger – not just as a total number but also with regard to the size of individuals. On average, teenagers in the 1990s weigh more than teenagers did in the 1980s. This is not surprising when you consider changes in people's diet. While our parents can remember sometimes going to bed hungry when they were young, this is practically unimaginable for children today. Food is freely available and there is a huge variety.

As the average size of young people increases, the number of teenagers who have weight problems does too. There are more overweight schoolchildren now than ever before. Emily Wan is a doctor specializing in nutrition and young people. She believes teenagers need to pay more attention to what they eat. 'In the past, food was not so plentiful or varied for the majority of the population,' she explained, 'so we just had to concentrate

on getting enough to eat. Now we have choices about how much and what we eat. We have to learn to choose with care.'

Dr Wan doesn't mean that teenagers should give up all snacks and fast food however. 'Adolescents need a lot of energy when they are growing. And if they are playing sports and leading active lives too, their bodies require huge amounts of fuel,' she said. 'Nevertheless, going to fast-food restaurants for every meal is not healthy and can seriously disturb your digestive system.'

While young people who are overweight may feel fine and not be worried about their condition, Dr Wan warns that they could be storing up problems for the future. 'If you can maintain a sensible weight when you're young, you shouldn't have too many weight problems as you get older.'

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 12 minutes)

A popular newspaper in Hong Kong is planning to add a new column called 'Teen Health' to its daily supplement for young people. The journalists who will be involved are interested in finding out what health issues are currently on teenagers' minds so they have invited groups of students to take part in an open discussion.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time*(Total time: 10 minutes)***Part One – Individual Presentations***(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)*

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Teenagers start the fashion

Of the many groups that make up Japanese society, school students often seem to have the fewest choices. They have to wear uniform every day and, at many schools, if anyone breaks the regulations, they are immediately sent home. Parents buy their children most of what they need, so children have very little spending money. And with schedules full of school activities, they don't get much free time either.

However, in spite of their limited resources, this apparently identical army of students actually defines the tastes in fashion of the entire nation. A few teenagers in central Tokyo can decide what is trendy nation-wide. At least with regard to style, Japan has become a young nation – the next generation has already taken over. Whatever new fashion you see coming out of Japan (*tamagotchi*, photo-sticker machines or Hello Kitty products, for example), it probably started in a Tokyo secondary school.

To discover the next 'look' or product (the new 'boom', as they call it), fashion editors like Keiko Arai talk to students and find out what they are currently interested in. 'I also look through magazines for young readers to see what kinds of hairstyles or accessories they are featuring,' explained Keiko. 'Then I copy the trend in my magazine so my adult readers also know what is fashionable.'

Keiko believes that the image of Japanese people older than 22 is created by the mass media, including magazines such as hers. These are full of articles telling readers what to wear, how to behave, and what to buy – and nowadays these articles are usually based on what teenagers think! 'School students create the "boom" for the entire country,' explained Keiko. 'Adults cannot decide what they like – they have to be told. They find out what is popular by looking in my magazine.'

Part Two – Group Discussion*(Total time: 12 minutes)*

A Japanese company is sponsoring a group of Hong Kong students to visit Japan. The students will spend a week there at the end of term. Before the tour plan is finalized, the company would like to find out what students know about Japan already, and what they would like to learn more about.

You are a member of the group that will visit Japan. You are meeting with some of the other participants to prepare a presentation for the company about your impressions of Japan as well as Japanese topics you would like more information about.

You do not need to come to a final decision or to reach a conclusion to your discussion. You should try to discuss both the content and procedures involved in your discussion task. You cannot take notes or write during the discussion.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

The price of progress

Kyoto is the ancient capital of Japan and is still considered the country's cultural centre. It is famous for its temples and palaces built many years ago and for the beautiful gardens which surround them. After the rainy season each year, there is a festival which has been held regularly since the year 970. It celebrates history and respect for tradition with parades and prayer ceremonies.

However, the mood of the festival was disturbed last year. While it was taking place, workers moved in to pull down one of the city's famous traditional wooden houses. A big development company had bought the house and wanted to start building a large office block on the land. Something even more disturbing was the fact that the person who sold the house was actually in charge of the festival.

'The chairman of the most traditional festival in Kyoto was busy tearing down his own family home in

the middle of celebrations to honour the city's past,' said Mark Kelly, an American architect who has lived in Kyoto for many years. 'This tells you a lot about the priorities of some people in this city.' Mark is also the leader of the International Society to Save Kyoto – he knows how difficult it is to stop the destruction of historic buildings there. 'There are so many beautiful traditional buildings in the city that it is difficult to argue the case for keeping any one of them in particular,' he explained.

Property developers are very powerful, and politicians and government officials are often involved in deals to find new land for these companies. In Kyoto, over four thousand town houses have been destroyed in the past ten years. This may explain why there are now so many ugly modern buildings in Kyoto and elsewhere in Japan.

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

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Candidate C

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Long life and happiness

For the last ten years, life expectancy – the average number of years which a person is expected to live – has been the highest in the world in Japan. Within Japan, the southern island of Okinawa has the highest rate and there is one village on Okinawa that beats the rest: the residents of Kijoka village apparently live longer than people anywhere else in the world.

These people have a nutritious diet which contains a lot of fresh produce and not much salt. The sub-tropical climate keeps them warm throughout the year. Close communication between relatives and friends ensures that stress levels are low, and a traditional system of helping neighbours guarantees that, even if your crops fail, you still get enough to eat. At dawn, traditionally, people eat breakfast together: if a light is on in someone's house at 4 am, it is likely that some other villagers will join the owner for coffee and rice before work. Then, as people make their way through the

village streets to the fields, they sing to scare away the poisonous snakes which are common on Okinawa.

However, this lifestyle is gradually coming to an end. When the villagers finally die, their houses are left empty and are not taken over by their children. The young people are working elsewhere in Japan or even overseas. The houses gradually fall down. The local language of Okinawa is likely to die out with the current generation of speakers.

Although visitors might expect a sad atmosphere in a place populated by old people, the mood is in fact light. In the evening, people drink rice wine and play music outside their houses. People in their seventies dance, those in their eighties sing and the ninety-year-olds bang drums. The *really* old people shout and laugh at their friends.

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

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Candidate D

Preparation Time

(Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations

(1½–2 minutes each; total time: 8 minutes)

Read the following passage. You may make notes to use as the basis for your presentation. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Sumo star

In Japanese sumo wrestling, there is only one way to celebrate the retirement of a wrestler with an outstanding career: you cut his hair. In the ceremony, the wrestler's traditional knot of hair, which he has had throughout the hard years of training, is removed. This is not done by one person alone; in fact, many people take turns to cut the wrestler's hair. The size of the ceremony depends on the importance of the sumo star who is retiring.

Konishiki was the first ever non-Japanese wrestler to reach second-highest ranking in the sport – he is also the heaviest wrestler in the 1,300-year history of sumo. He was born in Hawaii and has become very popular in Japan because of his friendliness and determination. His retirement next week is going to be a very special event. 'It is very traditional,' Konishiki explained. 'The whole day is dedicated to me and all the top wrestlers will be there. There will be regular

sumo wrestling to watch, and sumo singing and drumming. We have about 11,000 people attending and three or four hundred will come up to cut my hair.'

The first thing Konishiki is going to do after ending his career as a wrestler is start a diet which will last for three years. When he began competing, his trainer advised him to increase his weight. 'For me, it was good to be big. It was a deliberate technique to compensate for my lack of experience,' he said. But now Konishiki is going to become a coach himself and has to slim down.

Konishiki wants to encourage new interest in sumo. 'The media present a very stereotypical image of sumo,' he said. 'Young people don't understand it properly and are turning to other sports. I want to get their attention again.'

Part Two – Group Discussion

(Total time: 12 minutes)

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