

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, but should make the presentation in your own words. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Western stars shine brightly in the East

The achievements of film actor Jackie Chan in America and the continuing success of Hong Kong's only Olympic Gold medallist, Lee Lai-shan (San San) may give local teenagers a sense of pride but when it comes to popularity, it seems Hong Kong celebrities cannot compete with Western idols.

In the minds of the SAR's teenage population, Lee Lai-shan's achievements cannot match the football skills of David Beckham or Michael Owen. In the movie industry, Tom Cruise is more admired than Jackie Chan by local youngsters. In fact, recent surveys have shown that Western music, film and sports stars are still more popular than Hong Kong stars in the eyes of local teenagers. One possible reason put forward by a professor from the University of Hong Kong is that many teenagers regard Western people and Western beliefs as being modern. He argues that teenagers admire people who are trendy and so they worship Western idols instead of local ones.

Another academic from the Chinese University of Hong Kong claims that how local teenagers choose their idols is related to how they see their own culture. But this idea of cultural influence is rejected by some local teenagers. In fact, comments from youths aged between 15 and 17 suggest that the reason for the popularity of Western idols is very simple – it's just a matter of appearance and ability.

Alice Chan a Form Four student, claims, 'David Beckham is cute and fashionable but he is also a fantastic footballer that we can enjoy and learn from.' Tommy, who studies in Form Six, claims that the popularity of Western idols is a result of quality and nothing else. 'Europe produces the best footballers. The USA produces the best basketball players. Is it really so surprising that the best sportsmen are also the biggest idols?' he asks.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 2 minutes preparation, 10 minutes discussion)

Your school has entered an inter-school debating contest and the motion is, 'Idols have a negative influence on youngsters.'

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 organise and present your arguments.

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

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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, but should make the presentation in your own words. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

The greatest role model of them all?

Michael Jordan is most famous for his amazing skills and agility on the basketball court. His number 23 shirt is still worn by millions of basketball fans around the world, years after his retirement from the Chicago Bulls in 1999. In fact, Jordan is one idol who enjoys universal appeal. In other words, he is liked and respected by millions of people all over the world – from young children to teenagers and even parents!

His achievements with the Chicago Bulls turned him into a sporting legend and many commentators predict that the public will never see anyone quite like him on a basketball court again. However, his success was not restricted to the NBA in America. He has touched the hearts of millions of people around the world and the news of his early retirement brought disappointment and international mourning.

In the Philippines, Jordan's farewell announcement was on the front pages of all national

newspapers. In Germany, radio stations played sad songs all day. In Taiwan, authorities interrupted normal TV programming to show Jordan's press conference live. The young were particularly upset because Michael Jordan was more important in their lives than politicians, movie stars or any other sportsmen. So what made him so popular?

There can be no doubt that he has been seen as a role model by youngsters and, more importantly, by adults. People all over the world see him as someone from a normal background who has achieved extraordinary things. Of course, he is viewed as a symbol of American success, but he is also a good father and husband and the sort of son every mother would like to have! In fact, Jordan's mother has been profiled in many Chinese magazines saying how proud she is of her son's qualities.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 2 minutes preparation, 10 minutes discussion)

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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, but should make the presentation in your own words. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

When idols are not role models

Last year, one of Hong Kong's most famous court cases involved a young man who had been arrested for changing drivers after crashing his car. At the trial, the man was found guilty. So what made this particular case so special to the public and the media? The young man was Nicholas Tse, a singer and actor who was idolised by thousands of teenagers.

Tse is not the only celebrity to be accused of breaking the law. In Britain, two famous footballers were arrested after a young man had been attacked outside a disco. In America, a popular singer was charged by the police for threatening to use a gun in a public place and a top actress was found guilty of shoplifting. When celebrities get into trouble with the law, how does it affect their public image? For some, it can have a very damaging impact on their career. For others, however, this isn't the case.

The two footballers mentioned earlier still continue to play for top teams today. The American singer was found not guilty and his music remains as popular as ever. In Hong Kong, some advertising experts believe that Nicholas Tse, although guilty of the charges, can now earn even more money from films and sponsors. Why? Well, apparently his rebellious image has actually been strengthened by his arrest. One marketing executive said, 'It doesn't matter if he's guilty or not. All that matters is sales, and more companies will want to use him in advertisements.'

Yet, for Nicholas Tse, the disappointment felt by some of his fans can be bad for his public image. One fan, Shirley Yip from Kowloon, said she felt like her world was coming to an end when she heard that he had committed the crime. 'My idol wasn't so perfect after all,' she complained.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 2 minutes preparation, 10 minutes discussion)

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Candidate D

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

Giving something back

The faces of our idols are everywhere – on TV, in films and on advertising boards. It is no secret that much of a star's income comes from sponsorship deals. Companies will pay huge sums of money to a celebrity to appear in commercials to sell their products, ranging from soft drinks and clothing to moon cakes! However, many idols also promote charities and government campaigns.

In the same way that businesses know a famous face will help sell their products to customers, charities and government departments realise that they can also arouse public awareness by getting the help of an idol. In Hong Kong, Jackie Chan, the actor, has been promoting tourism for many years, while Kelly Chen, the popular singer, has been helping the government promote the 'English in the Workplace' campaign.

UNICEF (HK) is a charity which aims to relieve the suffering of children in poor countries. They have

Leon Lai, a singer, to help promote their campaigns around Asia. Other local entertainers have featured in civic campaigns to promote blood donation, a cleaner Hong Kong, and to persuade people to vote in elections.

These celebrities are giving their time to help organisations promote important social issues. Often, the stars expect nothing in return, but their presence in a campaign can have a very significant effect. Following the terrible floods in China recently, local singers got together to record a song that was then put on sale. The song helped to raise millions of dollars that went to aid the victims on the mainland. One spokesman for a local charity said, 'We could never have raised so much money without the help from local singers and entertainers.' It shows how much positive influence they can have on the public.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 2 minutes preparation. 10 minutes discussion)

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

A multi-cultural encounter in Montreal

When Daisy Yip heard about the overseas cultural experience programme her school had arranged for Form Four students last summer, she was one of the first to apply. She saw it as an excellent opportunity to expand her knowledge and experience a new culture. Among the cities on the list, she chose Montreal in Canada, a place she had been longing to visit ever since she had started learning French in Form One.

During the three-week trip, Daisy stayed with other overseas participants in a boarding school in Montreal. To her surprise, the participants came from different parts of the world. She met students from America, France, Germany, India, Thailand, Korea and Taiwan. This really excited her as she had always been interested in foreign cultures and languages. In fact, Daisy was overjoyed when she knew she was going to share a room with a student from Paris.

However, things did not turn out the way Daisy had expected. She had originally intended to practise speaking French with her roommate, Marie. But there were some difficulties. As she seldom had the chance to speak the language in Hong Kong, she found Marie spoke too fast for her to follow. Marie often lost her patience when asked to repeat herself and they soon had less and less to talk about. The differences in their lifestyles widened the cultural gap. At times Marie complained about Daisy talking too loudly over the phone while Daisy was not accustomed to the French dishes Marie cooked. They both tried very hard to please each other but arguments often arose. Daisy found the experience not always pleasant.

When Daisy returned to Hong Kong after the summer break, she felt she had a completely different outlook on life and had a better understanding of cross-cultural communication.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 2 minutes preparation, 10 minutes discussion)

The teachers at your school have organised some overseas experience programmes for students to give them exposure to other cultures. The programmes will be held in different countries during the summer vacation this year.

You and your friends are interested in taking part. You are meeting to discuss which country you would like to go to, what possible problems you may face, what you can gain from the experience and how you can better prepare yourself for it.

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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, but should make the presentation in your own words. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Homestay experience in Melbourne

During his last summer holiday, thirteen-year-old Edward Siu took part in an overseas homestay experience programme in Melbourne, Australia, organised by his school. The programme was geared to students who wanted to experience Western culture and improve their English. Arrangements were made for students to stay with a host family, attend classes at a local school on weekdays and participate in different activities during weekends.

Edward stayed with his host parents, a retired couple. As they had no children of their own, they treated Edward like their son. Every morning, his host mum would prepare a big lunch box for him before he set off for school and his host father would drive him to school and pick him up. They were both very interested in how the lifestyle in Hong Kong differed from that in Australia and enjoyed hearing about his experiences. Although Edward's English was not very good, they were very patient with him.

Nonetheless, Edward was disappointed that his host parents were unable to give him the freedom he had expected to find in a Western society. He felt annoyed when they nagged at him for not finishing his prepared lunch and for arriving home late at weekends. He also found it embarrassing to have them accompany him to all the places he wanted to visit. This led to some arguments between them. Gradually, however, he came to understand that they were over-protective at times because they were really concerned about him and felt they were responsible for his safety.

To Edward, this six-week overseas experience was memorable and enriching. He now realises the importance of seeing things from different perspectives and treasures the warm relationship he developed with his host parents. He is still in contact with them and hopes they will visit him in Hong Kong one day.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 2 minutes preparation, 10 minutes discussion)

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

Overcoming homesickness in Glasgow

During the summer vacation last year, Maggie Tsang's parents sent her on an overseas experience programme to Glasgow in Scotland for nearly two months. The programme was aimed at exposing students to a different culture in an English-speaking country and providing them with the chance to maximise their exposure to the language. Students stayed in a dormitory at a university where they attended morning language classes.

During her first few weeks in Glasgow, Maggie felt homesick. Being the only child of the family and a quiet girl, she missed her parents very much. She was not accustomed to doing all the cooking and laundry on her own. Furthermore, she was not used to the low temperatures. It was, on average, 5-10°C. She called home almost every evening urging her parents to let her go home but they encouraged her to stay and she had no choice but to agree.

Maggie soon realised, however, that many of the students staying in the dormitory were, like her, overseas

students. She joined an orientation programme where she met participants from Taiwan and China. Eventually, her loneliness disappeared. She started joining them on different activities and became more outgoing. However, her social activities were limited to interacting with other Chinese students. This meant she spoke almost no English at all during her stay. 'I know my parents sent me there to improve my English,' she reflects, 'but I just felt more comfortable with Chinese people and I found it hard to make friends with local students.'

When Maggie returned to Hong Kong after the overseas experience, her parents were rather disappointed that her English had not improved. But they noticed that she had become more independent, confident and active and were pleased that she was not as shy as she used to be.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 2 minutes preparation, 10 minutes discussion)

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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, but should make the presentation in your own words. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Summer adventures in Christchurch

Last summer, Johnny Choi, a third-former, joined a one-month overseas summer trip to New Zealand organised by his school. The aim of the trip was for participants to develop independence and improve their English. Before Johnny set off, he was reminded by his parents to take good care of himself and not to try anything dangerous.

Johnny stayed with his host family in Christchurch, New Zealand. The family had a twelve-year-old son whom Johnny enjoyed playing with and talking to. According to his teachers in Hong Kong, he refused to use any English in class before participating in the programme and never took part in English activities. After the trip, however, they were all surprised by his new interest in English. In fact, Johnny claimed that he had spoken more English during his short homestay than he had for the past ten years!

Johnny is a very active, sporty and adventurous person. Nonetheless, when his host family invited him to join them on a mountaineering experience and try whitewater-rafting the week before he left, he was faced with a dilemma. While he really wanted to take on this challenge, he remembered his promise to his parents. Eventually, he decided to go. When he phoned his parents to share his experiences with them, they gave him a severe scolding and warned him against joining such dangerous activities in future. This failure to meet his parents' expectations put a lot of pressure on him.

When Johnny returned from his trip, he decided to discuss his concerns with his parents. Noticing how much he had gained, they realised that they had been over-anxious about him and that he needed some freedom to make his own decisions. They were also very proud of the significant improvement he had made in English as a result of the experience.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 2 minutes preparation, 10 minutes discussion)

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

Warning signs

Feeling the pressure of Form Seven, Jenny Wong started to have difficulty sleeping and she was also developing severe headaches during the day at school. She tried to talk to her mother about how stressed she was feeling, but her mother didn't seem to understand. She had been a student a long time ago and couldn't relate to Jenny's problems.

The more Jenny tried to sleep at night, the more she found herself still awake at five o'clock in the morning. Consequently, she was finding it difficult to keep awake in class and her grades were getting worse and worse. This led to her feeling anxious and insecure. She started to doubt her ability to pass her exams and her teachers were surprised at her low grades.

Even Jenny's friends noticed the difference in her behaviour. They tried to talk to her about it but she

would not open up to them, feeling that they would think she was stupid. Desperate to try and get some sleep one night, she found some sleeping tablets in her mother's cupboard. She took too many and ended up in hospital. A counsellor was brought in to talk to her and Jenny started to talk about how she had been feeling. She told the counsellor about how she felt that she was worthless and that she had even thought of committing suicide because no one at home cared about her or had time to listen to her problems.

Most people in Hong Kong today are under some level of stress, but this level varies from person to person. It is important to watch out for signs of stress and to seek professional help from a doctor or a counsellor if you are feeling that your level of stress is too much for you to cope with.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 2 minutes preparation, 10 minutes discussion)

You are a member of a group of senior form students and you have decided to give a talk about stress as part of Mental Health Awareness Week at school.

You are meeting with your group members to discuss what to include in the talk. You should consider how stress can be both positive and negative in students' lives, as well as suggest some practical changes that students can make to cope with stress. You can also talk about what the school can do.

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

Coping with stress

Janet Law, a Form Six student, started getting headaches, feeling sick, and was having difficulty concentrating on her exams. She was falling behind in her studies and, as a result, the problems started getting worse. Finally, her mother sent her to the doctor and she was told that she was suffering from stress.

Following the suggestions of her doctor, Janet started to make some changes to her life. The first thing she started doing was eating better. She had been living on fast food for breakfast and lunch. Now she made sure that she got up early enough to have breakfast at home and asked her mother to make her lunch.

Next, she set herself a goal of getting at least 8 hours sleep a night. That meant going to bed at 11:00 pm at the latest. This was hard at first with all the homework

she had to do, but she found that planning her time better allowed her more time for sleep. However, one of the hardest things that she had to do was to learn to say 'no'. She had less and less time to do her homework as her friends kept inviting her to go out with them after school. She asked her friends if they could spend time together at the weekends instead. This meant that she not only had time to relax, but also time to do her homework and get enough sleep.

Finally, she learnt to share her problems with her mother. Her mother had been concerned about Janet's future, so she had been putting pressure on Janet to study more. Talking helped to make her mother aware that this pressure was actually making the situation worse. In the end, Janet learned how to cope with the unavoidable stress of exams.

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

Good stress

Stress is one of the biggest causes of sickness, bad relationships and reduced productivity at work. However, stress is not always negative. Sometimes, stressful situations can be stimulating or challenging. Our ancestors needed stress for survival. Today we need it for achievement, personal development and enjoyment of life. Stress only becomes negative when the level is too high for us.

One example of a situation where stress can be positive is in exams. Normally, students feel the stress of exams is very difficult to cope with. However, without stress, we would not push ourselves to achieve the best that we can do. It is important to use stress in a positive way rather than a negative one. If the level of stress becomes too much, then our concentration and health will suffer; but if it is used well, then we will perform at our best.

Another example of how stress can be a positive factor is in sport. Stress can help an athlete achieve high standards of performance. Take Lee Lai-Shan as an example. Without stress, she might not have won a gold medal for windsurfing for Hong Kong in the Asian Games. Although most people would find competing in a major sporting event highly stressful, Lee Lai-Shan was able to benefit from the stress. For her, the stressful situation was actually challenging and helped her to succeed.

Stress needs to be kept at a manageable level. It is important to know how much stress you can handle, but it is also important not to take out all stress from your life. Life is stressful and we need to learn to cope with it. Stress can help us to develop and to push ourselves to achieve what we didn't think we could achieve.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 2 minutes preparation, 10 minutes discussion)

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

The cost of stress

John Leung's father wanted him to go to England to study Form Seven next year. John's father had studied in a boarding school for 2 years when he was a child, and believed that the experience had made him a successful person. John's mother, however, wanted him to stay in Hong Kong. She thought that John was too young to take care of himself. John also hated the idea. He wanted to study Form Seven in Hong Kong with all of his friends.

Every night over dinner, the family argued about John's future. The arguments were getting more and more emotional. John was starting to get stressed every time his mother called him for dinner, knowing that his father and mother would be fighting about his future. The family had always been very close. Now, the arguments were breaking the family apart. John used to rely on his parents so much, but now he felt that he couldn't talk to them anymore.

John's English teacher started to notice that he wasn't paying attention in class and his marks were getting worse. She tried to talk to him, but he just said that he was having difficulty concentrating because he was tired. Eventually, after John failed an important test and was continually looking stressed, he was sent to the school counsellor. John talked about his problems at home and how the stress had been affecting his academic results and his relationship with his family.

Finally, the counsellor called the family to a meeting and John's father agreed to let him stay in Hong Kong for Form Seven while John also agreed to think about going overseas for tertiary education. The cost of stress can be great, but it can often be avoided through communication.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 2 minutes preparation, 10 minutes discussion)

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