

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.

A gap year teaching English in China

After completing her A-levels, Hannah Smith felt she needed a break. Before starting her bachelor's degree in education at London University, she believed a gap year experiencing education in another country would broaden her outlook.

Hannah chose China for her gap-year visit and took up a job teaching English to a class of fifty students at a school in rural Guangdong province. 'In the UK, I would never have imagined teaching such a large group,' she remarked. 'At first, Hannah was worried that she could not give the students the individual attention she felt they needed to improve their English. However, she found that they were very eager and motivated. This made her reflect on her own attitudes to learning French at school, which she had found difficult and had eventually given up. Hannah realised that she could learn from her students. Despite the crowded classrooms and the lack of resources, she did her best to improve her students' language skills.

Hannah faced a number of challenges in her teaching. One thing that shocked her was that the students did not see themselves as individuals, and rarely spoke up in class. 'I found this frustrating,' she recalled. 'But I tried out different activities and found some that motivated students to be more active.' The students also had a packed timetable. Classes started at 7.45 a.m. after morning exercises and finished at 4.45 p.m. 'At first I felt the routine was too harsh, but I thought if my students can do it, so can I. I got used to the long hours. I realise now that the discipline was good for me,' she remarked.

Hannah has set her heart on becoming a good English teacher. Now in her first year of university, she is able to relate what she learned in China to her studies.

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

There has recently been a great deal of public discussion on the topic of taking a gap year before, during or after one's university studies. Your local English language newspaper would like to hear the views of secondary school students on this issue.

You and your classmates have been asked by your English teacher to draft a letter to the editor of the newspaper, reflecting your opinions. You may consider the benefits and possible drawbacks of having a gap year. Discuss what other information you wish to include in your letter and how you could present it to make it more persuasive.

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

A gap year doing voluntary work in Mongolia

Zoe Davis is a 23-year-old undergraduate in her final year, majoring in social work and public administration in the United States. Last year, when she was invited to take part in a charity project, she decided to take time off from her studies and spend a year doing charity work.

Participating in the project gave Zoe the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to travel to many parts of the world, including Nepal, Thailand and Mongolia. In these places, she was involved in a lot of voluntary work in different charitable organisations serving the poor, the elderly, neglected and abandoned children, and the handicapped. Amid all her meaningful encounters, the most satisfying part of her gap year was in Mongolia, where she helped local residents establish a vocational centre for teenagers. Together with other volunteers, she designed the centre, made the furniture and planned the courses that the centre could offer. 'In spite of our cultural differences, we learned how to cooperate with

each other and we became good friends,' she said.

Zoe's experiences during her gap year were indeed both challenging and enriching. She felt she had seen something very different from what she would have experienced in her own country and this had certainly given her a broader perspective on life. 'I talked to many other volunteers and now know much more about the needs of people in different parts of the world. I've also learned what it means to work as part of a team to overcome difficulties and to accept others' views,' she said. Zoe is convinced that she has gained life skills from her gap year that she would not have learned in the classroom.

After taking a year off, Zoe returned to the final year of her course feeling completely refreshed and motivated. She also feels confident she is better equipped to handle the demands of her course.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 2 minutes preparation, 10 minutes 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, but should make the presentation in your own words. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

A gap year teaching skiing in Switzerland

Chester Low, a business student at a university in New Zealand, had just completed his first year of the course when he started to doubt if he had made the right choice and if he should continue his studies. 'After Year One, I still had no idea what I wanted to do in life. The courses bored me and I wondered if I should have done something else,' he said.

Chester decided to take a gap year to experience something different. He loved skiing, and so he enrolled in a one-month ski instructor's course in Switzerland. He passed it and soon found himself a full-time job at a new skiing school there. He met people from different walks of life and enjoyed the experience very much.

Chester valued this opportunity to be on his own. The quiet time he had away from his parents, friends and studies, allowed him to reflect on his priorities in life and

decide what suited him best. Gradually, he realised that even though being a ski instructor was fun, he still wanted to push himself academically and so he decided to finish his university education. When he shared these insights with his parents, they were delighted. After he got back, they could see the change in him and how much he had matured as a result of his experience. 'Chester has never been so confident and independent. We now know that he can be trusted to make responsible decisions about his life,' his mother said.

Chester has just graduated from university and is looking for work in the business sector. His mature personality, independent thinking and good interpersonal skills, all of which were cultivated during his gap year and developed afterwards, will surely go a long way in helping him land a good job.

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

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

A gap year serving patients in India

Benny Wan is a second-year student of nursing studies at a university in Hong Kong. After graduating, he plans to work in one of Hong Kong's many public hospitals. However, last year, Benny felt that working in a city like Hong Kong with its modern hospitals would not provide a proper perspective of what nursing is all about. To broaden his experience, he decided to take a year off.

One day, he read this in a magazine: 'For a year off, you can't beat India. You can see things you've never seen before and you will get a completely new outlook on life.' When he arrived in Calcutta, he came to realise that good quality healthcare in India is only accessible to a small percentage of the population. Benny soon enrolled himself as a volunteer in one of the local hospitals that serve the poorer sections of society.

On his first day at work, Benny was shocked by the conditions in the hospital. Most of the equipment

was old and the standards of hygiene were low. At first Benny found it hard, but soon adapted to the conditions. Apart from serving the sick, he worked with other volunteers who spent a lot of time every day cleaning up the hospital. His work there also brought him into contact with patients who were suffering from leprosy, a contagious disease. 'At first, I was scared I might become infected. However, I did not give up and learned to overcome the fear,' he remarked. Benny's experience in India has enabled him to develop patience and determination and become more courageous.

Benny's university teachers are very pleased to see the change in his character. One teacher, Mrs Tong, commented: 'Not only has Benny enhanced his nursing skills, he has also developed the courage and determination to face challenges,' she said.

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

There has recently been a great deal of public discussion on the topic of taking a gap year before, during or after one's university studies. Your local English language newspaper would like to hear the views of secondary school students on this issue.

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

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What happens after Harry?

Joanne Kathleen Rowling's books have become the most popular children's books in history. As Rowling has said that she will only write seven books describing the life of Harry Potter, a question is being asked by many teachers and parents: what will children do without Harry Potter books to read?

The question is generating a lot of discussion. There is no doubt that more children have started to move away from computer games and TV programmes and are now taking up reading as a hobby. It is likely that Rowling will inspire other writers to follow her example. With an interest in reading, perhaps children will go and search for new books to satisfy their curiosity and interest.

Some teachers are taking advantage of this new interest in reading and are using creative ways of promoting the classics in their English lessons. Mrs Rash,

a teacher in a local school, has started a class library. Her students choose their favourite books and then share them with their classmates. 'Students love to recommend their favourite books to their friends,' she said. Another strategy that she uses is drama. She asks students to read part of a classic, like Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* or George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. The students then work together to act out the story. 'They can write their own script, and wear costumes. It's a great way to learn a famous story and use English at the same time!' she said.

In another school, the students are given a story to read, such as *The Little Prince*, and then asked to re-write the story, but this time set it in Hong Kong. The Principal, Mrs Lam, believes that this helps to bring famous books up to date and makes the stories more interesting. Perhaps there will be life after Harry Potter!

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

Your school has just set up a Book Club as an extra-curricular activity for students. You and the other members of the Club are holding an informal meeting.

At the start of the meeting, you could talk about the impact popular books have on young readers. You could then discuss how reading can be an enjoyable hobby, and why young people find some books more interesting than others. Finally, you should plan some activities for the coming year to promote reading among students at your school.

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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.

A magical story

In 1990, on a long train journey in the UK, a lady called Joanne Kathleen Rowling started to jot down ideas on a piece of paper about a young wizard named Harry Potter. Six years later, Rowling's first book about Harry Potter was published. Called *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, the book was not expected to be very popular. Indeed, only a thousand copies were first printed. Now, over 200 million copies of the first four books in the series have been sold. Harry Potter and his creator, Rowling, have become two of the most famous names on earth!

The Potter books have received many prizes around the world. Rowling has been named 'author of the year' in the UK. The first two stories have been turned into films and more are to come. Harry Potter merchandise is sold in every corner of the world. It includes train sets, dolls, toy castles called Hogwarts like the one in the book, TV games and even a car! The

immensely popular books have been translated into forty-seven different languages, including Chinese.

What has made this story about a young wizard such a massive success? According to the book agent who first agreed to help publish *Harry Potter*, it is because the idea is so original. 'The books are like many traditional children's stories because they involve wizards, magic, and the great struggle between good and evil. What is different, however, is that Rowling has been able to make the stories so imaginative. This explains why they appeal to young people from around the globe.'

One girl described her feelings as she read the very first Harry Potter story. 'It was as if I was watching the story unfold in front of my eyes. Everything seemed so real. I couldn't put the book down until I had finished it!'

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

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Candidate C

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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.

Potter casts his spell on young people

The popularity of the Harry Potter series can be seen in every part of the world, from China and Vietnam to Australia and America. When the author, Joanne Kathleen Rowling, first tried to get the book published, several well-known publishers rejected her. However, one book agent finally saw the potential of Harry Potter and his magical adventures at wizard school. Even the agent could never have imagined that these books would promote reading to millions of youngsters.

Most children spend their time playing computer games or watching hours of television. This is a fact in the modern age. Yet the appeal of Harry Potter has encouraged many children to read books and this, perhaps, is Rowling's greatest achievement. Last June, children around the world queued outside bookshops to purchase the fifth episode of the Harry Potter series. Photos of children and their parents sitting in chairs reading the new book could be found in every newspaper. It was almost as if Harry himself had put a

magic spell on young people everywhere.

Many children have developed an interest in reading because of Rowling's work, and that is something that pleases teachers and parents. If children are encouraged to read, this has to be good news for anyone involved in education, particularly in Hong Kong, where language standards are regularly questioned.

In 2003, a survey of 350,000 nine-year-olds in thirty-five countries produced shocking results for Hong Kong. The survey showed that Hong Kong primary school students had the lowest interest in reading compared with every other country surveyed. Only one in five children said that they read books outside of the classroom for pleasure. 'If we want Hong Kong to move towards a knowledge-based society, we have to get young people reading,' said one worried teacher. Perhaps Harry Potter is the person to make them do that.

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

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

The power of Potter

Last June, the fifth book of the Harry Potter series, *The Order of the Phoenix*, went on sale. In Hong Kong, there were book parties as shops opened for business. In London, author Joanne Kathleen Rowling made a public appearance when she read from the book and answered questions from children, using a live web-cast that attracted 500 million viewers. At the same time, the new Harry Potter merchandise went on sale everywhere.

Harry Potter seems to have become a product for marketing and merchandise. Even the soft drinks company Coca-Cola has used Harry Potter in its advertisements. Some people, however, are not happy. They complain that companies are making a profit out of a wonderful story that should live in the imagination of children.

Yet it is also true that the real power of Harry Potter can be seen in the massive increase in the number

of children who are reading for pleasure. Mr Davis, a publisher, claims that 'more families are going to bookshops together, and anything encouraging that is a good thing.' He also points out that any company which uses Harry Potter to promote its products also has to invest in educational programmes to promote reading in schools. This has a powerful effect, as Rowling has recognised in her many meetings with young people.

Rowling has spoken to thousands of children from all over the world who have read her books. For many, *Harry Potter* is the very first book they have read. Some were even teenagers! She has also met parents of 'reluctant readers' – children who hate reading. They say that their children have developed a reading habit simply because they loved Harry Potter so much. Rowling is richer than the Queen of England because of her books but she says that getting children to read is her biggest reward.

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.

Woo-ing the world with his films

Mission Impossible 2 has been one of the most successful films in recent years. With high-speed car chases, non-stop action and gun battles, this film is typical of the work of John Woo. 'John who?' you may ask. Well, John Woo was once a poor, homeless child born in southern China, who later found international fame and fortune through his unique style of movie making. 'So many directors have tried to copy Woo,' said one American producer, 'but no one has ever got close to his type of action film.'

It appears that Woo wanted to be a film director at any cost. As a teenager, he had little money and to satisfy his interest in films, he stole books on movies from local libraries and bookstores! Woo came to Hong Kong at the age of three but he became increasingly frustrated and bored with local films. He started to watch American movies and these greatly influenced his own style of films later. In 1973, he directed his first movie

and, two years later, helped Jackie Chan in his first major film. Although Woo was busy, he had not become very well known. That all changed in 1986.

'Watching a Woo film is like watching a violent ballet dance,' said one film reviewer following the release of his movie *A Better Tomorrow* in 1986. It became one of Hong Kong's top films and helped launch the acting careers of Leslie Cheung and Chow Yun-Fat. Having achieved success in Hong Kong, Woo headed for America.

His success continued with the 1997 film, *Face Off*, followed by the super hit *The Replacement Killers* in 1998. 'His achievements are even greater when you consider that he is the very first Asian filmmaker to direct a major Hollywood blockbuster like *Mission Impossible 2*', said the editor of *Movie Weekly*.

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

You and the others in your group are members of the Film Club at your school. You are holding the Club's first meeting to plan activities for the coming term.

To start your meeting, you should discuss some of the ways you can promote films to students through the Club, and the types of films you could show. You may also want to talk about other activities to organise, and how you could help students who want to learn about making films.

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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:

Born in Hong Kong

Jackie Chan's Chinese name actually means 'Born in Hong Kong' and this seems perfect for one of Hong Kong's favourite celebrities. His worldwide success is not due to his looks, but instead, a combination of physical strength and personal determination. This determination was clear from a young age when he trained in the traditional Chinese arts of singing, acting, acrobatics and martial arts. He even studied opera in Hong Kong with a group called 'The Seven Little Fortunes'.

Jackie is now an international celebrity but he still holds one more ambition. He wants people to remember him by saying 'Oh yes, Jackie Chan. He was great.' That dream is quite likely to come true. In the 1970s, many people felt that Jackie Chan was just like Bruce Lee, but Jackie had other plans for his films. 'I watched the old silent films from America and realised that comedy, movement and timing were very important.

What I added were the fight scenes and the stunts,' Chan recalled. In a short time, films like *Drunken Master* and *Police Story* had turned Jackie Chan into a superstar.

In 1996, Chan won the hearts of fans in America with his action movie *Rumble in the Bronx*, and became one of the first Asian stars to find success in the USA. 'It was the first time I had seen an actor do stunts like that – he jumped from buildings and cars – it was incredible,' said one of Jackie's fans in New York.

However, those dangerous stunts have come at a price. While performing one stunt, Jackie Chan fell from a tree, landed on his head and broke his skull! But this has not stopped him and his recent film *Rush Hour II* made over US\$200 million – a 'born in Hong Kong' superstar!

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.

The legend lives on

In 1973, one of the most famous movie stars in the world died at the young age of thirty-two in Kowloon Tong. During his short life, Bruce Lee made Hong Kong famous through his films and became one of the top 100 best-known people of the 20th century, according to *Time* magazine in America. Thirty years after his death, Bruce Lee, the famous film star and martial arts fighter, is possibly Hong Kong's most famous citizen.

'He was the very first Chinese superstar in Hollywood,' said actor Chuck Norris. 'His whole life was an example of determination.' Bruce Lee, who grew up in a small flat in Tsim Sha Tsui and attended La Salle College, set out to make people more aware of Chinese culture. Bruce Lee once said, 'I want to show the world what our culture is like. Americans don't really know enough about us.'

In 1964, Lee established the Kung Fu Institute in America for martial arts. Soon after, he was given a role

in a TV series and within a short time, Hong Kong and Hollywood were paying attention to his name. However, he found it difficult to get film roles in America because he was a foreigner. He returned to Hong Kong and started making movies with a local producer. By 1972, his films were breaking box office records in Hong Kong and in February 1973, his film *Enter the Dragon* made him an international superstar. Tragically, he died suddenly a few months later.

At Lee's funeral in Kowloon, several thousand people came to pay their last respects to a man who had enjoyed a remarkable life. Bruce Lee once said that even if he died suddenly, he would have no regrets. 'What I've done, I've done to the best of my ability and you can't expect much more from life.'

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

You and the others in your group are members of the Film Club at your school. You are holding the Club's first meeting to plan activities for the coming term.

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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.

Spellbinding Spielberg

In the history of cinema, one director stands out in recent times. His movies have been some of the most successful ever. Still, Steven Spielberg continues to entertain us in his own unique way. From the age of twelve, he started making movies and by the time he left school he had made eight films! By 1971, his first film was released for TV and received a lot of praise from film critics. In 1975, he showed the world what amazing talent he had by directing *Jaws*, a film about a killer shark. The movie made people around the world afraid of swimming in the sea!

That film started a series of blockbuster movies that brought in millions of dollars and international awards for Spielberg. If people were asked to think of a famous film, there is a strong chance that they would name one produced or directed by Spielberg. *Jurassic Park*, *ET*, *Indiana Jones*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *Schindler's List* as well as the recent *A. I.* are all the work

of this remarkable man. His films have featured action, war, aliens, dinosaurs, love and comedy, and they have won him two Best Director awards at the Oscars.

'It's like working with a master. Everyone who is an actor wants to work with Spielberg because he is so good,' said one top American actor. It's not just films that Spielberg is involved in, however.

In 1995, along with two other powerful people from the film industry, he helped to establish a partnership with the computer firm Microsoft called *DreamWorks Interactive*. This company produces interactive games, videos and even teaching materials. Spielberg's work focuses on the hope and wonder that is in everyone. As he himself says, 'I dream for a living. What can be better?'

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

You and the others in your group are members of the Film Club at your school. You are holding the Club's first meeting to plan activities for the coming term.

To start your meeting, you should discuss some of the ways you can promote films to students through the Club, and the types of films you could show. You may also want to talk about other activities to organise, and how you could help students who want to learn about making films.

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.

The examiners cannot answer any questions about the instructions or the task you have to discuss. If you have any questions, you may discuss them among yourselves and that will be an acceptable part of your group discussion, and will be assessed.

NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY

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.

Read more about schools

The vast majority of parents are convinced that a good school is one that secures for their children better academic results and hence, better university and career options.

These parents tend to believe that schools with a good reputation provide better education, and that this guarantees success in examinations. In order to locate the best schools, it is necessary to invest a huge amount of time researching a school to find out how its students have fared compared to others. Parents refer to the school's prospectus, read up about it on its website and talk to other parents whose children are studying at the schools they have identified as good. Parents believe that comparing the schools' exam results and their university admission rates will help them make the best choice for their children.

According to educationalists, however, this does not give parents a full picture of the performance of the

school. It is crucial for parents to find out if the school has a good mechanism for quality assurance. To do so, parents may need to have access to published reports of any inspections of the school by the Education and Manpower Bureau. Such reports may enlighten parents on the structure of the curriculum at a particular school, and how this caters to its students' learning needs. Parents should also enquire if the school offers a broad range of academic subjects for students to choose from according to their interests and strengths. One parent, Mrs Tang, wanted her son to get into a top school, and is glad that she took the time to read up about her options. 'I now feel confident that this school will give him the best chance of getting to the top,' she remarks.

So, thorough research and in-depth inquiry is needed to ensure parents make the most informed choice for their children.

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

You and the members of your group are voluntary helpers of a welfare association in your district. You have decided to produce a *Good Schools Guide* for parents in the community.

In producing the *Guide*, decide what your criteria are for a 'good' school. You may also want to suggest to parents how and where they can collect information about what different schools offer. Consider what else you wish to include in the booklet and how it could be made more useful and informative for parents.

You do not need to come to a final decision or to reach a conclusion in 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, but should make the presentation in your own words. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Experience it for yourself

To some parents, a good education is one that offers their children a chance not only to excel in their studies, but also to enjoy school life and learning.

Mrs Sze agrees. In her view, the best gift parents can offer their children is a happy childhood. She is thus trying very hard to search for a school that will help her only son develop a good character and positive learning attitude. She particularly wants to avoid sending him to a school which places an overwhelming emphasis on examination results and exerts too much pressure on him. To her, what counts much more than the educational qualifications of the teaching staff and the university entry results is the learning environment, the facilities and the range of activities the school is able to offer. These will ensure her son has a positive experience at school and develops creativity, independent thinking and self-confidence.

Mrs Sze thinks that reading brochures about schools is not enough. To help her decide if schools can deliver all that they promise in these printed materials, she attends their Open Days, as she feels this will give her a clearer picture of the school. This also allows her to see the learning environment, meet students and find out how they like the school. She can also observe how relaxed, comfortable and confident the students are. Listening carefully to what students tell her about the school also gives her a better insight into what the school values. Of course, Mrs Sze has a chance to ask her own questions and to see the range of facilities and resources, activities, programmes and schemes available at the school for her child to choose from.

Like Mrs Sze, most parents are determined to try every possible means to make sure they have made the best choice.

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

You and the members of your group are voluntary helpers of a welfare association in your district. You have decided to produce a *Good Schools Guide* for parents in the community.

In producing the *Guide*, decide what your criteria are for a 'good' school. You may also want to suggest to parents how and where they can collect information about what different schools offer. Consider what else you wish to include in the booklet and how it could be made more useful and informative for parents.

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

Talk to the teachers

In their search for a good school, some parents may have failed to realise that there is nothing more important than finding a school that suits their children.

Mr Donald Cole, an expert in the field of child counselling, advises parents to first understand what their children need, and then find a school that will suit them best. Mr Cole believes that most parents know their children much better than anyone else in matters related to their everyday life; but when it comes to learning, perhaps not. To develop a better understanding of a child's learning needs, Mr Cole's recommendation is: 'Ask teachers for a view of your child's needs and abilities. Ask trusted relatives and friends how they see your child, as both an individual and as a member of society.'

Mr Cole suggests a unique approach in finding a school that meets parents' and children's preferences.

In his view, getting a 'feel' of the school is of paramount importance. He therefore urges parents to attempt to meet some of the teachers in the school on Open Days. This enables them to evaluate the teachers' enthusiasm for teaching, to assess their love for children and to find out how skilled and sensitive they are. 'How well your children learn depends on the type of teacher they have,' says Mr Cole. Of course, it is also crucial that parents prepare in advance a short list of questions they would like responses to and make sure they get answers to them. By talking to teachers, he is also convinced that parents will be better able to judge how the teachers can address their needs and those of their children as well.

Unless parents really enter the school and meet the teachers, it may be difficult to make the most informed choice.

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

You and the members of your group are voluntary helpers of a welfare association in your district. You have decided to produce a *Good Schools Guide* for parents in the community.

In producing the *Guide*, decide what your criteria are for a 'good' school. You may also want to suggest to parents how and where they can collect information about what different schools offer. Consider what else you wish to include in the booklet and how it could be made more useful and informative for parents.

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

Seeking alternative curricula

For most parents, choosing a school for their children is no easy task. In fact, most find the decision a difficult one and the process confusing. Parents in general seem to favour schools which offer a traditional curriculum. However, experienced teachers are suggesting that parents consider schools that adopt an alternative curriculum.

A group of teachers who have been in the profession for over ten years have recently formed an organisation to advise parents on their choice of school for their children. The group is encouraging parents to choose schools that have a greater freedom over their curricula, such as the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) Schools and private independent schools. These schools often provide students with wider choices in school subjects, reflecting their more global outlook in education. In one of them, for instance, students can study two or three languages, plus humanities, mathematics, physical education, sciences, arts and technology. This provides them with not only breadth,

but also depth of study. 'At a very young age, they learn creative thinking and leadership skills and are given chances to participate in basic decision-making,' a teacher says. These schools also have the freedom to award marks for community service, the arts and sports. An all-rounded development is therefore promoted. Although parents have to pay higher fees, the extra resources are needed to support such curricula.

The organisation is aware that most fee-paying independent schools have a further advantage. In addition to smaller class sizes, the classrooms are furnished with large tables and flexible seating arrangements in order to encourage students to work in groups and to interact freely with each other.

More and more parents are now considering paying a larger sum of money to enable their children to enjoy a new curriculum and experience a different kind of education.

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

You and the members of your group are voluntary helpers of a welfare association in your district. You have decided to produce a *Good Schools Guide* for parents in the community.

In producing the *Guide*, decide what your criteria are for a 'good' school. You may also want to suggest to parents how and where they can collect information about what different schools offer. Consider what else you wish to include in the booklet and how it could be made more useful and informative for parents.

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

Looking forward to listening

It is not unusual to hear students groan when they have a listening lesson. For them, listening lessons test their note-taking skills, and are far from enjoyable.

As the listening paper is a major component of the Use of English syllabus, many teachers get their students to do a number of practice papers to prepare them for the all-important public examination. However, they do not really acquire the necessary skills, or find their lessons appealing.

There are, however, some enterprising teachers in a number of schools who are of the firm belief that students will learn a lot, and more effectively, when their lessons relate to their interests. Some English teachers in a school in Kowloon have prepared their own listening resources. A lot of hard work has gone into the process of putting the materials together. Contemporary songs, stories, conversations between young people, news reports about local idols, etc. are used to teach the skills

needed. Students are taught to listen for gist, speaker's tone, main points and specific grammatical items like tenses. The encouraging results and the enthusiastic response of the students are inspiring teachers to carry on the good work. It is easy to see why the students in this particular school look forward to their listening lessons.

Listening skills are also taught at the primary level. One teacher, Mrs Chan, trains her students' listening skills by quizzing them about announcements made over the PA system or talks given during assembly. Before a talk or announcement, she asks them to anticipate what they will hear. This makes them especially attentive and they are rewarded with stickers for answering questions correctly. The children soon realise that language skills are not just learnt in lessons. 'They are motivated to learn and so, I have achieved my objective,' says Mrs Chan.

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

The coordinator of the English Club at your school wants to involve senior students in a plan to help new Form One students at the school improve their English. She has asked members of the English Club to suggest activities that can be held during the lunch break to achieve this aim.

Your group is meeting to think of activities that can help the students use the language in a natural and creative way. You should also try to think of other reasons for choosing these activities and how they could benefit the students.

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

Speaking spontaneously

Mr James Tan was new to the teaching profession. Keen on doing a good job, he spent hours teaching his students English conversation using the exercises in the prescribed textbook. His students, however, seemed to think his lessons were lifeless and were not motivated to use the language. The exercises did not seem to serve any purpose as they were far removed from their life experiences.

Eager to rectify the situation, Mr Tan sought help from his colleagues. One teacher, Mrs Law, a senior and well-respected member of the English Panel, invited him to observe her lessons. This was to help him get some ideas about teaching speaking skills. He did so, and was truly inspired by her highly motivating lessons. Mr Tan noted that she always gave her students realistic tasks which helped them use the language naturally and to their benefit. She would ask her students to interview tourists in Tsim Sha Tsui, get the opinions of non-Chinese teachers about specific topics, and discuss everyday social issues.

Mr Tan observed a lesson where there was a visiting professor from mainland China. During the lesson, Mrs Law asked her Form One students to prepare questions for an interview with the visitor. Mr Tan saw how the students, who first started with their prepared questions, quickly moved on to asking spontaneous questions. Having the professor in the classroom willingly answering their questions was a stimulus. 'I was surprised at the spontaneous interaction and realised how vital it is to make an oral English lesson relevant to the needs of the students and cater to their interests,' said an amazed Mr Tan.

Armed with this newfound knowledge, he was bursting with enthusiasm to see the positive results of his modified teaching methods. Sure enough, there was a marked change in the learning atmosphere, giving great satisfaction to the young educator.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 2 minutes preparation, 10 minutes 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, but should make the presentation in your own words. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Reading with relish

David has a story read to him every night. His father reads him a new story daily, bringing the characters to life with his vivid descriptions, adding excitement with actions and the way he uses his voice. As a result, David picks up a book whenever he can and wants to read. He is a keen reader and knows quite a few words. He is only four years old.

Many children, like David, enjoy reading, as their parents have helped form this habit at an early age. At schools, where reading lessons are an integral part of the curriculum, children also develop an interest in reading. Some schools in Hong Kong give a lot of importance to reading. Pupils are expected to read a certain number of books every month. Reading is done for pleasure and under no pressure. In a short time, the results of this approach are evident in the language students use. The students' general knowledge and creativity are also some areas showing improvement.

Reading programmes have been implemented in schools because educators are aware of the variety of learning outcomes that can be achieved. The Extensive Reading Scheme is one such programme which advocates that students read according to their ability. Teachers monitor the progress of students using a variety of activities like teacher-pupil conferencing, writing book reports and evaluating the books read. Reading corners are a common feature found in many schools. 'We aim to make the corner an open, inviting place where students can enjoy reading or just browsing through books,' said one teacher at a school in Sha Tin.

Reading helps children learn more about the world around them, and improves their language skills. Books open up endless possibilities for our children to learn. Is it not a good idea to get them into the reading habit as early as possible?

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

The coordinator of the English Club at your school wants to involve senior students in a plan to help new Form One students at the school improve their English. She has asked members of the English Club to suggest activities that can be held during the lunch break to achieve this aim.

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

Wanting to write

'Story in a bag', a writing activity designed by Anna, a student teacher, was a huge success with a Form Three class. The task was done in groups. Each group was given a bag containing a few objects like a pencil, tape, a cup, a soft toy, and so on. Once the members had picked five items, they had to create a story using all of them. The teacher had prepared them for writing stories by discussing and demonstrating the required techniques and essential elements of story writing. The result of the collaborative learning effort was eight imaginative, well-written stories.

Another success story with regard to writing was due to the efforts of a teacher to make learning meaningful. Mr George Hung's students were only interested in getting high marks and were not interested in learning. However, he did not give up on his class and in every lesson, he injected enthusiasm by using materials from a variety of sources like video programmes, newspapers, and magazines. Once, he

taught his students the effectiveness of short sentences using an extract from a book called *The Diary of Adrian Mole* – a book about a teenager and his thoughts. By giving the students a suitable context to work on, he ensured that students could relate to the issues. As a result, outstanding work was produced.

Writing should be a product of the students' creativity, a way of expressing themselves. It could be in the form of postcards to friends, invitations to birthday parties or posters for a new club. There is no limit to the possibilities. If students can see the purpose of the task, and are given guidance and positive feedback for the work done, they will certainly want to write.

Writing lessons need not be boring – it is up to teachers to think of ways to make them purposeful and interesting.

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

The coordinator of the English Club at your school wants to involve senior students in a plan to help new Form One students at the school improve their English. She has asked members of the English Club to suggest activities that can be held during the lunch break to achieve this aim.

Your group is meeting to think of activities that can help the students use the language in a natural and creative way. You should also try to think of other reasons for choosing these activities and how they could benefit the students.

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

Online chatrooms

Every afternoon, when Mary returns home from school, she goes online and logs on to her favourite chatroom, often staying there until late at night.

But what is a chatroom? A chatroom is a 'real-time' chat area on the Internet where users click on topics ranging from pop culture to politics, and talk to others who share the same interests. They can also create a chatroom on a topic of their choice. All users must register to participate. Once registered, users 'talk' to each other by typing in a text box; they can see the conversation on the screen as they type.

However, experts from Childnet International, a charity devoted to Internet safety, warn children and their parents that chatrooms are not risk-free and that parents should be very careful in choosing suitable chatrooms for their children. 'Safer' chatrooms are ones that clearly state they have filters for abusive language and

unsuitable material, and are monitored by a team of responsible and properly trained adults. This team moderates what goes on in the chatrooms and regularly checks the content of the messages that appear. To ensure safety, parents are advised to talk to their children more often, to encourage them to share what they are doing on the Internet and to find out who their online friends are. Children should also be reminded not to disclose their personal information to people they do not know in the real world. Keeping the children's computer in a room shared by the whole family is another way to supervise them.

So while there are exciting opportunities on the Internet to engage children like Mary in online interaction with people of their own age, they need to be aware of the possible dangers of chatrooms and safeguard themselves from potential harm.

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

You and the others in your group are on the committee of the Computer Society at your school. The Society has decided to design a poster on the use of the Internet, both at school and at home, in order to draw students' attention to the benefits and potential risks of online activities.

You are meeting to decide what suggestions you would like to include in the poster. You could also discuss where to display the poster and how to design it to make it appealing to the students.

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

Online diaries

A growing number of teenagers who have the habit of writing diaries are now turning to online diaries, seeing them as a new kind of experience.

Josie Li, a sixth-form student, maintains an online diary. She sees this online written world not only as a site where she can store her most treasured memories, interesting encounters, special thoughts and personal problems, but also as a means of communicating with local and overseas friends. 'It saves me the time of writing letters to each one of them,' she says. 'If they are interested in finding out how I am doing at school and my latest news, they can simply log on to the website and read about me,' she adds. Of course, what makes online diaries distinctively different from traditional ones, is that others can also read the writer's entries and write back.

Nonetheless, some parents and teachers worry about the fact that using online diaries means that the

private lives of the writers are made public. They warn teenagers of the danger of revealing their personal feelings and information to strangers. However, Josie does not share this worry. Last week she received an encouraging 'cheer up' message from a stranger after writing about her disappointment at failing a History test. Out of curiosity, Josie reads about others' personal lives. 'I feel I have learnt a lot from reading other people's stories – knowing what they encounter in their everyday lives and how they deal with problems,' she claims.

Times have changed. Traditional diaries used to be kept under lock and key and other people would never be allowed to get their hands on them. Diaries are now written with the someone's-going-to-read-it thought in mind. Don't children see this as a loss of their privacy?

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 2 minutes preparation, 10 minutes 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, but should make the presentation in your own words. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Online games

New technology has made online games one of the most exciting ways for the younger generation to use the computer. The wide variety of games on the Internet and the sense of enjoyment they offer fascinate teenagers.

Daniel is very enthusiastic about playing games, such as chess and action games, online. According to him, there are thousands of easily downloadable games available from which he can choose. 'You can either play one-to-one against the computer or join a multi-player team game,' he explains. As there is no physical barrier on the Internet, Daniel sees this as an excellent opportunity for him to meet net-users from all around the world. He prefers team games with overseas players and enjoys the fun of learning how to play them. In addition, Daniel feels that playing these games can give him a great sense of achievement for two reasons. First, he can choose the beginners' level. As he gets more advanced in his skills, he can move on to higher levels. Second, in

certain action games he is able to not only earn points, but also win online weapons from other players. He finds this very appealing.

Recently, however, there have been several news reports about teenagers committing suicide because of such games. In one case, a nineteen-year old student plunged to his death because the weapons he won after many sleepless nights had been stolen by another online player who hacked into his computer. There have also been many other instances of teenagers suffering from health problems because of addiction to such games, or developing violent behaviour through copying the actions in the games.

In view of such problems, parents and teachers are advised to monitor their children more closely and to warn them of the dangers of over indulging in online games.

Part Two – Group Discussion (Total time: 2 minutes preparation, 10 minutes 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, but should make the presentation in your own words. If you wish, you can add your own opinions or ideas.

Online ‘meetings’

Online conferencing and net meetings using webcams have become increasingly popular over the past few years. Now, business corporations are not the only ones making use of such online environments to contact their clients worldwide. Friends and families are equally enthusiastic about using this form of technology to meet online.

Emily, a university undergraduate who is currently on an exchange programme in Canada for one semester, is a great fan of the webcam. She owns a portable wireless webcam and uses it to catch up with her family and friends in Hong Kong. Whenever she logs on to the Internet, she switches on the device so that they can see her online. She has recently even installed a programme that enables her to talk into her portable webcam. She carries it around her room as she communicates with her parents and loved ones. ‘In this way, when I talk to my parents and best friends, we can see each other. This helps reduce the distance between

us,’ she says. ‘Last week I celebrated my birthday with my friends in Canada and my parents saw the whole thing.’

However, there is a real fear that this device may have potential risks for teenagers if not used properly. The danger of talking to strangers on web-based communication programmes, such as online messenger services, are all too obvious. Using a webcam in such situations makes it easier for people with criminal intentions to track potential victims on the Internet, gather information about them and harm them.

Teenagers are therefore reminded to be very cautious when using the webcam in online environments and to switch it on only when they are talking to net-users they are closely acquainted with. The consequences of ignoring the dangers of online communication can be serious.

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

You and the others in your group are on the committee of the Computer Society at your school. The Society has decided to design a poster on the use of the Internet, both at school and at home, in order to draw students’ attention to the benefits and potential risks of online activities.

You are meeting to decide what suggestions you would like to include in the poster. You could also discuss where to display the poster and how to design it to make it appealing to the students.

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.

The examiners cannot answer any questions about the instructions or the task you have to discuss. If you have any questions, you may discuss them among yourselves and that will be an acceptable part of your group discussion, and will be assessed.

NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY

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.

Automatic-teller-machine crimes

Police reports have shown a sudden rise in the number of crimes at automatic teller machines (ATMs) in Hong Kong. Since December 2003, there have been over forty cases involving ATMs, in which approximately \$1,900,000 has been stolen.

Unscrupulous thieves have invented new ways of stealing money. They install mini digital video recorders hidden at the corners of ATMs. When cardholders insert their cards into the slot and enter their personal identification number (PIN), the thieves can use these recorders to 'read' the number. At the same time, there is another powerful device inserted into the card slot that enables them to 'read' all the cardholder's information and duplicate the card. So most victims are unaware that their money has been stolen from their accounts until they receive their next monthly statement. Other thieves simply pretend to be queuing up at ATMs and snatch the card and money before the ATM user retrieves them.

Police warn the public that they need to be extra cautious when using ATMs. While banks are enhancing their security measures, ATM users should also be on the alert. In a recent television programme, *Police Report*, people using ATMs were reminded to use one hand to cover the panel when entering their PIN. They were also advised to use ATMs either within banks which usually have a security guard or in enclosed ATM cells where there are surveillance cameras. 'It is difficult for thieves to install such illegal devices in machines at these places,' a police officer explained. People who frequently withdraw money from ATMs were also urged to be vigilant at all times – to look out for suspicious people following them to the ATMs or queuing up behind them.

With the concerted efforts of the police, banks and ATM users, it is hoped that the problem will soon be brought under control.

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

In response to the increase in the number of crimes in your district, your school is planning to hold a 'Fight Crime Campaign'. It hopes the event will heighten students' and parents' awareness of the issue and inform them about ways in which they can protect themselves from potential risk.

You and the others in your group belong to the Junior Police Call at your school, and are organising the campaign. At the meeting, you may want to talk about the types of crimes you wish to alert students and parents to, and discuss the types of activities to hold during the campaign.

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

Mobile-phone crimes

Nearly 200 local citizens reported losing their mobile phones last month alone. Over half of these victims were aged between twelve and nineteen.

According to the victims of mobile phone theft, the thieves disguise themselves as innocent passers-by. Samuel Pang, a fourth-former, had his phone stolen while he was waiting for a bus. 'A man dressed very neatly in a suit came over to me. He said he had an urgent phone call to make but had forgotten to bring his own mobile phone,' Samuel said. He then lent the man his phone. 'As he was talking over the phone, he complained about the quality of the reception. He began to walk further and further away from me and eventually disappeared,' he recalled. Samuel's case is one of the most common ones. In other cases reported, dishonest people borrow mobile phones on the street not to make local, but long-distance calls, and victims usually do not realise until they receive their monthly bills.

In view of the increasing number of crimes involving mobile phones, police, parents and teachers are advising teenagers to be on their guard. 'Teenagers should learn to say 'no' to these requests from people they do not know,' a police officer said. At school, students are advised to tell these people to use public pay phones which are conveniently located. Police also urge parents to remind their children never to disclose their mobile numbers to strangers and to report to the police if they have been robbed of their phones. To curb such crimes, police have recommended that shops selling mobile phones should not trade in second-hand phones without confirming that they have come from legitimate sources.

So, think twice before deciding whether you should lend your phone to someone whose motives you are unsure of.

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

In response to the increase in the number of crimes in your district, your school is planning to hold a 'Fight Crime Campaign'. It hopes the event will heighten students' and parents' awareness of the issue and inform them about ways in which they can protect themselves from potential risk.

You and the others in your group belong to the Junior Police Call at your school, and are organising the campaign. At the meeting, you may want to talk about the types of crimes you wish to alert students and parents to, and discuss the types of activities to hold during the campaign.

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

Crimes targeting residents

There has recently been a sharp rise in the number of crimes in residential estates, with criminals disguising themselves as representatives from public utility companies. In the past few months, over twenty cases have been reported with losses ranging from a few hundred to millions of dollars.

Mr and Mrs Chiu were the unfortunate victims of such a crime. They were visited one afternoon by a person who claimed to be working for the telephone company. 'A young man rang our doorbell, so we opened the door. He showed us some promotional leaflets about reducing telephone bills and we invited him in to get more information,' Mrs Chiu said. 'We then completed a form requiring our signature and some personal details. He then asked us for our credit card to secure the offer. Because he was able to issue us a receipt promising that the card would be returned to us in three days, I gave him mine,' Mr Chiu recalled. A month later, the Chius

discovered that goods worth over \$50,000 had been bought using their card.

Police warn the public that such crimes are becoming more and more common. To prevent crime and protect themselves, residents are reminded not to let any strangers into their homes. They are advised to verify their identity by requesting proof of their employee status with the company mentioned and to call the company to check if residents have not been informed of such visits. Before verifying their visitor's identity, they should never disclose any personal information, or hand over their credit or identity cards. Police further urge security guards in apartments and housing estates to look out for unfamiliar faces and to perform security checks more regularly.

It is not only the duty of the police, but also that of the public to reduce crime in society.

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

In response to the increase in the number of crimes in your district, your school is planning to hold a 'Fight Crime Campaign'. It hopes the event will heighten students' and parents' awareness of the issue and inform them about ways in which they can protect themselves from potential risk.

You and the others in your group belong to the Junior Police Call at your school, and are organising the campaign. At the meeting, you may want to talk about the types of crimes you wish to alert students and parents to, and discuss the types of activities to hold during the campaign.

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

Street cheats

The police are alerting the public to a sudden increase in the number of street crimes involving criminals cheating passers-by of their money. Over 120 complaints were received in the first quarter of the year from citizens who reported having been cheated.

The targets of such cheats are teenagers who are in their school uniform or shopping on their own, or housewives and pedestrians who do not seem to be in a rush. The thieves approach their chosen victims, claim that they have either had their pockets picked or bags snatched and ask for money. Mrs Yiu, a housewife in her mid-thirties, was recently a victim. One morning, she was approached by a middle-aged woman. 'I met her at the market just after buying food for the day. She came over to me in tears, telling me that she had been robbed. She then asked if I could lend her some money to go home. I took pity on her and gave it to her. Two days

later, I met her again on the street – this time cheating someone else!' Mrs Yiu said angrily.

The advice that the police have for victims like Mrs Yiu is that they should never entertain such requests from strangers. 'If people you don't know claim that they have been robbed, refer them to us. Ask them to contact the nearest police station,' Inspector Chan says. 'If these cheats continue to pester you, you should call the police at once,' he adds. He also urges all victims or witnesses who have not reported such cases to do so. 'It is every citizen's responsibility to report crimes, however small the loss is,' he stresses.

To prevent such unscrupulous people from continuing to disturb or harm the public, citizens are urged to take immediate action to report crime immediately.

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

In response to the increase in the number of crimes in your district, your school is planning to hold a 'Fight Crime Campaign'. It hopes the event will heighten students' and parents' awareness of the issue and inform them about ways in which they can protect themselves from potential risk.

You and the others in your group belong to the Junior Police Call at your school, and are organising the campaign. At the meeting, you may want to talk about the types of crimes you wish to alert students and parents to, and discuss the types of activities to hold during the campaign.

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

Fear and fun at Halloween

The origins of Halloween are religious and can be traced back to ancient Ireland. To the people in those days, the first day of November represented the New Year and when one year moved into another, the boundary between this world and the spirit world joined. Even now, some societies refuse to celebrate this festival because of the religious meaning behind it.

In Russia, there is little support for Halloween celebrations. The Russian Church, which believes that people should not joke and play with evil forces, is against the festival. The authorities, who see Halloween as a festival for the dead, told schools in Moscow to ignore it. In Hong Kong, some schools also refuse to participate in the festivities because the festival is against their religious beliefs. In fact, the Chinese calendar has special days for 'ghost festivals'. Ghosts are feared and respected, and the festivals are very serious occasions.

However, to most local people Halloween is a time for fun, and not a time for fear. Last year, thousands of people went to popular areas such as Lan Kwai Fong and Causeway Bay dressed in different costumes. Parties were arranged for all ages and young children played 'trick or treat' in housing estates. This practice involves knocking on doors and asking for candies or 'treats'. If the person refuses to give any candies, the children play a 'trick' on him or her. What makes it more fun is that the children are all dressed in masks, wear costumes and often carry lanterns.

One little boy called Alex described his Halloween fun last year. 'I dressed up as a skeleton with a scary mask and went on the MTR. I tried to scare the other passengers but most of them just laughed. One lady actually got up and left the carriage though!' So, is Halloween fun or a time to be afraid? Perhaps both!

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

In recent years, special occasions and festivals like Halloween, Valentine's Day and Christmas have become very popular in Hong Kong. Some people claim that these days have become too commercial and are only about money.

Your English teacher has organised a class debate on the motion, 'Festivals have lost their true meaning in Hong Kong.' Now, your group is preparing for the debate by looking at the issue from both sides. You should consider arguments FOR and AGAINST the motion and decide together how you can illustrate your points with relevant examples.

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

Saying 'Hello' to Halloween

October 31st, All Hallow's Eve and the day before All Saints' Day are different names for the festival which is generally known as Halloween. Traditionally, it is a time when spirits and ghosts are supposed to enter the human world and roam around in search of bodies to possess. Now, however, it is a time for human beings, young and old, to dress up in fancy costumes and celebrate.

What has made Halloween so popular? A toy shop owner in Mongkok claims that for the last five years, business around Halloween has been increasing. 'Halloween wasn't very special to the Chinese ten years ago,' he said. 'But with the influence of Western culture and the arrival of major toy shops in Hong Kong, it has become very big business. It's great!' Indeed, everyone seems to be getting involved – which is why toy shops are so busy in the weeks before October 31st.

Ocean Park has a special Halloween theme for one month prior to the festival. Restaurants all over Hong Kong cover their walls in cobwebs and put giant spiders on the ceilings. Models of ghosts, witches and devils can be seen hanging from shop windows. Many schools, from kindergartens to secondary, join in the fun. One school last year had a day of celebrations starting with the distribution of candies at assembly. At lunch time, a horror film was shown and after school the principal carved a large pumpkin in the playground.

Toy shop owners think the increasing popularity of Halloween is great because they are the ones making the profit, with children's costumes costing from \$200 to over \$1000. That worries some parents. Mr Tong refuses to let his children take part because he thinks they are being exploited. 'It's not a festival anymore. It's just a way for some people to make money.'

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

In recent years, special occasions and festivals like Halloween, Valentine's Day and Christmas have become very popular in Hong Kong. Some people claim that these days have become too commercial and are only about money.

Your English teacher has organised a class debate on the motion, 'Festivals have lost their true meaning in Hong Kong.' Now, your group is preparing for the debate by looking at the issue from both sides. You should consider arguments FOR and AGAINST the motion and decide together how you can illustrate your points with relevant examples.

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

Valentine's Day – not only for lovers

Last year on February 14th, Julie bought a box of chocolates and wrapped it up carefully. She then gave it to a very special person – her maths teacher, Miss Chan. It seems that Valentine's Day is no longer a day when only loved ones share special gifts and messages with each other. As Julie said, 'February 14th is a day for me to show my love for all my friends and people I care about.'

Valentine's Day is celebrated in many countries including Canada, Mexico, UK, France, Australia and the United States. In those places, candies, flowers and gifts are exchanged, and all in the name of St Valentine. But who was this mysterious saint? There are many stories associated with him. One story is that he was a priest who performed marriage ceremonies for young lovers in secret, after an emperor in the third century banned marriage. According to another legend, he was the very first person to send a 'valentine' greeting. Whatever the

truth, St Valentine has become the patron saint of romance.

However, as Julie's case shows, romance is not necessary for someone to send a card or give a gift. In recent years, local people have been using February 14th to celebrate friendship as well as romance. Surveys have shown that teachers receive the most Valentine's Day cards, followed by children, mothers and wives, and then boyfriends and girlfriends.

So what do teachers think about this? The maths teacher mentioned earlier claims that she was surprised at first when students started to buy gifts for her and each other on February 14th but she has since got used to it. 'Love and friendship are so close to each other and anything that brings people closer together has to be good,' she said.

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

In recent years, special occasions and festivals like Halloween, Valentine's Day and Christmas have become very popular in Hong Kong. Some people claim that these days have become too commercial and are only about money.

Your English teacher has organised a class debate on the motion, 'Festivals have lost their true meaning in Hong Kong.' Now, your group is preparing for the debate by looking at the issue from both sides. You should consider arguments FOR and AGAINST the motion and decide together how you can illustrate your points with relevant examples.

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

For love and money

One well-known card company had over 1300 different cards especially made for Valentine's Day last year. Shops and Internet companies have thousands of items for sale every 14th February, and restaurants look forward to this day because of the financial rewards. While romance is in the air for all the lovers and couples celebrating on Valentine's Day, it is the businesspeople behind all these products that are, perhaps, the happiest.

Why has a day associated with love and romance become so commercialised? There is no doubt that Valentine's Day is big business. In 2002, consumers spent \$650 million US dollars on candies, flowers, food and other gifts. Of that enormous figure, \$45 million was spent on chocolates alone! Each year, about one billion Valentine's Day cards are exchanged and the only occasion when more cards are sent is Christmas. It is also traditional to send flowers with Valentine's Day

cards and over 100 million red roses were sold last year. Businesses profit from Valentine's Day, but this does not seem to stop people from spending even more each year to express their love.

John O'Leary sent his girlfriend 100 red roses last Valentine's Day. Inside the wrapping was a small box containing a diamond ring. Just to make sure, John put a message in the local newspapers which simply said, 'Anna, will you marry me?' John spent thousands of dollars to do this but has no regrets. 'Yes, Valentine's Day is expensive but it's also special. The money was not important. Romance has no price.'

Others are not so sure. One husband said that he bought flowers for his wife but only two days after Valentine's Day. 'The roses were half price then and my wife would have killed me if I had wasted more money!'

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

In recent years, special occasions and festivals like Halloween, Valentine's Day and Christmas have become very popular in Hong Kong. Some people claim that these days have become too commercial and are only about money.

Your English teacher has organised a class debate on the motion, 'Festivals have lost their true meaning in Hong Kong.' Now, your group is preparing for the debate by looking at the issue from both sides. You should consider arguments FOR and AGAINST the motion and decide together how you can illustrate your points with relevant examples.

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