

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.

Octopus spreads its tentacles in Hong Kong

Before the introduction of the Octopus card in 1997, people had to count loose change while waiting for buses, or use coins for buying single journey tickets on the MTR. This card has transformed the way people in Hong Kong travel and pay for public transport. This is because people no longer need to carry change; they can simply use the pre-paid Octopus card. The convenience that the card brings to people is often taken for granted, with over seven million Octopus transactions every day. Now this card is being used in other ways. Where will the influence of the card stop?

In recent years, the Octopus card has been accepted by small retailers, such as cake shops and cafés; they believe that it helps with micro-payments, or small transactions. Supermarkets have also started to use the system and in 2004, stall owners in wet markets allowed customers wanting to buy meat and fish to make payments using the Octopus card. One old man praised

the idea, 'I don't like counting out the change, as I get confused,' he said. Still, despite the obvious convenience, there are worries that the Octopus card might not be so perfect.

Several shoppers have said that they do not trust the cards. 'Mistakes can occur and, unlike when we pay the shop assistant directly, we cannot ask for the total to be checked. It happens too fast.' Shopkeepers who prefer receiving cash have also complained because they do not receive the money from the Octopus card company until much later.

There is also the question of privacy. Data on the Octopus card has enabled police to arrest criminals as the card shows where people have travelled and at what time. It seems that the Octopus card also records our daily activities!

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

A local English language newspaper is organising a public speaking contest for senior secondary students. You and your classmates are taking part in the contest. The topic is *The role of ID cards and other electronic cards in society*.

To prepare for the contest, discuss the pros and cons of electronic cards commonly used in society. You should try to illustrate your points and think of ways of presenting them in an interesting manner.

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.

How electronic cards can rule our lives

Identity cards, credit cards and Octopus cards are all so popular for one reason – they are convenient. They can fit into handbags, purses and pockets. In addition, they can provide proof of identity and contain hidden information or data about the owner. For example, an Octopus card can be personalised so that the identity of the owner is known. In Hong Kong, approximately 40,000 electronic cards are used to open main doors in housing estates. This is just one example of how the cards have developed from simple payment tools into security and identity devices. Identity cards are even more powerful.

Why are ID cards issued? Some countries believe that they will help fight crime. In Australia, the government believes an ID card will help stop tax evasion. In Holland, the card helps to make government administration more efficient. In other countries, an ID card is used as a travel document. By adding tiny computer chips, the cards can also be used to store

personal information which can be read by the government and the police.

In Hong Kong, everyone must carry an ID card, and it is not the only place where such cards are used. Over one hundred countries have ID cards, which are used for a variety of purposes. Some countries do not have a national identity card but instead, have social security or health cards. In the United Kingdom, there is no ID card; passports and driving licences are used for identification purposes.

However, a politician in the United Kingdom claims that ID cards provide greater security for citizens. 'The cards can benefit individuals who want to prove their identity and they can also make the community safer.' Despite the apparent benefits of an ID card system, many people in Britain still oppose such a scheme.

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.

How electronic cards can ruin our lives

Peter was at work one day when he received a telephone call from his bank. The staff asked him if he had spent \$250,000 that morning on jewellery. He was shocked as he had not been out of his office all morning. 'I later discovered that someone had used my credit card and my ID card details to buy gold. I felt so stupid and angry.' Even though credit cards and ID cards are supposed to make the world more secure and more efficient, there are criminals who use the cards to steal and to cheat people. This crime is called identity fraud and it involves someone stealing the identity of another person.

The man who pretended to be Peter and spent so much of his money without his knowledge was later arrested. The criminal, Mr. Lau, worked in a shop which Peter had previously visited and managed to make a copy of Peter's credit card. After a few days, he transferred the details to the fake one. By taking Peter's ID card

number, he was also able to steal the victim's identity and trick the jewellery shop into accepting what it believed was a genuine card.

Last year, an Australian bank issued a card which was designed using the most modern technology in security. Yet, within two days, criminals like Mr. Lau had managed to copy it. Many organisations now issue plastic cards which have security devices, such as holograms to try and prevent identity theft, but this does not deter the criminals.

Such crimes are inevitable according to police. 'The more an ID card is used, the more value it has to criminals and even terrorists,' one security official said. 'By making use of false identity cards, terrorists can change their identity very easily.' So do ID cards really make us more secure?

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.

What will tomorrow bring for electronic cards?

Hong Kong's Octopus cards and Smart ID cards are great examples of modern technology. In Hong Kong, people can enjoy travelling on public transport without cash. The newly introduced Smart ID cards can be fitted with a special e-Cert allowing users to buy shares and even gamble online. Compared to many countries, such as America and Australia, Hong Kong is already a futuristic society where identity cards are concerned. Considering how quickly technology has developed in recent years, it is hard to imagine what ID cards of the future will be like and how they will change our lives even further.

With police reporting that even the best ID cards can be copied by criminals, ID cards of the future are likely to include special features such as fingerprint data for instant confirmation of identity. In some high security buildings, employees are required to have their thumbprint screened to gain access to offices and

laboratories. If the thumbprint is not recognised by the company computer, it refuses entry and sets off an alarm. 'With the increased threat of terrorism, such a device is common now,' said a security expert.

It may even be possible for ID cards to be linked to a national crime and DNA database. This would help the police because the card could provide them with biological evidence as well as identification details which could be used to make arrests.

For some people, ID cards of the future are very frightening because of the amount of personal information they can carry. One opponent, John Blair, has been campaigning against the cards for ten years. 'Soon every detail of our lives will be available for anyone to download using the right equipment. We will all be numbers on a machine. No more privacy. It's a scary thought.'

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

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Empty your mind

Would you rather be unhappy and stressed out or happy and content? It is obvious which most of us would choose but we often forget we have the choice. Modern life can be extremely stressful, especially in a busy place like Hong Kong. People tend to work very long hours and consequently are not really satisfied with their lives. However, studies show that if people devote 10 to 20 minutes a day to relaxation, the benefits are enormous.

Meditation is one way of de-stressing and getting more in touch with our inner selves. It is an ancient Indian technique, which involves emptying the mind of all worries and concentrating on calm thoughts. Joanne Wilson, an experienced meditator says, 'One of the difficulties first-time meditators have is an inability to concentrate. However, the secret is not to try too hard. Beginners can focus on one thing, such as their own

breathing or even a painting on a wall, rather than trying to empty their minds completely.'

Terry Tse is relatively new to meditation. He says that it was difficult to concentrate at first but the more he practised, the easier it became. He admits that he used to be unhappy with his life but now he meditates for 20 minutes every day, which helps him to relax and be more positive, and he feels like a new man.

Ms. Wilson says, 'The good thing about meditation is that you can do it anywhere, it is free and you do not need any special equipment.' This means that people can easily fit it into their busy daily routines, whether it is in the morning before they go to work or at night before they go to bed. In fact, some people even meditate at their desks at lunchtime or on the ferry on their way to work!

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

Your principal is concerned about Form One students being very stressed. He is going to organise a *Beat Study Stress Day* to introduce methods for students to relieve their stress. As part of the day's activities, he would like to invite senior students to hold practical workshops. You are a group of senior form students and the principal has asked you for help.

Discuss practical and relevant methods of stress relief for Form One students and decide how the workshops should be organised.

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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.

Art jamming

Art is all about fun and making friends, at least that is what Betty Fu, the owner of the Happy Arts Café, thinks, and that is the aim of the art jam sessions at her café in Central.

An art jam involves getting together in a group and painting. It is not about creating a masterpiece but enjoying yourself and forgetting about the worries and stresses of everyday life. Betty says, 'In an art jam there are all kinds of people working next to each other and they all share the same aim, and that's to have fun. You don't have to be an artist and you don't even have to be creative. As long as you are willing to have fun, you will enjoy yourself.'

The idea behind art jamming is that people come together to have a good time. Painting is used in the same way that discos use dancing or karaoke clubs use

singing. In other words, people get together and have fun. Fiona Liu loves art jamming. She says, 'My friends and I are always looking for new and interesting things to do. We got rather bored of always going out for dinner or going to karaoke bars on a Saturday night, so we started going to an art jam session for a change.'

Fiona admits that she was worried before she went to her first session as she has never been good at painting. However, she soon realised that this did not matter. She says, 'The best thing is that you forget about work and personal problems as you are absorbed in the painting and the people around you.' Another advantage is that art jamming helps develop creativity, and this is often ignored in Hong Kong schools. We need to be creative to constantly adapt to the changing environment we live in.

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.

Tenpin bowling

If you are looking for a low-impact and fun way to exercise your body and mind, tenpin bowling is the sport for you. Unlike outdoor sports, bowling is not affected by weather conditions. It is a sport that can be enjoyed all year round, whatever the weather.

It is not surprising that bowling is the world's second most played sport as it can be played by people of all ages. Also, it is not too physically demanding and it is great fun. In fact, many families have started going tenpin bowling on a regular basis as they find all the family members enjoy it and it is a good way for everyone to relieve stress and have a good time.

Although bowling is an enjoyable pastime, it is by no means easy. Lewis Fung, a former Hong Kong bowling team coach says, 'It's 75% a mental game. Good bowlers must calculate the angle the ball enters the

lane so as to knock down as many pins as possible.' Apart from being a mental game, bowling demands excellent body coordination as timing is the most important part of the sport. Bowlers must coordinate their hands and legs and release the ball at exactly the right time.

Mandy Yau, who works part-time at the bowling alley in Olympian City, says that more and more people are going bowling these days. She believes this is because it is fun to go with a group of friends, colleagues, or family members and everybody finds it enjoyable. She says, 'It is important for people to do fun things in their free time so that they can forget about work and study pressure for a while and just focus on what is happening right now.' She thinks group games are an excellent way of de-stressing.

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.

Laughter – the best all-round medicine

Scientists are convinced of the positive effect of laughter on physical and mental health. However, how many times a day do you laugh? It seems like people have forgotten how to smile, let alone laugh.

Six years ago after reading medical reports about the benefits of laughter, Dr. Kataria from India set up the first laughter club. It started off very simply but has blossomed into a popular pastime. She says, 'At first, we used to tell jokes to make people laugh. People enjoyed the fun and felt relaxed after 15 minutes of laughter every morning. However, all of the good jokes ran out and it was evident that we could not depend on someone telling jokes 365 days a year.'

After a lot of thinking Dr. Kataria devised a plan to help people laugh without jokes. She believes that shyness prevents people from laughing. To remove this obstacle, group members were told to get together in

large numbers, look at each other's faces and raise their hands to the sky. Laughter spreads when people laugh in groups and have good eye contact. A laughing session starts with deep breathing and the participants all chant Ho-Ho, Ha-Ha-Ha together, faster and faster until they all start laughing.

The one benefit everybody derives from group laughing is a sense of well-being. After 15 minutes of laughter every morning, they feel relaxed throughout the day. Some people say 'there is no medicine like laughter' as it combats the ill effects of modern life such as depression and sleeplessness. Laughter provides instant relaxation, puts people in a positive mood, reduces stress levels and boosts the immune system. Members of laughter clubs have noticed that they now get fewer colds and sore throats. What is more, these clubs require no membership fee because laughter is free.

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

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Rack of pain

Some people will do almost anything to achieve their desired shape. In 2003, TV advertisements featured a machine that was supposed to make people taller by stretching their bodies. The machine, from Taiwan, is like a rack – an ancient torture device on which prisoners had their bodies pulled and stretched until they died. The modern 'Height Machine' promises to make people taller by slowly and carefully stretching leg and back muscles. The advertisements showed people who claimed that the machine had made them taller. One woman said that she had grown by 13cm in just 20 days!

Doctors in Hong Kong were quick to warn the public that this machine was potentially dangerous and that it could not make people taller. 'It is scientifically impossible to make adults taller by using a machine like this,' said one doctor. The Health Department promised to investigate the claims made by the company that produced the machine.

However, some people are still interested in the machine because they want to become taller. Research has shown that people who are not very tall can be discriminated against, and in some careers, height is an important qualification. For example, there is a minimum height for someone wanting to become a policeman or a flight attendant. One such person, Shuk-yin, had an operation last year to make herself taller so that she could achieve her dream and work as a flight attendant.

Shuk-yin had surgery to make her legs longer. First, her legs were broken and then metal tubes were placed inside the bones. Screws were inserted between the tubes and then gradually turned to widen the gap between the metal tubes and the bones. After three to six months, the legs had lengthened by 5cm to 8cm. Was it worth the pain? 'No,' said Shuk-yin, 'and I did not become a flight attendant either.'

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

Your English teacher has asked you to prepare for a presentation on the subject of *The things people do to improve their physical appearance*.

To prepare for the presentation, you and your group are researching some of the ways that people use to improve their physical appearance. In the presentation, you should discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each method and recommend some methods for people to try.

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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.

Is white right?

The number of young women in Hong Kong who are buying special cosmetics to whiten their faces has increased dramatically in the last few years. The desire to have white skin has also been encouraged by a number of advertisements featuring well-known singers and models.

According to a study conducted in Hong Kong, 45% of local women have used whitening products. Only one other country in Asia uses more whitener and that is the Philippines, where exactly half the female population uses skin-whitening cosmetics. What has made light skin so important for Asian women? Women using the special products have given several reasons. According to one teenage user in Hong Kong, the whitener helps to cover spots. Another lady in her 30s claims that the whitener makes her look younger. One respondent said, 'I think that men like it. I feel more confident.'

It is rather ironic that while many Asians want their skin to be fairer, a large number of westerners who already have fair complexions look for ways to darken the colour of their skin. In America and Europe, it is common for men and women to use creams that darken the skin. It is also becoming popular for western people to visit health clubs where they can relax on sun-beds and tan their skin under special lights. So, it is no longer necessary for people to expose themselves to natural sunlight to make their bodies brown.

Doctors worry about the rising trend in the use of skin-whitening products. According to one medical official in Hong Kong, skin whitener is just another way for businesses to exploit people's lack of self-esteem and confidence in order to gain profits. 'It's a trick. Asian women should appreciate the fact that they already have excellent skin,' she said.

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.

Hollywood teeth

Carol spoke to her dentist last month. 'I am going to a wedding tomorrow and I want white teeth,' she explained. When the dentist examined her mouth he found several damaged teeth and a cavity, which needed to be filled. According to Carol, these problems were not important. 'Just make my teeth whiter, please,' she asked again. It seems that dental health these days is no longer about fillings and having teeth taken out. Like so many other areas of the body, the appearance of their teeth is becoming a priority for many people.

In America, dentists spend more time on whitening patients' teeth than anything else. Apparently, everyone wants a Hollywood smile with dazzling white teeth. In 2004, Americans spent over US\$1.7 billion on dental cleaning and whitening products. Here in Hong Kong, a similar trend is starting to emerge with many chemists selling do-it-yourself teeth whitening kits along with a wide range of toothpastes. In Central, a special shop provides a whitening treatment in a process that

takes approximately 90 minutes. The cost is over HK\$6,000 – much more than a tube of toothpaste!

According to some dentists, the rising demand for this treatment is due to people having more money than before. 'If someone has good teeth, a confident smile and clean breath, they feel very happy, so they are prepared to spend more money on dental products,' said Dr. Lee. However, he also urged people to check with dentists before buying any product. 'A boy nearly poisoned himself because he tried to clean his teeth with bleach,' he warned.

It is said that the whiteness does not last long because as soon as people start eating and drinking, the teeth return to their old colour. Carol's dentist refused to whiten her teeth. He told her that she would not have any teeth to whiten if she did not pay attention to the damaged ones.

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

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Fitness fanatics

Miss Chan started to go to a health club a year ago. Initially, she just wanted to use the steam baths and saunas. However, she then became interested in shaping her body through exercise. 'After that, I hired a personal trainer who has developed a special fitness and exercise programme for me,' she said. According to Miss Chan, she attends the health club six days a week and it is well worth the money and effort. 'I have improved my physical appearance and I feel more confident.' Health clubs like hers represent one of the most popular ways of keeping fit in Hong Kong.

Health clubs and fitness centres charge money for helping people to get the body shape that they desire. The centres claim that they can help people slim down and lose weight, strengthen muscles, increase energy levels and even reduce anxiety. In a city like Hong Kong which suffers from air pollution, the air-conditioned health clubs are convenient and luxurious places to go to.

However, many people do not have the time or patience to go to a fitness centre. They prefer to look for a quick solution to lose weight.

Magazines and newspapers are full of advertisements showing photos of people who have supposedly lost a lot of weight by taking pills, reducing food intake and going for other treatments. These methods are often very expensive and there is no guarantee of success. Medical experts stress the importance of having a balanced diet and taking regular exercise in order to stay slim and fit. 'There is no quick fix,' said one doctor.

One lady spent over \$100,000 on fitness centre fees and slimming pills but found that she was unable to achieve her health goals. 'In truth, it was making me unhappy so I gave up,' she said.

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

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Illegal textbooks

Daniel Hunt, a professor at University College London, recently received an email from a student in China telling him that a book the professor had written was being illegally copied in China. He replied to the student to find out more and discovered that large numbers of copied editions of his book were being sold very cheaply. He felt extremely angry about this.

Mr. Hunt's case is very common in a country where items ranging from tennis shoes to restaurant logos are being copied without a second thought. While Chinese and foreign news reports often describe crackdowns on illegal DVDs and CDs, the piracy of textbooks receives far less attention.

The black market for textbooks is booming and it is hurting domestic and foreign publishers. Tsinghua University Press estimates that it loses 20% of its profits to piracy. It is not only the professional piracy operations that are to blame either. Many universities

have a very casual attitude to photocopying, with lecturers photocopying whole textbooks to use in class with their students. Susan Hays, a representative from a leading publishing house in China, wonders how students will ever understand copyright issues and respect intellectual property laws when even educational institutions do not obey the laws.

Although Ms. Hays says that the Chinese authorities are taking the piracy problem more seriously these days and the situation has improved slightly, illegal copying is still a major problem. However, she remarks that because copied books are cheaper and students do not have much money, they will inevitably buy them. Some students do not even realise that it is illegal, as they have never been taught about intellectual property. They buy copied DVDs, clothes, shoes, and other items all the time and they think buying a copied textbook or dictionary is exactly the same.

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

The Hong Kong Police Force is setting up an anti-piracy campaign targeted at secondary school students and has invited students to send in ideas for it.

You and your group members are meeting to discuss some possible ideas for the campaign. You might consider how to raise awareness among young people of the problems of piracy. You could also discuss how to promote 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.

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.

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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.

Free music, but at what cost?

Do you download music from the Internet? The chances are that you do, or at least lots of your friends do. Recent research has shown that there are over 340 websites around the world that allow illegal downloading of Chinese music, and 40% of these sites operate out of Hong Kong. The research also estimates that the number of illegal downloads is as high as 9 million per month, a trend which is having a devastating effect on the local recording industry.

Young people are mainly responsible. They freely admit that they download music and the majority say that even though they know it is a crime, they still do it as they do not really feel that it is wrong. Raymond Fong, a Form Five student, says that he downloads music because he does not have the money to buy the original versions. He also says that he does not like spending over HK\$100 on an original CD as he may take it home and discover that he actually dislikes the music.

Raymond knows that he is taking a risk because under copyright law in Hong Kong, the maximum penalty for piracy is HK\$50,000 and four years' imprisonment for each pirated copy. However, he believes he will not be caught as the police tend to look for people who do it for profit and not for personal use.

The economic losses due to music piracy are enormous. People mistakenly think that songwriters and singers are the only ones who suffer and that this does not matter, as they are rich anyway. However, this is completely untrue. All sectors of the local music industry, from factory workers to owners of music shops, feel the impact. A recent estimate is that music downloading alone could put the jobs of 600,000 people worldwide at risk.

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

The Hong Kong Police Force is setting up an anti-piracy campaign targeted at secondary school students and has invited students to send in ideas for it.

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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.

Is buying copied goods a crime?

Recently a survey of 1000 Hong Kong people was conducted on the issue of whether the purchase of copied or pirated goods was a crime. Most respondents admitted that they know buying fake goods is wrong but feel that it is not a crime and that the person who commits the act should not be punished. In view of this, it is perhaps not surprising that the market for fake goods is flourishing.

In Hong Kong, we are surrounded by fake merchandise. Any journey is likely to take us past hawkers selling illegal CDs, DVDs or designer clothing. In areas like Mong Kok or Sham Shui Po, pirated computer software is commonplace. Even a tourist would have no difficulty buying a 'copy watch', or fake versions of a Polo shirt or a Gucci bag.

It is possible for a person to buy fake goods unknowingly and almost half of the respondents admitted that they could not tell a fake item from a genuine one.

Some mentioned that this is a big concern as some fake goods such as toys and electrical equipment may not be safe for the user. In one incident, a fake DVD player exploded in a customer's face the first time he tried to use it. Another unsuspecting customer was seriously hurt when his mobile phone blew up because of a fake battery.

A spokesperson from the Hong Kong Police Force, Steven Griffin, said, 'Most people know that it's morally wrong to buy counterfeit goods and that it's damaging to Hong Kong. So, our message has to be: Come on, if you know it is wrong you have to do something about it.' He recommended introducing tougher penalties for both buyers and sellers of illegal goods. In view of the fact that so many people buy counterfeit goods, knowingly or unknowingly, he thinks civic education is very important.

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.

Are you eating ‘real’ food?

Copied DVDs, music CDs and computer software are everywhere in Hong Kong. However, the latest fake product is counterfeit soy sauce. Customs officials said they recently arrested three men after finding more than 200 bottles of soy sauce which had false labels. The counterfeit soy sauce was taken to government laboratories to check if it posed any health hazards.

Although this seems to have been a small operation, the amount of fake food coming across the border from China is increasing. Counterfeit wine, brandy and even tinned vegetables such as corn and beans have been found in Hong Kong shops. A Customs official said, ‘The fakes are usually found in small grocery stores and not in large supermarket chains. Owners of small shops are more tempted to buy the cheaper fakes as they think they will make more profit.’

The worry is that there is no guarantee the fake products are safe to eat. They may not be manufactured in a hygienic environment and they may not meet the strict standards set by the Department of Health and Hygiene in Hong Kong. There has been at least one case of a woman being taken to hospital after eating counterfeit tinned meat. She was found to have severe food poisoning.

It is very difficult for consumers to distinguish between fake goods and the genuine article. Fanny Choi, a housewife says, ‘We often hear about illegal DVDs and fake designer clothes but not about illegal food. When we go out to do our shopping, we do not think that we have to examine labels carefully in case the food is counterfeit.’ She thinks the government should increase publicity so that people are aware of this problem and also encourage the public to report shops selling counterfeit food products to the authorities.

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

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Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Save our harbour

‘Victoria Harbour is part of our home. It belongs to us!’ This was a statement from one of the campaigners protesting against the reclamation of some areas of Hong Kong’s harbour at a rally last year which attracted over 12,000 people. They were meeting to show their anger at the government’s decision to build a major road on reclaimed land between Central and Wanchai. It seems that the description of Hong Kong as the ‘Pearl of the Orient’ is under threat because of the reclamation projects carried out in the harbour.

At the protest, a 3000-metre long ribbon was unfolded along the edge of the harbour. The ribbon, which was claimed to be the longest in the world, was blue in colour to match the colour of the harbour. Mrs. Lee, an elderly resident, said that she was there for her grandchildren. ‘The government has turned this harbour into a river because of all the reclamation. What will be left for my grandchildren to look at when they grow up? Can’t the government see that our harbour is precious?’

It seems that the issue of reclaiming more and more of the harbour for commercial and transportation projects has touched the hearts of the local population, who are keen to defend one of Hong Kong’s most famous natural assets. On the one hand, the government claims that the reclamation is necessary for town planning so that traffic congestion can be reduced, but on the other hand, campaigners argue for sensible planning where business leaders, the government and the community work closely to develop a harbour district for everyone to enjoy.

In other parts of the world, waterfronts are being turned into green areas where people can live and work. ‘So much depends on getting individuals to work together to agree on a world-class harbour district for our future generations,’ said one planner.

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

You and your classmates are participating in an inter-school project on *How we can make Hong Kong a better place to live in*. You are meeting to plan your project.

You could discuss some of the major problems in Hong Kong at the moment and what we can do to improve our city. You might like to talk about environmental issues, architecture, and transportation systems. Try to provide examples to illustrate your points.

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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.

Should we preserve the past?

Hong Kong is regarded as one of the most modern cities in the world, but among gleaming skyscrapers and apartment buildings can be found hundreds of heritage sites. These are buildings and areas of historical significance which represent a bridge between the Hong Kong of today and the city of the past. In many countries there are laws set up to preserve buildings that are valued. In Hong Kong, however, only 78 historical buildings are protected by law. This has opened up a debate about whether Hong Kong's heritage should be better protected and preserved.

Buildings such as Government House in Central are regarded as historical buildings and therefore remain safe from development but for many other local structures and areas of interest, the threat of change and even demolition is very real. 'I remember taking my children to the Tiger Balm Gardens in Tai Hang and they loved it, but then it was demolished and the land was sold in 1998,' said one man. Like the old Bird Street in

Mong Kok, these areas are regarded as having historical and cultural importance but there are no laws to protect them.

Last year, a proposal was put forward to develop Lee Tung Street or Wedding Card Street, as it is better known. Residents and shopkeepers reacted with anger. 'These areas represent our collective history. They cannot be replaced,' said one campaigner. In Singapore, the government sets up conservation areas where historical sites cannot be altered. In Macau, nothing is demolished without the Chief Executive's approval.

So what about Hong Kong? The government has initiated a consultation process to try and obtain public agreement on what should be done in order to preserve historical buildings in Hong Kong. The critical question is should we preserve heritage? What will Hong Kong decide and will it be too late?

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

You and your classmates are participating in an inter-school project on *How we can make Hong Kong a better place to live in*. You are meeting to plan your project.

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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.

Changing the way we live

After the outbreak of SARS in 2003, many Hong Kong residents took a long, hard look at their lifestyle and, in particular, at the quality of life they were experiencing. Immediately after SARS had disappeared, many property agents reported an increase in the number of people buying flats in the New Territories where the air is believed to be cleaner. Property prices on the outlying islands also increased, reflecting demand from buyers. It seems that the need for a better way of life has driven many people to re-examine the way in which they live.

The Hong Kong Government last year announced plans to redevelop many urban areas in Kowloon including parts of Shek Kip Mei and Sham Shui Po. These urban renewal schemes can be seen as an important step in a comprehensive plan to improve and develop the living environments in Hong Kong. Alongside these initiatives, the government has also implemented incentive schemes for taxi drivers to switch

from diesel to LPG so that pollution levels can be reduced. Still, to some people, these policies are just not good enough.

A representative of the group, Friends of the Earth, says, 'The government is just making empty promises and it should be doing more.' While that debate continues, many property developers are building flats and apartments which appeal to people who want a better way of life. For example, increasing numbers of flats are now being built with balconies to take advantage of the fresh air and good views.

On Ma Wan Island a large housing project has been completed. Situated under the Tsing Ma Bridge, its residents enjoy wonderful sea views, clean air, luxurious clubhouse facilities and their own fast ferry service to Central. Country living is being combined with the conveniences of city living as people start to demand better living conditions.

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

You and your classmates are participating in an inter-school project on *How we can make Hong Kong a better place to live in*. You are meeting to plan your project.

You could discuss some of the major problems in Hong Kong at the moment and what we can do to improve our city. You might like to talk about environmental issues, architecture, and transportation systems. Try to provide examples to illustrate your points.

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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.

Can the damage be repaired?

In recent years, environmental groups in Hong Kong have criticised the government for its plans to develop parts of the city. Apart from the debate over reclamation of the harbour, there were also strong protests about the development of Penny's Bay on Lantau Island and the wetland areas of Mai Po in the New Territories. According to these groups, the damage caused by development and dumping waste products is irreparable. Greenpeace, for example, claimed that it was 'disgusted' by the government's lack of concern for the environment.

However, the government points out that it is adopting protective measures for the Mai Po area which contains many species of birds that annually visit the marshes and ponds there. It promises that, as the area's wetlands are famous around the world, it will prevent unnecessary development. On Lantau Island, this is not the case. With the expected completion of the Disneyland project in 2006, much of the island will be changed forever.

However, in the same location, there is evidence that nature can survive provided it has support. A Tung Chung stream is slowly returning to life after environmentalists started to repair the damage caused by the removal of 400 tonnes of rocks from the area. The rocks were stolen from the stream and used to build an artificial lake in the area being developed for Disney. Although the stream is still in danger, it is starting to return to normal with different species of fish being recorded in the area most damaged. Nature also helped restore the stream because heavy rains moved stones and formed natural pools.

Now the government is becoming more aware of the situation. It has ordered the Tung Chung Rural Committee to repair the stream. As long as different groups work together to protect Mother Nature, there is hope for our future environment.

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

You and your classmates are participating in an inter-school project on *How we can make Hong Kong a better place to live in*. You are meeting to plan your project.

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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.

Choosing a name

It is not known when humans first began using names, but the practice probably goes back to ancient times. Although all cultures use names, ways of choosing names vary greatly from country to country. Some societies choose names rather randomly, whereas others follow set patterns.

Traditional Chinese naming practices were very complex as Chinese males were given different names at various stages in their lives. Nowadays, things are a bit more straightforward. Chinese given names or first names usually consist of two characters, although it is common to use only one. These characters can be any of the thousands of Chinese characters, so the combinations are almost limitless. In practice, some names are chosen more often than others, such as *Mei* for girls, which means beautiful. Unlike western names, a full Chinese name is presented with the surname first and then the given name.

However, more and more Hong Kong people have a foreign name these days. They keep their Chinese names for parents, other relatives and close friends, or may not even use them at all. Peter Li, a sociologist, has been studying the popular trend of using western names. He has discovered that many of Hong Kong's young people experiment with different names before choosing one that they finally want. He says, 'They use a name for a while and then decide that it doesn't suit them or they become bored with it, so they choose another one.'

He believes this trend reveals something about how these young people see their identity. 'They don't identify themselves completely with western traditions and neither do they identify fully with Chinese traditions,' says Peter. 'They construct their own identity by giving themselves an English name in addition to their original Chinese name. Perhaps it's due to the special social and political history of Hong Kong.'

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

Your principal is worried that students are becoming too westernised and are forgetting their Chinese heritage. In order to promote Chinese culture, he has suggested that only Chinese names be used at school for school facilities as well as students' names.

Your teacher has asked your group to write an article for the school magazine to comment on the principal's suggestion. You may like to think about the pros and cons of this and whether this will really promote Chinese culture in your school. You may also suggest other ways of promoting Chinese culture at school.

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.

East meets west on the streets of Hong Kong

In July 1997, the former British colony of Hong Kong was handed over to China. Many tourists who have visited Hong Kong since then have asked the same questions: 'Has Hong Kong changed?' and 'Has the government made all the street names Chinese?' The answer to the last question is, of course, no. Hong Kong's street names still reflect an interesting mixture of Asian and Western history and culture. That is, if we look carefully enough.

Hong Kong is home to nearly 7 million people, many of whom live in crowded, congested areas. Much of that congestion occurs in the many thousands of streets and roads which cover the city like a giant spider's web. Every street has to have a name, but who is responsible for this task? The answer is the Lands Department, which provides names for streets in the New Territories, as well as in the urban areas such as on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon.

A recent change in the rules for naming streets has allowed individuals to suggest names for streets in the New Territories. However, before youngsters start to apply for a 'Beckham Street', they should consider that all new names have to undergo a consultation process first. The new names must be approved and be the phonetic spelling of the Chinese name, so now a sign would say 'Yu Gai' and not 'Fish Road'.

This is different from the past when street names were chosen for political or historical reasons. All over the city, there are reminders of our colonial past, such as Wellington Street and Nelson Street. These streets were named after famous people from British history. To observers, the new way of naming streets reinforces the Chinese identity of Hong Kong. 'It emphasises Hong Kong's Chinese heritage much more,' said one tourist.

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

Your principal is worried that students are becoming too westernised and are forgetting their Chinese heritage. In order to promote Chinese culture, he has suggested that only Chinese names be used at school for school facilities as well as students' names.

Your teacher has asked your group to write an article for the school magazine to comment on the principal's suggestion. You may like to think about the pros and cons of this and whether this will really promote Chinese culture in your school. You may also suggest other ways of promoting Chinese culture at school.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

My own name

Parents all over the world spend hours choosing names for their newborn children. It seems like a huge responsibility to choose the name by which a person will be referred to for their whole life. But have you ever wondered why we have names?

In fact, names serve several purposes. One is that, they help distinguish us from one another. Imagine how difficult it would be to refer to people if we did not use names. Instead of saying *John*, we would have to say something like *the short man with brown hair who is over there*. Perhaps, more importantly, names help to maintain tradition and family heritage. Some names, such as clan names or family names derived from names of places or jobs, carry information about our roots. Names can serve other purposes as well. For example, the Chinese generation name identifies the generation of the person, while the names used by some African cultures describe the order in which siblings are born.

However, despite the various functions of names and parents' good intentions to give their child a suitable name, it seems to be the case that many Hong Kong people are now choosing their own name, or, at least their own foreign name. They do this without much consideration about what the name means or where it comes from.

Hong Kong people, especially women, are giving themselves colourful names, such as Mango, Peace and Sunflower. What is more, many of them use the name for a short time and then decide that they do not like it anymore and choose a different one. Fantasy Lo, a Form Seven student, says, 'I used to be called Flora but I like the word 'fantasy', so I changed my name. I love the flexibility. It is like changing your clothes to suit your mood!'

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

Your principal is worried that students are becoming too westernised and are forgetting their Chinese heritage. In order to promote Chinese culture, he has suggested that only Chinese names be used at school for school facilities as well as students' names.

Your teacher has asked your group to write an article for the school magazine to comment on the principal's suggestion. You may like to think about the pros and cons of this and whether this will really promote Chinese culture in your school. You may also suggest other ways of promoting Chinese culture at school.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Building a name and a reputation

When planning a building, an architect will consider how the building should be designed. However, to the occupants of the building, its name is also of great importance in addition to the design of the building. This is because according to Chinese culture, the name can affect *feng shui*, which in turn, can affect the health and well-being of the occupants.

Walk around Hong Kong and it is quite common to see shopping malls with names like 'Success Plaza' and 'Lucky Centre'. One shop owner claims that he likes the reference to success in his building's name, 'It is a positive name and one which will attract lots of people and money – we need both.' The same is true of residential buildings which are often given prestigious titles and names.

Apartment blocks such as 'Tycoon Court' and 'Prosperous Tower' are designed to create an impression

of power and wealth to potential buyers. 'It's so typical of Hong Kong where image and labels are all important,' said one property expert. 'We also have new luxury flats and buildings in Kowloon with glamorous sounding French names. A good name is everything these days,' he concluded.

Even though Hong Kong is a predominantly Chinese city, it is surprising to see how many buildings have English names. As with many street names in the city, some buildings are named after historical figures and events, but some of those names have been changed because they are no longer appropriate. One obvious example is the Prince of Wales building in Central which used to house the British army before 1997. Now, of course, it is home to the People's Liberation Army, so the old name has been removed from the walls. Names are clearly important for both bringing luck and reinforcing national identity.

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

Your principal is worried that students are becoming too westernised and are forgetting their Chinese heritage. In order to promote Chinese culture, he has suggested that only Chinese names be used at school for school facilities as well as students' names.

Your teacher has asked your group to write an article for the school magazine to comment on the principal's suggestion. You may like to think about the pros and cons of this and whether this will really promote Chinese culture in your school. You may also suggest other ways of promoting Chinese culture at school.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Marvellous Marvel

When people watch the *Spider-Man* films, they may not realise that the main character originally became famous because of a comic book. In fact, the publisher of these comic books is responsible for producing eighty of the top hundred comics in the world today. Marvel is the company which has created super heroes such as Spider-Man, Daredevil and the X-Men. Now it has turned these comic stories into huge Hollywood movies.

When *Spider-Man* became a movie, it earned more than US\$820 million around the world. *The Hulk* was not such a success but it still earned US\$250 million at the box office. It seems that the demand for movie versions of famous comic stories is unstoppable. The chairman of Marvel Film Studios, the company responsible for turning comics into movies, says, 'This is the most exciting time of my life. People want to see their comic heroes come alive on screen!'

One reason why these films are so successful is that comic books are still very popular. One shop in Mong Kok sells around 100,000 super-hero comics every year. The owner, Mr. Lau, says, 'It is no longer true that comics are for kids. My customers range in age from 8 to 80.'

Given the massive success of the films, it is worth asking why these stories and characters are so appealing. The director of *Spider-Man* claims that Marvel created heroes that people can relate to, 'The magic of Marvel Comics is the dream that there is a hero in all of us.' Computer technology has advanced so much that it has allowed movies to show super heroes swinging from building to building and performing incredible stunts. It is likely every comic super hero will become a movie star soon.

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

You and your classmates have been asked by the English Panel Chair to share your views on the use of films and comics in the English language curriculum at a forum for staff and students. You are meeting beforehand to discuss your opinions and ideas.

You should discuss whether or not you think films and comics can be helpful in English lessons and why. You may also like to present your suggestions on what types of comics and films your teachers could use in their lessons. Support your answers with appropriate examples.

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.

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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.

Are comics educational?

When Mr. Wong walks into class, his students all sit up and pay attention. He brings comics to class in order to teach English and the students love it. 'If we are honest, comics are one of the few things that students read on a regular basis and I want to exploit their interest,' says the teacher. Mr. Wong chooses his comics carefully as he believes that not all are suitable for his students. He tries to select comics which contain a message for youngsters and he likes to choose stories that are written in good English.

His unusual methods are supported by some academics. Miss Chu, an expert in literature, believes that comics are the perfect source for examples of English language in use. She says, 'The fact that they can stimulate imagination and motivate students to read is another benefit.' Future changes to the Hong Kong English Language syllabus include the introduction of a

range of reading material covering fiction and non-fiction, so it is possible that comics will become more popular as material for classroom teaching in the future.

Some critics argue that comics should not be classified as 'literature' because they have mostly pictures and very little language, but Miss Chu rejects such views. 'A good comic story is like a good book,' she said. 'The story is the most important element. Many comic stories contain basic moral values, such as the battle between good and evil, and provide role models that we can look up to.'

Mr. Wong's students claim that they have benefited as a result of his lessons. One reported that he used to read comics just for their attractive pictures but not anymore. 'Mr. Wong shows us that the stories have meaning and values. We learn more English too.'

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

You and your classmates have been asked by the English Panel Chair to share your views on the use of films and comics in the English language curriculum at a forum for staff and students. You are meeting beforehand to discuss your opinions and ideas.

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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.

The ‘right’ sort of film

For the last four years, Hong Kong has hosted the International Children’s Film Festival. This event runs for six weeks and has a very simple goal – to present local children with the opportunity to watch classic films that bridge the generation gap and bring families together. One of the organisers claimed that they were trying to promote better communication between family members by encouraging them to talk about films that they all enjoyed. ‘Usually, there are only a couple of films for children in Hong Kong every summer so our festival attempts to introduce them to a world of different films that are fun and educational,’ she said.

An official for the Leisure and Cultural Services Department explained why they chose to screen the movies *E.T.* and *War of the Buttons* at last year’s festival. ‘We want parents to enjoy and share with their children the films they watched when they were at that age.’ The films are screened at weekends to allow parents to attend

and tickets cost as little as \$20. The event was very popular with over 4000 tickets sold last year.

There is another possible reason for holding this film festival. It is claimed that Hong Kong youngsters get too much exposure to Hollywood films that are often computer-animated and full of action, but which do not have much depth or meaning. ‘If the children always watch the same sort of film, it is not good for them and their view of the world becomes very limited,’ said an organiser.

The festival hopes to bring more educational films from around the world to show to local youngsters. The aim is to make the point that there are other films apart from *Spider-Man* and *Harry Potter* which they can enjoy and learn from. ‘Festival audiences will definitely find it an enriching experience,’ the organiser concluded.

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

You and your classmates have been asked by the English Panel Chair to share your views on the use of films and comics in the English language curriculum at a forum for staff and students. You are meeting beforehand to discuss your opinions and ideas.

You should discuss whether or not you think films and comics can be helpful in English lessons and why. You may also like to present your suggestions on what types of comics and films your teachers could use in their lessons. Support your answers with appropriate 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.

Can comics replace books?

Each year, Hong Kong marks World Book Day with lots of fun events involving celebrities and school students. In 2004, over 12,000 students attempted to set a world record for the largest number of people reading aloud. At the same event, a local businessman and a well-known singer read to children at the Central Library in Causeway Bay. One of the organisers said that the reading sessions were held to promote reading and books in particular. A parent who took part said that her daughter had poor reading habits. 'She hardly reads but when she does, it is just a comic and never a proper book.'

Indeed, this little girl is not unique. A study released last year found that over half of primary students spend fewer than five minutes a day reading texts that are not related to school work. Only 14% spent more than two hours per week reading! Some educators point to the lack of good reading habits in most children. 'Children

love instant excitement, which is why TV, computer games and comics are so popular,' said a professor from Hong Kong University. 'Comics are not always a good way of promoting reading habits,' he stated.

The academic points out that there is an emphasis on pictures in comics and very little language and vocabulary input. He maintains that the language is often artificial and full of slang which is not educational. 'Comics are simply a series of short, meaningless stories told through pictures,' he says.

Many English teachers seem to agree, as it is rare to see comics used in classrooms for educational purposes. The celebrities invited to share their favourite texts with the children on World Book Day recommended novels by Dickens, Rowling and Shakespeare. Not one of them suggested reading comics.

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

You and your classmates have been asked by the English Panel Chair to share your views on the use of films and comics in the English language curriculum at a forum for staff and students. You are meeting beforehand to discuss your opinions and ideas.

You should discuss whether or not you think films and comics can be helpful in English lessons and why. You may also like to present your suggestions on what types of comics and films your teachers could use in their lessons. Support your answers with appropriate examples.

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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.

Lack of water

One of the most serious concerns of environmental experts from around the globe is how to improve the world's water resources. In fact, the United Nations is holding more and more international summits in the hope of finding solutions to this serious problem.

We take it for granted that an endless supply of safe water will be delivered to us in our homes, schools, offices and so on. We do not even stop to think what we are doing when we turn on the tap to have a drink of water or when we have a bath or a shower. However, perhaps we should start to consider ourselves lucky. The United Nations has just released new data which reveals that about one in six people in the world lack access to safe drinking water, and nearly five thousand children a day die from diseases caused by a lack of water.

These shocking figures have prompted officials at the United Nations to try and reduce the number of

people without access to safe drinking water by 50%. However, this is no easy task. Many of the people without access to safe drinking water live in remote villages very far away from roads and basic infrastructure. This means a network of tanks and pipes has to be constructed to get the water to the people who need it. Therefore, supplying safe water is becoming increasingly difficult, especially in undeveloped countries. This is because these countries have experienced rapid population growth and lack the resources to supply clean water to people.

So, next time you turn on the tap to brush your teeth or have a glass of water, just take a moment to think about the people in the world who do not have that luxury. Maybe we could do something to help them?

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

Your school is going to hold a *Water Awareness Week* to educate students about water-related problems around the world and also to raise money to supply clean water to a village in western China. Your principal has asked your group to think of activities to be held during the week.

You could discuss water-related problems in Hong Kong and around the world. You could also think about how to educate students about these problems and suggest interesting ways to raise money.

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.

Is it safe to drink?

It is quite likely that some people in Hong Kong may turn on the tap to get a drink of water without worrying about its quality. However, how confident can people be that tap water in Hong Kong is really safe to drink?

Greenpeace has reported that the drinking water which Hong Kong buys from China is unsafe. The environmental group says it tested samples of treated water from the Dongjiang river in Guangdong just before it was delivered to Hong Kong and it contained harmful chemicals such as ammonia and mercury far exceeding acceptable limits.

In spite of this, the Hong Kong Government insists that the water is safe. It says that Guangdong officials have carried out tests, which prove that the water meets Chinese quality standards. It also claims that a new pipeline was recently constructed to improve water quality. However, Greenpeace says that this

new pipe is only effective when water levels in rivers are low. During periods of heavy rain, toxic chemicals from industrial waste still enter the pipe through floodwaters and contaminate the water supply before it reaches Hong Kong.

Other local green groups are also questioning the quality of our water. They say that even though Hong Kong's tap water manages to meet the World Health Organisation's standards immediately after it leaves the treatment plant, it may be polluted by the time it reaches our homes. Some people have reported that their tap water has a strange colour and an unusual taste. The reason for this is that the water pipes may be old and rusty and the tanks may not be maintained properly. If you live in an old building, this problem may be even more serious. To be on the safe side, you can boil your water or use a filter, as this helps to remove particles and chlorine.

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

Your school is going to hold a *Water Awareness Week* to educate students about water-related problems around the world and also to raise money to supply clean water to a village in western China. Your principal has asked your group to think of activities to be held during the week.

You could discuss water-related problems in Hong Kong and around the world. You could also think about how to educate students about these problems and suggest interesting ways to raise money.

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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.

Water and tourism

Many of us dream of escaping from the hustle and bustle of Hong Kong for a holiday in paradise. Our image of paradise is usually a small island with lots of palm trees and white sandy beaches, surrounded by clear blue seas.

However, these islands may soon disappear forever. At a recent United Nations conference, it was reported that huge amounts of solid waste and sewage are endangering a large number of small islands. This is because these islands have neither the money nor the space to cope with the waste.

The main problem these small communities face comes from tourism. Tourists flock to these places in large numbers yet the islands do not have the landfill space or the treatment systems to deal with the rubbish and the human waste. In the Caribbean, about 90% of waste water is discharged untreated into surrounding

seas. In the Pacific, this figure can be as high as 98%. This causes all kinds of problems. Approximately one in twenty people who go swimming in the oceans gets sick because of the polluted water. In addition, the waste is a threat to wildlife and it pollutes rivers and ground water. Photographs taken from an aircraft show that the sea around some small Pacific islands is blue-green in colour. However, this is not from plants and corals but from piles of discarded beer cans. The construction of big hotels and resorts too close to coastlines, and the industrial waste produced are also having a devastating effect on the environment.

Ironically, unless these small island paradises can implement better waste disposal technology, their attraction as tourist destinations will be lost forever. However, this is a vicious circle, as the income from tourism is needed to construct the new waste disposal systems.

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

Your school is going to hold a *Water Awareness Week* to educate students about water-related problems around the world and also to raise money to supply clean water to a village in western China. Your principal has asked your group to think of activities to be held during the week.

You could discuss water-related problems in Hong Kong and around the world. You could also think about how to educate students about these problems and suggest interesting ways to raise money.

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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.

A precious resource

Hong Kong consumes 916 million cubic metres of treated water a year, which is equivalent to 374 litres per person per day. We only drink a few litres of this – the remainder of this pure, expensively treated water is flushed down the toilet or washed down sinks and drains. This is despite the fact that more than three quarters of the population of Hong Kong are supplied with seawater for flushing toilets, which reduces the demand for fresh water.

The amount of water we use is much less than in many developed countries, where a huge amount of clean water is wasted for watering gardens and cleaning cars. Yet, Hong Kong still wastes a lot of its precious water. Almost a third of the treated water leaks away through old pipes before it even gets to our homes. The leakage rate will increase dramatically within five years if repairs are not carried out.

Apart from fixing leaky pipes, the Hong Kong government could learn from cities such as Los Angeles and New York, which distribute water saving devices free of charge to homeowners. New York has managed to reduce its consumption by 20% in seven years through this kind of water reduction programme. If Hong Kong could achieve a similar reduction, this would save 53 million cubic metres of water per year.

Hong Kong cannot continue to assume that there is an unlimited supply of water from China. Our city needs to start thinking about the future of its water supply. We should definitely look at implementing an effective water conservation programme to make more efficient use of an increasingly precious resource. This is especially so since the other cities which get their water from the Dongjiang river, such as Shenzhen, Dongguan and eastern Guangzhou, are growing rapidly.

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

Your school is going to hold a *Water Awareness Week* to educate students about water-related problems around the world and also to raise money to supply clean water to a village in western China. Your principal has asked your group to think of activities to be held during the week.

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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.

Changing tastes

Hong Kong is famous for many things and one of these has to be the amazing choice of food available to people these days. One local man has seen changes in people's tastes over the last fifty years and a dramatic expansion in the food industry.

Mr. Lee is the vice-president of the Hong Kong Food Trades Association and he believes that the starting point for the development of the food industry here was after World War II. Mr. Lee describes that period as the 'dark age' for local people because they were afraid to leave their homes and were forced to stay indoors. As a result, shops and factories were unable to operate and the choice of food was limited to dried foods such as biscuits. After the war was over, the economy started to recover and factories began to produce canned and baked foods. Very quickly, the choice of foods available to local people started to increase.

Mr. Lee claims that in the 1950s, western food and food products were unpopular with locals because they were so expensive. Of course, western food was imported because of the expatriates living in Hong Kong but, for the most part, western drinks and food items were regarded as foreign to local tastes. That all changed in the 1980s and 1990s when Hong Kong people became wealthier and started to buy foreign products like chocolates, coffee and cheese.

Mr. Lee, who also owns a supermarket, believes that as locals will eventually buy more food imported from the mainland, a new trend will emerge in the future. However, it does seem that what people eat in Hong Kong is directly related to the economy. As long as people have money to spare, new and more expensive foreign food items will remain popular with local residents.

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

Your English teacher has asked your class to prepare a report on *The changing aspects of food and eating habits in Hong Kong* for a cross-curricular project on Hong Kong society.

Your group could first discuss how local food tastes have changed over the years. You could also decide how to obtain people's opinions on this topic for your report. Consider how you can plan and make your report interesting.

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.

The home of new snacks

Changing food tastes create new challenges and opportunities for restaurant and shop owners everywhere. Around the world, new recipes and styles of cooking are introduced and soon spread as they become more popular. In Britain, someone decided to deep-fry a chocolate bar and shortly afterwards, takeaway restaurants were selling them to the public. In Hong Kong, one place where people can try something that is very different is Mong Kok.

The Chairman of the local District Council claims that there are over a hundred snack shops in Mong Kok. They are so important that they are used to attract tourists and are featured in promotional material. It is not just tourists who are attracted to the area, however, as local teenagers make up most of the diners eating in snack shops. So why is Mong Kok so popular with teenagers? 'I love Mong Kok because there is such a variety of

food and I can eat different snacks every day,' said one teenager.

According to another youngster, it is the new snacks that he finds most appealing. 'I get bored with the same fast food and dim-sum, so I like to find new snacks. Last week I tried fried ice cream!' The word 'fried' is not completely accurate because the ice cream is not really fried. Instead it is mixed with nuts, candies and chocolates using extreme cold and not fried in oil. Snack shops are all keen to create a best-selling new snack as this will attract more teenage customers.

One shop sells 45kg of fish balls every day. However, they are not ordinary fish balls because of the hot and spicy Sichuan sauce used to cover the balls. 'Curry fish balls are everywhere but these are special,' said the shop owner, who believes that unusual snacks will make Mong Kok the food centre of Hong Kong.

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

Your English teacher has asked your class to prepare a report on *The changing aspects of food and eating habits in Hong Kong* for a cross-curricular project on Hong Kong society.

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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.

Is fresh still best?

As people's tastes in food have changed over the years, so too has the way food is prepared and sold. In western countries, it is common to find supermarkets full of freezers containing all sorts of frozen food from vegetables to fruit to meat. In Hong Kong, however, the same trend has not emerged to the same extent because local people regard freshness as one of the most important factors when preparing a meal or eating in a restaurant.

Chinese cuisine emphasises freshness, and this explains the popularity of fresh food which is bought at wet markets. Even with the many supermarkets in Hong Kong, local consumers willingly make frequent trips every week to buy fresh meat and vegetables from the markets believing that the food there is of a higher quality. A study conducted by the American State Department found that Hong Kong people's eating habits reflect Chinese customs and traditions. Also, most

kitchens are so small that people **cannot store** too much food. This means that most consumers **have to** visit the markets every day.

Although the wet markets are **still popular**, it is mostly with the elderly population. **For the** younger members of society, the supermarkets are more appealing. 'I lived in Canada for many years and I prefer western food,' said one man. Imported western food products are mainly distributed through supermarkets, which have become highly competitive.

One such shop, city'super, was opened in 1996 and set out to become a lifestyle store appealing to the younger and wealthier generation. The shop sells a wide range of exotic products from around the world. It even sells cooked food which customers can take away, but the emphasis is still on freshness. As one shop manager says, 'Freshness is everything to local people.'

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

Your English teacher has asked your class to prepare a report on *The changing aspects of food and eating habits in Hong Kong* for a cross-curricular project on Hong Kong society.

Your group could first discuss how local food tastes have changed over the years. You could also decide how to obtain people's opinions on this topic for your report. Consider how you can plan and make your report interesting.

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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.

Fast food capital of the world?

Hong Kong is perhaps the food capital of the world with over 10,000 restaurants serving a variety of dishes. With such a large number of choices for people, it is surprising that so many of them choose to eat hamburgers, pizzas and fries, which are all fairly limited in how they are cooked and presented. Possibly, local preferences for fast food can be traced back to the emergence of 'yum-cha' or eating dim-sum in Hong Kong after World War II.

'Yum-cha' is a Chinese style meal which includes a lot of tea drinking. After the war, many refugees from mainland China met in restaurants to talk about jobs and chat over tea. The tradition was passed on to their families who would visit yum-cha restaurants to gather together. However, as people began to work longer hours, they had less time for eating. This is why western fast food has become popular among Chinese people.

Very soon, fast food chains such as McDonald's and KFC opened outlets all over Hong Kong. One man in his 40s claimed that he takes his whole family for hamburgers, at least twice a week, and even his 72-year-old mother comes along. This suggests that McDonald's has replaced yum-cha restaurants as the preferred eating place for many locals. Other companies have also followed McDonald's example.

Café de Coral has been operating since the 1960s, but only became successful after McDonald's arrived. It operates in a similar way to its western rival except that it has a wider choice of Chinese fast food. Western influence also extends to coffee, and shops such as Starbucks and Pacific Coffee Company can be found all over Hong Kong providing people with a convenient and comfortable place to gather and drink. Hong Kong's fast pace of life has made fast food popular.

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

Your English teacher has asked your class to prepare a report on *The changing aspects of food and eating habits in Hong Kong* for a cross-curricular project on Hong Kong society.

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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.

From Canto-pop to hip-hop

A singer once declared that 'there is no life without music'. To many people in Hong Kong, music represents a welcome break from the pressures of work and school. Since the 1980s, local teenagers have idolised young male and female singers belonging to the Cantonese pop music industry, or Canto-pop for short. However, in recent years a very different trend has emerged in the form of hip-hop music.

Wendy, a Form Five student, says that she loves both types of music. 'I will always love Andy Lau and Leon Lai because their music is Hong Kong's music but hip-hop is so cool because it comes from the United States,' she claimed. Another teenager said that hip-hop is more about expressing an 'attitude towards life' because of the way hip-hop singers dress and dance. Hip-hop is a cultural trend that first began in New York and spread around the world. It combines many different sounds and it is this mixture of cultures and styles

that has made it so popular. One musician said that hip-hop allows young people to express **themselves** rather than simply listen to pop tunes.

In Hong Kong, hip-hop is **becoming** more popular. In April last year, a dance **competition** held in Mong Kok attracted hundreds of **local** teenagers. Surrounded by dull, concrete buildings, **the** youngsters, who dressed mostly in black tracksuits, **baseball** caps and trainers, danced for hours showing **passion** and creativity.

'This music makes me feel **successful**,' said one participant who claimed that life was **boring** without hip-hop music. 'There is not much for **teenagers** to do here, so dancing to this music is fun,' he **stated**. It seems that teenagers are no longer happy to sit **inside** and listen to love songs from Canto-pop superstars. **So**, is hip-hop here to stay?

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

Your school is about to celebrate its 50th anniversary and as part of the celebrations, the principal **has asked** members of the Music Club to put on a musical production showing how music has changed in the last few decades. He **does not** want pop stars or film stars to be invited.

Your group members are on the organising committee and you have been asked to plan the musical production. You might like to discuss your favourite kinds of music and what you would like to see in the production.

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.

Standing the test of time

In Hong Kong, singers such as Aaron Kwok and Leon Lai seem to have been part of the entertainment industry for a long time. Another singer, Sam Hui, who first became popular in the 1970s, performed several sell-out concerts in Hong Kong in 2004. Why is it that some singers remain popular for so many years while others just disappear?

In other countries, too, there are singers who are almost 'ageless' because they still perform concerts even though they are nearly at retirement age. In Europe, the Rolling Stones still play even though the lead singer is over sixty. In America, the rock group KISS have been touring for 31 years. Another famous group, the Eagles, have been popular since the 1960s but they still managed to tour the world last year entertaining their many fans. One singer said, 'Age is not the issue. Music is the key and good music never dies.'

This is certainly true in Hong Kong, as proven by the music of Leslie Cheung and Anita Mui, which remains popular even after their deaths. Sometimes, groups break up, but their music lives on. One such famous group in music history is ABBA. They stopped singing in 1982, yet they remain one of the most popular and successful groups in the world.

In fact, some of ABBA's music has been used in a musical called *Mamma Mia*, which features over twenty of their songs. It has become one of the most successful musicals in history and it has been performed in over 60 cities. According to one writer, music makes people feel good. 'The world wants happiness and music makes people happy.' It seems that for many singers and fans, age does not matter as long as the music is good and people are enjoying themselves.

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

Your school is about to celebrate its 50th anniversary and as part of the celebrations, the principal has asked members of the Music Club to put on a musical production showing how music has changed in the last few decades. He does not want pop stars or film stars to be invited.

Your group members are on the organising committee and you have been asked to plan the musical production. You might like to discuss your favourite kinds of music and what you would like to see in the production.

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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.

It could happen to you

A well-known local company, Tom Lee Music, has been promoting music through its annual SoundBase Acoustic Band competition. This is now a major event. The first round of the competition in 2004 attracted over 70 local groups. It seems that Hong Kong is full of musical talent just waiting to be discovered.

To join the competition, the groups do not have to prepare very much. They can perform another artist's song or play one of their own, and there are different prizes for the best performances and best original songs. Over the last five years, the standard of music performed at the competition has risen enormously. One of the organisers, Mr. Lee, claimed that by focusing on acoustic sounds, the music was 'more natural and raw' and not like a rock band competition where electric instruments are used. The participants also preferred using acoustic instruments because such instruments allowed them to demonstrate their musical skills better.

Much of the music played at the competition is very different to the music performed by local pop stars. This is important as it allows young, local musicians to develop their own styles independently. Even though the competitors are allowed to copy other songs, not many do, which shows that they are willing to develop their own styles. One guitarist used a quote from a famous composer to show how varied music should be, 'all the sounds of the earth are like music'.

For some lucky participants, the prizes of music vouchers and medals are just the beginning. Past winners of the competition have gone on to sign contracts with music companies and have become popular local groups. One record producer said that Hong Kong has some very talented musicians and artists who just need the chance to be discovered. Music competitions like this should be encouraged.

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.

‘Get into the groove’

Dance is so closely connected to music, that for many teenagers it represents an escape from the daily pressures of school and home life. Dance is often seen as an expression of people’s feelings, and it has been said that the best way to understand a culture is through its dance and music. In the West, there is a popular form of dance called break dancing. This has spread to Hong Kong and can be seen in places like Tsim Sha Tsui and Mong Kok.

Sports companies such as Adidas and Nike have been sponsoring local break dancing competitions, with such events attracting many teams. Some of the participants in this event are as young as ten. One boy was in a dance team with his brother and he performed a ‘boomerang’ dance by spinning on his hands while sticking his legs out. He then fell backwards onto his hands, kicking one of his legs high into the air. He claimed that he saw the dance performed in Japan and

wanted to do the same.

Many of the dancers have their own forms of communication. They do not use words, just actions, and this seems to be part of the dance culture that has become so popular with Hong Kong’s youth. When asked if the dances were dangerous, one boy said that some positions could be unsafe. ‘It’s just like an extreme sport, so dancers must be prepared for injuries,’ he claimed.

Some of the audience thought that the dances were too aggressive and the music too loud but the judges disagreed. To them, the dancing does not have to be perfect because they are looking for effort and creativity. ‘This is a chance for youngsters to get together and do something positive. All they are doing is dancing and what is wrong with that?’

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

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Candidate A

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

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

E-waste

Most of the toxic waste of the computer age ends up in Guiyu, a town on China's southeastern coast. Huge quantities of used electronics, such as computers, are shipped there from the US, Europe and Japan. Most of Guiyu's residents, including children, earn a living by searching through the waste for things they can sell, such as metals, glass and plastic. However, this technological rubbish produces massive quantities of poisonous substances, which pollute the water and soil. This raises serious health concerns.

In America, more than 40 million out-of-date computers were thrown away in 2001 alone and it is estimated that 80% of these old machines are being shipped to Asia. Countries such as China have become a dumping ground for the world's unwanted technological waste. This is because wealthy countries want to protect their own environments and also, breaking down computers into reusable raw materials is expensive. In fact, it costs 90% less to ship the waste to China than it does to dispose of it in the USA.

Although China has a ban on the import of e-waste, people get around this by bribing corrupt customs officials. Unfortunately the people who really suffer are those who live in the towns where the e-waste ends up. For example, children there work for about US\$1.20 a day in extremely unsafe conditions. In addition, many people are suffering from various illnesses such as blood diseases and breathing problems. Babies are also being born with disabilities and some are dying very young.

Environmental groups have accused computer manufacturers of failing to take responsibility for the pollution they cause. It has been suggested that they should all have their own recycling programmes. In addition, developed countries should wake up to the problems they are causing in developing countries and find safe ways to dispose of the waste themselves.

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

You are going to attend an international student conference on *Hidden Pollution: What the world should know*. Your group is part of the Hong Kong delegation and has been asked to give a presentation to the students from other countries.

In your presentation you will discuss hidden forms of pollution, which people in Hong Kong have just begun to become aware of. You also need to explain why these kinds of pollution are a problem and give suggestions as to how governments and societies can deal with the problems resulting from pollution.

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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.

Ship pollution

The number of days a year during which the air pollution index is high is increasing. It has become more and more common for us to wake up to hazy skies. In fact, sometimes the smog over our city is so bad that we can barely see across Victoria Harbour. Most of us blame the exhaust fumes from traffic and also the factories and industrial plants in Guangdong and the Pearl River Delta. However, there is another cause of this pollution which we may be unaware of.

The waters surrounding Hong Kong and even Victoria Harbour itself are always busy with sea traffic, such as big container ships, ferries, and cruise liners. Yet, do we ever consider how shipping traffic contributes to Hong Kong's air pollution?

The Environmental Protection Department says that maritime pollution is much less serious than the emissions from power plants and vehicles. Also, since

much of this pollution is emitted away from urban centres, it is not so dangerous. In fact, a spokesperson for the department stressed that pollution from ships is insignificant. However, Dr. Michael Hung, a senior scientist, doubts whether official ship pollution levels actually represent the true picture. He thinks the actual figure is likely to be much higher. He says, 'A single cargo ship can release as much pollution as 350,000 cars and this is serious, as it can increase the risk of cancer and other illnesses.'

The problem is that there are currently no regulations concerning this kind of pollution. It has been suggested that sea vessels should use cleaner fuels and also that a 'green' tax should be paid by ships which enter Hong Kong waters. This is being done in some European ports and so far has proved to be successful. For the sake of our harbour, perhaps Hong Kong should follow this practice.

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.

No escape from the noise

Last week, Nancy Hung took the ferry from Hong Kong to Guangzhou for a business trip. She arrived at the China ferry terminal at 6:30am for a 7:00am ferry and immediately noticed how busy and noisy it was.

Nancy says, 'I was shocked by the noise and I found the constant announcements really disturbing. Where I was sitting, I could hear two different television stations, both loud, and the announcements were non-stop as they were all in three languages – Cantonese, English and Putonghua. Added to that were the conversations of waiting passengers. I tried to read the newspaper but was unable to concentrate.' Nancy thinks that this level of noise in public places is unacceptable, as it can cause stress and the physical and mental consequences of stress can be very serious.

Unfortunately, it is becoming increasingly difficult in Hong Kong to escape from the noise of the

city and find a quiet place in which to **think**. Whether we are in shopping malls, on public **transport** or walking on the street, we are constantly **exposed to meaningless, distracting and unhealthy noise**. This comes from traffic, construction, television screens, **announcements**, mobile phones and so on. As a society, **have we really forgotten** the value of rest and silence and the **importance** of quiet, personal time in which we can relax, **collect our thoughts** and reflect on life?

Of course, if we attend a **large public gathering**, such as a pop concert or a sporting **event**, we expect the energy levels and the accompanying **noise** to be very high. However, these kinds of noise **levels are becoming normal and unavoidable in our everyday lives**. If noise levels continue to rise to even **more alarming levels**, perhaps it will be necessary to **establish noise-free zones** in public places, just like non-smoking **zones**.

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.

Air travel and the environment: finding a balance

Air travel is becoming almost as commonplace in the 21st century as walking was for our ancestors. Whether on business or for pleasure, people fly to the four corners of the world. Since 1949 when the first passenger jet was launched, the air travel industry has expanded to seventy times its original size.

However, the massive growth in air transport conflicts strongly with the desire to protect the environment. The types of pollution caused by the air travel industry are varied. First of all, people who live under flight paths are exposed to constant noise pollution. It is rare to look up at the sky over the north coast of Lantau without catching sight of an aeroplane taking off or coming in to land and the hum of the engines can be heard for miles around.

In addition, although little research has been done on exact pollution levels, scientists are certain that fuel

emissions from aircraft seriously increase air pollution. Airports themselves are also hotspots of pollutants, not only from the planes but also from vehicles on the ground. After the closure of Kai Tak in 1997, the runways and the ground around the airport were so contaminated with pollutants that they had to be specially treated with chemicals. The land had to be left unused for a long time, as it was too dangerous to use it.

As air travel increases, airports either have to be expanded or moved to accommodate more air traffic and more passengers. This means previously unspoilt countryside, such as the once beautiful island of Chek Lap Kok, is destroyed as runways, terminal buildings, new roads and other transport links are constructed. Can we do anything to improve this situation? How can we balance freedom to travel with environmental protection? Aside from using cleaner fuels, these questions remain largely unanswered.

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

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In your presentation you will discuss hidden forms of pollution, which people in Hong Kong have just begun to become aware of. You also need to explain why these kinds of pollution are a problem and give suggestions as to how governments and societies can deal with the problems resulting from pollution.

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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.

Want to be a model?

These days when looking for a job in Hong Kong, the competition is very tough. Job seekers are not only expected to have good qualifications and solid work experience, but in many cases they also need to be proficient in English and Putonghua. Fresh school or university graduates often cannot meet these requirements and as a result they may have a difficult time finding a job in their specific field.

Carlos Wong is one such person. He studied business at university but has been working as a full-time model since he graduated. He did some part-time modelling while he was at university, but never expected to make it his career. He only decided to model full time after nine frustrating months of looking for a job in the business world. Although it is not really his dream job, he thinks it is better than being unemployed and he is earning significantly more money than many of his friends who work in sales, marketing, advertising and information technology.

Most people think that **modelling** is all about glamour and living the high life, **although** this is only true for top international models. **Generally** it is quite an unstable career as most models are **self-employed** and cannot rely on a regular monthly income. For many models, the best thing about the job is **that they** have the chance to travel to exotic places for **photo sessions**. However, the worst part about the **job** is that they sometimes have to do things they are not really comfortable with, for example, acting sexy in front of the camera.

You do not need specific qualifications to be a model but you must be self-confident. Carlos says, 'You have to let people stand up and judge you. This can be difficult to get used to. It's not a career for sensitive people.'

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

Your principal is thinking of introducing a *Work Experience Week* for Form Six students. During this week, students would be required to work in various organisations around Hong Kong in order to gain practical work experience.

Your principal has asked students to discuss this idea. In your discussion, you might like to consider whether this experience would be useful for students' future careers and what positive or negative experiences they might have.

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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.

Cyber career

Do you spend hours playing fast-paced computer games? Perhaps your parents get annoyed with you as they think you are wasting your time. Well, that is what Mark Clinton's parents thought until their son found himself a job as a 'pro-gamer'; he now earns US\$50,000 a year.

A 'pro-gamer' is a professional game player who makes a living playing computer games in international competitions. Mark, now aged 22, started 'pro-gaming' at a competition in Dallas, Texas when he was 17. He came fourth and won US\$4,000. Since then he has played in lots of major tournaments, received sponsorship from many high-tech companies and travelled all over the world for free. He says that another benefit of this job is that he gets free computer hardware. MTV are currently making a documentary about his colourful life.

The biggest and highest paying competitions are in America. However, the craze has caught on in Asia

too. Nearly 200 professional competitions were held in South Korea last year and the total prize money was US\$5 million. The industry is also developing quickly in China. A Chinese team of four 18 to 20 year olds spends several hours every day playing computer games to practise for tournaments. Daniel Jin, one of the team members, says, 'The sponsors in China are not paying that much money yet, only around 2,000 yuan a month, but our team is quite good so we make a lot of extra money at competitions.' In fact, the team members are earning more money than 70% of the people in China.

Daniel says, 'Although it's a very unstable career, it's good to make money doing something you really enjoy.' His advice for people is that they need to spend five to ten hours a day playing real-time strategy games and if they are good enough after a year, they can turn professional.

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.

Fashion designer

Prada, Gucci, Ralph Lauren ... we are all very familiar with the names of these well-known fashion brands, but what does it take to be a famous designer? Billy Ho has worked as a designer for ten years and he now runs his own successful business designing wedding dresses. He says, 'Designers need to be patient. They can't expect to create masterpieces from day one. It takes a lot of time and effort to get recognised.'

Billy frequently designs wedding dresses for Hong Kong's rich and famous. He thinks the best part of his job is making people look beautiful. 'It's an amazing feeling to see a bride wearing my dress on the most important day of her life.' However, he admits that although he is now making a very good living for himself, it has taken him a lot of hard work and patience to get to such a position. The reality is that many young

designers cannot cope with the long hours, so they decide to leave the industry and change careers.

There is a lot of competition in the fashion industry, especially for new graduates who are looking for work. Raymond Tse was lucky enough to find a job with Esprit when he graduated last year. He thinks the best way to find a job is to do voluntary work or gain work experience while you are studying. This is a good way to build up your portfolio, so that when you graduate you already have some real work experience.

Candy Yip is a careers advisor and her advice for people thinking of becoming a fashion designer is, 'Be patient. The day will come when you are creating your own designs and managing your own team, but you cannot expect to have complete freedom from the start.'

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

Your principal is thinking of introducing a *Work Experience Week* for Form Six students. During this week, students would be required to work in various organisations around Hong Kong in order to gain practical work experience.

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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.

Art therapy

If you like art, but think that you will never make it as a professional artist, why not think about becoming an art therapist? This means you still get to paint and draw but you do not have to rely on selling your works in order to make a living.

Some of you may wonder what an art therapist actually does. Well, to put it simply, an art therapist helps people who suffer from certain illnesses, both physical and psychological. Art therapists visit patients and help them to express their feelings by creating art. It is believed that art can make patients feel better and can offer them some relief from their pain and suffering.

Vera Choi is an art therapist in Hong Kong and she adores her job because it is very meaningful and rewarding. She says, 'Art therapists have to like meeting and relating to a wide variety of people as clients range

in age from three to ninety and they come from different backgrounds and have different abilities. Some of them are children with cancer, whilst others are terminally ill patients. You need to be open-minded, patient, understanding and creative.'

Although people cannot get a professional qualification in art therapy in Hong Kong, they can study it in England or the USA. The University of Hong Kong and the Open University offer short introductory courses in art therapy. Interested people can enrol in one of these courses to see if it suits them before they make the commitment to go overseas to study. Vera's advice to young artists who would like to work in the same field as she does is, 'Work hard and be tolerant of other people's problems. This job is great as you feel like you are really helping people in need.'

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

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Your principal has asked students to discuss this idea. In your discussion, you might like to consider whether this experience would be useful for students' future careers and what positive or negative experiences they might have.

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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.

The new boat people

Phil wakes up every morning with water all around him. He never complains and actually pays money to live like this. Phil is one of the increasing number of people who are choosing to live on a boat instead of in a flat. Phil's boat is moored in Aberdeen typhoon shelter and it is a lifestyle he adores. 'It is the most peaceful place to live in Hong Kong.'

So why do people choose to leave their high-rise buildings and live on boats in the middle of a typhoon shelter? The main factor is cost. For many people, the thought of taking out a large loan on a property is frightening. Another boat owner, Julie, spent approximately \$300,000 on her floating 'home'. It came with furniture, kitchen, washing machine, oven and shower and she was able to add a sofa-bed, a TV, a hi-fi and air-conditioning. 'Living here has been wonderful,' she commented, 'the only negative thing is the heavy

summer rain which makes a terrible noise on the windows.'

It is clear that many Westerners have made a lifestyle choice by living on a boat instead of on land. They say that the evenings are very quiet because the only noise is the sound of insects and the water splashing against the boat. At weekends, they can untie the boat and sail off to different parts of Hong Kong. Also, unlike on many local housing estates, pets are allowed.

However, for some people the thought of living on a boat is impractical. One Australian, who moved from a boat in Sai Kung to a flat in Kowloon, spoke of the loneliness of life aboard a floating home, 'I just felt so isolated because there was no one to talk to and no community, unlike living in an apartment block.'

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

You and your group members have chosen to enter a newspaper competition on *Different types of accommodation in Hong Kong*. The newspaper wants students to design a multi-media project for the competition.

You are now meeting to discuss what to include in your multi-media project. You could start by discussing which type of accommodation people would most like to live in and why. You may also like to talk about other choices open to people in Hong Kong. Consider how to make the project interesting and attractive to viewers.

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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 beach on our doorstep

John and Cindy live on Lantau Island in a village called Cheung Sha opposite one of Hong Kong's most beautiful beaches. 'We used to live in Sham Shui Po and I could not wait to close the curtains every night and shut out the urban jungle. Now I have a picture perfect scene outside my window. It's so beautiful here,' said Cindy. The quality of life is one of the reasons why couples like John and Cindy have relocated from the city to the outlying islands.

The couple moved to Lantau after the SARS outbreak in 2003. Upon reflection, they felt that their quality of life was more important than madly rushing about and working around the clock as they had done before. Both Cindy and John work in Central but John loves the travelling. 'In autumn, when the weather is cooler, the views from the ferry are breathtaking and sitting on a slow ferry is such a great way to unwind after

a stressful day at work.' In fact, the MTR link to the airport has also made getting from Hong Kong to Lantau Island much faster and easier. Cindy prefers using the train when the weather is colder.

Property prices on Lantau have been rising as more people seek the peace and quiet of island living but prices are still cheaper than similar accommodation on Hong Kong Island. However, the value of clean air and beautiful views is priceless to residents of Cheung Sha. 'The only busy time is Sundays when people arrive from the city and junks bring in groups of people by sea,' said one.

The only negative point is the threat of development. 'The government is talking about turning this unspoilt paradise into a resort with hotels and attractions. That is when we will move out!' said John.

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

You and your group members have chosen to enter a newspaper competition on *Different types of accommodation in Hong Kong*. The newspaper wants students to design a multi-media project for the competition.

You are now meeting to discuss what to include in your multi-media project. You could start by discussing which type of accommodation people would most like to live in and why. You may also like to talk about other choices open to people in Hong Kong. Consider how to make the project interesting and attractive to viewers.

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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.

Country living not for me

Wilson moved away from his family home in 2002 and rented a small flat on Lamma Island, believing that he would find a peaceful environment and beautiful scenery to enjoy. At first, he was happy, 'I enjoyed hiking over the hills from one side of the island to the other and the air was so fresh.' Unfortunately, his happiness did not last. Two years later, Wilson moved back to his father's flat in a public housing estate in Shatin. According to Wilson, 'Living in a public housing estate is much better.' But why?

Wilson says that he was not suited to living away from the city. He disliked the inconvenience of travelling by ferry. 'I missed the ferry so many times and hated waiting for another one because it took so long.' Another problem was the wildlife on the island. Wilson had to lock his doors and windows because of insects and stray dogs. One night he arrived home to find a snake on his doorstep!

He returned to Shatin last year and moved into a flat in public housing. He now feels more comfortable and is never late for work because of the efficiency of the KCR and MTR services nearby. 'I prefer to live in a busy environment and there is so much going on in these housing estates,' he said.

In particular, Wilson prefers the greater sense of community compared to village life on Lamma. 'Everyone is so friendly here and we all help each other. Public housing estates are like small communities with markets, parks, recreation centres, restaurants and shops. On Lamma, I was quite lonely and isolated because many of the residents were expatriates and we could not communicate so well.' He still visits Lamma but enjoys returning to his flat in the city.

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

You and your group members have chosen to enter a newspaper competition on *Different types of accommodation in Hong Kong*. The newspaper wants students to design a multi-media project for the competition.

You are now meeting to discuss what to include in your multi-media project. You could start by discussing which type of accommodation people would most like to live in and why. You may also like to talk about other choices open to people in Hong Kong. Consider how to make the project interesting and attractive to viewers.

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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.

Village people

Hong Kong is full of choices for people looking for a place to live. Some look for convenient transport, while others look for a place to escape the noise and pressure of the urban areas. In addition to the modern and sparkling apartment buildings which cover the city, there are many villages, which are some of the oldest residential areas in Hong Kong. For locals and expatriates alike, these villages offer affordable and comfortable homes which are no higher than three floors.

Towns like Sai Kung and Tai Wai are famous for their villages and distinctive houses, which are approximately 2000 sq. ft. Usually consisting of three floors, each house has a terrace and, in some cases, a balcony and a garden. It is common for these houses to be divided into three separate flats and this represents a cheaper way for people to enjoy village life. Teresa rents two floors of a village house in Tai Wai Village. 'This village is the oldest and largest walled village in the area

and was built in 1574. The history is amazing.' Certainly, many residents choose to live in villages because they are part of Hong Kong's heritage.

Unlike other areas in Hong Kong, villages cannot be redeveloped or knocked down without the approval of the villagers. Therefore, there are no sudden changes to the landscape as there are in more developed parts of the city. Many villages also have their own temples, stores, elected leaders and a strong sense of community.

In Fanling Wai, for example, a village between Sheung Shui and Fanling, there is an annual celebration for all residents, old and new. 'It's a celebration of village life that has been going on for centuries,' said the village leader. In recent times, many younger residents of villages have moved away, but traditions are still maintained.

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

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Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Cyber friends

The vast majority of young people in Hong Kong use the Internet every day. Their reasons for doing so include doing homework or research, shopping, playing online games, reading newspapers and so on. However, chatting on ICQ is by far the most popular reason for logging on.

According to a report released by the market research company Netvalue, Hong Kong was the first place in Asia to use instant messaging and now 85% of all Internet users use ICQ or other similar applications. Emily Chan chats on ICQ every day. She sends messages to her existing friends but also loves meeting new people. She says, 'ICQ is much better than sending emails, as the messages are instant and more direct.' However, she adds, 'I had a bad experience recently and I'd like to advise young people to be careful when chatting to strangers.'

Emily had been communicating online with Flora for a few weeks when they finally decided to meet for lunch. However, Flora did not arrive at the restaurant, but instead a man did. He said he was Flora's brother and that Flora was sick. He offered to pay for Emily's lunch. Emily immediately realised that she had been cheated, that Flora did not exist and that the man was a liar who was trying to meet young girls.

Emily admits that she learnt a valuable lesson and that she will be more careful in future. Social worker Billy Ho says, 'Emily had a lucky escape. Parents always tell their children not to talk to strangers, yet young people do this all the time when they are online. Parents need to be more aware of what their children are doing when they surf the web so that they can offer them advice and guidance.'

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

Spending long hours on the Internet is a popular pastime for young people. Parents are worried about this because they do not know what their children are doing. Your principal has planned a meeting with parents, teachers and the Students' Union to address parents' concerns.

You are members of the Students' Union and are preparing for the meeting. You may wish to discuss what rules parents should set on how children should use the computer at home. You can also give examples of how students benefit from using the Internet.

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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.

R U good at English?

People frequently complain about low standards of English in Hong Kong. Many different factors have been blamed for this, but the latest one is the Internet.

This worry has arisen because many youngsters spend most of their free time online, using cyber English rather than proper, accurate English. Using symbols, for example the smiley face made up of a colon, a hyphen and a bracket, rather than real words, is popular when emailing and chatting online, as it is efficient. More than twenty such Internet symbols exist, describing different emotions. In addition, people use short forms, such as the letters U for 'you' and R for 'are', ignore grammar and leave out capital letters and punctuation.

The main reason behind this is time. People do not have the time, or take the time needed, to write correctly. Emails and online chat rooms are regarded as instant methods of communication, so people want to

write their message as quickly and efficiently as possible, almost as if they are speaking rather than writing. Tommy Tse, who works for Thomson Electronics, says, 'I get nearly 100 emails per day. The pressure is to answer them as quickly as possible so grammar is sacrificed for time.'

Although some people feel annoyed that the Internet is leading to a more informal style of English, other people believe that language is always changing. For example, the English we use today has changed a lot since it evolved from Latin. Karen Smith, a university professor says, 'People are using the Internet to write more, which generally improves overall ability. Whether it is via email or via paper, a letter is a letter. I'm all for anything that forces people to practise writing skills.' However, she did say that increased Internet writing blurs the line between formal and informal communication.

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

Spending long hours on the Internet is a popular pastime for young people. Parents are worried about this because they do not know what their children are doing. Your principal has planned a meeting with parents, teachers and the Students' Union to address parents' concerns.

You are members of the Students' Union and are preparing for the meeting. You may wish to discuss what rules parents should set on how children should use the computer at home. You can also give examples of how students benefit from using the Internet.

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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.

Making friends

Social networking sites (SNS), such as SixDegrees, Hi5 and Friendster, are spreading rapidly through the Internet world. These sites were launched to help people make new friends through their own circle of friends. In other words, users get to know friends of friends rather than complete strangers.

These sites are user-friendly and have many different functions. Users can publicise their personal data so they meet people with similar interests and they can add pictures and leave messages for people. The main difference between SNS and other sites such as ICQ or MSN Messenger is that you do not meet people randomly but through your real friends' networks.

Mandy Chan registered with Friendster last week and she thinks it is a really good way to maintain and expand her circle of friends. She tries to log on to the

site once a day and she says, 'I can keep in touch with my friends and meet new people. I have about thirty-five names on my list and most of them are friends of friends.' Stanley Choi is also a big fan of SNS. He says, 'It's a really useful way of gathering people together.' He also thinks that it is good for people who are shy and are afraid of showing what they are like in real life.

Janice Yip, a headmistress, thinks that those who do not have many friends, or are isolated at school are most likely to turn to these websites. Even though she admits the tool is safer than many other sites, she warns that youngsters should not overestimate the safety of SNS. Her advice is for users to be careful as they do not know if they can trust new people. 'It's best to ask your friends about the people you meet before giving them any personal information.'

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

Spending long hours on the Internet is a popular pastime for young people. Parents are worried about this because they do not know what their children are doing. Your principal has planned a meeting with parents, teachers and the Students' Union to address parents' concerns.

You are members of the Students' Union and are preparing for the meeting. You may wish to discuss what rules parents should set on how children should use the computer at home. You can also give examples of how students benefit from using the Internet.

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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.

Temptation on the Net

What are the chances of a child looking at harmful material such as pornography on the Internet? Of course, it depends to some extent on how curious the child is. However, there are not too many things you can search for without the results coming back with a reference to a web page containing some type of pornography. This is because there is an alarming amount of pornographic material online.

Many parents say that they feel sure that their children would not visit pornographic sites. However, when the same parents were asked what their children actually do when they sit in front of the computer for long hours at a time, the majority of them did not know. Perhaps parents, who automatically presume that their children's online behaviour is harmless, should be taking more of an interest in what their children really do when they are surfing the Internet.

In fact, a recent survey found that 46% of the 3000 Form Four students interviewed had visited pornographic websites more than three times. Some of these students admitted that the first time was unintentional but when they saw what was on the site they felt interested and decided to have a look at the content.

Teachers and social workers are worried about the amount of pornography available in cyberspace and many of them believe that computers in homes, schools and libraries need to utilise filters to prevent children from being exposed to unsuitable material. Johnny Choi, a senior social worker believes, 'Parents should supervise their children's online behaviour. They should check which sites their children visit and ask them what they have been doing.' He also said that very young children should be prevented from using chat rooms and instant messaging unless there is direct parental supervision as they could meet the wrong kinds of people.

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

Spending long hours on the Internet is a popular pastime for young people. Parents are worried about this because they do not know what their children are doing. Your principal has planned a meeting with parents, teachers and the Students' Union to address parents' concerns.

You are members of the Students' Union and are preparing for the meeting. You may wish to discuss what rules parents should set on how children should use the computer at home. You can also give examples of how students benefit from using the Internet.

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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.

A growing problem

In the past, many people believed that rapid population growth would eventually lead to a shortage of food. Yet, according to figures from the United Nations, the number of people without food has declined considerably over the last 20 years. Instead of people not eating enough, people are now eating too much. As a result, overeating is becoming one of the world's greatest problems.

The number of overweight people in the world has increased to such an extent that in 2000, the World Health Organisation (WHO) described obesity as an 'epidemic'. There are many problems associated with being overweight or obese. These include heart disease, cancer and diabetes. It is common for doctors and medical professionals to describe smoking and drinking as potential killers but now it seems that eating too much is the most dangerous threat to public health. Why are people eating so much and becoming so obese?

A survey in 2003 found that over 60% of Americans were either obese or overweight. In Britain, the numbers were similar. Even in China, it was found that almost one-fifth of men and women were overweight. In rich cities like Beijing, the number was even higher. An increase in wealth could be part of the problem. The more money people earn, the more they spend on food. Also, as people get busier and busier at work, they look for more convenient ways of eating.

The fast food industry has been blamed for the rise in obesity around the world. Companies like McDonald's and KFC have all been criticised, as have supermarkets, for stocking so many varieties of unhealthy food. In fact, there are suggestions that governments should impose a tax on fattening food items like sweets and snacks in order to pay for the cost of health care. Obesity is expensive for everyone.

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

You and your classmates are doing a project on health problems in society and you have decided to focus on obesity. To prepare for the project, your group is having a meeting to generate some ideas.

Discuss some of the reasons for obesity and how it can be reduced. Think of some ways that will help people and governments to reduce the problem of obesity. You should provide relevant examples to support your points.

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.

It's not our fault

McDonald's is one of the world's most well-known brands. It describes itself as the world's leading food service retailer with more than 30,000 restaurants in 119 countries. Amazingly, it claims that it serves over 47 million people every day. According to the McDonald's website, the company works hard to provide customers with a choice of meals and a memorable dining experience. However, there are people who argue that companies like McDonald's are directly responsible for the rising levels of obesity in the world today.

One such person is Morgan Spurlock, who made a film about McDonald's food. In 2002, he read about two women who had sued McDonald's for making them fat. McDonald's claimed that their food was nutritious and could not be linked to health problems. So, Mr. Spurlock decided to do his own research by only eating McDonald's food for 30 days. After a month of burgers, fries, milkshakes and ice-creams, Mr. Spurlock had put

on nearly 11kg in weight, had frequent headaches and even started to suffer from depression. 'My body was starting to fall apart over the course of 30 days,' he said.

McDonald's has denied these claims and pointed to the fact that it does not only serve burgers and fries. Indeed, in many McDonald's restaurants, menus now feature salads and fruit. Another company, Cadbury's, has reduced the amount of fat in the chocolate it manufactures. However, companies like these find it hard to sell 'healthy' food even when they try.

'We are trying to think of different ways of producing fried chicken,' said a manager at KFC. However, the problem is that KFC is famous because of its fried chicken! In the 1990s, McDonald's tried to sell a low-fat burger but it was quickly taken off the menu when few people bought it. So who is to blame?

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

You and your classmates are doing a project on health problems in society and you have decided to focus on obesity. To prepare for the project, your group is having a meeting to generate some ideas.

Discuss some of the reasons for obesity and how it can be reduced. Think of some ways that will help people and governments to reduce the problem of obesity. You should provide relevant examples to support your points.

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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.

Inactivity can kill

The rising number of obesity cases around the world is alarming doctors and politicians. While doctors have to pay for public health costs. However, what about the responsibility of the public themselves? According to some people, lack of activity is the most likely cause of health problems. This claim is supported by recent changes in working conditions.

Today, more people sit behind desks looking at computers. This is in contrast to previous generations when men and women worked in factories and fields. A labourer or manual worker no doubt burns more calories than a person sitting behind a desk. Last year, a study conducted by Hong Kong University found that about 20% of deaths in Hong Kong of people aged 35 or above could be attributed to a lack of physical activity. According to one academic, Professor Lam, the number of deaths due to lack of physical activity was more than

the total number caused by smoking.

He urged people to become more responsible for their own health. 'If people cut down their sitting time by half an hour and walk, it would be beneficial,' he said. The study did not focus on obese people but it shows that lack of activity can be a major cause of heart disease and cancer for people who are not even overweight. Imagine, then, the health problems facing a person who is both overweight and inactive.

Governments have started to advise their citizens to take regular exercise. They say there is no need to join a gymnasium or a health club. People just have to exercise regularly. 'If you are behind a desk all day, make sure you take time to walk for at least twenty minutes a day,' one legislator recommended. 'It might just save your life.'

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

You and your classmates are doing a project on health problems in society and you have decided to focus on obesity. To prepare for the project, your group is having a meeting to generate some ideas.

Discuss some of the reasons for obesity and how it can be reduced. Think of some ways that will help people and governments to reduce the problem of obesity. You should provide relevant examples to support your points.

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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.

No money, no obesity?

Five years ago, a leading British supermarket sold six types of tomato. Now it sells fifteen. What would make a shop sell fifteen types of the same food? According to a store manager, the reason is simple. 'People are richer than before. They eat at restaurants more often and are more aware of different varieties of food,' he claimed. Having more money probably means that consumers spend more on food and, of course, the more food they buy, the more food they eat.

A survey in the UK found that people go shopping for food more frequently. It was once common for families to make a single weekly trip to the supermarket but these days people might visit the same store three or four times in one week. People are even changing their diets due to the availability of so many new foods. In China, between 1989 and 1997, the amount of meat consumed by people increased by nearly 50% and the number of eggs eaten doubled! What can be done to

help people eat less?

Governments have been able to educate the public about the dangers of smoking through health warnings and high levels of tax. With food, this approach has not worked so well and now there are calls for more government regulations on what people should and should not eat. In America, it is argued that soft drink companies should not be allowed to sell their products in schools. In some European countries, there is a ban on advertising fast food to children. However, obesity levels continue to rise.

Perhaps a tax on some types of food is the answer. In Australia, there is a tax on snacks and convenience foods but not on fruits and vegetables. If this does not work, the world might just eat until it explodes.

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

You and your classmates are doing a project on health problems in society and you have decided to focus on obesity. To prepare for the project, your group is having a meeting to generate some ideas.

Discuss some of the reasons for obesity and how it can be reduced. Think of some ways that will help people and governments to reduce the problem of obesity. You should provide relevant examples to support your points.

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.

A walk in the jungle

Apparently, exploring Hong Kong's beautiful countryside is becoming dangerous. In the first five months of this year, thirteen incidents of crime in our country parks were reported. This is almost as many as were recorded in the whole of last year.

The robberies and attacks in the countryside have varied widely. A woman was attacked and had her handbag stolen while walking around the Peak. A couple were robbed and then tied to a tree for twelve hours in Tai Tam Country Park, and two European girls were sexually assaulted near Route TWISK in the New Territories. Weapons used in these incidents have included scissors, knives, razors and sticks.

Hikers are advised to hike in groups, carry whistles, go only in daylight and run away as fast as possible if they see someone suspicious. The Hong Kong Federation of Countryside Activities Chairman,

Victor Cha, said larger hiking parties are more difficult to rob and also that a whistle could help save your life as it can alert others if you are in difficulty. He advised all hikers that the standard hiking equipment, of map, compass, mobile phone and first-aid kit, should now include a whistle. Also, hikers should leave their credit cards at home and take less cash with them.

A self-defence expert, Bruce Fung, advises that if people are attacked or even tied to a tree, they should try to remain calm. If something terrible happens, for example if someone is held at knifepoint, he should not fight back. Police officer Edmund Leung says, 'On the whole our city is very safe compared with other cities in the world, but there has been an alarming increase in headline-grabbing incidents involving hikers in country parks. It is still safe to go hiking, but you should be careful.'

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

A student conference entitled *Hong Kong's New Problems* is going to be held to collect students' views on the most serious problems people in our city are experiencing at the moment. Your group is going to give a talk at this conference.

You are now meeting to discuss the content of your talk. You could decide on what you think are the three most serious social problems and discuss their effects. You could also make suggestions on how to deal with these problems.

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.

Youth crime

At a meeting of youth group leaders in Hong Kong, one of the main items on the agenda was the rise in youth crime. Many of the speakers expressed their concern about the increase in drug use, theft and the involvement of youngsters in triad and other gang activities.

The speakers felt boredom, caused by a lack of facilities and entertainment options for young people, was partly to blame. This is especially so in new towns such as Tin Shui Wai and Tuen Mun. Also, because housing developments may be very crowded, bored teenagers come into contact with the wrong kinds of people, such as gang members or adults who may commit crime. Social worker Eddie Wong says, 'If youngsters do not have something meaningful to occupy their time, they will be tempted by criminal activities such as drug taking, and joining a gang may become appealing to them.'

Other causes may be feelings of frustration at school, loneliness at home as parents are busy working, and the lack of a good role model. This is especially true if the child comes from a single-parent family. It is thought that one of the reasons why youngsters are tempted by a gang lifestyle is that they need to feel wanted and recognised. Belonging to a group gives them exactly this.

The youth group leaders agreed that they should try to encourage more teenagers to join their organisations and they should try to make the activities they organise more appealing. Another idea was to set up more sports facilities and sports courses to keep young people occupied when they are not at school. 'Being in a sports team can give youngsters a sense of belonging to a group and also a sense of achievement,' said Candy Lam, a youth group leader in Tuen Mun.

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.

High abortion rate

According to findings released by the Health Department, abortions are more common in Hong Kong than in any other developed society in the world. While the rate is only just over 20% in Britain, Canada and Japan, it is almost 30% in Hong Kong.

In 2001, there were almost 70,000 pregnancies, and of these, 20,000 ended in abortion. Experts say that the rate of abortion has risen every year since 1988. Considering that the birth rate in Hong Kong is on the decline, with many families having only one child or remaining childless, the percentage of abortions has reached an alarming level.

Also of concern to doctors and social workers is that this figure is the official count and the real number is probably much higher, as many women travel across the border for an illegal abortion. In Hong Kong, a woman must be over 18 years old and must not be more than six

months pregnant in order to qualify for an abortion. However, social workers believe that many women who do not meet these requirements go to illegal mainland clinics, which are often not medically safe. Susan Law, a counsellor for a teenage-support group, said that girls had told her that mainland clinics were prepared to carry out abortions even when the pregnancies had gone beyond six months. Crossing the border for an abortion also meant that their parents would not find out.

Health and welfare professionals say that inadequate sex education is the main reason why the abortion rate is so high. Schools implement the government guidelines in various ways, with sex education usually taught in biology lessons, where issues of emotions and contraception are mostly ignored. One possible solution would be for schools to set up workshops for parents and their children to address the issue.

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.

New technology helps crime

People used to say that Hong Kong was one of the safest places in the world to live. However, this attitude may be changing. In the past year, the incidence of crime has increased sharply, especially as criminals are now using new and innovative ways of taking our money from us.

Banking fraud has become more common because advances in technology mean the options available to criminals have dramatically increased. Nowadays it is not necessary for criminals to have your bank card in their possession in order to access your account.

Although this type of fraud has been a long-standing problem in many other developed countries, such as the UK and the USA, it is a relatively new crime in Hong Kong. This previously unheard of phenomenon is getting more and more prevalent and banks are taking action to protect their customers' cash. Recently,

HSBC has warned their customers, who use Internet banking, about hackers. These criminals create fake websites to trick people into giving away their secret information, and then use it to withdraw money from the victims' accounts.

Some criminals even use personal data obtained in this manner to apply for credit cards in others' names. It is unlikely victims will find out about their losses until it is too late. Therefore, it is important to protect your mailbox and be careful with personal data. Police officer Alfred Chan says, 'Do not give personal information to anybody unless you feel certain it is safe.' He also emphasises the importance of being careful with one's personal belongings. 'The most common kind of fraud is still the use of cards stolen from bags and jackets. Thieves generally use the card immediately, as they know it will be cancelled when the loss is reported.'

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

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