

2008 AS Use of English

Section D Guidelines for Assessment

1. A candidate's performance will be assessed on a SEVEN point scale for Part 1 Individual Presentation and Part 2 Group Discussion.
2. Examiners will use an impression-mark scheme and will mark to a pattern of mark distribution. Separate marks will be awarded to each candidate for Part 1 and Part 2. The marks will range from 7 (the best) to 1 (the weakest). The marking scheme is norm-referenced, which means that examiners will not have a detailed verbal description for the level of marks awarded (i.e. 1 to 7) but instead, each day, the examiners will compare and then rank the performance of the candidates, one with another.
3. A score of '0' will be given ONLY in the following circumstances: for Part 1 if a candidate does not speak at all or if a candidate has copied out the reading passage in full and just reads out the passage; for Part 2 if a candidate does not speak at all, even after being prompted by the examiner.
4. Examiners will use the checklist below which is printed on the candidate's scoresheet when assessing the candidate's performance.

Checklist boxes for examiners

Checklist						
Part 1 Presentation			Part 2 Group Discussion			Remarks
Intelligibility	Audibility		Effective Communication and Interactive Skills	Range of vocabulary and structures		
	Clarity of speech					
Accuracy	Pronunciation			Fluency		
	Grammar					
Fluency	Ease of language production			Intelligibility		
Technical aspects of presentation	Eye contact			Participation and meaningful contribution		
	Manner of delivery					

NOTE:

- If the candidate has been awarded a penalty for either the Individual Presentation or the Group Discussion, you should make an explanatory note in the 'Remarks' column.
- Only the computer-read marks in the 'Mark Given' column will be considered.

5. The candidate will be awarded one global impression mark independently by each examiner for the Individual Presentation and another for the Group Discussion. The presentation is not designed to test the candidates' summarising skills, so as long as candidates speak on the specific topic covered in the reading passages they will be awarded marks. The factual accuracy or completeness of their presentation is not considered in the assessment of their performance. In Part B, Group Discussion, completion of the discussion task is not considered in the assessment.

Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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 lost cause

Ho Jin's parents only have one photo of him. The four-year-old boy was kidnapped from Dongguan city in Guangdong province last year. His parents are struggling to continue with their lives without their only child. 'Without you, your mummy and daddy have died several times,' reads a message that his desperate mother has written on the back of the photo.

Unfortunately there are lots of parents like those of Ho Jin. It is estimated that between 40,000 and 70,000 Chinese children are stolen from their families every year. Most of the parents try everything possible to recover their children, but they are not usually successful. Ho Jin's father says, 'My wife and I travelled the length and breadth of Guangdong and Fujian looking for our son. We went to the police but they did not even file a crime report. They were not interested. They did not even ask for a blood sample, which is obviously required for DNA testing, and

they have never contacted us since regarding the case.'

Hu Jianfa is another desperate parent whose son, Yang Yang, was abducted two years ago. 'I went to the police with information about the person who I think stole my child. They didn't do anything so I decided to take the matter into my own hands. I started to follow the person who I thought had taken my child. I thought he would lead me to my boy.' Hu did not find her son. Instead, she was cornered and beaten by a gang of men. She was stabbed in the ribs five times and spent a week in hospital. Still the police did nothing.

'There is no money for the police to make from stolen kids so they can't be bothered. They seem to be concentrating their resources on silencing the parents rather than trying to find the children,' says Hu. 'It's terrible.'

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

In order to raise awareness of child kidnappings in China, you have decided to write an article on this issue for the school magazine. You are holding the first meeting to discuss the article.

First of all, you need to think about the content of the article. You should discuss the most important points to include and ways of getting the information you require. You should also think about ways of organising the article to make an impact on the readers.

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)

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.

Stealing from the poor to sell to the rich

Every year, thousands of Chinese children, mostly boys, are stolen from their families. The majority of these are sold by gangs to wealthy people who do not have their own children or who want to have a son. Many people believe that the one-child policy is to blame for the huge number of kidnappings in China.

Professor Liu of Beijing Normal University says, 'The number of children being kidnapped is increasing. The Chinese preference for sons, combined with the one-child policy, means young boys are very precious on the Mainland. If a wealthy family cannot produce a son, they can choose to buy one instead. As China's wealth has grown, so has the trade in young boys. The buyers tend to come from the 'golden' coastal areas of Guangdong and Fujian which are very wealthy, and target residents of rural areas who are not so well-off.'

According to CCTV, an estimated 40,000 children are traded on the Mainland every year. In fact, the trade in boys is so common in some areas that some people do not even care. One man who was interviewed commented, 'If I do not have a boy in my family, everyone will look down on me. My family line will not continue and I will feel ashamed. I do not care how much money I have to pay to get a boy because I want to guarantee that my family name will continue.' The asking price for a boy generally ranges from 14,000 to 18,000 yuan.

An 80-member gang in Fujian was arrested last year for selling 60 children. However, very few of the kidnapped children are ever found by their families. Professor Liu says, 'Happy endings have become scarce and the number of kidnappings alarmingly high. This is a terrible situation. Finding the criminals does not mean the families get their little treasures back.'

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

In order to raise awareness of child kidnappings in China, you have decided to write an article on this issue for the school magazine. You are holding the first meeting to discuss the article.

First of all, you need to think about the content of the article. You should discuss the most important points to include and ways of getting the information you require. You should also think about ways of organising the article to make an impact on the readers.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Child labour

Last year, the world was shocked when newspapers published stories about children in China being kidnapped and forced to work in terrible conditions. At least 1,000 children, some as young as eight years old, have been taken away from their families and sold as slaves to work in brick factories.

Su Jinduo and Su Jinpeng, brother and sister, were travelling home by bus from a visit to Qingdao when they disappeared. First of all, their money was stolen so they were unable to buy a ticket for the last part of the journey. Next, a kind woman offered them shelter and a hot meal as it was a very cold night. However, this was a trick. The children were loaded into a minibus with several other youngsters and taken to a factory where they were forced to make bricks. Several days later the boy, who is 16, escaped and managed to reach home, enabling his father to rescue his sister.

Su Jianjun, the children's father, said, 'I'm very lucky to have my children back. Many parents are not as fortunate as us. Some children have been gone for years. The brick factories are in remote and isolated areas so it is often difficult to find the children. Quite often the police and local authorities are not interested in helping.'

Four hundred fathers have started an online campaign to find their missing children because they feel they are not getting any help at all. So far, they have located around 40 of the children. One of the fathers, Ma Jhe, has lost his nine-year-old son. He says, 'Forced labour and child labour in China are illegal, but some local governments don't take appropriate and timely action. We have waited long enough and feel it is now time to take matters into our own hands.'

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

In order to raise awareness of child kidnappings in China, you have decided to write an article on this issue for the school magazine. You are holding the first meeting to discuss the article.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

China's stolen children

Last year, a British documentary called *China's Stolen Children* was released. The short film details the tragic and shocking trade in stolen children which is taking place in China today.

The producers of the film spent a lot of time in China conducting interviews. One of the film-makers says, 'China's one-child policy has had the horrific side effect of a boom in stolen children. It is estimated that 70,000 children are kidnapped there every year and traded on the black market. I was horrified when I interviewed a man who arranges the deals and he told me that he had sold one of his own children.' In fact, the child traffickers are so relaxed about the trade in stolen children that they allowed the film-makers to record them buying and selling tiny human lives.

John Smith, who has seen the film, comments, 'The documentary is extremely moving. I felt sick after learning about what is happening in China. It's

so depressing to see parents crying because their precious children have been stolen from them.' One mother who is interviewed in the film says that she cannot stop thinking about her kidnapped son. It is impossible for her to live a normal life now. 'Every day I wonder if he is calling somebody else mummy and daddy. When it rains, I wonder if he is getting wet.'

Viewer Doris Wu says, 'This film is beautiful, haunting and deeply tragic, and impossible to ignore. We need to make sure as many people as possible see this film so it can raise awareness of what is happening. Tens of thousands of children are being kidnapped but the government is more concerned with keeping the story quiet rather than tracing the stolen children.' In fact, the trailer of the film was made available on *YouTube* but shortly afterwards, mainland viewers could not see this film on the website.

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)

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 dream wedding

Hong Kong couples are abandoning the government registry office for more romantic venues in response to the government's decision to make changes to the Marriage Ordinance. The law, introduced last year, allows over 1,000 public notaries and solicitors to conduct wedding ceremonies anywhere and at any time. Such ceremonies can now be performed outside the traditional church or registry office.

This change means couples now have control over the kind of weddings they want. Suria Kong and Kenneth Leung, who are both teachers at tertiary institutions, got married at the former British army chapel at Lei Yue Mun Park and Holiday Village. 'It was the kind of wedding we always dreamed of,' says Kong. They were the first couple to wed at the chapel under the new scheme and decided that they wanted a different kind of wedding. 'We were not interested in getting married at one of the usual venues. We wanted our guests to share our treasured moments while having

a good time in a relaxed environment and this was just the right sort of place to achieve this. It was a great success,' Leung adds.

They chose the former army chapel because they felt that the registry office ceremony was soulless and mechanical. 'You don't even have time to take photos because the next couple and their guests are waiting in the corridor before you even finish repeating the vows. Everything is done in such a rush and yet this is supposed to be the most important day of your life,' says Kong. They say that they would have got married abroad if the only alternative had been to get married in a government office.

Since the change in the law last year, more than 33,000 brides and grooms have chosen alternative venues which are more to their liking. The new policy should allow couples the flexibility to plan and have the wedding of their dreams.

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

The government has changed the law and now allows wedding ceremonies to take place in less conventional settings. You work for a company which plans weddings. Your manager has asked you to provide suggestions for some unusual wedding packages.

You are meeting to plan your ideas. You need to identify new locations and possible themes for weddings that would be attractive to young people. You should consider factors such as guest restrictions, size of venue, cost and availability. You may also think of different ways of marketing your company's services to the public.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Anytime, anyplace, anywhere

Couples in Hong Kong, who want their big day to be a little different, are taking advantage of a change in the rules that has allowed them more flexibility with their marriage plans.

Public relations executive Cecilia Wong and her husband Wilson Cheung, an engineer, chose to get married in the Yuen Long village where Cheung was born and grew up. 'Having our wedding at his birthplace has a special meaning for us,' says Wong. Clan villagers attended the wedding ceremony and a traditional ritual with a *poon choi*, or big bowl feast, at the Cheungs' ancestral hall. District councillor Raymond Ho and his fiancée Iris Wu were even more unusual in their choice of venue for their big day. They got married on the beach in Repulse Bay. They thought that because they spent so much time there anyway, they might as well tie the knot in their favourite place.

One of the advantages of planning your wedding at an alternative venue is that it is easier to book it for an auspicious day. A booking for a wedding at a government registry office needs to be made at least three months in advance if a couple want to choose a lucky date. This is important as registry booking is done on a first-come, first-served basis. This means couples also need to plan early to organise banquets and photographers since such arrangements cannot be made at short notice.

Another benefit is that it is easier to choose a venue that has enough space for the guests. As Wong says, 'Rooms in government offices are too small to accommodate all of our relatives.' Of course, Ho's choice of a beach wedding meant there were no restrictions on how many people attended. 'I think we even had a crowd of strangers there who were just interested in what we were doing!' he remarks.

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)

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.

Underwater wedding

Couples are marrying in more unusual places. Although many are persuaded to adopt a more conventional venue by family and friends, an unusual location can make a wedding far more memorable. For some this means getting married in a helicopter, on a train, or even underwater.

Ronald Ip and Sharon Mak did just that. Wearing scuba diving equipment over their wedding outfits, the couple took the plunge and exchanged rings underwater off Pak Lap Tsai in Sai Kung. Solicitor and diving instructor Pan Chi-chuen officiated at the event and explained the reason for the couple's choice. 'They met on a diving course so they wanted to have their wedding under the waves. Underwater weddings are becoming extremely popular with young people who are looking for a unique and memorable wedding experience,' he said.

There are some disadvantages to this kind of ceremony. As Ip explained, 'We were rather worried

whether our guests could hear our wedding vows and we also thought that the wedding photographs might not be very good due to the poor water quality.' The location also placed restrictions on the number of guests who could attend. 'Very few of our guests are experienced divers, so not all our guests could witness our underwater wedding,' he said. However, these problems were solved by having another ceremony at Kerry Lake Egret Park restaurant in Tai Po.

Pan adds some words of wisdom, 'Wherever a couple choose to get married, it is important not to forget the basics. I've seen many nervous grooms say their vows only to discover that they had forgotten to bring the rings, or brides who forget to bring their wedding gowns.' So it would appear that, even though many are opting for the strange and the unusual, the traditional elements of a wedding remain the same.

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

The government has changed the law and now allows wedding ceremonies to take place in less conventional settings. You work for a company which plans weddings. Your manager has asked you to provide suggestions for some unusual wedding packages.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Planning for the big day

With more weddings taking place outside of the traditional church, temple or government registry office, a new variety of wedding provider is flourishing. One such provider is the Eden Marriage Registry, which offers couples a range of exciting venue options. It has organised more than 6,800 weddings since April 2007.

Eden offers wedding packages for between HK\$700 and HK\$1,900 for a 20-minute ceremony, which includes organising the venue and services. Founder Alfred Sui says, 'I am more optimistic about the wedding business now that couples are legally allowed to choose their own wedding venue rather than having to go to a government registry.' He also says that people are spending more on decorations for their big day. 'Couples are willing to spend anything from HK\$5,000 to HK\$14,000 on creating a romantic atmosphere,' he adds. This usually involves arrangements of flowers but it might mean the making of heart-shaped arches and other romantic structures.

Wedding planner Sharon Au is also reaping the benefits. 'My business has grown by 10 percent since the government relaxed the laws governing marriages and 80 percent of my customers now choose to do their own thing,' she says. This often involves creating the wedding ceremony around a central idea. Au explains, 'We have had several couples use war games as their theme. This gives the groom a chance to wear full military uniform and impress both his wife-to-be and the guests.'

However, most couples play it safe and opt for a more conventional marriage ceremony. 'They think that a wedding isn't the time to take risks and prefer something traditional and romantic rather than an off-beat ceremony where there is more chance of something going wrong,' says Au. Nevertheless, with greater choice and a more creative wedding industry in support, it seems getting married in Hong Kong is sure to become a more individually designed affair for couples who want something different.

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

The government has changed the law and now allows wedding ceremonies to take place in less conventional settings. You work for a company which plans weddings. Your manager has asked you to provide suggestions for some unusual wedding packages.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Destined to travel

Travel writing is quite often thought of as being the most interesting form of journalism. People often think travel writers stay in expensive hotels, see famous sights and lead exciting lives. However, the reality is usually very different.

Travel writing is very demanding and requires a lot of stamina as trips to far-away destinations are usually packed with various excursions and meetings. Writers need to work hard, collect a lot of information and carry out interviews. They need to find out what times tourist attractions open and close, how much they cost and why tourists should visit them. They also have to look for other information such as the timetables for buses, trains and flights. This can often take a long time, especially if the writer does not speak the local language.

One key asset for the travel journalist to have is the ability to write in an interesting and attractive

style. The first paragraph is the most important because it needs to grab the reader's attention and hopefully lead them to finish reading the article. Travel writer Drew Watkins comments, 'Quite often writers take the most interesting or unusual event that they have experienced and start their article with that. It can be very effective in drawing the reader into the text.'

Travel writers need to develop the ability to get several stories out of one destination or trip. There are a lot of costs involved in this form of journalism such as flights, transport and accommodation. The writer needs to think of different angles for stories as this will make it easier for them to sell more articles when they have returned from their journey. 'It's difficult to make good money in this profession, although the rewards are obvious. You get to travel the world and make enough to pay for it at the same time,' concludes Watkins.

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

You are members of a group who work for an online magazine in Hong Kong. Your company would like to employ different kinds of writers for its website. You have been asked to write the job advertisements.

Your group should first consider what kinds of articles the website will feature and the types of writers needed for it. You should also decide on the skills and qualities you expect from the candidates for each category that you have chosen. Finally, you could consider where you would like to place the job advertisements.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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 question of persistence

Being a reporter is an interesting profession which requires some basic skills. Firstly, you need to be able to write in the style of the publication you are writing for. You also need to be able to write at any time and function well under pressure because of all the deadlines. There are some rules that need to be followed and some personal characteristics that are crucial for the job.

Reporters need to write very concisely and in a certain style. They start out with an introduction, which should summarise the story, then use the next three paragraphs to complete it. Subsequently, they add lots of quotations. 'It is like writing an essay: you make your claims and then you use your quotes as the evidence to prove them. However, the first line has to be really good as it must grab the reader's attention,' says journalist Martin King.

Experienced journalist Tim Hopkins has some

advice for reporters who are new to the profession. 'When interviewing, you need to be pleasant and non-judgemental. Therefore, never express an opinion about anything you hear, just scribble it down and add the judgement when you write it up,' he says. He believes reporters need to be very determined. 'When you're talking to politicians you need to be very firm and question everything they say. They'll always try to distract you or act like they've done nothing wrong. You should keep firing questions until they get nervous and you might hear something worth publishing,' he adds.

Staying in control during the interview might actually be the hardest skill for a reporter. 'Whenever the conversation stops you must ask a question. Also, some people will continue to talk about the most irrelevant nonsense, so with them you need to find a way of politely telling them to stop talking about mindless rubbish and answer the question,' says Hopkins.

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

You are members of a group who work for an online magazine in Hong Kong. Your company would like to employ different kinds of writers for its website. You have been asked to write the job advertisements.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Storytelling

Creative writing is the skill needed to become a professional storyteller. However, the skills needed to achieve success in this field of writing take many years to develop. As publisher Gina Wade explains, 'Your writing style, the manner in which you express yourself, evolves naturally over time. It's a combination of your personality, reading choices and, to a certain extent, the decisions you make consciously while writing.' So what advice should be given to someone who wants to become a published writer?

The first thing is to read widely. Through reading a variety of styles, a writer can learn a great deal. 'Read extensively, and read actively. Read the classics because great literature is your best teacher,' recommends Wade. Learning about why a writer is considered to be great can set a standard that a writer can try to aim for. 'Developing your own individual style will often come from combining the different styles of other writers,' she concludes.

A good imagination is another important asset. A writer needs to create complex characters, and this process can be extremely time-consuming. 'You must think about how your characters look, where they are from and what motivates them. You need to consider their childhood, their job and their personality. You also need to work out how your characters behave in different situations,' says writing coach Graham Morrison.

There are of course some general rules that beginner writers can follow. First, they should write as much and as often as they can. They should also be clear, concise and precise. 'Make sure sentences are easy to understand, rephrase longer sentences into shorter ones where possible and choose the best, most accurate nouns and verbs for the situation you are trying to describe. Also, think of original things to say and use colourful language and vivid expressions for the perfect product,' advises Morrison.

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)

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 recipe for writing

People have been writing about food for centuries. Examples of such writing are recipes, reviews and articles giving general information about different kinds of food. Of course, food critics need to have more than just a healthy appetite. So what distinguishes a good food writer?

Although a thorough knowledge of food and how restaurants operate is essential, it is also important that food critics know enough about the background culture of the cuisine they are writing about. As food writer Mark Cummins explains, 'Eating is a central activity of humankind and food is one of the single most significant trademarks of a culture.' When someone understands the relationship between a particular kind of food and the people who eat it, it is much easier to write interesting things.

Another asset essential to the food writer is to have a keen sense of fairness. Techniques employed

by the restaurant industry to get sparkling reviews include complimentary dining opportunities and other gifts for food critics. Editor of Hotel and Catering magazine Mina Mitchell says, 'Restaurants always look for favourable reviews but reviewers must be fair. This applies equally to who they are writing about as much as the people they're writing for. It's a fine balance but you must remember to stay impartial.'

Food writing focuses on fairly specific subject matter. It therefore helps if it is connected with other topics. For example, some foods may have historical, scientific, religious or medical significance. Food writers often focus on these aspects when writing about certain foods and dishes. This can draw the reader into the article as there is a dimension that does not just relate to food. Enhancing the text with humour is also a strategy commonly used. 'I try and write in an amusing style as it often allows for an easier and more entertaining read,' says Mitchell.

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

You are members of a group who work for an online magazine in Hong Kong. Your company would like to employ different kinds of writers for its website. You have been asked to write the job advertisements.

Your group should first consider what kinds of articles the website will feature and the types of writers needed for it. You should also decide on the skills and qualities you expect from the candidates for each category that you have chosen. Finally, you could consider where you would like to place the job advertisements.

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

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NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY

Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

World anti-poverty day

In 1992, the United Nations General Assembly declared 17th October *International Day for the Eradication of Poverty*, in other words, a world day to end poverty. This special day gives very poor people a chance to speak about their efforts to fight poverty. Also on this day, various groups and organisations all over the world hold events to raise awareness of poverty and inequality and hopefully bring about changes.

Last year, 23.5 million people around the world joined events organised on that day. In Hong Kong, more than 500 people packed into a community hall in Sham Shui Po to show their support for the day and call for action against poverty and hardship. Katie Kwok works for the Art of Living Foundation, the organisation which arranged the gathering. She believes there are many poor people even in an extremely rich city like Hong Kong. 'It's about time the government did more to help poor people in the city,' she says.

On a nearby rooftop in Sham Shui Po, the Society for Community Organisation held a small protest. More than 80 underprivileged people gathered to renew their plea for more government help to end poverty. One of the protesters, Leung Chun-kit, is jobless and lives on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance payments of HK\$1,630 a month. He says, 'Chief Executive Donald Tsang pledged to fight poverty in his election campaign, but he has done nothing. I only have \$50 a day to live on. Should I use the money for food or to go to job interviews?'

An employee of the United Nations says that 17th October is an attempt to remind governments around the world to keep the promises they made at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000. 'They set goals to halve the number of hungry or poor people in the world by 2015 and are working to achieve this target.'

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

Your group has decided to hold some events in your school on 17th October to commemorate *International Day for the Eradication of Poverty*. You want to raise awareness among students and their families of the inequality that exists and raise funds to give to charities which help poor people.

You are meeting to plan the events for the day. You should think about the kind of information you would need and the ways to educate students and their families about poverty and the wealth gap. You should also decide on meaningful fundraising activities to hold in order to raise awareness AND 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)

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 rich and the poor

It is no secret that Hong Kong has more than its fair share of wealthy people. In fact, in 2006 the number of US dollar millionaires in the city rose by 12% to almost 90,000. Hong Kong is also home to almost 1,500 ultra-millionaires, in other words, people who have assets of more than US\$30 million. These statistics show that a large and growing proportion of society is doing well, but how about the others?

Local academic Professor Henry Tam comments, 'It's very positive that the local economy is doing well and we are no longer in a recession, but the truth is that a large proportion of Hong Kong residents are actually very poor. People around the world think this is a city of plenty, but we have a serious poverty problem because the wealth is not distributed equally. Over the past decade the number of very poor households has been increasing. In fact, one in four children lives in a low-income household.'

However, Flora Jones, a banker, has a different opinion. 'Hong Kong is well placed to help the poor get richer. We should celebrate the fact that the number of rich people here is increasing. It proves that free-market principles continue to work in Hong Kong's favour. The growth in Hong Kong's wealthy population has been driven by the strong economy and the rising stock market. This is obviously good for all residents, not just the wealthy. When the economy is strong, the government makes allowances and companies give pay rises and bonuses to their employees.'

Nevertheless, Professor Tam feels strongly that more needs to be done to help the poor. 'The poverty rate has risen in the past 10 years from almost 15% of the population to 18% now. We need to address the inequality,' he urges.

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

Your group has decided to hold some events in your school on 17th October to commemorate *International Day for the Eradication of Poverty*. You want to raise awareness among students and their families of the inequality that exists and raise funds to give to charities which help poor people.

You are meeting to plan the events for the day. You should think about the kind of information you would need and the ways to educate students and their families about poverty and the wealth gap. You should also decide on meaningful fundraising activities to hold in order to raise awareness AND raise money.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

China's great divide

Although China is experiencing an economic boom, the income gap between rural and urban areas is widening. Figures released last year show that at least 6% of the rural population lives in absolute poverty. However, city residents are getting richer. In fact, the average Chinese city dweller earns more than three times as much as his counterpart in the countryside.

Wen Yong-ming, a government minister, explains that farmers are also getting richer but not at the same rate as city residents. In fact, the income of farmers is growing at a rate not seen since the mid-1980s, with average rural incomes increasing by 6%. Wen says, 'Although farmers' income has been growing quite fast in recent years, the pace is still slower than the growth rate of urban residents' income.'

The government has been trying to narrow the gap but the task of boosting farmers' income remains

tough. For the past five years, China's leaders have been introducing measures to make life in the countryside easier, for example getting rid of agriculture-related taxes. A farmer from Guangdong comments, 'The government is trying to lift the rural areas out of poverty, but there is still a long way to go in order to narrow the gap between rural and urban areas. Our leaders have identified income distribution as a priority. President Hu Jintao says the widening wealth gap is a key obstacle in his long-term objective of building a harmonious society. This is good news but we are still waiting to see any progress.'

Henry Smith of Hong Kong Baptist University is a China expert. He explains, 'The income gap is increasing but farmers are definitely richer than before. Surely this is positive. I believe the income gap is unlikely to narrow in the next decade as cities will remain the centre of China's economic growth.'

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

Your group has decided to hold some events in your school on 17th October to commemorate *International Day for the Eradication of Poverty*. You want to raise awareness among students and their families of the inequality that exists and raise funds to give to charities which help poor people.

You are meeting to plan the events for the day. You should think about the kind of information you would need and the ways to educate students and their families about poverty and the wealth gap. You should also decide on meaningful fundraising activities to hold in order to raise awareness AND raise money.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

More to help the poor

When tourists on a short tour of Hong Kong look down from Victoria Peak at the brightly lit city below, they can be forgiven for thinking that they are visiting a very rich city. Although 14 in every 1,000 people here are US dollar millionaires, the poverty rate in Hong Kong is much higher than that in many other developed cities in the world. Among the 7 million Hong Kong residents, 1.12 million people live below the poverty line.

Politicians are aware of the increasing gap between the rich and the poor and have promised to solve the problem. The Chief Executive, Donald Tsang, described the wealth gap as 'a serious social problem', but many feel he has done little about it. Fred Cheung teaches economics at a local university. He comments, 'Around the time of the handover, the emphasis was on the economy of Hong Kong and therefore more attention was paid to business interests instead of middle-class people. What this means is

that hardly any measures to help lift people out of the poverty cycle have been put in place.'

Social worker Judy Lo says, 'Poor people here are fortunate in the sense that they do have a safety net such as public housing, Comprehensive Social Security Assistance and free medical care, and education. Underprivileged people in some countries may not have such schemes. However, this is still not enough. The government should be trying to narrow the wealth gap.'

Professor Cheung believes local people have changed their attitude. 'In the past, Hong Kong people felt that rich people got their money through hard work. Today, they are beginning to have doubts. Ten years ago, Li Ka-shing was an idol. He was known as Superman Li and he represented the Hong Kong dream, in which one has the chance to succeed if one works hard. Now his popularity appears to be declining,' he says.

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

Your group has decided to hold some events in your school on 17th October to commemorate *International Day for the Eradication of Poverty*. You want to raise awareness among students and their families of the inequality that exists and raise funds to give to charities which help poor people.

You are meeting to plan the events for the day. You should think about the kind of information you would need and the ways to educate students and their families about poverty and the wealth gap. You should also decide on meaningful fundraising activities to hold in order to raise awareness AND raise money.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Rainforest Festival – jive in the jungle

The island of Borneo brings to mind images of tattooed tribesmen and unspoilt hardwood forests, but a visit in July will show you a more musical side to the island's charm. The island is the venue for *The Rainforest World Music Festival*, an event which has been held for ten years. This unique event features performances by renowned world musicians as well as local acts with their own exciting musical styles.

So what exactly is world music? Well, styles at last year's festival ranged from Russian throat singers to the bagpipes and whistles of a Celtic band from Poland. African drummer Hugh Kuti says, 'The festival's strength is that the music is truly international. It's also great because we musicians get to network and this sometimes leads to future musical collaboration.'

The festival attracts an international audience who enjoy its country fair atmosphere. The three-day event has a mixture of information workshops, ethnic

music lectures, jamming sessions and mini concerts in the afternoon, followed by evening performances on the main stage. Emma Richards, who attends the festival every year, explains her motivation. 'Not only do I get to see some unusual performances, I also learn so much from the educational sessions that take place. These musicians are not famous pop stars. They are dedicated to their style of music and it's really great to see that passion.'

Serious festival-goers, who take their tents and camp out when they attend music festivals, might be a little disappointed if they decide to attend this festival. The event is held at the Sarawak Cultural Village, which has replicas of traditional tribal longhouses, and it is here that local cultural performances are held. Festival-goers are therefore asked to find accommodation in the nearby city of Kuching, which is 45 minutes away. But there is one important piece of advice for them: do not forget your mosquito repellent – you are still in the middle of the rainforest!

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

You are volunteers for a charity group that wants to stage an outdoor performing arts and music festival in Hong Kong.

You are meeting to brainstorm ideas for this event. You should consider options for an appropriate venue and what types of acts you would like to include in the festival. You should also think of how long it would last and which groups of people it should be aimed at. Finally, you could consider how you would obtain funding and other donations for the event.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Rockit Festival – park ‘n’ rock

The *Rockit Festival* was held each March in Hong Kong’s Victoria Park from 2003 to 2006. Although the event only attracted a few international bands, among the featured acts, regional and local acts were well represented. Ticket prices were reasonable and it never rained. The festival did not happen last year but how successful was it when it did take place?

The two-day event gave local bands the chance to play on a stage equipped with an excellent sound system. It also meant they could expand their fan base. Guitarist Sam Ng was grateful for the opportunity to play. ‘It’s really tough for local bands to find good venues to perform at. Even then, you are often just playing to your friends. This event allowed you to reach a far larger audience,’ he explains.

Jason Green attended the festival every year. Although he was delighted that the event actually took place, he thought it could have been so much better.

‘First of all, it finished at 9.00pm, which was way too early for a rock festival. I also felt there was not enough variety of food, drink and other things to do. Other festivals I’ve been to had market stalls and more entertainment for kids,’ he says.

Government restrictions on the arrangement of such events are largely to blame, according to Janet Robins, a local events organiser. ‘Typically in Hong Kong the authorities want to over-manage everything. This leads to a highly regulated affair with organisers being forced to abandon any creative ideas. The government also does not support festivals like this because it considers them to be too unconventional and without public value,’ she says. The *Rockit Festival* looks dead and buried for the present. Nevertheless, music lovers in Hong Kong hope that another musical event will emerge and take its place at some point in the future.

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)

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.

Glastonbury Festival – mud glorious mud!

Once a year in the middle of summer, the tiny village of Glastonbury in the UK takes centre stage for one of the largest rock festivals in the world. Last year, over 177,000 people camped for three days under the stars and watched more than 700 acts play on over 80 stages. Tickets for the *Glastonbury Festival* cost about HK\$2,200 and sold out in less than two hours of being released.

With the exception of technical and security staff, who are professionals, organisation of the event involves large numbers of volunteers. They are provided by charity and campaign groups which receive donations in return for supplying manpower. Sally Fields is one such individual. She says, 'Although I am not paid, I do get a free ticket and an opportunity to contribute to the smooth operation of this awesome spectacle. That's reward enough.'

Although the *Glastonbury Festival* is renowned

for its contemporary music, it also features dance, comedy, theatre, circus, cabaret and many other arts. There are also lots of charities and organisations that operate promotional and educational stalls. Countless food stalls offer delicacies from around the world and beer tents keep the crowds from getting thirsty. In addition, traders sell a variety of goods to satisfy the most dedicated of shoppers.

As with any outdoor event, the weather plays a major role. English summers are often rainy and in some years, the bad weather turns the rolling green fields into mud. However, this does not prevent fun-seekers from slipping and sliding around the festival site and enjoying themselves when they are not watching performances in the many tents that are scattered around. As Dave Hardy explains, 'The mud is part of the enjoyment of the event. If it rains I'm going to be one of the first to get covered in the stuff.'

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

You are volunteers for a charity group that wants to stage an outdoor performing arts and music festival in Hong Kong.

You are meeting to brainstorm ideas for this event. You should consider options for an appropriate venue and what types of acts you would like to include in the festival. You should also think of how long it would last and which groups of people it should be aimed at. Finally, you could consider how you would obtain funding and other donations for the event.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Fuji Festival – sushi rock

The *Fuji Rock Festival* is a three-day event which features Japanese and international musicians performing on seven different stages. Crowds of 100,000 people regularly attend the event. The Green Stage is the main stage and it has a capacity of more than 30,000 spectators. Other stages include the White Stage, Orange Court, the Red Marquee and the Field of Heaven.

At the first *Fuji Rock Festival*, conditions could not have been worse. A massive typhoon nearly destroyed the festival site and this led to the cancellation of the events scheduled for the second day. The audience were also left stranded for hours by terrible weather because there was a shortage of bus transportation between the venue and the nearest train station.

Ten years on, the Fuji festival has a new location and is now smoothly organised. Although

the new venue is not close to Mount Fuji, the festival has kept its original name. The Naeba site is ideally situated in the middle of mountainous forests. This gives festival-goers an opportunity to take in the beautiful scenery as they move between stages, which are quite some distance apart. Festival devotee Adam Balcombe says, 'There are absolutely stunning views, there's no rubbish and the toilets are spotless, which is very unusual for events such as these.'

A campsite is home to most of the audience who decide to stay for the full three days. Kumi Yashamoto loves this aspect of the festival. 'What could be better than to sit around gazing at the stars after seeing some of the best rock bands in the world? But don't forget to take a good sleeping bag as it can get quite cold,' she adds. The chance to enjoy all of this does come at a price however. Tickets for a three-day pass are HK\$2,700.

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)

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.

Homecoming

Leading up to the handover in 1997, a large number of people, both foreign and local, packed their bags and left Hong Kong. People were worried and uncertain about the future of their city. However, thousands of these former residents have already flocked back to Hong Kong and many more plan to come back soon.

Kimmy Choi is one of them. She left Hong Kong for Australia in 1996 but in 2001, Choi saw an opportunity and moved back here. 'My parents told me we were leaving for my education, but I think my family were worried about the future under Chinese rule. We had watched the events of 4th June 1989 and my parents thought it was safer to hold an overseas passport. They had seen examples on the mainland where people were not allowed to leave the country and that made them nervous.'

Professor Henry Wu from City University offers

an explanation for the phenomenon. 'By the late 1990s, people who had left eventually found that the economic situation in Hong Kong was good enough for them to move back. Many regretted that they had missed golden opportunities, especially when they had migrated to another country and life was not as good as they had imagined.' A lot of foreigners who left have returned too, after realising that Hong Kong was a better option. They had considered Hong Kong as a stop-off point before but now view it as their permanent home. Andy Jones is one such person. 'I returned in 2000 after four years in the UK. Hong Kong is my home now,' he says.

Choi says she does not regret moving back here even though it is not ideal. 'I worry a lot about the air we breathe and I am also concerned about China's human rights record, but I think things are improving. I'm Chinese and my roots are in Hong Kong.'

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

As part of a social studies project, you have to write an article on how Hong Kong has changed since the handover in 1997.

You are meeting to plan the article. You need to think about the content of your article and choose the most important points to include so as to present a balanced view of events since 1997. You should then think about the organisation of your article and what types of data to include. Finally, you should decide how you are going to collect the information you need.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Money matters

Before the handover, many people left Hong Kong but those who chose to stay were those with a special commitment to the city. These people have seen the ups and downs since 1997 and have worked hard to transform Hong Kong into a major world city and financial capital.

Candy Liu is a real estate agent. She says, 'It's been a roller-coaster ride for the property market. Property prices peaked ten years ago and then plunged during the Asian financial crisis. Many people in our city saw the value of their homes drop and many were forced to sell them at lower prices than they had bought them for. This was a sad time for people who had worked hard to buy their own home. Many Hong Kong people are still afraid of buying a flat as they are worried the same thing will happen again. However, Hong Kong's economy is booming. The GDP increased by 6.8% in 2006 and it is set to continue at

6% until 2011. After years of salary cuts, people are now getting pay increases. Liu says, 'The future looks good for Hong Kong.'

Social worker Kelvin Ho disagrees. 'People on a low income are worse off than before. The wealth gap has widened and the government blames people for being poor. It says that their problem is one of personal failure. This is terrible. The British Government was more sympathetic to the poor because of their Christian tradition and the fact that there is an effective safety net in the UK. I thought there would be a stronger sense of caring after the handover, but in reality poor people lead an increasingly difficult life.'

So despite Hong Kong's status as a financial hub, it seems the wealth is now concentrated in the hands of a smaller number of people. Will the government do more to address this inequality in the near future?

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)

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.

One country, two systems

Hong Kong people said goodbye to British rule more than a decade ago with doubts and fears about the future of Hong Kong under the 'one country, two systems' policy. How do people feel now and has the implementation of this system been a success?

If we ask any ordinary citizen in the street a simple question, whether they feel better or worse off now, the chances are their replies will be a bit unclear. Opinion polls show more positive feelings towards Beijing and China's progress in areas such as human rights; yet many people are concerned about the development of democracy in Hong Kong and feel that Beijing has been interfering in our city's affairs much more since the mass protest of 1st July 2003.

Recent surveys show that Hong Kong people identify strongly with China. This is especially true for younger people since they grew up under Chinese

rule. Raymond Cheung is a 19-year-old student. He explains, 'Since the handover Hong Kong people have gained a country. We are not a colony, we are part of China and China is booming. I am proud to be part of China and want to contribute to China's growth and modernisation.' However, his classmate, Eva, is less certain. 'I worry about the future. I think we should have the right to elect our own political leaders. Beijing has not allowed us this right. I am also nervous about how the Chinese Government acts in times of crisis. I do not like the way it handled the Sars outbreak.'

Professor Leung from City University is confident. 'On the whole Hong Kong people have a new sense of belonging and identity. Since the handover, people feel more positive and want to work together for a better city. Of course, there are still issues, such as pollution, unemployment and democracy, but generally things are good.'

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

As part of a social studies project, you have to write an article on how Hong Kong has changed since the handover in 1997.

You are meeting to plan the article. You need to think about the content of your article and choose the most important points to include so as to present a balanced view of events since 1997. You should then think about the organisation of your article and what types of data to include. Finally, you should decide how you are going to collect the information you need.

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 D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Ten years on: Post-colonial Hong Kong

So many things have happened since Hong Kong became a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China in 1997. There have undoubtedly been highs and lows, but what do Hong Kong people think about the past decade?

Maggie Cheung, a teacher, feels this was an eventful period. 'It's been a busy time for Hong Kong. There have been lots of major events, both good and bad. We have seen the Sars epidemic and the bird flu crisis. The loss of 299 lives during Sars changed people's attitudes towards life. After that there was a stronger sense of community spirit. People who used to be money-minded and materialistic became more caring. Hong Kong has become a much cleaner city too as people are more aware of the importance of public health and hygiene. It seems that good can come out of bad.'

University student Apple Wong thinks otherwise. 'I'm proud to live in Hong Kong because it

is one of the safest cities in the world. The crime rate is low and we have efficient law enforcement agencies. However, one thing that concerns me is that the living environment of Hong Kong is deteriorating. One attraction featured in every tourist guide is the view of Victoria Harbour from the Peak, yet this is obscured by haze on most days of the year. It was better in the 1990s. Our Chief Executive tried to deny the air quality problem by saying that Hong Kong people live longer than the average citizen elsewhere in the world. But the statistics do not lie: the number of hazy days when the air pollution index is high is growing steadily. The government needs to take this issue more seriously.'

All in all, Hong Kong appears to be a good place to live. There are problems, just like anywhere in the world, but opinion polls suggest that most people are satisfied.

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

As part of a social studies project, you have to write an article on how Hong Kong has changed since the handover in 1997.

You are meeting to plan the article. You need to think about the content of your article and choose the most important points to include so as to present a balanced view of events since 1997. You should then think about the organisation of your article and what types of data to include. Finally, you should decide how you are going to collect the information you need.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Watching you

Reality television is a kind of television programming which presents real-life events and features ordinary people instead of professional actors. *Big Brother* is one of the most well-known reality TV shows.

The first series of *Big Brother* was broadcast in the Netherlands in September 1999. Since then the 'real life soap opera' has been a prime-time hit in almost 70 different countries. Although each country has made its own changes to the format of *Big Brother*, the general concept has stayed the same. Housemates are confined to a specially designed house where their every action is recorded by cameras and microphones and they are not permitted any contact with the outside world.

During each series, which lasts for around three months, members of the public vote to determine which of the housemates to evict. In other words, it is up to the public to decide who has to leave the house

and who gets to stay. The programme is immensely popular with young people. Crystal Jones is a fan of the programme. She says, 'During a *Big Brother* series, I watch every episode. I feel like I cannot miss one otherwise my vote will not be reliable. I love the part where the housemates go to the diary room to individually convey their thoughts, feelings and frustrations, and confess who they would like to throw out of the house.'

Critics such as Crystal's mum say that the term 'reality television' is misleading because such shows usually portray a very strange form of reality. 'Participants are often in abnormal situations, such as being confined in a house, and sometimes they are told to act in certain ways by off-screen directors. This is definitely not real. The public believe that they are watching the actual events on screen, but these are frequently changed through editing and other post-production techniques. I keep telling my daughter this but she does not care.'

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

Many parents believe that students watch too much reality TV and they think these kinds of programmes are a waste of time. They are trying to persuade the principal to launch a campaign to discourage students from watching reality television shows.

The principal has asked you to collect opinions about reality television. First, you should discuss which reality shows are popular with students and why. You should then share your opinions of reality TV and discuss why you think parents are worried. Finally you should think about how you will collect the views of the other students in the school.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

He's got talent

Last year saw the launch of a new reality television show, *Britain's Got Talent*. The programme is rather like a talent contest in which there is a studio audience of 2,000 people and three judges. Contestants include singers, dancers, comedians and other talented people of all ages. The idea behind the show is that anybody with a special talent should be encouraged to take part. The judges decide whether the contestant is good enough to get through to the next round of the competition.

Paul Potts, a 36-year-old mobile phone seller turned opera singer, was the winner of the show. He received HK\$1.5 million in prize money and got the chance to perform in front of the Queen and members of the Royal Family. He admits that entering the competition changed his life forever. Paul used to be bullied at school and lacked confidence. 'When I got through to the final round of the competition, it was the first time in my life I'd felt I had any chance of doing anything worthwhile.'

Paul fell in love with opera when he was 11. 'I find opera affects me emotionally more than any other form of music.' He adds, 'I feel safe when I start singing.' Although Paul has performed as an unpaid opera singer, his lack of self-esteem prevented him from turning professional. However, since winning the show, Paul has released his first album *One Chance* which made it to number one in the UK album charts.

Music producer Peter Brown says, 'Reality TV shows like this, which give people with talent a chance to be discovered, are fantastic. There is a lot of amazing talent out there but unless people have contacts in the music or entertainment industry, they may never get the chance to work professionally. Plus, the show is great entertainment. Both the audience in the studio and at home love it.'

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

Many parents believe that students watch too much reality TV and they think these kinds of programmes are a waste of time. They are trying to persuade the principal to launch a campaign to discourage students from watching reality television shows.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

City chase

Last August, Hong Kong hosted a reality TV show called *City Chase*. This was the world's largest urban adventure race and was designed to test mind, body and soul through humorous mental and physical challenges. These included kissing live fish, eating red hot chillies and diving into a freezing tank of ice water to do a word puzzle.

The race started with teams of two receiving a clue sheet detailing a list of physical, intellectual and fun challenges, known as Chase Points. Participants had to complete ten Chase Points in any order. To do this they had to run, walk or use public transport to get around Hong Kong, while calling family and friends for help, accessing the Internet and even employing the assistance of total strangers.

Elton Ng and Kin Wong were the winners and they will go to Rome to take part in the final. Wong said the most difficult part was the word search puzzle

in a tank of freezing water. 'I had to do this twice as I could not see anything the first time,' he explained. Nick Jelinek, the founder of *City Chase*, had some advice for concerned local participants. 'The public transport system in Hong Kong is among the best in the world. Participants do not necessarily need to be super fit to compete – they just need to have an open mind as well as the mental strength to complete the challenges,' he said.

Nat Geo Adventure Channel broadcast the exciting event at the end of last year. Cameraman Benny Kwok filmed the race. 'Viewers love this kind of reality TV. They like seeing people suffer, for example, undergoing physical pain, challenges and difficulties. Watching participants doing things like eating red hot chilli peppers and durian pancakes with their hands tied behind their backs and kissing a live fish is both disgusting and entertaining. It attracted a lot of viewers,' he commented.

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

Many parents believe that students watch too much reality TV and they think these kinds of programmes are a waste of time. They are trying to persuade the principal to launch a campaign to discourage students from watching reality television shows.

The principal has asked you to collect opinions about reality television. First, you should discuss which reality shows are popular with students and why. You should then share your opinions of reality TV and discuss why you think parents are worried. Finally you should think about how you will collect the views of the other students in the school.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Dreams become reality

Indian television has shown that talent hunts and reality television are not just about making fun of people and seeing people suffer. Last year, a programme called *Scholarhunt Destination UK* proved that reality TV can in fact have a useful purpose.

The programme was the idea of the British Council and NDTV, a 24-hour Indian news channel. It was a huge success, both in terms of the number of competitors and viewers. Thousands of people competed for the scholarships to five British universities. The programme involved eight weeks of quizzes, exams, practical tests and interviews. Arvind, an 18-year-old student, beat 14,000 others to win a scholarship to study engineering. The prize is worth HK\$1.25 million and it covers all fees and living costs for four years. He had never considered studying in the UK before he saw the adverts for the programme, but he is delighted that he won. He says, 'I did not feel stressed. I was not even aware of the cameras.'

Many people have criticised the show. Professor Bruce of Leeds University commented, 'The best and most able students, in other words the ones who should be winning scholarships, may not always come forward for a televised competition. The previous experience of reality TV shows suggests that it is the people with big personalities who tend to shine.' Others feel that giving away a university place as a prize on a reality show undermines the importance of applying to a university and being selected.

However, the director of *Scholarhunt* disagrees. 'The winners appear to be serious, motivated, intelligent and studious. We think our show may have changed the face of reality TV. In the past, people watched these kinds of shows to see the participants suffer. However, our show is more meaningful. We have created a show which gives people the opportunity of a lifetime.'

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

Many parents believe that students watch too much reality TV and they think these kinds of programmes are a waste of time. They are trying to persuade the principal to launch a campaign to discourage students from watching reality television shows.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Anti-drug game

A mobile phone game is being used for the first time to spread anti-drug messages. Last year, the Action Committee Against Narcotics (ACAN) and the Narcotics Division of the Security Bureau launched a new game, *Evil Killer*, for free download in both mobile phone and computer versions.

The new game is designed to combat the two most commonly abused drugs among young people, Ketamine, otherwise known as K, and Ecstasy. Game players need to have a good memory and perfect co-ordination skills to overcome the difficulties posed by the cyber characters, *Evil K* and *Evil E*. Players learn about the harm Ketamine and Ecstasy can do as they battle through the different stages of the game. They first take on the role of a cool-looking teenager whose mission is to clamp down on drug abuse. They then have to beat the *Evil K*, the *Evil E* and the brain-eating monster in four stages of the game to save their friends from the dangers of drugs. Secondary school student

Jenny Au comments, 'I have tried the game and it's great. It's as good as other mobile phone games but it also teaches us something important.'

Players of *Evil Killer* have many options for accessing the mobile phone and computer versions of the game. Hutchison Telecommunications will use their 3G mobile communication platform and Hutchison Global Communications will use their website to help spread the game to young people. California Red Karaoke will promote the game to their customers and invite them to download the game via a Bluetooth device.

Pop singer Eric Suen attended the launch of the game as an anti-drug ambassador. He played *Evil Killer*, competing against more than 40 young people. He pointed out that some young people thought it was harmless to try drugs at karaoke bars, discos or parties. Suen explains, 'They believe that they will look cool and not get addicted. This is simply not true.'

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

Your principal is keen to set up some anti-drug initiatives in your school to educate junior form students about the dangers of drug abuse. He has asked your group to help organise some events to be held in school.

You are now meeting to think about the best possible ways to educate the younger students. You should choose your best three ideas and think about how to implement each one. You should also think about the anti-drug messages and other information you will pass on.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

More young addicts

Over the past three years, the number of drug offenders as a whole in Hong Kong has dropped. To a large extent, this is due to stronger law enforcement from the police and the Customs and Excise Department. However, the number of young people taking drugs is on the increase.

Last year, the number of teenagers arrested for drug offences was 90% higher than the year before. David Hui works at a drug treatment centre. He says, 'The number of teenagers seeking our help has risen dramatically over the past few years. We often see children as young as 13 and we have had a couple of instances of 10-year-olds coming in. Many teenagers are helping to distribute drugs as they see it as an easy way to earn money. They don't really regard it as being illegal as they may not be taking the drugs themselves. They need to realise that selling drugs is far worse as it impacts many more young people.'

Police Inspector James Cheung comments, 'Our anti-drug efforts have effectively reduced the total number of drug abusers in the past 10 years. However, the steady increase in the number of young abusers indicates a new approach is needed to deal with the problem.' He adds, 'Besides enforcement, we will also step up education and promotion to tell the younger generation to distance themselves from drugs.'

Concern groups familiar with the problem of teenage drug abuse blame the government for being too passive in tackling the issue. Hui says, 'Hong Kong is a very liberal and open community. Just like in western countries, young people like to try new things and they love excitement. However, the government needs to step up their publicity so that young people are aware of the dangers and also the punishment. I think many youngsters who are taking drugs do it for fun and do not realise that they may get hooked.'

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

Your principal is keen to set up some anti-drug initiatives in your school to educate junior form students about the dangers of drug abuse. He has asked your group to help organise some events to be held in school.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Drugs in school

Last year, four schoolgirls at a secondary school in the northern New Territories felt unwell and were rushed to hospital. It was discovered that they had been taking drugs supplied by a fellow schoolmate. The principal of the school believes that his students can easily get drugs because the school is near the Mainland. However, it appears that drug abuse in schools is on the rise all over Hong Kong.

Figures released last year show that the number of teenagers taking drugs is increasing. The government is taking the issue of youth drug abuse very seriously and has implemented a variety of different measures to combat the problem. These include strengthening the links between schools and the police, organising seminars for teachers, parents and social workers on anti-drug education, and intensifying publicity to target youngsters.

Betty Ma, a teacher at a secondary school in Tin Shui Wai, is in charge of student discipline. She says,

‘We are aware that some of our students are experimenting with different drugs and we are doing everything we can to educate students. We have held school talks and workshops to educate youngsters of the harmful effects of drug abuse and build up a positive and healthy lifestyle. We are also trying to enhance teachers and parents’ knowledge of drugs, heighten their awareness of the signs of drug abuse and upgrade their skills in handling drug abuse cases.’

The police are also trying to crack down on the problem. They have strengthened liaison with schools to collect information and are trying to make students aware of the consequences of drug abuse and cross-boundary drug trafficking. Chief Inspector Kenny Leung comments, ‘We have launched a new drug education kit for teachers to distribute in schools. However, we know that young people are very curious and even if they understand the dangers of drug abuse, they may still succumb to peer pressure.’

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

Your principal is keen to set up some anti-drug initiatives in your school to educate junior form students about the dangers of drug abuse. He has asked your group to help organise some events to be held in school.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Drug-addicted mothers

In 2006, the Hospital Authority, the Department of Health and the Society for the Rehabilitation of Drug Users established a programme to help drug addicts and their newborn babies. This programme was launched because doctors have noticed that more mothers who are addicted to drugs are having babies.

Doctor Tse is on the programme. He says, 'About 50 babies are born to drug-addicted mothers at the Prince of Wales Hospital every year. The problem is that the babies are addicted to drugs at birth. The sight of these babies suffering so much is heartbreaking. They cannot sleep well. They stay awake in the middle of the night and they cry loudly. Their small bodies shake and they vomit frequently. We did not have so many drug-addicted mothers 10 years ago.'

The programme is run by a team of concerned doctors, nurses and social workers. They educate the

addicted mothers about the dangers to their baby, give lots of support and help them to kick their drug habit. The programme coordinator believes the initiative has been very successful even though it has only been running for just over a year. 'More than 70% of the addicts who join the programme manage to kick the habit. Before the programme was introduced, the success rate among addicts was only 17%.'

Teenager Anita Tong has a success story to tell. 'I did not think I could stop taking drugs. It was my way of life. However, the social workers were very helpful. They talked to me and said that as a mother, I should do something for my baby. What they said moved me. They seemed to understand me and my situation. I had never been able to talk to anybody like that before. I knew immediately that I must change my life and be a good mother.'

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)

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.

Mass tenant relocation

The long awaited West Island MTR line is now going to become a reality after years of debate over funding. The extended service and better transportation links mean that property values in this area are set to rise. One would expect all residents to support the extension. However, the reality is that, for some residents the new line is not good news.

Occupants of two Sai Ying Pun buildings that will need to be demolished to make way for a new station are anxious about the level of compensation that they will receive. Both owners and tenants are worried that the payment will not be enough for them to afford new homes in the area. 'Since rumours about the go-ahead for the West Island Line began a year ago, rents for apartments the size of mine have soared from HK\$4,500 to HK\$7,000 a month,' explains tenant Michael Lai.

Residents in the area have been informed that

either public housing or temporary housing in Aberdeen has been organised for them. However, they have to meet the income and asset requirements. To qualify for public housing, the monthly income limit for a household of five is HK\$16,900, whilst the ceiling for total net assets is HK\$403,000. This means many people will be disqualified because their assets are too large. Lam Siu-kwan bought a 152-square-metre flat in 1997 for HK\$1 million and she has just finished paying off the mortgage. Lam says, 'We are worried we will be forced to move out and buy a home at the peak of the housing market, which is a mistake we have made before.'

For the majority of Sai Ying Pun residents, the new line is a blessing. 'This new MTR line is long overdue,' says long-time resident Andy Tam. 'It will cut travelling time to Central and also re-energise an area that has been neglected for far too long.'

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

The Hong Kong Government is asking for opinions on new road and rail projects. You are members of the student council and are meeting to draft a letter to the government expressing your views on proposed infrastructure and development projects.

You should start by listing projects you would like to focus on. You should then consider the social, economic and environmental impact these projects may have on different groups within society and support your ideas with adequate reasons. Finally you could think about how you can organise your ideas to make the letter effective and 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)

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.

Bridge of change

Last year, the Chinese and the HKSAR governments finally agreed to give the green light to the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge. The project will consist of a series of bridges and tunnels that will connect the west side of Hong Kong with Macau and the neighbouring city of Zhuhai. The bridge will be 29km long and is expected to cost up to US\$4 billion.

The benefits of this project are many. Travel time between Hong Kong and Macau will be cut and it will stimulate the economic development of the west coast region of the Pearl River Delta. Many jobs will be created in the construction industry and regional tourism will be boosted. As Chief Executive Donald Tsang says, 'The time needed for driving from the west of the Pearl River Delta to Hong Kong will be 30 minutes shorter, which would be especially convenient for Guangdong residents wishing to pay a one-day visit to Hong Kong.'

Yet many people in the tourist industry think business will be negatively affected as Hong Kong and Macau will be directly competing for mainland Chinese tourists. 'In general, Macau attracts tourists who like to gamble and most of them may not have the time to also visit Hong Kong. Yet the new bridge will allow travellers from the Mainland to bypass Hong Kong. This may have a serious effect on our tourism industry which depends significantly on visitors who stop over,' says Baptist University lecturer Tom Cheung.

Eric Chan, who owns a shop in Central, is worried. 'So many tourists travel to Macau from the territory by ferry and this brings them into some of Hong Kong's main shopping areas. The new bridge will mean those people who live in Shenzhen and other cities beyond can travel directly by bus to Macau. It will be cheaper and faster. For sure, it's going to hurt my business,' he predicts.

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

The Hong Kong Government is asking for opinions on new road and rail projects. You are members of the student council and are meeting to draft a letter to the government expressing your views on proposed infrastructure and development projects.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Green belt – going, going, gone

Last year, the government announced the release for development of about 2,000 hectares of land from the Frontier Closed Area situated between the borders of the HKSAR and mainland China.

Deputy Secretary for Security Cheung Siu-hing said, 'At least 10 rural villages extending along the 30km border, in which about half of the 10,000 population live, will benefit from the plan. The measure will make it more convenient for residents of these villages, their relatives and friends, as well as members of the public, since they will no longer need to apply for a closed area entry permit.' Responding to critics, the government rationalised the move citing two key reasons. Since 1997, the number of illegal immigrants has declined and calls from the public for development of this area have been received. Both people living in the area and property developers seem to welcome the plan, but what will the environmental cost be?

The decision could result in the complete loss of the green belt separating Hong Kong from Shenzhen. This designated zone includes flat land and rural villages as well as ecologically sensitive wetlands and hilly terrain.

Civic Exchange CEO Christine Loh worries that the biodiversity of the region's ecosystem will be dramatically affected. 'Under British rule this was forbidden territory and because it was undeveloped, a wide range of plants and animals exist. This precious ecosystem is already under threat from pollution and development will only further deplete its wealth.' She also pointed out that in other areas where new towns have been built, the natural environment has suffered. Greenpeace campaigner Martin Baker said, 'Hong Kong has such a wonderful array of flora and fauna because of its unique climate and landscape. Yet so much is being lost to development that eventually there will be nothing left.'

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

The Hong Kong Government is asking for opinions on new road and rail projects. You are members of the student council and are meeting to draft a letter to the government expressing your views on proposed infrastructure and development projects.

You should start by listing projects you would like to focus on. You should then consider the social, economic and environmental impact these projects may have on different groups within society and support your ideas with adequate reasons. Finally you could think about how you can organise your ideas to make the letter effective and 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 D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Reclaiming our harbour

The Wanchai Development Phase II will extend along the waterfront from the Central Reclamation Phase III to Causeway Bay. Following a court decision, the project was re-evaluated and finalised last year. The government believes reclaiming more of the harbour will facilitate transport and infrastructure projects, but many people are opposed to the reclamation.

Citing extensive official studies, the authorities insist that new land is needed to build a bypass for the already congested Central District. The proposed project includes plans to build a new road system stretching along the length of the new harbourfront. 'The government has become reliant on reclamation to provide it with revenue and much-needed space to expand. However, if its plans are realised, the harbour will lose 60% of its original area,' complains one opponent.

Those opposed to the administration's plan say that public views were never adequately collected.

'The government's proposal to sell the reclaimed land for massive property development has never been properly considered by the public. Attracting more people and traffic to Central will worsen the air pollution levels in this district,' claims Winston Chu, advisor to the Society for the Protection of the Harbour. The organisation Friends of the Harbour also criticises the plan. 'We believe that there are other alternatives to reduce road congestion. Reclamation is not sustainable. There are other ways to solve the traffic problem and planners should make better use of the existing reclaimed land,' says a member.

In other cities, harbour redevelopment has resulted in the increased provision of public spaces. 'Today, there are effectively no restaurants or cafés along Hong Kong's harbourfront, and very few places to relax and enjoy its beauty,' says journalist Colin Galloway. 'Hopefully the government will learn from this mistake and will revise its plans. This may better reflect what the public actually wants,' he adds.

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

The Hong Kong Government is asking for opinions on new road and rail projects. You are members of the student council and are meeting to draft a letter to the government expressing your views on proposed infrastructure and development projects.

You should start by listing projects you would like to focus on. You should then consider the social, economic and environmental impact these projects may have on different groups within society and support your ideas with adequate reasons. Finally you could think about how you can organise your ideas to make the letter effective and interesting.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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

The power of the sea

Last year, we received a very serious warning from weather experts: if global warming continues at its present rate, more than 1,150km² of land in the Pearl River Delta, including parts of Hong Kong and Guangzhou, will be under water by 2050. In response to this urgent situation, scientists are investigating the possibility of producing electricity from alternative sources such as from the tides of the ocean.

Electricity from tidal power is produced by fast flowing water, which can be created using underwater turbines working on the tides or currents in the sea. These turbines look similar to the turbines used to produce wind power. Tidal barriers, which are like dams with tunnels, can also be used to generate electricity. Environmental consultant Ben Black is very confident. 'Hong Kong is a perfect place to install tidal power projects. It is surrounded by water and has numerous offshore islands.'

In France, tidal power has been used to generate

electricity since 1966. The barrier at the Rance estuary produces enough electricity to power 250,000 homes. Engineer Pierre Marchand explains, 'The Rance project has been a huge success. Tidal power is very reliable as we know the times of high and low tides and this means the power output can be calculated in advance.' He adds, 'My company is planning to build a tidal barrier in the UK which will generate 7% of the energy needed for England and Wales. This is the equivalent of energy produced by 12 nuclear power plants.'

Environmentalists such as Ivy Chan are worried. 'Tidal barriers block rivers and destroy the habitats of birds and fish. We need to protect Hong Kong's marine life and ecosystem.' However, the Hong Kong Government hopes to have 1% of our city's power from renewable sources by 2012, so we may well see a tidal barrier across the Pearl River Delta or underwater turbines near our outlying islands.

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

You have recently been learning about electricity production in Hong Kong. Your group feels very strongly that power companies in Hong Kong should reduce their use of fossil fuels and introduce alternative sources of energy.

You have decided to write a letter to the editor of the *Hong Kong Post* to express your views. You are meeting to plan your letter. First, think about the content of the letter such as why power companies need to change immediately and possible ways of producing green power. Then discuss how you would make your arguments convincing.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Winds of change

Although other countries have been experimenting with renewable energy, Hong Kong has been rather slow. Two years ago, Hongkong Electric commissioned the city's first wind power project on Lamma Island.

This project consists of one wind turbine, which generates around one million units of electricity and saves 350 tonnes of coal a year. Although it would take 6,000 such turbines to power Hong Kong, the change to environmentally-friendly forms of power has to start somewhere. Henry Kwok, who works for Hongkong Electric, has some doubts. 'One concern is reliability. The levels of energy generated can differ significantly from day to day depending on wind speed. On 20th February last year, the turbine generated 348,700 units of electricity but two days later, it only generated 29 units. However, the experimental turbine on Lamma will provide valuable data to assess whether more wind turbines are a possibility.'

Even though Hong Kong is an ideal place to erect wind turbines as winds here are quite often very strong, many people are resistant. Richard Kwan, a Lamma resident, is one of them. 'Wind power is the second most expensive renewable energy source after solar power, so customers will face an increase in electricity bills.' Mandy Baker of Greenpeace disagrees. 'This is a small price to pay. If Hong Kong can lead the way as an urban community using wind power, we should be responsible and support it. In the future, I hope our children can look back and talk proudly about how these wind farms helped us to clean up the dirty air. This form of energy will help to ensure that the skies above Lamma Island remain clear and unpolluted.'

The future does look promising. China Light and Power is studying the possibility of an offshore wind farm with 50 turbines near Sai Kung. The company has also pledged to produce 5% of its electricity from wind power by 2010.

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

You have recently been learning about electricity production in Hong Kong. Your group feels very strongly that power companies in Hong Kong should reduce their use of fossil fuels and introduce alternative sources of energy.

You have decided to write a letter to the editor of the *Hong Kong Post* to express your views. You are meeting to plan your letter. First, think about the content of the letter such as why power companies need to change immediately and possible ways of producing green power. Then discuss how you would make your arguments convincing.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Shine on

There is an urgent need to reduce our city's reliance on fossil fuels. The government has done a lot to reduce vehicle emissions, but little to limit carbon emissions from Hong Kong's two power companies. Environmentalists insist alternative energy sources should be introduced so we can move towards a low carbon future.

Solar energy is a topical issue right now. From calculators to skyscrapers with solar panels, solar power has been widely used in our daily lives for years. The advantages are that it does not emit noise or greenhouse gases and it is relatively easy to fit new or existing buildings with solar panels. Professor Akers of the Open University says, 'Hong Kong is an ideal place to capture solar energy. The daily mean level of solar radiation in our city is higher than the global level. This means we get a lot of sun. Most people are shocked when I tell them that more energy from sunlight strikes the earth in one hour than all of the energy consumed on the planet in one year. However,

solar power only provides one millionth of our total electricity supply.'

Charles Wong of the Hong Kong Observatory is less sure. 'I understand the benefits but solar energy is only available during daylight hours and when the skies are clear. Plus, in developed places like Hong Kong, the buildings are tall and close together, and the shadows they cause can limit the amount of solar energy captured.'

Despite these drawbacks, Ma Wan School is setting a shining example. In 2004, the roof of the school was fitted with solar panels. Teacher Monica Leung says, 'This was done to understand local solar energy resources and promote the installation of solar panels in other schools. It has been a massive success. The panels on the roof are generating electricity, giving our students a valuable and practical lesson in renewable energy.'

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

You have recently been learning about electricity production in Hong Kong. Your group feels very strongly that power companies in Hong Kong should reduce their use of fossil fuels and introduce alternative sources of energy.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Nuclear power's new age

Many people who previously opposed nuclear power have now changed their minds. The climate change threat is so urgent that these people now regard nuclear power as a real alternative to carbon dioxide-producing fossil fuels such as oil and coal.

Scientists all over the world are studying different ways of producing clean, carbon-free energy such as solar power, tidal power and wind power. However, many believe that nuclear power is the obvious answer. Professor Yuen of City University says, 'Global warming is here now. We have a crisis on our hands and we cannot wait another year or two for more studies to be done. We need to do the best we can now. Nuclear power is the solution. It provides limitless, clean energy.' He cites France as a good example. The country has 59 nuclear reactors which meet 80% of the country's electricity needs. China currently has nine operational reactors, with two more being built and 28 others in the planning stages.

However, opponents of nuclear power mention the accidents such as the 1986 explosion at Chernobyl in the Ukraine. Rainbow Lim of Greenpeace says, 'Although only 50 people died in the explosion, the death toll from the radioactive cloud which spread across Europe was in the thousands. We cannot trust nuclear power. It is toxic and a long-term hazard to the environment. Solar and wind power are the way forward.'

Professor Yuen disagrees. 'People are wrong if they think they can cut their dependence on coal and gas by using renewable sources, such as wind and solar power, and by adopting practices to conserve energy. Most people in the developed world are unwilling to give up the standards of living they have got used to. Nuclear energy appears to be the only answer to preventing the disasters of climate change while still providing a good standard of living.'

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

You have recently been learning about electricity production in Hong Kong. Your group feels very strongly that power companies in Hong Kong should reduce their use of fossil fuels and introduce alternative sources of energy.

You have decided to write a letter to the editor of the *Hong Kong Post* to express your views. You are meeting to plan your letter. First, think about the content of the letter such as why power companies need to change immediately and possible ways of producing green power. Then discuss how you would make your arguments convincing.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Teen violence

Gun crime in schools is a serious concern in many countries. In some schools in the USA, students have to walk through a scanner on their way in so security guards can check if they are carrying any weapons. Fortunately, gun crime is not a problem in Hong Kong schools but bullying is. Many people report that they were sexually abused and physically attacked at school, but they were too afraid to seek help at the time.

One such person is Gary. He was repeatedly tortured by two schoolmates because he refused to join their gang. One of the attackers would visit his house after school to give him remedial maths lessons. These so-called lessons included punishments such as electrocution with an electric mosquito swatter. On one occasion the bullies used a knife to cut his leg and then applied hot pepper sauce on the wound. On another occasion they tied the victim up and burnt his legs with a red-hot iron bar. Gary was too scared to tell his parents or teachers.

After two years of torture Gary became seriously ill and eventually told his mother about it. The bullies were taken to court but denied everything. Gary commented in court, 'I remember the sizzling sound of my flesh burning and the laughter of the two boys. They enjoyed abusing me. I just wanted to die.'

Teacher Cynthia Lee says, 'What influences these children to behave like this? Do we blame Class III movies? Or is it the Internet? It is outrageous that teenagers can torture a person so brutally. I just cannot believe it!' Professor Henry Shum is a psychologist who deals with troubled children. 'The main focus in Hong Kong schools is on getting good grades. This creates a lot of pressure for students. Everyone emphasises academic achievement but fails to address the problem of school violence.'

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

Your principal is concerned about violence and gang culture in your school. He is worried that certain students are being abused but are too scared to admit this to anybody. He has asked senior form students to organise a display in the school hall entitled: *Say No to School Violence*.

You are meeting to plan your display. You need to think about what makes students violent or turns them into bullies. You should then think about advice or help to give to victims. You may also consider how you will gather the information needed and how the work will be allocated among group members.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Why did they do it?

On 20th April 1999, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, students of Columbine High School in Colorado, USA went on a shooting rampage in their school. They killed 12 students and a teacher and wounded 23 others before committing suicide. This tragic event sparked debate about gun control laws and gun violence involving youths. Discussion also centred on the nature of high school gangs and bullying, as well as the role of violent movies and video games in American society.

Harris and Klebold had been planning the attack for over a year. They made their own bombs and even filmed themselves claiming that they were going to inflict 'the most death in US history'. A local policeman comments, 'They were hoping to create a nightmare so terrifying that the whole world would shudder. The attack was meant to be a bombing as well but they were so bad at wiring the timers on the bombs that many of them did not explode. Had they

got it right, the bomb they placed in the cafeteria would have killed 600 people.'

Incidents such as this force the public to question why there are such individuals in our society and what their motives are. A teacher at the school says, 'Harris and Klebold were very different individuals. Klebold was hotheaded, depressive and suicidal. Harris was sweet-faced and well-spoken, but he was cold, calculating and cruel. Klebold was hurting inside while Harris wanted to hurt people.'

Psychologist Dr Brian Kent says, 'Most Americans believe the teenagers acted in this way because they were taking revenge against the bullies who had made their school life miserable. However, I am not sure about this. They wanted to feel power and achieve fame. I think they got some big ideas from watching too many violent movies and playing video games.'

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

Your principal is concerned about violence and gang culture in your school. He is worried that certain students are being abused but are too scared to admit this to anybody. He has asked senior form students to organise a display in the school hall entitled: *Say No to School Violence*.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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 went wrong?

Last year, Finland was forced to question its school system when an 18-year-old student ran through his school with a handgun and shot dead the headmistress, the school nurse and six students. Finland is well known for providing excellent education and for having a very low crime rate, which makes incidents such as this very hard to accept.

Finland's schools are seen as models for the rest of the world. One of the teachers from Jokela High School, where the shooting took place, was unable to explain the student's actions. She said, 'The teaching is very student-centred and we pride ourselves on our school's support network and our ability to understand student behaviour. It is hard to imagine that this happened in our school. I guess the world is getting smaller and students can get their ideas from anywhere.' Another teacher commented, 'It felt unreal. A pupil I have taught was running towards me, screaming, a pistol in his hand. What is the world coming to?'

Finnish media reported that the shooter revealed his plan on *YouTube* the day before the massacre. He posted a video, entitled *Jokela High School Massacre*, showing a photo of the school and then a picture of a man pointing a handgun at the camera. A posting read, 'I am prepared to fight and die for my cause.'

Despite having the world's third largest per capita handgun ownership, violent incidents are rare in Finnish schools. A policeman said, 'Guns are available to citizens as young as 15 for hunting purposes, but their sale is tightly controlled. This is a peaceful place. Nothing like this has happened before.' A friend of the gunman commented that the shooter was a loner and had been bullied at school. Some teachers have drawn comparisons with shootings in other countries. They say students who have been bullied frequently may vent their anger or frustration on staff and other students.

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

Your principal is concerned about violence and gang culture in your school. He is worried that certain students are being abused but are too scared to admit this to anybody. He has asked senior form students to organise a display in the school hall entitled: *Say No to School Violence*.

You are meeting to plan your display. You need to think about what makes students violent or turns them into bullies. You should then think about advice or help to give to victims. You may also consider how you will gather the information needed and how the work will be allocated among group members.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Worst school shooting in US history

On 16th April 2007, the world was shocked by the news of the deadliest school shooting in US history. 33 people were killed when a student of Virginia Tech University went on a shooting spree and then took his own life. The gunman, Seung-Hui Cho, a 23-year-old South Korean, had always suffered from mental illness. People all over the world have been asking the same question: why was a person with mental health problems allowed to purchase a handgun?

Cho's aunt admitted that he was not really a normal child. 'At three years old, he chose not to speak and did not like any physical contact.' When he was in high school, he was diagnosed with depression and a social anxiety disorder. In 2005, he was declared mentally ill. Several of Cho's former professors have commented that his writing as well as his classroom behaviour was disturbing, and that they had encouraged him to seek counselling.

Since the incident, US gun laws have been strongly criticised. Unlike in many other countries, US law gives citizens the right to purchase guns. However, some people are saying that violent crime is becoming so common that this right should be withdrawn. University officials have also been criticised for failing to share information about Cho's problems. One professor said, 'Of course there are privacy laws but information about a student's mental health should be shared. It is only since Cho's death that I have learnt he had a mental health disorder and a history of unacceptable behaviour. This should have been a warning signal to us all.'

Cho's motive is unclear but a suicide note found in his room included comments about 'rich kids'. On 18th April 2007, NBC News received a package from Cho containing an 1,800-word manifesto and 27 digitally recorded videos, in which Cho expressed his hatred of the wealthy.

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

Your principal is concerned about violence and gang culture in your school. He is worried that certain students are being abused but are too scared to admit this to anybody. He has asked senior form students to organise a display in the school hall entitled: *Say No to School Violence*.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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 waves

Wakeboarding, which grew from the popular sport of waterskiing, is now becoming more and more common in Hong Kong. The only difference between the two is that wakeboarders stand on a single board while waterskiers stand on two skis. Wakeboarding first made its appearance in the USA in the 1980s, but it is now a great hit all over the world. Offering fun, exercise and excitement, wakeboarding is categorised as an extreme sport. So, why is it that wakeboarding is making waves in Hong Kong?

Wakeboarding in Hong Kong has attracted support from a large number of enthusiasts. In recent years, there have been both local and international competitions here, increased media awareness and more interest from local people wanting to learn the sport. Chris Baker, a wakeboarding instructor, is convinced the sport has arrived in Hong Kong. He says, 'Hong Kong is a very important city for the Asian wakeboarding community. The sport has gained such

popularity that there are now almost 30 companies offering lessons and wakeboarding trips.'

Although Stanley has long been a thriving wakeboarding hub, Tai Tam, Tung Chung and Sai Kung also offer facilities. Baker says that people of any age can have a go at the sport, but young people tend to pick it up more quickly as they like the thrill of being pulled along at top speed. Despite this, Baker is confident most people can achieve success. He adds, 'With good instruction people of different ages and fitness levels are able to stand up and cruise slowly behind the boat, even on the first day.'

Candy Fung, a 17-year-old student, says she tries to go wakeboarding as often as possible because it is exciting. 'Most of my girlfriends like going shopping at the weekend and they think I'm crazy when I tell them I'm going wakeboarding. They just don't understand.'

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

Your PE teacher is keen to raise students' awareness of different sporting activities which bring students closer to nature. He is implementing a new scheme entitled *Adventure for All*. He has asked you to help him organise this.

You first need to think about which new activities or adventure sports students would like to learn. You should choose three of these, making sure you think about different interests, abilities and fitness levels. You should then think about suitable times to hold the activities and ways of recruiting students.

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

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Life in the depths

The standard reaction when you tell people you go scuba diving in Hong Kong is, 'You do what?'. They are not shocked because you are putting a tank of air on your back and entering the depths of the ocean, but rather because you are willingly entering what are perceived as being the horribly polluted waters of Hong Kong.

The fact of the matter is that, although Hong Kong's waters have been getting increasingly polluted over the years, most people are amazed by what they find underwater around the coast of Hong Kong. Diving instructor Nancy Choi says, 'On a good dive, we get about 8m visibility and see soft coral, big groups of small fish, star fish, sea urchins, shrimps, rays, octopus, squid and crabs. To be honest, even if you don't see that much sea life, the underwater scenery is stunning. There are big walls and rocks, caves, tunnels and even a sunken boat off the coast of Sai Kung.'

Tom Ho, another local diver, says that simply being out on a dive boat, away from the madness of the city is a great experience in itself. 'We normally go out for a whole day and do two dives. We take lunch and just relax on the boat in between dives. There is nothing I would rather do on a Sunday.' Thousands of others obviously feel the same as Ho as scuba diving in Hong Kong is becoming increasingly popular. In the early 1990s, there were about 7,000 qualified divers in Hong Kong. The number is now closer to 70,000.

Nancy takes beginners out on training dives every week and she says most of them are very surprised at how beautiful the underwater world is here. 'While overfishing, habitat destruction and pollution have damaged Hong Kong's rich marine world, there is still an abundance of creatures left to observe.'

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

Your PE teacher is keen to raise students' awareness of different sporting activities which bring students closer to nature. He is implementing a new scheme entitled *Adventure for All*. He has asked you to help him organise this.

You first need to think about which new activities or adventure sports students would like to learn. You should choose three of these, making sure you think about different interests, abilities and fitness levels. You should then think about suitable times to hold the activities and ways of recruiting students.

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

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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 natural high

Many people think the only way to get to high places in Hong Kong is within the safety of a lift. However, our city has an abundance of natural skyscrapers such as Kowloon Peak and Lion's Rock. In fact, enthusiastic rock climbers claim that Hong Kong has some of the best rock climbing in Asia.

Whatever your ability, there is plenty of climbing action to be had in Hong Kong. 'Not many places have such a variety of climbing options in such a small, accessible place,' says Jimmy Lim, a keen climber. He adds, 'Tung Lung Island near Sai Kung is perfect. It has unique sea cliffs and there are rock faces with various grades of climbing, including plenty of easy routes.'

Climbing instructor Karen Brown is very impressed with the YMCA. 'The 'Y' is a good place to learn the basics, such as how to wear a harness and tie

a secure knot to attach the harness to the rope. They offer introductory courses at a reasonable price and you can practise your newly-acquired skills on the man-made climbing walls so you get some confidence before you head for natural heights.'

The rock-climbing community in Hong Kong is growing rapidly. Brown thinks people are keen to escape from the city and have a challenge. 'One of the amazing and exhilarating things about climbing in Hong Kong is that you can be away from the buzz of the city. When you climb up a cliff, you can suddenly have an amazing panoramic view of Hong Kong. The sheer beauty of the place is magnificent.' She adds, 'Anybody can learn the basic skills but they must like challenges and have determination. Sometimes after descending, I look back up the cliff in disbelief that I managed to climb something so steep and high. I get a huge sense of achievement and satisfaction.'

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)

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.

Riding high

Hong Kong may be a relatively small place with an extremely high population density, but there are some great sporting opportunities for those who like excitement in their life. People who love the outdoors, like to feel the wind in their hair, and are not afraid of speed, will love mountain biking on Hong Kong trails.

Mountain biking in Hong Kong kicked off relatively recently, with the first official trail opening in 1994. Unfortunately the fast-growing sport has been severely restricted as country park authorities, who are worried that bikers will disturb walkers, are reluctant to open more trails to mountain bikers. At the moment there are only eight official trails, located on Lantau, Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon.

Terry Li is a keen mountain biker. He says, 'Hong Kong's trails are a huge challenge. The uphill is punishing and the downhill terrifying. The view is spectacular and there is no better cure for stress than a

ride. I love it!' Mark Taylor, a mountain biking instructor, believes that Hong Kong trails are a good training ground as they require a lot of technical skills. 'If you can ride here, you can ride anywhere in the world.' He feels there are very few places in the city which are suitable for beginners. 'Many give up after their first attempt as they cannot deal with the narrow paths.'

However, those who are keen to try should not be put off. Asia Pacific Adventure offers great foundation courses. Participants practise on a purpose-built obstacle course for bikers and learn about equipment and mountain biking techniques. Taylor says, 'We equip inexperienced riders with the skills and confidence they need to enjoy their first off-road ride. Within a couple of hours, new riders are attempting slippery steps made of tree roots and sharp bends. The better they get, the more they want to try. It's addictive!'

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)

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.

Food costs ‘meat’ opposition

The economy in Hong Kong has been doing very well over the last few years and for this reason, the cost of many commodities has increased. Property values, rents and transport costs have risen. However, for people in this city, the greatest impact on their budgets comes from one essential product that has seen a rapid rise in price.

In September 2007, food prices went up 11%. The price of eggs, pork and canned meat rose by at least 30% on average. Other foods, such as vegetables and poultry, also became more expensive. Economists in the city argue that although food costs have increased, the prices for other goods have fallen. But surely a price increase in something as important as food must have large consequences for the public?

For many people, grocery shopping has become a painful experience. Banker Judith Lau was asked if she was aware of the increased costs when she shopped

at her local supermarket. ‘Oh yes, the increase in prices is really noticeable. Some items seem to be 30% higher than a few months ago. I sometimes have to look twice at prices to overcome the shock!’ she says. Supermarket manager Barry Chan explains the reasons behind recent price hikes. ‘Food has become more expensive globally. There are also local factors such as reduced supply from traditional sources for a variety of reasons. The bird flu crisis is just one example. How can local prices remain unaffected?’

But whilst the middle-class may be surprised, for many people on low incomes the price rises are really hurting. Office assistant Leung Man-ki is struggling to get by. ‘How can I afford to feed my two children when food is so expensive? Now we cannot afford to eat meat often. It would be all right if my salary had gone up but in the last two years, it has hardly risen at all,’ explains Leung.

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

You are editors of the school magazine. The next edition of the magazine is going to focus on the situation of the poor in Hong Kong.

You are meeting to plan the edition. You should discuss ways in which you think the poor are affected by the rising cost of transportation, medical care, education and food. You should also offer suggestions on how disadvantaged people can be helped by interest groups, members of the public and the government.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Fuelling costs

As the price of oil fluctuates around US\$100 a barrel, there is steady pressure to raise the cost of private and public transport in Hong Kong. The price of taking a ferry to the outlying islands has recently increased and other transport companies are destined to take similar action. So, what impact will rises in transport costs have on the community?

'As always, it is the poor who will take on most of the burden,' says economist Leung Wai-sum. Commuter Jason Lee agrees. 'An increase of a few dollars in my expenditure on public transport will have little effect, but on those who receive salaries of a few thousand dollars a month, it will have a large impact. People are angry and are getting very frustrated. See how the rising bus prices in rural China have led to violent confrontations between the authorities and the public.'

Increasing fuel costs also have an influence on the price of items that have to be brought into Hong Kong. Food and other commodities imported from the rest of the world will obviously cost more. Even imports from the Mainland will face extra transport charges before they arrive on the shelves of our shops. Consumer Maggie Lai voices the concerns of many. 'Everything seems to be getting more expensive and they blame it all on rising fuel prices. I am not sure how much longer I can make ends meet on my salary.'

Taxi drivers are also feeling the pinch. 'When we have to increase our fares because of the rise in the price of fuel we become less competitive. Since it is illegal to offer discount fares, we have a problem making enough money to survive,' says taxi driver Mak Chui-wai. 'If the taxi fares increase, people will no doubt start taking public transport instead. How can we survive?'

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)

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.

Tsang vouchers for elderly medical care

In last year's policy address, Chief Executive Donald Tsang promised HK\$250 in free health care vouchers to people over 70. He believed this was a move designed to acknowledge the contribution senior citizens had made to their city. Tsang went on to say, 'Our measures to help the elderly are focused. We want to help those in need rather than just make up slogans.'

The Chief Executive stated that the scheme for healthcare vouchers will be introduced for three years on a trial basis. It is intended to enable the elderly to choose primary medical care services in the local community with greater ease. As people visit other healthcare providers, waiting-time at government clinics will be greatly reduced. Recipients will be able to use the vouchers at any registered medical or dental clinic, including Chinese medicine practitioners. Supporters of the scheme defend it by saying that the vouchers would offset some of the increased expenditure from rising medical costs.

However, many social workers have criticised the move as just a way of pretending that something useful was being done and say it is just mean and insensitive. Social worker Martin Lam thinks that the vouchers will do little to help the old and poor. 'Many elderly people go to the hospital at least once a month – HK\$250 cannot cover medical bills at private clinics, which charge between HK\$100 and HK\$500,' Lam says. 'The result is that the elderly will end up spending more, not less,' he adds.

Kwok Chi-yin, a 75-year-old man living alone in a small flat in Kowloon, is very critical of the scheme. 'Introducing medical vouchers is a meaningless gesture. Poor people already enjoy free medical services at public hospitals. Why do we need vouchers? Besides, what can we do with HK\$250 at private clinics which charge high fees? Can I buy more food or pay bills with these vouchers? Medical vouchers can't fill my empty stomach.'

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)

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 schooling: A hidden burden?

According to many educators, the three-year extension to free education will place a hidden burden on low-income families. Although families do not need to worry about fees, they need money for exercise books, files, air-conditioning and extra-curricular activities. Therefore extra time in school will raise the costs for many poor families who are already struggling to make ends meet.

‘There’s no point waiving tuition fees when my husband and I still have to deal with lots of different school bills,’ says mother-of-three Kam Yuet-mee. ‘We have three children to look after and on top of that there are countless expenses that the schools charge us. What people like us really need is money for these extra expenses,’ Kam argues.

Although her eldest son will be among the first to benefit from free senior secondary schooling, Kam

thinks that the policy would only add to her financial burden. ‘My husband is a construction worker and only makes HK\$5,000 a month. I had to borrow money from friends in September for all the extra-curricular activities and other expenses. If the government really wants to assist us, it should help us settle all the fees imposed by schools,’ she says.

Cheung Man-kwong, president of the Professional Teachers’ Union, believes that three extra years of free education will help poor families. Kam feels that extending free education will not benefit poor families as they already qualify for subsidies. Under the current system, students in Form Four and Five pay HK\$6,020 a year and students in Form Six and Seven pay HK\$9,870. ‘It looks like the government is helping the poor but in reality nothing has really changed for them. Actually, there are no benefits from this policy, just extra costs,’ says social worker John Wong.

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)

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

For better or for worse

Divorce has been on the increase all over the world over the past two decades. For many, this is just a sign of the times as people are more liberal and open-minded these days. However, others find the high divorce rate very alarming as they believe strong families are at the heart of strong societies.

Michael Ko is a marriage counsellor. He comments, 'People say the divorce rate is rising because it is easier nowadays to get divorced, but this is not true. Attitudes to divorce have changed. It is more acceptable these days. People are less willing to work at something. If their marriage runs into trouble, they won't try to fix it, they would rather walk away. The mentality of people these days is that they can have anything they want very easily.'

Ko thinks the high divorce rate is very disturbing as he believes the family unit is at the core of a stable society. 'People who go into a marriage and

stay married have certain values that contribute to stability.' Last year, a UK survey revealed that children raised by a married couple rather than a single parent are healthier, do better at school, commit fewer crimes, go further in education and report higher levels of well-being. Ko adds, 'To men, the benefits of marriage are unquestionable. The healthiest, happiest, richest men are all married.'

So, if men benefit so much from marriage, how about women? Ko thinks it is good for them too. 'Women are generally homemakers. They enjoy the challenge of creating a warm and loving environment for their husband and children.' However, the 2007 survey revealed some very interesting trends. It showed that the majority of divorces are initiated by women. Also after seven years of marriage, most men say that given the choice they would marry the same person again, whereas most women would not.

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

You are representing your school in a public-speaking contest. As part of the competition you are required to do a 20-minute group presentation. The topic of the presentation is marriage.

You are meeting to plan your presentation. You should decide exactly what areas of the topic you would like to cover in your presentation and then decide on the title of your talk. You can also think about ways of making your presentation interesting and the duties of each speaker.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Finding the right partner

In societies where dating is not common, arranged marriages perform a similar function as they bring together people who might otherwise not have met. In some cultures, arranged marriage is a tradition handed down through many generations so it is viewed as the norm. However, some young people feel that they are forced into a marriage with a partner whom they would not have chosen.

Arranged marriages tend to take place in the Middle East and parts of Africa and Asia. Sociologist Suri Palmer explains, 'An arranged marriage is arranged by someone other than the persons getting married. This is not necessarily the parents. The partner could be selected by a matchmaking agent or a trusted third party, such as a priest or a good friend. The benefits of an arranged marriage are that the matchmaker makes a rational decision based on similar family backgrounds, class, education and so on. When young people have the freedom to choose, they can be

blinded by love and passion and therefore make a wrong decision.'

Ayesha Ali, who is 17, disagrees. She has lived in the UK all her life but her family is Pakistani. She overheard her father telling his friend that he would kill his daughter if she refused to marry the man he had chosen for her. Ayesha says, 'I ran away from home. I refuse to marry a man I have never met. We should have individual freedom over the key decisions in our lives.'

Palmer says that Ayesha's father was planning a forced marriage, not an arranged one. 'In an arranged marriage the couple are first introduced to see if they like each other. They can say no if they don't want to go ahead with the marriage.' She explains, 'Most arranged marriages work because the couple accept this tradition and respect it. They also feel they have the responsibility to make their marriage successful.'

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)

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 to marry

With more and more couples choosing to live together rather than get married, it is not surprising that the number of weddings all over the world is on the decline. However, many same-sex couples who are keen to enter into a legally-binding union do not even have the choice as gay marriage has still not been legalised in a large number of countries.

Beth Miller is a gay author. She explains, 'Approximately 75% of people in the USA support equal rights for homosexuals, but 50% oppose gay marriage. This is because very few people understand the reasons behind such a relationship. How many people understand that two men may want to get married because they are in love and they care for each other? People don't see it that way.'

While most religions do not recognise same-sex marriages, same-sex civil wedding ceremonies are becoming more common. John and Peter got married

in the Netherlands almost five years ago. Peter explains, 'The Netherlands was the first country to legalise same-sex marriages in 2001. The status of same-sex marriage changes almost on a daily basis as legislation is introduced around the world.' In many countries it is just a matter of terminology. The government may be unwilling to call it a marriage because they say a marriage can only be between people of the opposite sex, so it may be called a union.

'Same-sex couples should be given the same rights as men and women who choose to enter into a legally binding relationship,' says John. 'It is a serious civil rights issue with far-reaching consequences. We do not have the right to make medical decisions for our partner in times of emergency and we are not granted the same financial benefits, such as tax breaks, that governments give to other couples. Surely marriage is a good thing for all societies, whatever the gender of the couple.'

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)

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 really married?

These days Internet dating is considered a legitimate way of meeting new people in the endless search for the right person. For many single people, chat rooms and dating sites have replaced bars and restaurants. In fact, Internet dating is becoming so popular that many people are not shocked or even surprised when they hear that a friend met his or her partner online. So, if cyber dating is becoming more mainstream, how do people feel about cyber weddings?

A cyber wedding is an online wedding ceremony for the bride, groom and their guests. There are thousands of websites offering this service. Wendy Hui is an employee at netwedding.com. She explains, 'You choose your special day and select your wedding theme, style and colours. You invite your guests by e-mail, giving them your private chapel password so that they can access the wedding chapel chat room. You will receive a wedding certificate from us and we will post your wedding announcement on our site.'

Reverend Peter Hall is extremely worried about the trend. 'Some people want to get married in cyberspace rather than go to the trouble of arranging a real wedding. Although online marriages aren't legally binding, they are growing in popularity. This is a worry. Marriage is a social institution. It is at the heart of a healthy society. We should encourage couples to enter into a proper, legal marriage rather than a cyber one.'

However, other people are not so concerned. Liz Heung and her colleague James Lee had an online wedding last year. She says, 'We are young and it was a fun way of showing our family and friends that we care about each other. We know that the Internet isn't a real place, so the ceremony was not recognised by law.' Reverend Hall believes this could confuse many people. 'Couples who have a virtual wedding are not really married. In my view it is meaningless.'

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

You are representing your school in a public-speaking contest. As part of the competition you are required to do a 20-minute group presentation. The topic of the presentation is marriage.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Bound to succeed

When ten-year-old Huang Li made up her mind to swim the English Channel one day, little did she know what she would have to go through to realise her dream. Her father, Huang Daosheng, a middle-school teacher who had coached her since she learnt to swim at the age of five, tied his daughter's hands and feet together, and made her swim in a river for three hours.

Under her father's supervision, Huang Li swam three kilometres along the Xiang River in Hunan Province before she could stop and have some cake. Her father insisted that this form of exercise would help her to achieve her goal. 'She needs to test her stamina,' he remarked. When asked if he thought the swim was too difficult, he argued that she was a good swimmer and that she insisted on training that way.

Answering claims that his training methods were extremely cruel and put his daughter's life at risk,

he said, 'It's not dangerous because she is a good swimmer. I always swim with her and stay close by.' He went on to say that like any father, he would never do anything to threaten his child's life. 'I had her when I was 35, so she means everything to me. I would never play around with her life,' he said.

Although bystanders on the riverbank were alarmed by the incident, they did nothing. Priscilla Lui, director of Hong Kong's Against Child Abuse organisation, thinks that public awareness of child abuse in China is lagging behind other countries. 'China is so big and has so many problems to handle. There's still a need to promote greater awareness of this issue,' she said. Commenting on Huang Li's exercise regime she added, 'Her parents are putting her life at risk. Any act that causes damage to a child's mental and physical health is child abuse.'

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

You are the editors of the school magazine. The next edition of the magazine is going to feature an article on gifted children.

You are meeting to plan the article. You should start by selecting examples of gifted children you would like to feature in your article. You should then talk about the problems they may face and consider what advice you could include for these children and their parents so that they can experience as normal a childhood as possible. You could also consider how such children can best be supported by society.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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.

Young at heart?

Nine-year-old mathematics genius March Boedihardjo started studying for a bachelor's degree in mathematical science at Hong Kong's Baptist University in September last year. This makes him the youngest person in the territory ever to study at university. But how can a child so young be expected to deal with an adult world?

When asked how he coped with the new study environment and other people, March said that he had never been worried about dealing with classmates who are much older than him. 'When I was studying in Oxford, all my schoolmates were over 18 and we often discussed mathematical problems. I think I won't have problems in communicating with people older than me,' said March who recently finished two years of high school in England.

At the press conference held the day after he started his studies, March looked every inch the child,

playing with the microphone, yawning and pulling faces as the photographers' flashbulbs went off around him. When reporters asked him what he did in his spare time, March answered, 'Most of the time, I like to read books but at the weekend, I like to go out to play with my friends. I first met them in kindergarten. Although we play chess, Monopoly and cards together, academically, we can't communicate.'

Experts say that child prodigies tend to have problems when they become older and their peers catch up in terms of achievement. Ellen Winner, professor of psychology at Boston College, agrees that life can be difficult for gifted children. 'The skills a child genius needs are different from those an adult would require. Adults need to be adaptable and creative but most of these children find it very difficult to develop such skills. It can hurt the child emotionally when they enter the real world and suddenly discover they are not so special,' professor Winner said.

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)

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.

Marathon child

In India, a legal battle is taking place between the running coach of a boy and the local authorities. Four-year-old Budhia recently ran 65 kilometres in just seven hours prompting fears about the boy's health and allegations that he had been exploited.

The state government worries that the long distances he runs may be damaging the child's heart and lungs. The medical board that examined Budhia after his marathon run said it had found serious disorders in his body. Doctors found he had high blood pressure and heart stress probably resulting from long-distance running. If he continues to run, they warn, it may aggravate his condition and result in kidney failure. There were also concerns that the boy's spine might already have been damaged.

The legal battle over the child's welfare began after the media found out about him. Welfare Minister Pramila Mullick has long opposed what she calls, 'the

physical exploitation' of the boy by his coach for financial gain. She recommended that the youngster's talent be nurtured scientifically under the direction of a modern and qualified coach, and with proper medical supervision at a recognised sports institute.

His trainer, Biranchi Das, dismissed the fears, saying Budhia had regular medical check-ups. 'A team of three doctors conducts regular check-ups on Budhia to find out if anything is wrong with him. I don't know why the authorities are so concerned.' Das, a judo coach, first noticed the boy's ability when scolding him for being a bully. 'As a punishment I asked him to keep running till I came back. Then I got preoccupied with work. When I came back after five hours, I was stunned to find him still running,' Das said. He defends himself and says he has given the boy a better life by rescuing him from poverty and providing him with a home and education.

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)

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.

Bookwork burden

At the age of 12, Nancy Yifan earned a global publishing deal for her first novel. The Yifans have moved house at least ten times in order to send their daughter to the best schools and help her succeed. When asked if moving so often has had an effect on her ability to make friends, Nancy says, 'My best friends are books. Books are everything. They are my teachers and are always there for me.'

Her father, Harvey Yifan, has sacrificed everything for his daughter's success and has coached his daughter to become a writer. 'She is under my control at home. I only allow her to read classics, or award-winning children's books,' he says. Her evenings after she returns from school are planned out following a set routine. Nancy finishes her homework and then settles down to writing her second book. After dinner, the family go jogging together.

But were her publishers worried about the stress that meeting deadlines and being famous might have on

this young mind? Kate Jackson, editor with the Children's Division at Harper Collins, says, 'At the beginning, I might have worried, but this is her passion, this is what she loves. She is a very calm person, even with all the things going on in her life. Now I've no worries about it. She is old beyond her years.'

However, psychologist Alan Goldberg believes that few children have the capacity to achieve such goals on their own. 'What drives children is parental pressure. Most of the time when you have a very able child, parents overdo it and that causes problems,' he explains. Dr Goldberg warns that some gifted young people simply burn out and drop out. 'They may achieve great things but there will be a significant emotional effect on their lives. They also carry a heavy burden if their parents have made sacrifices for them to achieve,' he says.

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)

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.

Return of the dragon

Dragon boat racing has gained in popularity around the world over recent years, but it is in Hong Kong that the most races take place. Although it has been seen as a traditional Chinese event, this surge in popularity has attracted the attention of several expatriates living in this city.

For expatriates it is both a chance to sample a uniquely Chinese sport and at the same time keep fit. Many companies in Hong Kong sponsor their own teams and both local and non-local staff take part. Kevin Jones works for an investment company and loves dragon boat racing. 'It's good exercise for the upper body and really builds team spirit at work. It's also a great opportunity for local and expatriate staff to get together outside the workplace. These races take place all over Hong Kong so foreigners get to see more of the city. I have been to Stanley, Shatin and Sai Kung with my team,' he says.

The event is not just restricted to male participants. Women's teams have also become more popular over the years. Sue Wilkins races for an all-women team on Lamma Island. 'I love dragon boat racing. I get to make lots of friends, keep fit and have fun! However, teams need to practise regularly and the training sessions can be very exhausting,' she says. Despite all the difficulties, Wilkins feels it is worth it. 'Last year we won one competition and came second in another. It feels fantastic when your team wins – you get a real sense of achievement.'

With dragon boat racing becoming a regular event in many cities across the world, it may even become an Olympic sport in future. Kevin Jones cannot wait for this to become a reality and explains, 'Other than martial arts there aren't any truly Asian sports in the Olympics. It would be wonderful if dragon boat racing were to be included.'

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

RTHK is holding a series of programmes entitled *Be Active: Get involved in community events*. Your group has been invited to take part in a panel discussion on one of the programmes to promote physical activity among local communities.

You are meeting to plan your ideas. You need to generate some creative ideas for activities that may appeal to both local people and expatriates. You should also consider the benefits participants and the community can get from such events. Finally, you may consider the timing of these events and suitable venues for them.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

Part One – Individual Presentations (1½–2 minutes each)

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 marathon challenge

The *Hong Kong Marathon* is held every year in March. Events include a full marathon, which covers a distance of 42km, a half marathon and shorter races. More than 43,000 runners took part in 2007, making it Hong Kong's largest sporting event. It attracts professional runners, keep-fit enthusiasts and amateurs who just want to take part.

The Marathon starts very early in the morning to avoid the heat of the day. It is important that athletes are well-prepared for the physical exertion of this event. The sponsor, Standard Chartered, has introduced an initiative *Marathon 101* with the backing of the Education Bureau to ensure just that. It offers advice on training schedules and gives running tips for people of all ages. There are also teaching kits for use in schools. The programme helps people better understand the importance of adequate preparation when engaging in physically demanding activities such as the *Hong Kong Marathon*.

Nevertheless, besides ensuring physical fitness, participants need to prepare in other ways as well. Mental strength is also required. Experienced runner Roger Lee explains, 'Once you hit the pain barrier it is all about having the strength of mind to keep going. Of course, a good endurance training programme prepares you for this.' The best runners also need to think about the tactics required to win, even when they are physically exhausted.

As the event enters its twelfth year, the city is still waiting for a local competitor to win. Twelve-year-old Sun Chun-ming believes that when he is older he can be this person. 'Of course, at the moment I don't run a full marathon but I am training for the 10km race. I am careful about what I eat, I do stretching exercises every day and I train twice a week.' With that attitude, his dream may become a reality.

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)

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 charitable event

Every November, *The Sedan Chair Race* takes place in Hong Kong. A sedan chair is a seat on two poles carried by two men, one in front and one behind. The first race was promoted in 1975 by the Matilda Hospital located at the Peak. These chairs were the only available transport to the hospital when it first opened in 1907. Today, over 50 teams participate and the event draws 3,000 spectators. Separate races are organised for men, women and children and there are two tracks, one of 2.1km and the other, 3.2km in length.

Why does this novel event attract so many people? Terry Mackey, from the firm Lehman Brothers, provides an answer. 'Each year the organisers put together an event that achieves significant fund raising goals with a tremendous sense of community and fun. It's an honour for our company to take part.' Last year, the race raised over HK\$2 million for local charities and over HK\$40 million has been raised for more than 100 charities since the event began.

Kevin Smith, CEO of Standard Life Investments, thinks that the unusual nature of the event is another attraction. 'The sight of a person being carried around in a sedan chair is unusual in this modern age. Over 500 people give up their Sunday morning to run around the Peak carrying sedan chairs. It's a strange sight but all this effort is being channelled into one of the best causes that people can support.'

However, contestants can take away more than just good memories and the sense of having raised funds for the community. Prizes are awarded for the 'Best Dressed' and the 'Most Entertaining' teams and also for the team that best captures the spirit of the occasion. With more teams participating every year, this has certainly become one of Hong Kong's most colourful and unique events.

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)

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.

Oxfam Trailwalker

The *Oxfam Trailwalker* is an annual event that takes place in November. Teams of four compete along the MacLehose Trail to finish the 100km walk in the fastest time. This charity walk starts in Sai Kung and finishes near the Gold Coast with participants covering some of the toughest trails in Hong Kong.

Being fit is a real advantage when competing in such mountainous terrain, especially as many teams actually run. Unfortunately for Jack Jones, he joined his team at the last minute. 'I paid a heavy price for my lack of preparation. Things were good for the first 60km but I collapsed later on. It was clear that I wouldn't be able to keep up with the guys. I felt very dehydrated and I had to drop out, much to my disappointment,' he recalled. Although he failed, he felt he had learned something important. 'Failing at the race was actually a very positive experience. I learned that the world doesn't end if you back off from a challenge,' he said.

Training for the race can be hard. When Jones trained to compete in the event the following year, he ran for three to five hours a week and also practised uphill runs for two hours. He would also swim a kilometre twice a week and work out in the gym. 'When my wife went on holiday, I trained for 17 days in a row,' Jones said. His hard work was rewarded when his team finished fourth.

Of course, the race is not just about improving fitness and winning. Past winners, The Securicor Team, are always happy to contribute to Oxfam Hong Kong. 'At the end of the day it's all about raising money for a good cause,' says team member Puran Singh Darmi. Since 1986, more than 46,000 walkers have raised over HK\$200 million to support Oxfam's various anti-poverty and emergency relief projects.

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

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