

Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

The work of Save the Children

‘Working for a better world for children’ is the motto of Save the Children, the largest international voluntary organization in Britain. This non-government group works for the rights and welfare of children in the UK, and also in over 50 developing countries around the world.

There are many types of jobs in the organization at different levels. Most young people who start working for the organization do so on a voluntary basis. That means they get their expenses paid, including flights and accommodation if they are posted abroad. Their living allowance may be much less than the income from a regular job, but the experience they get is invaluable.

For those who are older and more experienced and want to move into management, there are many interesting and rewarding positions available in

developing countries overseas. These positions may include responsibilities such as working with local staff to develop social welfare or education programmes in the cities, or implementing better health-care programmes for young mothers and babies in remote jungle villages.

These challenging jobs offered by Save the Children are advertised in newspapers every week. A typical management position in an African country, for example, may require applicants to have a comprehensive range of skills. The job might involve negotiating with local and international government officials, so obviously the successful applicant should have good communication skills, and be able to work in a team. If the position is in a country which is at war, it is likely that an important part of the job would be to highlight the problems the children face there. So, experience in post-war child protection would also be an advantage.

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

As part of a sixth-form project you have been asked to set up a new Hong Kong-based organization that will help people in need.

You are a member of a group which is working on the project. You will need to decide what sort of people you would like to help, where the charity’s work should be based and what kind of people you would need to employ.

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Candidate B

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

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

The work of Peace Brigade International

Peace Brigade International, or PBI, is a voluntary organization which works on every continent. The aim of the group is to promote peace in countries which are in a state of war. Their message is one of non-violence. They are opposed to peace-keeping soldiers being sent in to stop the civil wars in places like South America and Sri Lanka. Instead they try to raise awareness of the local situation by seeking media attention as well as getting governments to put pressure on those countries to negotiate for peace.

In Colombia, for example, groups of young people from several European countries represent PBI and provide help to local villages. In the jungle, many villagers have been chased out of their homes by police and soldiers who believe they support rebel groups. Sometimes the villagers are accused of hiding criminals wanted by the police. Villagers who have fled are often too scared of the soldiers to come back – they have heard

stories of the soldiers and police killing their friends and neighbours who remained.

PBI provides the local people with a channel of communication which their own government does not allow them. Often the local police and officials are not interested in listening to or helping the mothers of lost children or murdered husbands. These women then turn to PBI which speaks out against such treatment.

Another task performed by PBI is to accompany the villagers back to their farms and homes. They travel with the farmers and their families by truck, bus and boat and help re-build their homes and plant their crops. These European volunteers have no special skills, but they are an obvious international presence. While PBI is in the country, there will always be some degree of world attention on the situation there.

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

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

The work of Oxfam

Oxfam is a well-known organization which works with people, regardless of race or religion, in their struggle against poverty and disease. It has offices and field stations all over the world, including Hong Kong.

In the old days the charity workers for Oxfam used to concentrate on sending clothes donated by the public to people in need, or they sent teams of workers to repair roads or plant seeds for people suffering as a result of natural disasters or wars. Now Oxfam concentrates more on long-term projects. Its new policy is to help local people develop their own strategies towards recovery. This could mean educating local farmers in new farming methods which would produce more wealth for the family, or helping them build new schools or clinics. The local people are more involved in these recovery projects and learn skills which they can use after Oxfam has left.

Recently Oxfam has been particularly active in environmental health and food preservation in countries such as Angola in Africa. Angola has been suffering from a civil war for decades and ordinary people have had to live with frequent shortages of food. Much of the food which is available is not kept properly and it often doesn't reach the people who really need it. In such situations, Oxfam normally employs a project manager to coordinate the distribution of the food to the communities which need it. The manager would train local people on how to store the food properly and what the most effective means of distribution are.

Working for Oxfam can be tough, however. It involves a lot of exhausting travelling, and the salary is low, so such a job would probably be more suitable for people without a partner or a family.

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

The work of Sightsavers

Since 1950, the organization known as Sightsavers has helped people with eye problems. Using funds donated largely by the public, it works in many poor countries where health care or health education is very basic. So far it has helped to restore sight to nearly four million people.

The organization works with governments in developing countries such as the African nations of Mali and Nigeria. Not only does it perform essential eye operations, but it also sets up eye-care programmes which may prevent future problems. Another important area of its work is helping sightless people find a comfortable way of life and adjust to their situation of blindness. Education is important too. Sightsavers workers train African doctors and officials so that the local communities can manage the programme on their own.

Often the eye-care given by the organization is quite simple and inexpensive. In poor countries, routine

operations which are performed in developed countries all the time are rare even in cities. Many operations are only available in expensive private hospitals and are unheard of in poorer rural communities. Sightsavers, however, offers its services to both rich and poor, and will perform operations in both the cities and the more remote parts of the country.

Doctors, nurses and assistants who work in the organization get immense satisfaction from the work. All the staff, including volunteers and those in administration and finance, get experience working in different cultures, seeing new places and meeting local people. The personal rewards are great. In addition, there is a good salary and benefit scheme as well as travel and accommodation allowances at all levels of employment. It may also be possible to work for short periods of time, for example a month, which is appealing to medical students who want work experience and a meaningful holiday overseas.

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

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Mobile miracle

When a switchboard operator received an emergency call from a man who said he was hanging off a cliff by his fingernails, she thought someone was playing a joke on her. The operator, based in a town in a mountainous area of France, didn't trust the caller. She said to the man, 'If you are hanging off a cliff, how did you dial this number?' The man replied that he had pressed the re-dial button on his mobile phone with his nose.

The caller's name was Christian Raymond and his subsequent rescue has caused a sensation in France. The event has been presented by the media as a miracle. It has also created a lot of free advertising for mobile phone companies, which now hope to increase their sales to people working on their own in isolated areas.

Christian is a 23-year-old shepherd in the French Alps, some of the highest mountains in Europe. On the day of the accident, he was looking after his sheep as usual, high in the mountain grasslands. Suddenly, he lost his balance and slid down the steep, grassy mountainside towards a cliff. 'I managed to hold on to a rock,' Christian explained, 'and succeeded in getting my portable telephone out of my bag.'

No sooner had he got through to the emergency operator for the first time than the connection failed. Christian then lost his grip once more and slid down closer to the edge of the cliff. Luckily, his mobile phone slid after him and ended up near his face. So Christian's unusual explanation to the operator was not a lie. 'I finally convinced her that I wasn't joking because I was sobbing so much,' he recalled. He was safely rescued by helicopter 17 minutes after making his call.

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

Your school is going to send representatives to a conference on *Technology and Communication in the 21st Century*. The conference will focus on how new technology is affecting the way we communicate.

You and your friends have been chosen as the representatives for your school. You are meeting to discuss what ideas you wish to bring up at the conference. You should try to talk about both the positive and negative effects of technology on communication and human relationships.

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

E-mail operation

A Russian sailor competing in the Solo Around-the-world Boat Race recently saved his own life by performing surgery on his arm. Victor Tepov followed instructions sent by the medical consultant for the competition and managed to drain and clean a wound which had developed on his right elbow. There was a danger that the infection would affect his whole arm.

Dr Daniel Bush explained the operation in a 14-point procedure, which he sent as an e-mail message to the sailor on his boat somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean. ‘I wrote a list like a recipe you might follow to make a cake,’ said the doctor from his office in New York. ‘Victor was clearly in trouble: he certainly wouldn’t have been able to manage his boat with only one of his arms.’

Sailing a 12-metre boat around the world on your own is obviously very demanding. Victor knew that he

had to be in first-class condition to cope with bad weather or unexpected difficulties. Therefore, as soon as he noticed a problem with his arm, he contacted Dr Bush by e-mail for advice. Over the next day or so, Victor reported that the swelling and the pain were getting worse and the doctor realized that something had to be done.

Despite stormy seas, the patient carried out Dr Bush’s instructions perfectly and after a night’s rest his arm was already much better. ‘The worst thing for me was not being able to find out immediately what had happened,’ explained Dr Bush. ‘The computer on Victor’s boat uses solar energy so he had to wait until the sun came up again before he could send me an e-mail message confirming that everything was okay.’ Now Victor has reached South Africa, the first stop in the race, and is receiving a thorough medical check-up.

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

Telephone support

'By this time tomorrow, two people in Hong Kong will have killed themselves,' says one newspaper advertisement designed to catch the reader's eye. The appeal which follows this shocking headline is for people to apply to train as part-time volunteers for a charity called The Samaritans.

The Samaritans organization was founded over 40 years ago by a church minister in London after he conducted the funeral of a girl who had killed herself. She did this because there was nobody in her family she could share her problems with. The name of the organization comes from a story in the Bible, in which a traveller helped someone who had been attacked when other people did not. The Samaritans was originally a nickname for the charity coined by British journalists. It is still used today, although the organization has never been religious.

Samaritan volunteers are people from all walks of life. They are chosen because they are open-minded, sincere, and know how to listen. They then receive training so they can support people who are suffering a crisis. Samaritans work for about three hours a week in their local area answering phone calls from people who don't know where else to find help.

'Using the phone means that callers can keep their identity secret if they want to,' explained Lily Man, the Hong Kong co-ordinator. 'Our hotline operates 24 hours a day and the number is easy to find in the phonebook or from the operator. Most people these days have easy access to a telephone, so this is probably the most practical way in which we can provide confidential help for those in need.' The volunteers never laugh at or turn away their callers – they are 'always there' as the Samaritans' slogan declares.

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

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

Television tragedy

German newspapers have recently contained reports about a man who died while watching television in his flat. The shocking thing about the story is that he actually died five years ago but nobody noticed until last week. What is more, he didn't live in a remote house in the country, but in a block of flats in a large city.

Arnold Fisher was divorced, and his neighbours remember him as a loner who had no visitors and rarely went out. He had left his job as a factory security guard a year earlier because of ill health. The terrible discovery of his dead body was only made when Mr Fisher's landlord stopped receiving the monthly rent for the flat and knocked on the door to find out what had happened. In fact, all Mr Fisher's bills had continued to be paid automatically from a bank account until the money ran out last month.

Mr Fisher was 43 when he died; the police know the exact date because they found his skeleton in an armchair with the daily newspaper opened to the television guide. 'He used to have the television on a lot and we could hear it in the evenings,' recalled one neighbour. 'We were a bit surprised when the noise stopped, but I suppose that must have been when the television broke down. The lights stayed on, though, so we thought everything was all right.'

Some journalists are saying that a lack of community feeling was the real cause of this tragedy. People nowadays seem to be more interested in the fictional characters of television dramas than in their real-life neighbours. It is strange that the death of a man who watched so much television might not have been noticed because his neighbours were too busy watching TV themselves.

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

Late starter

Simon Lai is a teacher in Hong Kong. Last year, he and some other teachers took their pupils on a camp to Lantau Island. They spent a lot of time outdoors, walking and studying the plants and animals they saw. On the second day of the camp, however, the peace was destroyed: the group was walking along a path on a low cliff above the sea when one of the children tripped and fell into the water several feet below. Simon was behind the boy and saw what happened.

‘He hit his head on a rock and a wave pulled him quickly away from the land,’ explained Simon. ‘I realized I had to do something, but what? I couldn’t swim.’ Simon shouted to one of his colleagues, who ran back to help. She was able to jump down into the water and pull the boy back to shore. Luckily, the sea was not rough and the boy was only bruised and in mild shock.

‘Everything was all right in the end,’ said Simon, ‘but the accident made me feel useless. It’s dreadful to think what might have happened if my colleague hadn’t been there.’ Simon decided that he had to learn to swim straight away. It was a brave decision because this can be an embarrassing experience for an adult. ‘When I was a child, thirty years ago, my parents just didn’t think it was something I needed to learn. Now it’s much more common to learn to swim as a child, so young people sometimes laugh when they see adults learning.’

Nevertheless, Simon is making good progress and is much more confident in the water now. He is hoping to use his school swimming gala this year as an opportunity for pupils to sponsor him to swim a length of the pool.

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

Your school is planning a weekend of special events based on the theme *Hong Kong and the Sea*. Your principal has asked each class to think of something to do for the festival.

You are meeting with other members of your class committee to decide what ideas you will suggest to the principal. You should talk about the different aspects of the topic you would like to include, and consider what activities you could organize as part of the special weekend.

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

Boat people

The Tanka people probably have a longer history in Hong Kong than most other groups of people who live here. They have fished in the local waters for several centuries. Traditionally, Tanka families did not set up a fixed home on land. Instead they lived on their boats and moved around, following the fish which they caught and sold. Some families still live on their boats in Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter and elsewhere, but many have moved into flats. The new generation has a way of life which is just like that of other young people in Hong Kong.

Benny Li is a student in secondary school. His parents were both brought up on boats, but, when they got married, they decided not to continue the tradition, and moved into a housing estate. ‘My mum and dad have told me about their childhood in the harbour,’ said Benny. ‘It seemed exciting and adventurous to me at

first, but in fact they say it was a hard life. They had few of the comforts I take for granted, like hot water in the shower, and television.’

Although he wouldn’t like to change his present way of life, Benny is proud of his background and has read some books about the traditions of the Tanka people. When he visits his grandfather, who now lives in a nursing home, he asks him to talk about the old days too.

The sea still seems to be in Benny’s blood, because his hobby is fishing. He goes out most weekends, either with his father or with school friends. ‘Dad and I go out for the whole day and take food and water with us,’ explained Benny. ‘My friends and I just fish in the harbour, but we still have a good time.’

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

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

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

Keep the beach tidy

A good way to escape the bustle of city life in Hong Kong is to go to one of the country parks or beaches at the weekend. Frequent public transport connections ensure that relatively quiet and unspoilt areas are within reach of even the most built-up districts.

As a child, Cathy Choi was often taken to the beach by her parents to play. She has continued this habit as a teenager. She arranges barbecues with school friends at her favourite beach near Sai Kung and has recently started taking her new boyfriend Louis there too. Cathy and Louis find it easier to talk openly to each other when there are not so many people around, and their day out is cheaper because there are no expensive shops or cafés to spend money in.

However, a few weekends ago, Cathy injured her foot on some broken glass on the beach and had to be

taken to hospital for medical treatment. ‘My friends and I were playing a game of volleyball on the sand when I stood on a piece of glass and cut my foot quite badly,’ she explained. ‘My foot’s fine again now, but I’m still very angry that someone could be so thoughtless as to leave a broken bottle on the beach instead of throwing it into the bin.’

Last weekend, Cathy and Louis returned to the same beach and spent the afternoon picking up all the rubbish they found there. By the end of the day, they had collected four boxes of bottles, packaging and plastic bags. ‘It’s a pity people can’t learn to respect the environment more,’ complained Cathy. ‘If picnickers took responsibility for their own rubbish, there would be no problem. Because some people can’t be bothered to tidy up after themselves, we all have to suffer.’

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

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

Sea cadets

There are several large, inhabited islands in Hong Kong, and travelling by ferry is part of everyday life for many people who live there. Until the mid-1970s the only way to get from Kowloon to Hong Kong Island was on the 'Star Ferry', and even today access to some of the outlying islands is still only possible by boat. An outsider might therefore think that local people would be interested in the sea, but this doesn't generally seem to be true.

Sonia Wu, however, is an exception. This 16-year-old spends time each weekend learning about boats and sailing with a group of other young people who share her love of the sea. They are all members of the Hong Kong Sea Cadets, an organization originally set up in 1968. 'My unit meets at the Seaman Training Centre in Tuen Mun every Sunday afternoon,' said Sonia. 'We learn about navigation and seamanship as well as having other training, like first aid and life-saving.' The group

sometimes does water-sports too, and Sonia enjoys canoeing most.

The organization has quite strict rules regarding the behaviour of its members, who also have a special cadet uniform to wear. 'Discipline is an important part of working as a team on a boat – the whole crew has to obey the captain,' explained Sonia. 'I don't usually mind being told what to do and I suppose it's probably good training for the future anyway.'

Sonia would like to find a job which allows her to develop her seafaring skills. She knows that there are opportunities in the Hong Kong Marine Police, as officers from there sometimes come to train the cadets. 'I think a job like that would be ideal, and being a member of the Sea Cadets is a great preparation for it,' she said.

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

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Universities on-line

Technological advances have been made in every area of society this century. One of the most important advances in the field of education is the use of Information Technology. It seems that computers and the Internet are gradually replacing books as the main source of information.

At the University of Hong Kong, for example, there have been huge changes in the nature of learning because of the widespread availability of computers and easy access to the World Wide Web. Each faculty in the University already has its own web page offering course materials and other services to students. This means that instead of reading a chapter in a book, students can download it from the faculty web page and read it on their home computer screens, or simply print it out.

In effect, the Web acts as an extension to the classroom. There are chat lines open for students to

continue discussions with each other out of class time. Students can also ask their tutors questions, and the tutors can give advice about where to find answers to the essay tasks they have set. The tasks themselves can be e-mailed to the students and once the students have completed their essays, they can e-mail them back to the tutor for marking. Shy students who lack the confidence to speak in a large group will feel much more comfortable expressing their ideas and exploring new subjects through a computer rather than face to face in class.

However, it should not be forgotten that computers are just a tool for making learning more stimulating. Educationalists stress that reading books and taking notes is still a very important study skill, and that being able to do these things helps students to process the information properly.

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

Your school has been given a large sum of money to improve the learning environment for students. The principal is considering investing the money in some form of Information Technology (IT). However, she would like students to give their own views on how the money should be spent.

You are a member of the sixth-form committee. You are meeting to discuss whether you think the money should be invested in IT, and if so, how it should be used. You may want to talk about the advantages and disadvantages of computers in education and what other ways the learning environment could be improved.

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

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

IT changes learning

In a place like Hong Kong, where the latest technology is always available, it is very easy for children to get access to computers even before they reach school age. Many learn how to control a mouse before they are six years old because computers are becoming more common in the home and there are plenty of CD-ROM materials for children. Ten years ago it was unthinkable that children so young would be able to use the computer for learning activities or playing games. And, in the future, children will be using computers on a daily basis in ways we cannot yet imagine.

It is in education that we will see one of the biggest changes. Already some schools in Hong Kong have one or more computer rooms. Those schools that do not, at least have access to the Internet through computers in the library. These computers allow students to use more sophisticated learning programs to increase their knowledge.

Some of the latest educational programs, for example, allow geography students to see how land masses are formed and how climate changes occur through animated computer images. Famous experiments can be recreated for science students, and historical events can be brought to life in the same way. At college level, architects can plan their buildings by using three-dimensional models, and medical students can practise operations on computer-generated patients rather than real ones.

Some educationalists are worried, however, that computers encourage students to be passive. They believe that watching images on a computer screen is not much different from watching them on TV. They think that learning should be a more active process and should involve such things as reading and note-taking, and using one's imagination. They stress that educational computer programs should be as interactive as possible so that real learning can take place.

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

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Role change for teachers

In his policy address of 1998, the Chief Executive, Tung Chee Hwa, stressed the importance of Information Technology (IT) in education. Since then, a great deal of money has been spent on improving school and college computer facilities, as well as on promoting the development of computer skills.

Many educationalists, however, are worried that more IT in education could bring changes for the worse. To begin with, it is clear that many students already know much more about computers than their teachers do. Unless these teachers become more familiar with computers and their applications, they will be unable to guide their students' learning effectively.

Another fear is that the Internet will provide students with too much information too easily. When doing homework, for example, a student can simply search for a particular subject on the Internet, download

the information and print it out. However, the information may not be accurate or reliable. Furthermore, the student may present it as his or her own work simply by doing a little bit of editing. In such cases, true learning does not really take place.

The educationalists believe that, unless IT is properly controlled, teachers may have to take on a new role in future. This new role will involve helping students understand the information they get from the Internet. Students will need to be taught how to analyse, process and summarize the information they get. The skills of critical thinking and careful interpretation of texts will become vital, especially since so much information on the Net is not of a high quality. In the years to come, it may be that one of the main responsibilities of teachers will be to help students distinguish between good and bad material on the Net.

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

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Lap-tops for everyone

Until recently, there were about 4000 desk-top computers on the campus at the University of Hong Kong. That may sound like a lot, but with 13,000 students wanting to use them, it was clearly not enough. Twenty-one per cent of the students at the University live on campus and are therefore dependent on the university facilities. For these students in particular, finding a free computer was not an easy task, especially towards the end of the term when everybody is in a hurry to finish their assignments at the same time. Also the campus is small, so there is not very much space available to expand computer facilities.

In order to tackle this problem and also to encourage school-leavers to apply for its courses, the University recently decided to offer every first-year student a lap-top computer for an incredibly low price. In spite of this generous offer, IBM, the computer manufacturers, sold so many lap-tops that they actually

made a profit. Over three quarters of first year students now own one of these lap-tops.

Having a lap-top means that students can write their assignments wherever and whenever they like. They can also plug into the Internet on campus free of charge and download information from their faculty home page, or anywhere else in the world. They can e-mail their lecturers or fellow students to ask questions or discuss their assignments, and use the computers to play multi-media games in their free time.

The University hopes to install 10,000 Internet access points on campus over the next two years. Students will be able to be more flexible in their working hours and not be confined to using a few crowded facilities. Now students will not have any excuse for handing in their assignments late!

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

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Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Bigger male brains

It is a scientific fact that men have bigger brains than women. Male brains are almost 10 per cent bigger than those of females. Although scientists have known this for a long time, they still do not understand what men use their extra brain cells for. One theory which has been disproved is that men are more intelligent than women - it appears that brain size is not related to intelligence at all. Instead, recent studies have suggested a link between bigger brains and better visual skills.

It could be that the extra brain cells provide men with a greater ability to assess size, space and distance in the visual dimension. The studies suggest that men are better able to 'picture' things in their minds. This seems to support some people's argument that men are more skilled at reading maps, have a more accurate sense of direction and are generally more aware of their physical surroundings.

Researchers have found that humans are not the only creatures where males have larger brains than females. It appears that monkeys and gorillas are similar to humans in that the female brain is smaller. Comparing the size of human brains with those of animals may not prove to be very helpful, however. Brain size differs greatly between humans and animals. Such creatures as birds, or certain varieties of fish, for example, have very acute vision and an extraordinary sense of direction which is far superior to that of humans, yet their brains are obviously much smaller.

Scientists are now investigating another theory. This is that the human male brain is bigger because, in the Stone Age, it was males who were mainly responsible for hunting animals for food. They may therefore have developed a better visual awareness of their surroundings.

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

Hong Kong is hosting an international forum titled *The 21st Century Brain*. Medical and scientific experts will be making a series of presentations and will hold an open discussion at the end of the event with the aim of raising money for further brain-related research. They have invited young people to put forward suggestions for future research projects.

You and your friends have been invited by your science teacher to take part in the discussion. You will need to decide what kind of project would be most interesting and beneficial for medical authorities to invest in. You may also want to talk about how you could help to raise money for it.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Disabled brain power

Jonathan Black is an extraordinary man. Because most of his muscles do not work, he is unable to move his body and therefore cannot speak. His mind, however, is normal and his desire to communicate is so strong that he has actually managed to write a book. He did this by ‘dictating’ the words to his friend simply by blinking his eyes. He blinked once for the letter ‘A’, twice for the letter ‘B’ and so on. Obviously the book took years to complete.

Not everybody with similar disabilities can be so patient and determined. Thankfully, scientists in Germany have developed a computer system which can help people with similar conditions to communicate. The patients wear a special headset which can pick up the electrical signals in their brains. These signals are then fed into a computer and can be used to move a cursor on the screen. The patients are then able to select letters from the alphabet and spell out messages. The computer

encourages the patients by showing its own messages on the screen, such as ‘Well done!’ and ‘That’s perfect!’

At the moment, the process is quite slow as only one letter can be typed every six seconds. The scientists are, however, developing a faster communication system with single letters representing common words like ‘and’, ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’ and ‘but’, for example. ‘Our patients may not yet be able to form messages as fast as they would like,’ explained one scientist, ‘but they are very excited that they can communicate simply by using their brain power.’

Although the device costs about US\$20,000 to produce, the scientists are convinced it is worth it. The research team is now investigating other ways in which severely disabled people can use their brain power to make life more bearable.

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

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Babies' brains are better

Learning another language can be one of the most difficult things to do in life. In Hong Kong, as in many other parts of the world, it is important to learn English, for example, because of its international status. Most students have to work very hard to develop a proficiency in the language, and the social pressure to learn it can be the cause of much stress and anxiety.

Many educationalists, particularly those in the field of linguistics, believe that the best time to learn a language is before the age of five. In support of their argument, there is a great deal of research which shows that infants are more receptive to language patterns than older children or adults. In fact, some studies suggest that babies as young as seven months old are able to work out their own rules for language before they actually understand what the words mean!

You may think that babies are too young to have very much intelligence, but, in fact, they are thinking all the time. Some scientists believe that babies' brains are therefore better equipped for language learning. Their brains are more active than adults' brains because they have double the number of neurons, or nerves, and have to work harder than adults processing all the information that new experiences bring. Physically, a baby's brain is extremely big compared to the rest of its body. In fact, babies can't lift their own heads for months because their brains are so heavy. Babies also sleep a lot because their brains are working so much harder than adults'.

Scientists are keen for more research to be done on how babies' brains grow and develop, particularly the part of the brain which deals with language. Any findings could have useful applications for adult learning too.

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

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

‘Supernatural’ brains

Anyone who likes science-fiction TV shows like *The X-Files* will be familiar with the idea of supernatural powers. There are many stories of people who are supposed to have special abilities which seem to defy the laws of nature. Some can communicate their thoughts and ideas to each other by sending messages direct to each other’s brains; others can move objects across the room without actually touching them. More passive powers include the ability to see and speak to ghosts.

In Hong Kong, some people actually make their living from the supernatural. There are fortune-tellers who claim they can predict the future with incredible accuracy, and every day *fung shui* masters are paid to get rid of evil spirits which may inhabit new houses or office buildings.

Is there any firm scientific evidence that these people really do possess special powers? Medical authorities are reluctant to spend money on trying to

answer this question. They feel there is more practical and realistic research to be done instead. A few scientists, however, believe it would be worthwhile finding out more about the supernatural. They would like to establish whether the brains of mind-readers, fortune-tellers and other ‘psychic’ people are different from those of normal human beings in any way.

Doctor Van Helsing from Europe is one person who believes that such studies could benefit society. He points out that in the field of criminal investigation, for example, people with special mental powers have sometimes been used to help find missing persons when the police have no other clues. ‘There are also many recorded cases of miracle doctors curing seriously ill patients through the power of their minds alone,’ he adds. ‘We need to find out whether they have a special gift, or whether all our brains are capable of developing such abilities.’

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

Hong Kong is hosting an international forum titled *The 21st Century Brain*. Medical and scientific experts will be making a series of presentations and will hold an open discussions at the end of the event with the aim of raising money for further brain-related research. They have invited young people to put forward suggestions for possible projects in the future.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Preserving the old

The most famous image of Hong Kong is probably of Hong Kong Island seen from Kowloon. It appears on stamps, postcards and posters designed to attract tourists to visit the city, and it certainly creates a dynamic and exciting picture. This skyline has changed significantly over recent years with taller, more eye-catching buildings appearing one after the other. People returning to Hong Kong after a long absence would definitely not find it easy to locate places they used to know well.

However, among the modern skyscrapers of Central, there are some older structures. These are an important part of Hong Kong, as they form a physical record of local history. In recent years, the government has recognized the importance of restoring and maintaining these buildings rather than replacing them.

Alan To, who works at the Hong Kong Museum of History, believes that the public will understand why

buildings should be preserved as monuments to the past when they become aware of their histories. ‘The police station on Hollywood Road was built by the British in 1919. It still has the original European-style exterior, but inside there used to be living accommodation for Chinese, Sikh, Muslim, Hindu and British police officers,’ he explained. ‘There was a mosque, a Sikh temple, Chinese and European bathrooms, and an Indian canteen. The design of the building reflected the multicultural city it served.’

Other old buildings in Hong Kong are Chinese in origin. There are some rare examples of traditional Chinese architecture in the New Territories. ‘“Tai Fu Tai” (), in San Tin near Yuen Long, is a fine example of a mandarin’s home, with a garden and an elegant living area,’ said Alan. ‘The house was built in 1865 and has been restored over the last 20 years so the public can visit it again.’

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

Your local District Board is going to develop the area where you live. It has invited residents in the area to a special meeting to air their views on what should and should not be done.

You are one of a group of friends who live in the area. You have decided to attend the meeting but would like to think about what issues to raise beforehand. You may want to talk about such things as the importance of design, special facilities, and the need to create a sense of community.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Modern beauty

Hong Kong is home to some of the world's most famous buildings. Three local skyscrapers are currently in the global Top Ten: Central Plaza in Wan Chai and, in Central district, the Bank of China Building and The Center. The city also has other architectural record breakers. The most expensive building in the world is here – the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank Building on Queen's Road – and this has recently been voted by the public as Hong Kong's best piece of architecture.

Alice Chan is a local architect who loves this building. 'It has so many unique features,' she explained. 'All the services in the building, such as lifts, toilets and emergency stairs, are located in the east and west towers. This means that the whole area between them can be used flexibly: internal walls can be moved to create different office layouts as the Bank develops and changes.' All the power and communications links, as

well as the air-conditioning system, are under the floors, which makes it easy to install computers and telephones in convenient places with minimal disturbance.

'The architect always intended the ground floor of the building to be an open, public space. You can look up through a glass ceiling into a huge internal space which extends up to the eleventh floor of the building,' said Alice, full of admiration. 'Two escalators form the entrance and exit to the public area on the first floor. It is full of light, which comes in through the huge windows on both sides of the building and indirectly via a system of computer-controlled mirrors, which reflect sunlight down into the main hall.'

When you next have a few minutes to spare in Central, use the time to visit this marvellous building and admire its sophistication and efficiency.

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

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Eyes of the City

Richard Lee is an architecture student at university in Hong Kong. Last August, for a summer course project, he visited several housing estates in the city and took photographs of the buildings. He submitted some photographs as part of the project. ‘I was surprised when my tutor called me and asked if I had any more pictures,’ remembered Richard. ‘I took everything I had to her office and we discussed the photos and why I had taken them.’

Richard’s tutor was very impressed by his collection of photographs and encouraged him to put on an exhibition of his work at the university. The exhibition, which was given the title *Eyes of the City*, ran for two weeks and attracted the attention of several local newspapers and television stations. Richard is now working towards his second exhibition and is busy taking more pictures to show.

His photographs are very distinctive. There are no people in them; he simply takes photographs of the windows, doors and balconies of people’s homes. ‘When they first hear about this, people are often quite shocked and think that I’m being nosy and invading the privacy of others,’ admitted Richard. ‘But once they’ve seen the pictures, these objections disappear and people realize I’m not spying.’

The pictures show an amazing variety of styles of windows and doors, and they can be used to show how building design in Hong Kong has improved over the years. What you can see through the windows is also fascinating – plants, children’s toys, washing, curtains tightly drawn – all symbols of the lives that are carried on in residential flats around the city. The way in which people use their balconies also reflects their individuality. For example, they may create tiny gardens, an extra storeroom, or a miniature children’s playground outside their windows.

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

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Better access for all

People who regularly use the MTR in Hong Kong have probably noticed the facilities in stations for disabled people to use. There are special paths on the floor to help people with poor vision move safely around the platforms. Escalators have sound signals to indicate their location to blind and partially-sighted people. Wheelchair users can take lifts to get to the underground platforms, while some stations have their own wheelchairs available and staff members trained to assist people with disabilities.

These measures might appear to indicate that there are no problems for disabled people in Hong Kong with regard to access to buildings and public transport. However, despite the special services and facilities offered by MTR stations and local councils, most private buildings and public areas do not cater for disabled people.

Samantha Yiu, co-ordinator of a support group for disabled people, makes this point clearly: 'Think about how difficult your route from home to work or school would be for a disabled person. Count how many steps you go up or down and how often there are sign posts or rubbish bins in the middle of the pavement you walk along.' Parents with prams are already aware of such problems, as are older people whose eyesight and mobility are deteriorating.

'The problem of lack of space in Hong Kong is often used as an excuse for not having adequate access for disabled people,' complained Samantha. 'In the past, if you had a disability, you had to stay at home and rely on your family for help. Disabled people today want to play a more active role in society and to lead lives similar to those of able-bodied people. Easier access to facilities like supermarkets and cinemas, as well as residential buildings, is a move in the right direction.'

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

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Candidate A

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

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

Who Wants to be a Millionaire?

TV quiz shows are popular all over the world. In these shows, the presenter asks individuals or teams a series of questions to test their general knowledge. Those who can answer the most questions correctly usually win a prize of some kind – perhaps some new furniture, or other appliances for the home.

In Britain, *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* is a new show which offers a much more spectacular prize altogether. The presenter starts by asking each player, or contestant, a very easy question. Their first correct answer will win the contestants £500 (about HK\$6000). They are then offered the chance to double their winnings by answering correctly a more difficult question in the next round. With each round, the prize money doubles again, so if the contestants can answer all the questions correctly, they can win hundreds of thousands of pounds. However, one wrong answer means that they lose all the money they have won so far, except for the original £500.

The questions are all multiple-choice, but what makes the show different is that the contestants are allowed to call a family member or a friend at home, using a mobile phone, to ask them what they think the correct answer is. If the contestants are still not sure about their choice, they can even ask the audience for advice.

Of course, friends, relatives and audience members may all have a different idea about what the correct answer is, so the contestants become very nervous before they make their final choice. To add to the suspense, the presenter keeps saying, ‘Are you sure?’ or ‘You don’t want to change your mind?’ before he reveals the correct answer. It may sound like a simple idea, but this quiz is currently the most popular TV show in Britain.

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

In order to celebrate the end of term, your school principal would like students to plan a contest or competition of some kind.

You are a member of the planning committee. You are meeting to decide what sort of things the contest should include and how it should be organized. You may also want to talk about what kind of prizes you would like to have for the winners.

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

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Call My Bluff

There are hundreds of thousands of words in the English language. Even people who speak it as their first language are not familiar with every one of these words. In fact, some experts estimate that most educated speakers of English know less than a quarter of the words in the English vocabulary.

In Britain, there is a famous TV show called *Call My Bluff*, which tests people's knowledge of rare or uncommon words. Two teams compete against each other to guess the meaning of these words. A team is given a word by the quiz master and each of the three members then gives a definition of it with some examples of how it is used. The trick is that only one of the definitions is correct; that is, only one of the team members is telling the truth, while the other two are telling lies, or 'bluffing'. The members of the opposing team have to decide who is telling the truth. They score a point if they guess correctly.

What makes the game so enjoyable is that the team members try to make their explanations as believable as possible. Also, in many cases the most ridiculous explanation turns out to be the correct one! The players and the audience are often surprised to discover that such words actually exist in English, because they often describe silly or trivial things.

Another appealing thing about *Call My Bluff* is that a simpler variation of it can be used in the classroom. Teachers sometimes use the game as a way of helping students to learn English. As with the TV show, students work in teams and make up their own definitions of a new word. Not only can they increase their vocabulary by doing this, they also get plenty of writing and speaking practice.

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

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Mastermind

Most TV quiz shows can be described as light entertainment. The participants enjoy themselves and try not to take the contest too seriously. There is one show in Britain, however, where the players, or contestants, have to concentrate very hard and keep as calm as possible. In the show *Mastermind*, the emphasis is on suspense rather than fun.

Each week, *Mastermind* is broadcast from a famous old university or national heritage building. Four contestants, each from a different walk of life, must answer two rounds of questions. The first round is on a special interest area that they have chosen. A special interest area may be historical, such as ‘the kings and queens of England’, or scientific, like ‘the flowering plants of Asia’. It can even be something as topical and unusual as ‘the characters and events of the *Star Wars* movies’. The second round consists of general knowledge questions on a wide variety of subjects.

Although the questions are incredibly difficult, the contestants usually do quite well, particularly in their specialist areas. If the contestants answer a question correctly, they get one point; if they give the wrong answer, the quiz master gives the correct answer then moves on to the next question. If the contestants don’t know the answer, they have to say ‘Pass!’

What makes *Mastermind* more challenging is the two-minute time limit imposed on each round. This means that the contestants have to answer the questions as quickly as possible. Many contestants get so nervous beforehand that they cannot think of the correct answers, even to relatively easy questions. They waste precious seconds thinking about what response to make, when they should simply say ‘Pass!’ The winner of the contest must therefore not only be a genius, but should also have nerves of steel.

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

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You are a member of the planning committee. You are meeting to decide what sort of things the contest should include and how it should be organized. You may also want to talk about what kind of prizes you would like to have for the winners.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

The Krypton Factor

Everybody has different talents. Some people are very intelligent and knowledgeable. Some think very logically and can solve practical problems. Others spend much of their time keeping fit and building up their physical strength and sporting skills. Many people excel in one or two areas, but not in all.

The idea behind *The Krypton Factor*, a popular TV show in Britain, is to find someone who has a combination of all these talents. (Krypton, incidentally, is the name of the fictional Superman's home planet.) The show is a contest divided into several rounds in which the players, or contestants, have to face various challenges.

The first round is usually a general knowledge quiz. The questions could be on subjects as diverse as history, science, geography or entertainment. In the second round, the contestants have to solve a puzzle of some kind. For example, they may have a number of

wooden blocks that they have to make into a certain shape, or a few materials which they must use to construct a model bridge, or something similar. These tasks must be performed within a given time limit. Other rounds will test their physical strength and endurance. They may have to complete an army training course, climb a rock face, or do an accurate parachute jump from an aircraft – anything which requires courage and stamina.

Obviously, the winner of the contest is the person who can perform well in all of these areas. This winner will then go on to the final contest in the last show of the TV series. Only when they win this can they really claim to be a super-man or super-woman, and to possess 'The Krypton Factor'. As for the prizes, these can be anything from a brand new luxury car to an all-expenses-paid holiday.

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

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You are a member of the planning committee. You are meeting to decide what sort of things the contest should include and how it should be organized. You may also want to talk about what kind of prizes you would like to have for the winners.

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Candidate A

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

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

Too much television?

For a long time, teachers in Hong Kong have been worried about the effect of television on school students. They think that their students watch too much television and that the programmes they watch are frequently unsuitable. This may be because they contain too much sex and violence, or because they are silly and unimaginative.

The teachers believe that most of their students switch the television on as soon as they get home from school and many of them watch it all evening. Children may use television to keep themselves company because their parents work long hours. Even when their parents are at home, though, television interferes with the children's homework and distracts them from reading books or just talking with their family.

Teachers are also concerned about how violence on television affects younger children. They point to warnings from child psychologists that young people can

be deeply affected by watching such things as violent cartoon programmes. A recent survey of cartoons available in Asia indicated that most of them showed violent and aggressive characters. Children are often excited by these programmes but may not have enough experience of the world to understand that the characters are not real. There have been tragic cases of children jumping out of windows in high-rise buildings pretending they could fly like their cartoon heroes.

All child psychologists agree that parents should supervise what their children watch. They advise parents to check the TV guide every day and restrict their children to watching suitable programmes. If possible, these should include programmes with an educational theme. Children should only watch small amounts of television, and not while they are doing their homework. They should also be encouraged to read more books so that they can 'exercise' their imaginations.

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

As part of a project for Parents' Day, the principal of your school has asked students to prepare a handbook of advice for parents entitled *Tips for Bringing Up Your Children*.

You are a member of the group which has been asked to help prepare the handbook. You will probably want to discuss what kind of information you want to include in the handbook, how you plan to collect this information and how you will produce the handbook.

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

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Bringing up children

No one can ever forget holding a new baby for the first time. But this moment can also make many parents anxious about how to bring up their children properly. New babies do not come with a set of step by step instructions like a new rice-cooker, so some parents are not sure how to cope.

Psychologists argue that it is impossible to write down instructions for parents. Every child has a different personality and parents need to become familiar with this personality before they can decide what kind of guidance their child needs. Unfortunately, today it is not as easy to raise children in the same way as parents did a generation ago.

The biggest challenge for present-day parents is finding enough time for their children. In Hong Kong, very often both parents have jobs. They work long

hours and sometimes have to go out with their business clients in the evenings. The children are left at home with a maid or relatives to look after them. This is a problem because studies show that it is especially important for parents to be with a child as much as possible during the first few years of its life.

Mary Chu is one parent who gave up her job as a teacher last year to spend more time with her two-year-old daughter. She says that she and her husband decided that parenting was more important than making enough money to live comfortably. Mary is sure that her daughter has benefited from her decision, but she also feels that it is just as important to give children a *balanced* amount of attention. If children get too much attention from parents, then they may feel insecure in situations where they must make their own decisions.

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

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Hitting children

Parents sometimes hit their children if they are being rude or do not do as they are told. But, in most countries, opinion is divided over whether it is right to hit children.

Recently in Hong Kong, a group of concerned teachers have suggested that parents should use less physical discipline with children. These teachers feel that the tradition of hitting a child because he does not obey, or because he gets bad grades, seriously damages child/parent relations. The teachers point out that one of the causes of recent child suicides is the lack of communication between children and their parents. They are also worried that children often feel threatened by their parents.

Some of these teachers feel that the government should provide free counselling services for parents who regularly hit their children. The counsellors would be

able to provide advice on other methods of making sure children do what they are told to do. The teachers would also like laws similar to those which exist in Sweden, where it is illegal for a parent to hit a child. However, other people argue that if such laws were made in Hong Kong, then the authority of parents would be seriously challenged.

The United Nations Charter on the Treatment of Children states that children as well as adults have basic rights. Neglecting or hitting a child violates these rights. Child psychologists argue that families must realize the importance of communicating with children rather than just insisting that they obey. They point to a recent case in the USA where a 12-year-old boy won a court case against his parents because he felt that they neglected him. In the future, it seems possible that more children could take their parents to court for hitting them.

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

As part of a project for Parents' Day, the principal of your school has asked students to prepare a handbook of advice for parents entitled *Tips for Bringing Up Your Children*.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

What the kids think

Being a good parent is not easy, but many children in Hong Kong think that being a good child is even harder. A good child should not only be well-behaved, but also hard-working and able to achieve good results at school, especially in English.

Christine Cheung is a typical Hong Kong teenager. She thinks that good parents are those who listen to their children. However, when she left primary school, she tried to persuade her parents to apply for her to go to a secondary school where the lessons were taught in Chinese. This was because she did not think her English was good enough. Her parents didn't listen and she was sent to an English medium school. As a result, she fell behind the rest of her class in her studies and did badly in her exams.

Sixteen-year-old Tony Lam also suffered as a

result of his parents' desire for him to do well in English. Although Tony's English is better than Christine's, his parents insisted that he take the most difficult English syllabus at school. They thought the qualifications he would get would be worth more. He thought about running away from home because he couldn't do as well in English as his parents wanted him to. They were very strict with him, and he wanted more freedom to live his own life and make his own decisions.

Most Hong Kong children respect their parents, but many feel that their parents don't have a clear idea of their abilities. Hong Kong's competitive education system is often blamed for this lack of understanding. Parents want their children to do well at school, especially in English, so they put a lot of pressure on them. Perhaps these parents would do better to listen to what their children say.

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

As part of a project for Parents' Day, the principal of your school has asked students to prepare a handbook of advice for parents entitled *Tips for Bringing Up Your Children*.

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Candidate A

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

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

Studying at home

Students often complain about the amount of homework which their teachers give them. Because they receive so much, it is important that they have a suitable place to work. It might seem difficult to create a perfect environment for studying in a noisy Hong Kong flat, but there are several ways to make working at home easier.

To be able to concentrate properly, most students need to be away from distractions like television and other people's conversations. Therefore, rather than working at the living room table, they should try studying quietly in their bedroom. Wilson Ip, a sixth-form student, shares a room with his younger brother. His brother has agreed that Wilson can study there on his own for two hours each evening, and his parents have promised not to disturb him either. 'I close the door and put on some music to block out the noise of the television,' he explained. 'Then it's easier for me to focus on what I'm doing.'

Wilson chooses the music carefully. 'At first I played my favourite pop tunes, but I would sing along and forget about my homework,' he said. Now he has some quiet classical music which helps him to concentrate. He puts away his computer magazines as well because they could also distract him. 'I always take some water to my room in case I feel thirsty,' explained Wilson. 'If I have to go out to fetch a drink, I can't help stopping to see what's on TV.'

Many of Wilson's schoolmates simply cannot work at home. Instead, some of them go to the library to do their homework while others have to work in open areas such as shopping centres or parks. Wilson realizes that he is lucky to have such an understanding family and a bedroom he can work in.

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

Your school principal wants to help students in Form Five prepare for their exams. She would like a group of Form Seven students to go into each Form Five class to give suggestions on study and revision skills. She feels the students will be more willing to listen to other students who have recently taken public exams than to teachers.

You are a member of this group. You are meeting to decide what to tell your schoolmates about preparing for exams. You will probably want to discuss what advice to give and how best to present this information. You may also want to talk about preparing for exams from personal experience.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

New attitudes to studying

Many students find studying very boring. They are easily distracted and invent all kinds of excuses to stop working. Sometimes household tasks like doing the washing up may suddenly seem very attractive alternatives. If people could only change how they think about studying, it could quickly become a more positive experience.

The attitude many students have towards studying is often negative because they feel that their schoolwork is not connected to everyday life. These students tend to see textbooks as the only source of information and knowledge, and they believe that studying them is the only way to learn. In fact, this is not true. There are very informative documentaries on television, which can be more memorable and up-to-date than books. Libraries may have educational videos students can watch, and there are often programmes on the radio linked with school subjects. Films can teach us a lot, particularly

about history and geography, and newspapers are also a huge source of information. Using a variety of resources makes learning more enjoyable.

Another way to stimulate learning is to find out other people's opinions about a topic. This is a useful way to clarify your own point of view. If students form study groups to share their opinions and ideas, they can help each other by reducing the total amount of work. For example, each student can read one book and then tell the others about what they have read. This is almost as good as if every student had read all the books. Students with computers do not even have to meet, as they can communicate with each other using e-mail.

By being more active and looking for alternative ways to find out new information, students can make studying and preparing for exams a much more rewarding task.

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

Your school principal wants to help students in Form Five prepare for their exams. She would like a group of Form Seven students to go into each Form Five class to give suggestions on study and revision skills. She feels the students will be more willing to listen to other students who have recently taken public exams than to teachers.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

All work and no play

As exams approach, students often spend more and more time preparing. Every hour seems essential for revision. Clearly, it is important to prepare well for an exam, but students should also take time to relax and do some kind of physical exercise. Research shows that students with a more balanced lifestyle often do better in exams than those who only study.

Tina Yuk, a 17-year-old student, used to think that she had to spend as long as possible each day revising before exams. 'I would get up early and immediately open a book,' she explained. 'I would read at mealtimes and also when I went to bed.' Tina soon became exhausted and her parents realized that she wasn't using her time wisely. They bought her a book about study skills and how to prepare for exams. It explains that the quality of revision time matters more than the quantity. The book also stresses that it's

important to keep some time to do the things you like during the revision period.

Students often cut themselves off from their friends before exams, but in fact, in this difficult period friends become more important than ever. 'I don't spend as much time with my best friend,' said Tina, 'but we meet or talk on the phone once a day. As we are going through the same experience, we can support each other when we feel worried.' Tina also continues to go to her swimming club and says she feels more relaxed and ready to study after doing some exercise.

Getting enough sleep, taking part in some kind of sporting activity and keeping in touch with friends are all useful ways to make exam preparation less stressful. Students should try to keep their lives as normal as possible despite the extra work they are doing.

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

Your school principal wants to help students in Form Five prepare for their exams. She would like a group of Form Seven students to go into each Form Five class to give suggestions on study and revision skills. She feels the students will be more willing to listen to other students who have recently taken public exams than to teachers.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Revision techniques

These days, qualifications are more important than ever and parents have high expectations of their children. It is therefore understandable that students become nervous as important exams approach. However, with a little planning, exam preparation need not be a distressing or painful experience.

Teachers always recommend that their students begin revising for exams well in advance. It is much better to do a little every day, starting several months before an exam, than to leave everything until the last minute and ‘cram’ in the final few days. ‘Cramming’ means spending all your time studying, and this affects your eating and sleeping routines. It is not a sensible way to prepare for exams because the natural body rhythms are disturbed and the brain gets overloaded. Instead, students should start early and write a timetable for their revision, setting themselves realistic targets. People cannot work every minute of every day and so

realistic planning means including time for meals and relaxation too.

When revising, students should take a break for a few minutes every hour or so. Walking around the room, washing your face or just standing up and looking out of the window can help you to keep awake and focused on your work. Otherwise you can easily fall asleep and this will stop you from learning anything new. In addition, an active approach to revision is often necessary. Simply reading a text is not enough. Students need to practise note-taking to help them absorb information. These notes can then be used later to review what has been learned.

Students sometimes complain that making timetables and taking notes is a waste of valuable revision time. In fact, these are the keys to success because planning reduces stress and helps you prepare yourself psychologically for the exam.

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

Your school principal wants to help students in Form Five prepare for their exams. She would like a group of Form Seven students to go into each Form Five class to give suggestions on study and revision skills. She feels the students will be more willing to listen to other students who have recently taken public exams than to teachers.

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Candidate A

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

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

Equality of the sexes

For decades now, we have realized that society is responsible for the way girls grow up differently from boys. Apart from the obvious biological differences between the sexes, we are shaped by our parents, teachers and other important influential figures. Society's expectations of the individual sexes cause males and females to accept their different roles very early on in life.

Sociologists point out how the innocent act of buying toys for children reveals how conditioning of the sexes begins at an early age. While some families try to buy educational toys for their daughters and sons – toys which are appropriate for both sexes – it is still rare for a parent to buy a doll for a boy, or toy soldiers for a girl, for example.

Some sociologists have also concluded that the way parents talk to children affects the way they grow

up. Without realizing it, parents send different messages to their children which show different expectations. For example, when visiting a clinic, a mother might say to her son, 'Would you like to be a doctor when you grow up?' because there appears to be more male doctors, but then say to her daughter, 'Would you like to be a nurse?' because there are more female nurses. Once parents become aware of this habit, sociologists hope that they will be more careful about identifying a certain job with a certain sex.

As the children grow older, it is also important that both sexes have the same opportunities. To ensure this, many education authorities around the world have been implementing policies which aim to treat girls and boys equally. Girls are encouraged to study science and maths, while boys learn to cook and sew. Whether these policies will change the roles of men and women in society remains to be seen.

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

As part of a liberal studies project, your school is planning to set up a multi-media exhibition on the theme *Men and Women in the 21st Century*.

You and your friends are meeting to discuss what ideas you want to present in the exhibition. You may wish to talk about such matters as physical appearance, fashion, and the roles men and women may play in the society of the future.

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

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Modern women are more like men

When scientists dig up skeletons from hundreds of years ago, they can find out many things about how humans have developed. One thing they have recently been studying is how the shape and bone structure of women has changed over the years. Over the centuries it is clear that women have become taller and stronger in general. In fact, modern women resemble men more than ever before in terms of their physical size and strength. They have wider hips and shoulders and their bones are significantly larger.

Scientists believe that one reason for this change is that, today, women in most places in the world are better educated about nutrition and healthy eating habits than they were in the past. Both men and women have improved their eating habits, but women seem to have benefited more from this. If this trend continues, the women of the future will be even larger and stronger,

closing the gap between the sexes to an even greater degree.

Another factor which brings women closer to men in physical shape and ability is sport and exercise. Women today involve themselves in more demanding sporting activities and fitness programmes which help to build up their strength. Regular exercise develops muscles and improves body functions overall.

Some sportswomen are physically much stronger now than before, and some have even improved on the performance of their male counterparts. In fact, today's top female athletes are almost as fast and strong as the male athletes of ten years ago. Male sports records of the past in running, swimming and skating have all now been beaten by women. Who knows what the future of sports will hold? Perhaps men and women will compete against each other instead of separately.

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

As part of a liberal studies project, your school is planning to set up a multi-media exhibition on the theme *Men and Women in the 21st Century*.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Can you tell the difference?

Young people are usually interested in the newest and most modern styles, trends and fashions. They are searching for an identity that is different from that of their parents', the older generation. Many teenagers spend hours shopping in order to find something totally new and original to wear. The fashion world is a perfect arena for teenagers to break with tradition and experiment with new ideas.

Hong Kong teenagers share these interests and, fortunately for them, the city is fast developing into a centre for fashion. Areas like Tsim Sha Tsui and Causeway Bay are full of clothes stores and boutiques. There are expensive brands for those who have a little more money, but also a huge market in copy designer clothes which young people are usually able to afford. These copy clothes may be illegal, but they are certainly very popular.

Fashion-conscious youngsters try their best to look unusual and outrageous, but, interestingly, these days young girls and boys are choosing to wear similar kinds of clothes. Among the items which both girls and boys are wearing now in Hong Kong are platform shoes or large boots, headscarves and earrings.

There are other aspects of fashion which boys and girls share. For several decades now, men have been able to wear their hair long, sometimes in pony-tails. At one time hair spray and hair gel were only used by women, but now they are commonly used by men. A large number of men are also dyeing their hair different colours. In their turn, more and more women are having their hair cut short and are wearing trousers and other items of clothing traditionally worn by men. The future could be even more surprising. Perhaps one day men will wear gowns or cloaks much as they did centuries ago, and more women will start to wear ties!

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

As part of a liberal studies project, your school is planning to set up a multi-media exhibition on the theme *Men and Women in the 21st Century*.

You and your friends are meeting to discuss what ideas you want to present in the exhibition. You may wish to talk about such matters as physical appearance, fashion, and the roles men and women may play in the society of the future.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Feminine men more attractive to women

Leonardo DiCaprio is probably one of the most famous young men in the world at the moment, at least among teenagers. He is one of the top international movie stars and someone whose face has appeared on the cover of most teenage magazines. Many local women adore and worship him, as they do Aaron Kwok, for example.

One thing these young men have in common is that they look both young and slightly feminine. It seems that today's young women prefer quite feminine-looking men compared with a few decades ago when popular male stars were more masculine-looking. In fact, research has shown that today, masculine male faces, like those of Sylvester Stallone or Bruce Willis, are much less popular than softer, more female-featured faces like Leonardo's.

Most women think of masculine faces as having larger features, with a broader forehead, a square jaw,

thinner lips and smaller eyes. A more feminine face would have a rounder or more pointed chin, a wider mouth with full lips, as well as larger eyes.

Recent research has suggested that women associate different personality characteristics with the two different types of face. A group of young women were shown two photographs of the same man, but the photographs had been changed, using computer graphics, to make one face look more masculine and the other face appear more feminine. The women were then asked to choose words from a list and match them to the pictures. The words many of the women chose for the photograph of the masculine-looking man included such things as 'dominating', 'cold' and 'untrustworthy', while the man whose face was made to look more feminine was generally described as being warm and kind. Interestingly, the young women involved in the study thought that the more feminine-looking men would make better husbands and parents.

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

As part of a liberal studies project, your school is planning to set up a multi-media exhibition on the theme *Men and Women in the 21st Century*.

You and your friends are meeting to discuss what ideas you want to present in the exhibition. You may wish to talk about such matters as physical appearance, fashion, and the roles men and women may play in the society of the future.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Computers with your coffee

Most cafés and snack bars provide magazines or newspapers for customers to read while they drink their coffee, but these days a new style of café has appeared all over the world. The new cafés have computers where customers can use the Internet or e-mail their friends. ‘Internet cafés’ can be found everywhere from business districts in major cities like Hong Kong and Singapore to beach restaurants in Thailand.

Some cafés offer free use of the computers while others charge local telephone rates. The main source of income for the cafés, however, is the coffee, tea, cakes or snacks which the customers buy while they are ‘surfing the Net’. Research has shown that customers tend to stay longer and buy more refreshments in Internet cafés than they do in ordinary ones.

Malaysia is one country where people have really

been attracted by this new technology in a social setting. Because of the recession, many Malaysians have found it is too expensive to buy their own computers. Internet cafés have therefore increased in popularity and there are huge numbers of them all over the country. As the cafés are often overcrowded with people, some places now display signs outside which say that no persons under 18 will be admitted. This age-limit, however, has raised suspicions that many customers are using the Internet to view indecent or pornographic material.

On the whole, however, it seems that the public are happy to spend time every day using this new technology to catch up on the latest news, check the sports results, or keep in touch with their friends through e-mail. And, providing the customers keep drinking and eating while they do so, the café-owners are happy to let them use the Net for whatever they want to.

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

Your school has entered an inter-school debating contest on the motion that, ‘*The Internet is a bad thing*’.

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

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Children on the Net

The Internet is now part of our everyday lives. We use it at work, at school and at home, and now it is possible to use it in cafés, bars and restaurants too. Most people agree it is a wonderful resource, whether for seeking information, contacting people, or simply for entertainment.

However, many educational experts have expressed concern about the influence of the Internet, particularly on children. Young people these days spend more and more time using computers and less time talking or playing with their friends. It is possible that those children who become proficient at communicating through the Internet may not only have difficulty developing normal face-to-face communication skills, but may also encounter serious learning problems.

As an example, one expert has pointed out that, in the past, children did their homework by reading several books and summarizing the relevant details.

Nowadays they get the computer to search for a specific topic, then download the information and copy it without really reading it properly. A child can also send the same information to all his friends over the Internet, which means that everybody produces the same homework.

More worrying is the fact that there is no quality-control over the materials which are available on the Internet. Whereas the books in a school library have been carefully selected and are usually written by respected authors, pages on the Internet can be written by anybody and may be full of incorrect data. Indeed, many of the materials may even be dangerous – some, for example present racist or sexist viewpoints. Educationalists warn that parents and teachers should take full responsibility for how their children use the Internet. They should monitor them to make sure they do not spend too long on the computer and that the web-sites they visit are suitable.

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

Your school has entered an inter-school debating contest on the motion that, *'The Internet is a bad thing'*.

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

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Political broadcasting over the Net

Political protests are quite common in some countries. People who feel strongly about various issues get together and demonstrate in order to express their opposition. The protests are not always against governments; in fact, more and more are against private businesses and companies. In recent years, demonstrations have been staged against very rich international companies such as McDonalds and Microsoft.

In Britain, one environmental group called Undercurrents has been protesting about the oil company Shell, which it believes is seriously damaging the environment. Last year, 12 people from the group walked into the Shell headquarters in London and took control of three offices there. The company tried to stop them communicating with newspapers or television stations which might put their demonstration in the news. It cut off the electricity, and disconnected the phone lines, so they could not contact the outside world.

However, the protesters managed to communicate with a very wide audience through the Internet during the five hours that they were in the offices. One of the protesters had a small digital camera. Another protester had a palm-top computer and a third had a mobile phone. When they got into the office they linked the camera to the computer. Then, using the mobile phone, they transmitted their speeches along with photographs to their web page and to national newspapers and television channels. As one protester explained, 'Sometimes the media don't give the public all the facts, so this technology gives organizations like Undercurrents the chance to tell their side of the story.'

It may be that the Internet will be used to protest in this way more often and will become a new style of journalism. Internet reporting will allow people more freedom to say what they want to say.

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

Your school has entered an inter-school debating contest on the motion that, '*The Internet is a bad thing*'.

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

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

The Internet as a political tool

With the increasing use of the Internet, organizations are beginning to realize how powerful it is as a way of spreading their message to a worldwide audience. Nevertheless, questions have been raised about the ways in which certain organizations use the Net, as sometimes their messages can lead to disastrous results.

For example, in America there is a powerful group of people who campaign against abortion. They believe that abortion is murder and that killing an unborn baby is the same as killing a child or adult. On the Internet, the anti-abortion activists have published a list of doctors who perform abortions. They have a web-site where they describe doctors as ‘committing crimes against humanity’. They hope that even if people decide not to join their anti-abortion group they will at least refuse to use the doctors on the list.

Everyone has the right to express their views on the Internet, but this group went too far. The group posted personal details of the doctors on the World Wide Web, such as their home addresses and telephone numbers, their route to work and even the names of their children. As a result, bombs were let off at the clinics where the doctors worked and there were a number of attempted murders, three of which were successful. The names of the doctors who were killed soon disappeared from the list.

Eventually, the activists were fined millions of dollars for posting the names and photographs of doctors on the Web. It is not always possible to prove that Internet users have broken the law, however. Unlimited free speech on the Internet is a growing problem and the law has to find ways of dealing with organizations who use it for criminal purposes.

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

Your school has entered an inter-school debating contest on the motion that, *‘The Internet is a bad thing’*.

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

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Candidate A

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

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

The Indians of Malaysia

There are three distinct ethnic groups which make up the Malaysian population. They are the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians. The Indian community is interesting because it is composed of many smaller groups, including Hindus, Tamils and Sikhs.

The Malaysian Indians arrived in the country during the British colonial period over 100 years ago, but they stayed long after the British left. Many of this first generation of Indians received a British education. After graduating they may have worked with the colonial government, or had other highly-paid jobs. They were relatively wealthy and sent their children to schools and universities in Britain. Their grandchildren, today's Malaysian Indians, have an important role in society, working in the fields of law, medicine and education.

Another section of the Indian population of Malaysia is descended from farm labourers who were imported by the British from India. These labourers

were brought to Malaysia to work in the rubber plantations on short-term contracts. They stayed on after the British left, working in low-paid manual jobs – for example working on the roads and on construction sites. Their descendants are seen as a disadvantaged underclass who have a poor standard of living and few opportunities.

Many Malaysian Indians are Hindus who have a rich culture of religion. Hindu temples have been built all over the country. Each temple is square because Hindus believe a square is the perfect shape. These temples are dedicated to different gods, and traditional ceremonies frequently take place in the temple grounds. One of the most important festivals is Dewali, or the Festival of Lights. Homes are decorated with oil lamps to celebrate the victory of light over darkness. The festival is celebrated with as much enthusiasm in Malaysia as it is in India.

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

Your school is planning to send a small group of students on an educational visit to Malaysia in the summer. The students will have to do a project on the country while they are there and will need to plan what aspects of Malaysian life they want to study.

You are one of the students selected for the visit. You are meeting to plan your project. You will need to decide what aspects you want to research, and how you will collect your data. You may also want to discuss how you will present the project.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

The Chinese of Malaysia

The Chinese have always been great travellers and they can be found all over the world. Malaysia is one of the many countries in which they have settled, importing their own culture and living in harmony with the other ethnic groups in the country. Some Chinese families arrived in Malaysia as early as the year 1400, though the majority trace their roots back to the early 1800s. The Chinese currently make up 35% of the total population of Malaysia.

Most Malaysian Chinese came from Southern China. Some are Hakka and Hokkien, while others come from Guangdong or the island of Hainan. These people still preserve a traditional family-based culture and remember the exact village in China where their ancestors originally came from. They speak many different Chinese dialects, but can communicate with each other in Mandarin or English. The government also encourages them to learn the official language, Malay, so many children grow up speaking three or four languages and dialects.

As the original Chinese settlers were mostly sea-traders, most Malaysian Chinese are business people of one kind or another. They run such businesses as import-export companies, department stores, laundries, bars and restaurants. Because they are industrious and adaptable they have become the main economic force in the country. While the majority tend to live in the cities, shops run by Chinese merchants can also be found in the most remote parts of the jungle.

Chinese influence can be seen in all walks of life in Malaysia. Chinese temples celebrating Taoism and Buddhism sit side-by-side with Muslim mosques, Hindu temples and Christian churches. Many restaurants offer a choice of Chinese food along with Indian and Malay dishes. Chinese movies are shown in all the cinemas, and Chinese entertainers are a regular feature at the concert halls.

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

Your school is planning to send a small group of students on an educational visit to Malaysia in the summer. The students will have to do a project on the country while they are there and will need to plan what aspects of Malaysian life they want to study.

You are one of the students selected for the visit. You are meeting to plan your project. You will need to decide what aspects you want to research, and how you will collect your data. You may also want to discuss how you will present the project.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

The native tribes of Malaysia

The population of Malaysia includes a high percentage of Chinese and Indians, and a small number of Europeans. But before any of these ethnic groups came to Malaysia, the country was inhabited only by a number of native tribes.

Many of the original tribes are the descendants of other tribespeople who migrated from Indonesia in the south, or from Cambodia and Vietnam in the north. They form distinctive and quite separate communities which are mostly located in the more remote parts of the country. Most tribes live in the national parks, either high in the mountains or in traditional forest settlements in the depths of the jungle.

The natives follow an ancient religion based on the worship of nature, though some of them have converted to Islam (the Muslim religion), or Christianity. They survive by farming, hunting, and fishing. They also

have a small trade in handicrafts: they make baskets, wooden bowls and unique musical instruments which they can sell to tourists. Woollen fabrics are another source of income and many of the women spend their days weaving attractive shawls and blankets.

Unfortunately, the future of these tribes seems doubtful. In the Malaysian state of Borneo, for example, much of the tribal land has been taken over by corrupt government officials. These officials have allowed foreign companies to cut down the trees on tribal land without paying the natives any compensation. In addition, many of the local tribesmen have been employed as cheap labour by the logging companies. As more and more of the forest is destroyed, the younger natives move into the cities to try and find work. The result is that the tribes are breaking up and their traditional way of life is slowly disappearing.

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

Your school is planning to send a small group of students on an educational visit to Malaysia in the summer. The students will have to do a project on the country while they are there and will need to plan what aspects of Malaysian life they want to study.

You are one of the students selected for the visit. You are meeting to plan your project. You will need to decide what aspects you want to research, and how you will collect your data. You may also want to discuss how you will present the project.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

The Muslims of Malaysia

Despite the fact that Malaysia is made up of several different ethnic groups, the Malaysian government consists almost entirely of Malay people who practise the Muslim religion. Some government officials have claimed that the Malay people are the original inhabitants of Malaysia and that the Muslim religion is the first and most important in the country. However, the truth is that 400 years ago, Muslim travellers settled in Malaysia and their religion spread to some of the native tribes already living there.

Like Muslims everywhere, the Malays pray five times a day, are not allowed to drink alcohol, and must not eat certain foods. Also, the women have to keep their hair covered. However, unlike women in other Muslim countries, they are allowed to wear colourful headscarves. Until quite recently, Malay Muslims were seen as farmers who followed a traditional lifestyle in the countryside. While this is still true of today, more and

more of them are now choosing to live in the cities, attracted by job opportunities and the promise of wealth.

Because the Malays have the political power in the country, the people in many states have to obey Muslim laws. This sometimes makes life quite difficult for the second largest ethnic group in Malaysia – the Chinese. Many Malays are also unhappy about the success of Chinese business people in Malaysia and, although these two groups usually live in peace, occasionally there have been violent fights between them.

The government has introduced regulations which make it easier for Malays to go into business on their own, and it has also encouraged the use of the Malay language in schools. Nevertheless, the government is keen to maintain cultural and religious harmony as it realizes that all the races and religions in the country are essential for its success.

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

Your school is planning to send a small group of students on an educational visit to Malaysia in the summer. The students will have to do a project on the country while they are there and will need to plan what aspects of Malaysian life they want to study.

You are one of the students selected for the visit. You are meeting to plan your project. You will need to decide what aspects you want to research, and how you will collect your data. You may also want to discuss how you will present the project.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Superstar catcher

Some people are willing to put themselves to a lot of trouble to get what they want. In the past year, Kevin Fung, a 17-year-old student, has stayed up all night twice, and been soaked to the skin by rainstorms several times. Kevin knows that some people can't understand why he is so determined, even when they find out what his hobby is. 'My best friends think I'm crazy too,' he admitted, 'but I know it's worth it, as long as I get what I want in the end.'

Kevin collects famous people's autographs. He is proud of the albums of signatures and dedications he has built up in the three years since he took up this hobby. 'I got started by accident, when my parents and I were going on holiday to Thailand. It was the first time I had been on a plane and I was very excited,' explained Kevin. 'I asked if I could go to visit the cockpit to watch the pilot flying the plane and, on the way back to my

seat, I saw Jackie Chan in the first class cabin!' Kevin didn't really know what to do, but said 'Hello' to his favourite actor. He was surprised when the star presented him with his signature on the in-flight menu.

Since then, Kevin has become a fanatical autograph hunter. He looks in the newspapers to see which actors and singers are performing in Hong Kong and finds out where they are staying. He then goes and waits outside the hotel or theatre for them to arrive or leave.

'Some celebrities have so many guards and personal assistants that it's impossible to approach them,' said Kevin, 'but most of the stars seem friendly and don't mind stopping for a moment to give me their autograph and a smile.'

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

A producer at a local television station wants to make a programme about the entertainment industry and how show business affects young people in Hong Kong. The producer has invited a group of teenagers to share their views with her as part of the planning for the programme.

You are a member of this group. You are meeting to discuss your opinions on how the entertainment industry influences you and your friends. You will need to decide what to say to the producer when you meet her next week.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Ordinary star

Seventeen-year-old Suki Lam is familiar to many people in Hong Kong, though they probably won't know her name. She appears in a series shown twice a week on local television, playing the role of the daughter in a typical family which is always having problems. The programme is popular because ordinary people can relate to the story.

Suki started her acting career very young when she was appearing in television advertisements for children's snacks. 'My parents knew I enjoyed performing because I was always putting on shows for them at home,' she explained. 'I would sing or copy actors on the television.' As a teenager, Suki joined a drama club and that was where the director of the television series first noticed her.

The thing Suki likes best about acting in the television series is working with more experienced

actors. 'I'm learning such a lot from them – I'm really fortunate that they're so patient with me and help me when I can't remember what to say,' she said.

However, there is a negative side to show business too: Suki has to accept that people will recognize her wherever she goes. 'Some people think that it's fun to be famous, but I'm not so sure. Basically, I'm just an ordinary teenager who gets up and goes to school on the bus every day. But people often stare at me or point me out to their friends when they recognize my face,' she complained. Suki knows she cannot avoid this, particularly in Hong Kong because it is so small. Meanwhile, her parents insist that she is not treated differently at school because of her fame. They want her to continue to have as normal a life as possible. Suki, though, sometimes wonders whether her life could ever be normal again.

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

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Star collector

Laura Mason is a 17-year-old high school student who lives with her parents in a small flat in New York. In common with millions of other teenagers around the world, her bedroom is not particularly tidy and she has filled every corner with something or other. However, Laura's room is a bit different in one respect: absolutely everything in it is somehow connected with her favourite pop group.

'For the last two years, I've been collecting everything connected to this group,' explained Laura. 'The band is simply the best and I want to be reminded of them as much as possible!' This means that, around her CD-player, Laura has piles of the albums the group has released and on every available piece of wall there are posters of the performers. She will also show special visitors her collection of T-shirts and baseball caps from the various tours the band has made.

On the wall there is a frame containing a picture of the lead singer next to Laura's most treasured possession of all – a limited edition CD of the group's latest album signed by each member of the band. 'That was my birthday present from my parents this year,' Laura smiled. 'It was the only thing I really wanted.'

Laura's parents are becoming concerned about her obsession with the group, although her mother secretly admits to liking their music too. What they are worried about is the cost of the souvenirs and magazines their daughter collects. 'The people who promote these musicians know that the fans are willing to buy anything connected with them,' explained Laura's father. 'But the fans are often still children, and they rely on their families for money. It's really a kind of exploitation and parents feel a great pressure to let their child have the latest CD or poster.'

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

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Falling star

If you saw Ricky Stern today, you might think he was over 30. In fact, he is only 24, but his experiences over the last five years have aged him considerably. Having become addicted to drugs, he is now at a clinic for young people who are being helped to return to a normal life.

In contrast, the Ricky Stern of ten years ago was an intelligent and good-looking 14-year-old. He appeared in a series of successful films made for teenage viewers about school life in America. He was always the star, and the films ended with him scoring the winning goal for the baseball team or saving the school open day from disaster while, of course, winning the heart of the prettiest girl in class.

Initially, Ricky's real life matched the stories in his films. His talent was discovered by a Hollywood producer at a performance of a school play. He and his

parents moved to Los Angeles so that he could make films there, and his future looked bright. The success of his early films brought Ricky a lot of money, and several top directors became interested in his acting talent. However, this success at such a young age also created problems. Ricky described these in a recent magazine interview: 'I spent a lot of time with people older than me. They encouraged me to try alcohol and, later, drugs. It didn't seem wrong because everyone did it, but I realize now I just wasn't ready to cope with the pressures of that kind of lifestyle.'

In the end, Ricky was not offered parts in new films because he became moody and unreliable to work with. His parents eventually realized that he wanted their assistance. They have since helped him leave the high-pressure show business environment which ruined his teenage years.

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

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Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

A change for the better?

The process of mixing two types of plants together to make a whole new type of plant is called genetic, or food engineering. This may seem like a very modern thing to do, but in fact, studies of old civilizations have revealed that ancient farmers in Central America were using similar techniques 7000 years ago.

The natives of Mexico were practising food engineering when they took one variety of wild grass and crossed it with another type of grass to make what we know as corn or maize. For hundreds of years the farmers selected the best crops and mixed them together so that the good genes, or biological strengths, of the corn continued and the bad genes were lost, thereby improving crops. Eventually the gene for the new corn crop was fixed to produce the corn we all eat today.

The food engineering which takes place nowadays still involves corn, as well as many other plants we eat, especially fruit. There are completely new fruits, such as the green kiwi, and new types of apples which are sweeter and more juicy than other varieties. As well as these, there are seedless grapes and oranges, all of which are easier to eat than the original varieties which contain pips and seeds. Another result of genetic engineering is crops which are resistant to insects.

Recently, however, there has been a lot of controversy about changing the genes of natural food crops. Some people are afraid that new developments in food engineering may affect the environment in ways we cannot predict. For example, crops which are more difficult for insects to attack may result in a drop in insect numbers. This in turn could result in a shortage of food for birds, which depend on insects to survive.

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

RTHK is planning to produce a programme on young people's attitudes to genetic engineering. It has invited a group of students to take part in a live discussion on air.

You are a member of a group of four students who have been invited to take part. You are meeting together to discuss what points you want to make. You may want to talk about food engineering, as well as human and animal cloning and what the possible developments will be in the 21st century.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Improving the human race

A famous British scientist, Professor Stephen Hawking, recently gave a speech in London about the future of science. Much of what he talked about concerned research into the creation of human life in a laboratory. At one time, such an idea would only have appeared in science fiction and horror stories. Now, however, it is close to becoming a reality.

Professor Hawking made many references to the discovery of DNA, the chemical code which makes up all living creatures. In each living cell, this code appears in a line, just like a supermarket bar code which tells the cash machine the price of an item. Hawking made the point that every DNA code can be copied. This means that scientists will be able to copy the DNA contained in human cells and create new cells from them. Eventually, they will be able to make 'clones', or copies of naturally-born humans.

Even if they are unable to reproduce a whole human, Hawking explained, scientists will be able to use their research to alter the genes of future generations of babies. They may, for example, be able to change the babies' genetic code in order to get rid of weaknesses. In theory, scientists will be able to help mothers produce children with strong physical and mental attributes, such as healthy bones and teeth and highly-developed brains.

Professor Hawking, along with many other scientists and religious leaders, believes this kind of scientific experimentation should be banned by the government, however. He does not think it is a healthy or useful branch of science. He warns that copying human cells raises many ethical issues which have not been adequately discussed. He realizes, though, that even if DNA experiments are forbidden, some scientists will perform them anyway.

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

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Improving the quality of food

Everyone knows that scientists are able to modify and improve plants and crops. These scientists can actually take the genes, or biological information, from a fruit and change it so that the fruit grows bigger and more tasty. Farmers regularly try to improve the quality of the food they produce with the help of scientists, but recently people have become concerned that ‘genetically modified’ (GM) food may not be totally safe.

Many experts claim that there are no risks attached to eating GM food. However, other experts are worried that not enough tests have been conducted on GM food and that little is known about its long-term effect on health. Those who support GM food claim there is no evidence to prove it is dangerous. Those who are against it say there is no evidence to prove it is *not* dangerous, because it will take many years before any negative effects are seen.

Environmental groups such as Friends of the Earth have asked governments to pass laws that force food producers to label any food that has been genetically modified. Officials have responded positively in many countries, believing that consumers need to know what they are buying if they are concerned about the safety of GM food. The British government, for example, has agreed to label GM food in shops and restaurants.

Some pressure groups in Britain would like to ban GM food altogether. They argue that the government is putting money before health and safety with respect to GM food. However, as the rest of Europe, America and Asia are selling GM food, the British government believes it needs to sell it too so that UK food producers can continue to be competitive. It remains to be seen whether GM food will ever be fully accepted.

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

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Changing the nature of animals

Three years ago, scientists from all over the world were talking about a sheep called Dolly. Dolly was special because she had been created by scientists who were experimenting with DNA. They had taken a cell from a normal sheep, developed this cell in a laboratory, then planted it inside a female so that it would grow normally and have a natural birth. When she was born, Dolly caused a great deal of discussion on the subject of cloning (creating animals from the cells of an existing one).

Since that time, there have been many more experiments involving the creation of ‘test-tube’ animals. The public usually only get to hear the success stories, but last year, Doctor Griffin, a British scientist working in the institute which produced Dolly the sheep, wrote a report highlighting some of the failures.

The report covered some of the latest experiments which involved the cloning of cows. Many of the cows died at birth or several weeks later as a result of ill-formed body organs. Several of the cows that survived were born with deformities such as missing legs. The report also revealed that there could be sudden changes in the cows’ immune system, meaning that they could easily die of something as harmless as a common cold. Those cows that survived are not expected to have a very long life.

Doctor Griffin concluded that there are clearly problems attached to making clones of animals. ‘It’s not at all surprising that it doesn’t work all the time,’ he said. ‘We know very little about this new area of science.’ In spite of the current high rate of deaths, scientists who support the idea of cloning are confident that after a lot more research into the subject, they will soon be able to produce healthier animals.

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

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Candidate A

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

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

First time in hospital

Eddie Kan has just left hospital after spending a week there recovering from an operation. The 17-year-old student tripped over while playing basketball, and some of his team-mates fell on top of him. Eddie's ankle was badly broken in the fall and he had to have surgery to reset the bones. He now needs to rest at home and can't go back to school for several weeks.

'I'm going to miss playing basketball more than going to school,' joked Eddie, a keen sportsman. Although he is now able to laugh about his recent experiences, his few days in hospital were difficult and Eddie admits that he didn't enjoy his time there. 'It was my first stay in hospital,' he explained. 'When I first arrived I was in too much pain to notice anything else. However, after the operation, when I saw some of the other people near me in the ward, I realized just how lucky I am to be young and healthy.'

During his stay in hospital, Eddie shared a room with five other patients. Some were seriously ill and needed a lot of attention. He found it hard to get to sleep because of all the unfamiliar noises at night. The lack of variety in hospital routine made each day seem endless. It was so boring that waiting for the next meal became the only excitement of the day.

Although the nurses and doctors looked after him well, Eddie could see that they were busy and didn't have time to spend talking to him. Because his parents both work and it takes a long time to reach the hospital from their home, they couldn't visit him very often. 'I was lonely and bored and just wanted to be at home again talking with my family and friends,' he said.

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

Your school runs a popular community service programme in which students spend some of their free time working with local organizations on special projects. Your class has been invited to start a new project with a local hospital or other healthcare institution.

You are a member of the class committee. You are meeting together for the first time to discuss what types of project would be possible. You should talk about the benefits and problems of the different options so you can point these out to your classmates.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Paintings in Hospitals

The charity called Paintings in Hospitals was established in Britain in 1947, when an art-loving social worker started to borrow paintings from his friends and artists to display in the London hospital where he worked. From this small start, the organization has grown and it now rents over 1,500 paintings by living British artists to hospitals nationwide for a yearly sum of money.

Today, in the huge and bustling Westminster Hospital for example, there are several of these rented paintings on the walls in wards and public areas. Other types of art can be found in the building too. Colourful mobiles – light wooden sculptures – hang from the ceiling in the main entrance hall and seem to float slowly through the air. Susan Lock, the art co-ordinator at the hospital, believes strongly in the benefits of having these works of art in hospitals.

‘The art here brightens up our hospital and makes the rooms and corridors more welcoming and attractive places,’ she explained. ‘This creates a good atmosphere for those who work here and visitors alike. But the greatest effect of having art around the hospital is on the patients themselves.’ Although nobody has yet done any scientific research on the subject, most medical professionals agree that art helps patients relax and puts them in a positive state of mind. A consequence of this is that they recover sooner.

Critics say that the works of art are too expensive and that the money used to purchase or rent them should be spent on new equipment and better drugs instead. However, Susan is quick to point out that the money spent on the artwork comes mostly from donations. ‘As this money is not part of the hospital’s budget, it isn’t a question of deciding between a painting and a new brain scanner,’ she said.

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

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Radio addict

David To spends more time in hospital than most teenagers do. He has problems with his kidneys, which means that he has to go to hospital three times a week so that a machine can do the work his kidneys should be doing – that is, cleaning his blood. David accepts this part of his weekly routine, as he knows that he needs to have such treatment in order to stay alive.

Each treatment session is three or four hours long, and to pass the time, David usually listens to music. He used to take his portable stereo and headphones on each visit to listen to his favourite singers on CD. However, one day about a year ago, he forgot his CD player and didn't have anything to take his mind off the treatment. 'Then one of the nurses suggested I tuned into the programme on the hospital radio station,' remembered David. 'I didn't know anything about it so I was interested to listen and find out more.'

These special programmes are transmitted to patients from a studio in the hospital. Next to each bed is a connection for headphones. The people who run the station are all volunteers so it isn't 'on air' all the time, and most of the programmes are music shows. 'The first time I listened, I thought it was terrible,' admitted David. 'The disc-jockey certainly wasn't a professional and he made lots of mistakes, but that made it amusing.'

Now, though, David also enjoys being able to get his requests for music played so easily. 'I dedicate lots of pop songs to the nurses who are looking after me,' David laughed. He has now become addicted to hospital radio and during his school holidays he actually spends time helping the other volunteers in the studio.

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

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Family support

Joanna Law, a Form Seven student, spent some of her school holiday last summer working as a volunteer in a nursing home for elderly people. The reason for this was her family situation. Joanna's grandfather lives with her and her parents at the moment, and he is becoming increasingly dependent on them. Unfortunately, the family is not really able to give the old man the attention he needs.

'My parents get very tired caring for him and they worry a lot about his health,' said Joanna. 'Grandad knows how difficult it is for them to look after him, but he is frightened about moving into an old people's home.' Joanna wanted to find out what everyday life was like for people who lived in nursing homes so she could help her grandfather get used to the idea of moving into one himself.

As a volunteer, Joanna wasn't involved in the hard work of looking after the residents in the home. The manager simply suggested that she spent some time talking to the people who lived there. 'When I started, I was nervous because I didn't really know what to say,' said Joanna. 'It was strange to be with so many old people. But I slowly began to make friends with them – I could see that they liked telling me about their lives, particularly those who didn't get visits from their families.'

Looking back on her experience of going to the home, Joanna thinks that her grandfather will be quite happy there. 'It's not perfect, but Grandad can get the medical treatment he needs more readily, and we can visit him a lot to make sure he's all right,' she explained. 'I've told him what the home's like, and he seems calmer about the possibility of moving there now.'

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

Your school runs a popular community service programme in which students spend some of their free time working with local organizations on special projects. Your class has been invited to start a new project with a local hospital or other healthcare institution.

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Candidate A

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Armies of children

In Britain, people as young as 16 and 17 years of age are recruited into the army. While that may seem very young, in less developed countries around the world, there are hundreds of thousands of child soldiers using guns to fight deadly battles, and suffering the tragic consequences. Many of these child soldiers are under 10.

Obviously, these young children suffer from the loss of a normal childhood. They are exposed to situations and experiences not normally encountered by young people, such as violent conflict, injury and death. They live in a world full of danger and suspense, waiting for the enemy to attack.

Social scientists and aid organizations claim this unnatural childhood will lead to an unstable and unhappy future for the society in which they live. Without an education or a family-based upbringing, these young people may not be able to contribute to society in a

positive way. A range of welfare problems will result from this. For example, when children become adults and leave the army they will find it difficult to get a job. They may also be emotionally unstable and suffer from not having any experience of life outside the army.

At the moment there are no international laws to prevent children joining the army. However, laws will soon be passed that will enable a new international court to punish governments and other organizations which use children as soldiers. At a regional level, aid organizations are beginning to educate families and local officials about the problem. At the same time they are compiling reports on armies which have a high percentage of child soldiers. ‘Armies which refuse to recruit child soldiers will gain more respect for their cause,’ explained one official. ‘They will also help to make their society more stable in the future.’

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

As part of International Children’s Day, your school has been invited to stage an exhibition in the shopping mall at Pacific Place, with the theme of *Children at War*. The idea behind the exhibition is to make people aware of how many children are being exploited in wars all over the world. As part of the exhibition, you also intend to raise money for a children’s aid project.

You are a member of the organizing committee for the exhibition. You are meeting to discuss what you will include in it, what issues need to be presented, and what project you will raise the money for.

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Candidate B

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

‘Orphan’ soldiers

All over the world there are battles and wars being fought. Every day hundreds of soldiers, both men and women, die fighting for their country or their beliefs. Of more concern is the number of children who die in such wars. These deaths are not just the result of bombing or other acts of war – many children are actually killed in battle.

Aid organizations estimate that over 300,000 people below the age of 18 are regularly fighting in armed warfare around the world. Some of these children are as young as nine years old. Children can be found fighting in Africa, South America and some countries in the Middle East. The children do not receive any special privileges and they have to undergo tough training programmes, just like adult soldiers.

Investigations show that the children who join the army can be one of three things. They are orphans, they may have been abandoned by their family, or they may have run away from home. They have nowhere to go and no one to look after them. The army offers food, friendship, and money, so it is easy to understand how a child is attracted to becoming a soldier. The children are only concerned with having a regular income and somewhere to stay. They are too young to understand the politics of war, or the dangers they may face in battle.

In some countries, children are unable to escape from the army. In Uganda, for example, a large number of children have been kidnapped by rebel army groups. The children are given addictive drugs such as cocaine in order to keep them loyal and to prevent them from running away. The only way out for these children is to die in battle in the jungle.

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

As part of International Children’s Day, your school has been invited to stage an exhibition in the shopping mall at Pacific Place, with the theme of *Children at War*. The idea behind the exhibition is to make people aware of how many children are being exploited in wars all over the world. As part of the exhibition, you also intend to raise money for a children’s aid project.

You are a member of the organizing committee for the exhibition. You are meeting to discuss what you will include in it, what issues need to be presented, and what project you will raise the money for.

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 which will be assessed.

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Candidate C

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

Children of the civil war

Colombia in South America is a country with lots of problems. One of the most serious is the civil war that has been waged there over the past few years. Rebel groups have accused the government of killing many innocent village people. They have also pointed out that there is a surprisingly high percentage of children among the casualties in these battles and that these children may not just be innocent victims of the war. Many children have been found wearing some kind of uniform, which suggests that they are, in fact, soldiers.

Several international aid organizations are trying their best to help the local people lead a relatively normal life in spite of the fighting and corruption which surround them. These organizations are now focussing their efforts in particular on children caught up in the fighting. One organization, SOS Children, has arranged a series of regional lectures where children are warned against joining the army, and encouraged to stay in their villages and work to improve conditions there.

A representative from SOS Children says that it is common for teenagers to be recruited into local rebel groups. 'Children can be turned into effective fighters in the short term,' he explained. 'They have not reached a state of mental development where they may be affected by feelings of morality. They can therefore kill without mercy and don't feel guilty about it afterwards. Something has to be done to stop these young people choosing the wrong path.'

No one knows the true number of children who are fighting with the rebels in the Colombian jungles. The war means that communication and transport systems are unreliable and information is difficult to get hold of or confirm. Many of the areas where children are fighting are simply too dangerous for foreigners to approach.

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

As part of International Children's Day, your school has been invited to stage an exhibition in the shopping mall at Pacific Place, with the theme of *Children at War*. The idea behind the exhibition is to make people aware of how many children are being exploited in wars all over the world. As part of the exhibition, you also intend to raise money for a children's aid project.

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Candidate D

Preparation Time (Total time: 10 minutes)

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

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

African children armed

Much of Africa is still suffering from the effects of war. For many years, in countries such as Uganda, the Republic of Congo and Nigeria, rebel groups have been fighting government troops for control of the country. Hundreds of thousands of children are affected by these wars. Some are killed when their villages are raided, some are forced to become refugees when cities and towns are evacuated, and some even become soldiers and are killed in battle.

Aid agencies in Africa are becoming increasingly concerned about the large numbers of children being recruited into various armies in the region. In one country it is estimated that, of the five million soldiers stationed there, half of them are under 14 years old. The agencies believe the fact that more children are killed than adults in some places is a cause for concern.

Aid officials have several theories about why so many children have been killed. One is that the commanding officers regard the children in their armies as expendable – they don't care how many of them get killed in battle. Children are often sent into enemy villages first so that the adults, watching from safe positions nearby, can get an idea of how strong the enemy force is there. If many children are killed, they may choose not to attack the village. If only a few of them are, the officers may decide the village can be easily taken. The children are often not aware of the danger they are in, and tend to view the fighting as a game.

This 'game' has been made easier for them by the increasing availability of small hand-guns and child-size rifles. Aid agencies are trying to ban the manufacture of such items because they believe it encourages the recruitment of under-age soldiers.

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

As part of International Children's Day, your school has been invited to stage an exhibition in the shopping mall at Pacific Place, with the theme of *Children at War*. The idea behind the exhibition is to make people aware of how many children are being exploited in wars all over the world. As part of the exhibition, you also intend to raise money for a children's aid project.

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