

# 老西口大范围精选 2015 年 5-7 月独立写作

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## 独立写作

### 大范围五星级

1

**In times of an economic crisis, in which area should the government reduce its spending?**

**1. Education 2. Health Care 3.support for the unemployed.**

I think that during an economic crisis, the government should reduce its spending on health care. It's a tough choice, but I think cutting back on health care would cause the least damage compared to the other options. Many people still have the option of receiving health care through their jobs, education and support for the unemployed would crumble without government assistance, and cutting back on health care would have the least dramatic effect at the start.

Although there is health care through the government, many people are still able to receive health care from their employer. Therefore, cutting back on health care in some areas wouldn't cause an immediate disaster. Those who have the option to get health care at their jobs could switch and begin doing that. People in more dire situations, meanwhile, could continue to receive assistance through the government. It wouldn't be ideal, but it would be manageable for most of the population. And it would reduce government spending, because they would be providing health care to less people than they were before.

It would be different if the government reduced spending on education or support for the unemployed. Those are two areas that are highly regulated and funded by the government. If all public schools suddenly provided a cheaper education, all that would happen is the kids would suffer. It's not realistic that they would all move to private schools, paying out of their own pocket. Many people can't afford that. And government assistance is the main thing that helps the unemployed stay on their feet. The alternatives for them are terrible. They would have to beg, steal, or starve otherwise. Support from the government is absolutely vital for them.

Finally, reducing spending on health care would not have immediate, drastic effects like the other choices would. If you cut funding for schools, within weeks there would probably be more junk food in the cafeterias and fewer music classes and plans to lay-off some teachers. The orders for newer computers would be cancelled, and so on. And unemployed people would immediately go into panic mode, not knowing how they were going to pay their next bill or get enough food for the next month. But if people can either keep their government healthcare if that's all they have or switch to their healthcare at their job, nothing is really disrupted there. Paperwork gets shuffled but the day-to-day stays the same.

That is why I think the government should reduce spending on healthcare in an economic crisis. The field is open enough that many people can still receive non-government healthcare through work, education and unemployment support are very dependent upon the government, and reduced healthcare would not have immediate negative effects.

## 2

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? In order to attract good students, a university should spend a lot of money funding social activities.**

I disagree with this. The high quality of classes, professors, and lessons should be the focus for attracting good students to universities. It's rare that students choose colleges based on social activities. Also, university clubs and other social organizations usually do their own separate fundraising anyway.

When good students are researching colleges, they certainly want to know that the classes are high quality. These are kids who have studied hard and excelled throughout high school. They like learning. They want to know that for the next four years, they will continue to learn and be excited and challenged by their teachers. For the majority of college-bound students, this is their priority. Therefore, assuring them that they will get an excellent education is the best way to attract them.

Also, I don't think many students are thinking about a college's social activities when they are choosing which school to attend. Once they get to college, sure, they can delve into clubs and such. But students are so stressed out about everything else when they are first applying, like whether they'll live in the dorms or how much tuition costs. I don't believe campus social activities are at the forefront of their thoughts. Is it really that big of a deal if the dances have a live band instead of a local DJ? Or if there are five different environmental clubs? These things are secondary. Throwing money at them won't necessarily bring in good students.

Finally, it seems irresponsible for a college to spend a lot of money funding social activities when typically campus clubs and organizations do their own fundraising. Bake sales and car washes and other fundraising activities have worked well enough so far! The university itself should stick to official business, like paying professors and staff members. It would be a shame if their salaries got cut because some of the college's funds were re-routed to pay for social activities. It would just harm the school instead of helping it.

## 3

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? In the busy and crowded world today, we should not expect people to be polite to each other.**

As a traditional virtue, politeness gets little attention nowadays. As people are becoming occupied by other concerns, many see polite greetings as more dispensable than ever before. However, I maintain that politeness is not outdated and that we should always be polite to others.

People are paying less attention to polite greetings than in the past for various reasons. Along with changing social and political attitudes, people are becoming busier; in these circumstances, good manners sometimes seem like a waste of time. Traditionally, Chinese people considered it friendly to talk while eating and to keep shaking hands for a long time when greeting. Although these behaviors still make individuals appear more hospitable, recently these conventions have

been ignored because they take a long time to observe. In order to save time and energy, people have dispensed with several good but time-consuming manners.

Although one could argue that certain boring and intricate greetings should be abandoned, basic politeness is not outdated. For instance, when we meet strangers at work or school, shaking hands for a long time wastes precious time; however, a simple and cheery hello is necessary to express friendship. Similarly, talking while eating sometimes prohibits people from concentrating; a simple gift may be equally effective at communicating the same message.

Furthermore, politeness is beneficial in many ways. Being polite is conducive to developing intimate friendships. A warm greeting upon meeting a friend, a heartfelt apology upon doing something wrong, and an expression of thanks when others offer help are all gestures that promote friendship. Conversely, receiving polite treatment from others brings a merry heart. An important aspect of the modern world is cooperation; politeness and cooperation are inseparable.

In summary, although certain boring and complicated greetings have become outdated and should be abandoned, politeness has not become irrelevant and offers numerous advantages.

#### 4

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? We should state our honest opinions even though other people may disagree with them.**

I agree that it is a good thing to state our honest opinions, even though others may disagree with us. You're never going to please everyone, so you might as well say what you truly feel. Sometimes when you speak your mind, you find that you set off a chain reaction of others standing up and supporting you. Finally, hiding your true voice can cause deep personal frustration and unhappiness.

No matter what, you're never going to please everyone with what you say. Even if you try to be blandly pleasant and non-offensive all the time, someone is going to disagree with you. It's just human nature. Our opinions and personalities are so varied and complex. You say you think the weather is nice today? Someone will respond that it's too cold. You think cats are cute? Ew! Someone thinks they are bratty and mean animals! If there is always going to be disagreement no matter what, you might as well say what you truly think. You'll feel better. Don't worry about offending people; it's unavoidable! Go ahead and say you think your town's mayor is out-of-touch, if you think it. Or that personalized license plates are tacky or that the latest hit pop song is annoying, or whatever! Speak your mind.

Also, the positive aspect of this is that sometimes, when you speak up about something, others will be inspired to do the same. They could have just been too shy or scared before. For example, a parent could write an open letter to the local newspaper, saying that the speed limit is way too fast near a popular park where lots of kids play. Maybe a lot of other parents had thought the same thing and worried about their children's safety, but had never said anything

because they didn't want to start trouble. Encouraged by the open letter, they could then write their own letters of support and work to eventually get the speed limit lowered. The key was that first parent speaking his or her mind, making others feel safe to do so too.

Not speaking honestly is also just bad for the soul. People can begin to feel depressed and frustrated if they censor themselves and don't speak their minds. They feel as if their voice doesn't matter, so they must not matter either. They shouldn't hide their own thoughts and opinions.

Yes, it is important for people to be honest and speak their minds, regardless of what others think. You can't please everyone anyway, you could inspire others to speak out as well, and hiding your thoughts is unhealthy and damaging.

## 5

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Teachers were more appreciated and valued by the society in the past than they are now.**

I agree that teachers are not as appreciated by society today as they used to be. Parents are not as respectful toward them, class sizes are larger and more unruly than ever, and the desire that schools have for higher test scores makes personal lesson plans not that important.

It used to be that when a parent got a note from their child's teacher or talked with a teacher during a conference, they listened very closely to what was said and respected it. Even if the news about the child was negative, the parents would take it in stride. They would then relay that information to their child, like it was the word of a judge. "Mrs. Carter says that you've been disrupting your math class a lot. Do you want to explain yourself?" "Mr. Brandt told me about you trying to cheat on your history exam. You're grounded for the next three weeks." But now, it seems, parents spoil their children so much that they often can't bear to hear anything bad about their precious little angels. Rather, they'll get angry with the teacher and demand some sort of punishment for him or her. It's ridiculous, because teachers are just trying to do what's best for everyone involved. But they get lashed out at.

It's well known that teachers don't make that much money for how much work they do. But the day-to-day situation is just getting worse, because average class sizes are continuing to increase. That means teachers are still making a small amount of money, but they're dealing with more kids, more headaches, and more conflicts every single day.

Finally, teachers used to be able to mold their lesson plans more closely to their own passions about certain subjects. If an English teacher loved the works of John Steinbeck, maybe she could have her students read two of Steinbeck's novels and then write an essay comparing them. It would make the kids learn and the teacher would have a genuinely good time reading the essays. While stuff like that can still happen sometimes, more and more it seems that teachers are at the mercy of standardized tests. Schools become extremely concerned about how well their students are going to score on nationwide tests, so they strongly emphasize that teachers focus on subjects the test will cover. Suddenly that English teacher can't teach Steinbeck. She has to focus on whatever the school wants her to.

That's why I think teachers are not valued as much as they used to be. Parents don't respect them nearly as much, class sizes keep increasing despite low pay, and standardized tests make lesson plans lose their fun.

## 6

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Workers would be much happier if they are doing different types of tasks during their workday than doing the same task.**

Satisfaction undoubtedly is one of the most essential factors for people from all walks of life to continue making the best out of themselves. What would be more satisfied for them—having various works to do during the workday or doing the job all day long? In my perspective, I think workers would be way more content if they have a variety of works to do during the workday. To begin with, by doing various works under a working day, workers can gain more working experience in their trade. Having more works to do means they are of importance in what they are doing in the profession. This is a demonstration of having one's professional skills or know-hows practiced and performed, which brings enormous satisfaction to the workers. As a good case in point, if a server working in a fast food restaurant only has one thing to do—taking orders, it makes him feel unwanted and tedious in this job. Will that bring satisfaction to people? Will this make people set up their mind to improve themselves? The answer is definitely a NO. By having various kinds of works to do, workers learn through those works, being stimulated for thinking more. They can gain more experience and learn more things in the trade, which is priceless and it makes people satisfied.

In the second place, doing a variety of works in a workday enables workers to acquire professional knowledge in a faster way. Workers need more work to do in order to find out what they are unfamiliar with and what they excel at. For things they are not adept in, they can work harder since people have more opportunities to know this part through working more with different works. For the things that they are good at, they can maintain the skills and pass them down to other people or teach others who are not doing as good. Besides they can make great use of the time to improve their professional knowledge or techniques in a more rapid way as in the example of tourist guides, hotel receptionists who need more works to do to gain their expertise. Dealing with people is not easy and simply. This is a fulfillment of work in a professional way that will certainly bring satisfaction to people.

On the contrary, doing the same job all day long for a worker makes them gain experience and their professional knowledge in a slower pace. All workers need a variety of works to locate their weakness or inferiority in their jobs. For example, if a server works in a coffee shop who only does table cleaning job, he or she cannot learn how to deal with customers asking other services, such as the ingredients of the meal; he or she cannot learn how to make coffee or food. Doing the same job all day long makes people feel like a robot repeating things mechanically, which will certainly not bring out the sense of satisfaction. Who wants to work like a soul less robot? Additionally, this kind of job is just a “job” not a career on account of the fact that the worker will lack of enthusiasm and passion to do better and try their limits.

Things always have two opposite sides; some people must say that doing the same job all day long makes people focused only on such job. As a proverb says “Practice makes perfect.” Doing the same job in a repeated way will spark new ideas or make people more professional since they do only the same job and will be more familiar with it for better improvement and this is also a fulfillment of jobs that brings great satisfaction. However, this is not true for most

occupation. We are all human beings and we need a variety of works in order to learn, to try and to challenge, pushing ourselves to see how far we can go. Satisfaction itself can only be led out via a variety of works being performed rather than doing the same job all day long.

**7**

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The most important things people learn are from their families.**

Opinions vary widely from person to person, or at different stages of life for any individual, whenever it comes to the topic of what are the most important things and how to gain them. There might be too many things for anyone to acquire and cherish in a single lifetime, but to me, what I hold most essential is one's capacity to love and to shoulder responsibilities. These two qualities are initially shaped and later influenced to a large extent by one's families.

It is true that we gain an abundance of skills and knowledge at school or outside the family setting as we grow older, but the ability for us to love, not merely ourselves but our family members, friends, strangers or even our enemies, originates in our families. If we grow up in a loving environment, seeing how our parents live out, rather than simply talk about, their love and care for each other, for their parents, siblings, neighbors, community members on a daily basis, we would find it natural to do the same as adults. Being considerate and empathic may lead us into a richer life with greater humanity and commitment in a modern mechanized society.

Then there is responsibility. Being responsible is a highly desirable personality in today's fast moving and increasingly complex world. Everyone prefers to be friends with, to do business with, or to marry someone who is responsible. The sense of responsibility, however, is not something that can be taught. It is, in my opinion, like a family tradition that is passed down from an older generation to the next. When we were still young, we observed our parents or elder brothers and sisters dealing with people and situations in responsible ways and we learned to do the same until it becomes our habit.

That being said, I do not mean that we learn nothing or little out of the family; what I am saying is that though we benefit greatly from different learning, it is our families that turn us into both loving and responsible individuals.

**8**

**Some students prefer to have their final grades determined by numerous small assignments, whereas others prefer to have their final grades determined by only a few large assignments. Which do you prefer and why?**

I prefer to have my final grade determined by numerous small assignments rather than one or two large assignments. That way, procrastination is less likely because I'm sharply focused on

the frequent due dates. I also tend to learn more throughout the semester and each assignment is less stressful because they aren't worth a huge percentage of my total grade.

Procrastination can be a big problem for some students, myself included. When there are only a few large assignments in a class, there can be several weeks in a row where we aren't required to turn in any work. The assumption is that we are studying or writing at home in the meantime. However, I know that this can sometimes lead to procrastination on my part. I take advantage of the situation and think I can take a few days to relax before getting to work. But more and more time goes by and suddenly I am scrambling to complete the assignment before the due date. Turning in smaller assignments more frequently prevents this scenario. The structure doesn't allow me to fall behind because something is always due in the near future.

These frequent assignments also assure that we students are learning more throughout the semester. For example, if each small assignment covers one chapter from the textbook, then my classmates and I will read each assigned chapter because we must. A test or new assignment is always around the corner to check our work. But such specific studying isn't really necessary if we don't even turn anything in until midway through the semester. Certain chapters might get skimmed or even skipped out of perceived unimportance. Maybe we save time, but we are receiving less information overall, which isn't good.

Finally, having only a few large assignments can be tremendously stressful. I'm always well aware that doing poorly on an essay could result in me failing the entire class if the essay is worth a large percentage of my overall grade. This can have a nearly paralyzing effect on my work because the pressure is just too much. Nothing I do seems good enough when the assignment is that important. Having several smaller assignments is much more pleasant because I know it isn't the end of the world if something goes wrong with one of them. My grade won't be affected too terribly. I'm then more confident and at ease in my work.

That is why I much prefer having my grade determined by several small assignments instead of a few large assignments. I'm not allowed to procrastinate, I engage more with the subject matter over the course of the semester, and I'm not overwhelmed with stress because of massively important assignments.

## 9

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The most important goal of education is to teach people how to educate themselves.**

There is no issue more important than education. Each parent or teacher wants to produce the smartest student. But what is the standard of a good education? By answering this question we should first of all look at the ultimate purpose of education. Most people would agree that the passing of knowledge is the main goal of education. Indeed this is important but what's more



important is the ability to get this knowledge on one's own, even without teachers, i.e. to educate oneself.

Learning is a life-long process. A person starts learning the moment he is born, and we continue to learn even when we are old. So we are learning every minute, and everywhere. But teachers cannot be with you all the time. You have to learn how to learn by yourself when no teacher is available. If you possess this self-learning ability, then you have the freedom to learn what you like, anywhere, anytime. I think you will feel more powerful and life will be more fun if you have this freedom of knowledge. Apparently, school education should equip students with this power – the skill of self-learning.

Secondly, the development of modern technologies in education means that anyone can be a teacher for himself or herself. With abundant information on the Internet, it is not necessary to go to the classroom and read those boring textbooks. However, there is a problem here. If there is too much information, then sometimes people get confused. They get lost in a sea of information and do not know where to start. Therefore school education should take this into consideration and start teaching students how to design their own learning plans and how to make the best use of modern technologies to learn, such as iphone and ipad. Students equipped with this skill will no doubt have a much better chance to become competitive individuals in this society.

Finally, learning is a highly individualized process. Each person has his or her own way of learning, and there is nothing right or wrong about it. But the most important thing is to find the most suitable way to learn, a way that can realize one's own potential, or weakness, and sometimes it is difficult to achieve this in a traditional classroom where many students are being taught the same knowledge in the same way. I think the best education should be to teach students how to realize their own potentials and let the students choose their own learning path. In this way, each student becomes the best teacher so the learning progress will be much faster.

As Confucius once said "Give a person a fish, and you feed him for one day. Teach him how to fish, and you feed him for a life time". Indeed, the most important goal of education is not to stuff knowledge into students' head, but to teach them how to make the best use of their brain to get the most useful knowledge. This will benefit their whole life.

## 10

**If your teacher says something incorrect in a class, what will you do? 1. Interrupt your teacher right away 2. Keep silent 3. Correct your teacher after class**

If my teacher says something incorrect during class, I think it is best to correct the teacher after class. To begin with, I wouldn't want to embarrass my teacher in front of the other students. I

also wouldn't want the other students to potentially doubt my teacher's credibility, when the incorrect remark was probably just a small mistake. At the same time, it's important to ensure the teacher is aware of their mistake and is able to remedy it.

It is unnecessary and slightly rude to interrupt your teacher during class if he or she says something incorrect. They could become embarrassed and flustered at being corrected in such a public setting. Even if my intentions were good, teachers are only human. They have egos. They could even be angry with me because it seemed like I was undermining their authority as an educator.

There is also the chance that some of the other students could start to get a skeptical view of the teacher's abilities if the mistake was blatantly pointed out. Even if it was just a small mistake, like saying a king was born five years earlier than he really was, different people's perceptions can vary wildly about such errors. A couple students could repeat the incident to their friends, saying that the teacher doesn't seem to know much about his or her own subject. Gossip and unfair reputations can sometimes begin in such ways and I wouldn't want that.

However, it is still important that the teacher is made aware of his or her mistake so that they don't continue teaching it to more students. Nicely mentioning it to them after class is the best option. My tone will immediately seem more friendly and conversational rather than confrontational, hopefully making the teacher more receptive. All he or she would have to do is discreetly change that small part of the lecture for the next class and the problem would be solved, to everyone's benefit.

That's why I believe that privately correcting a teacher after class when they make a mistake is the best choice. They are not publicly embarrassed, other students aren't made aware of the mistake, and the teacher is still able to remedy the error for future classes.

11

**A high school has decided that all students must take a class in which they learn a practical skill. School administrators are trying to decide whether to hold a class in cooking, managing personal finances or auto repair. Which do you think the school should require students to take? Why?**

I believe that the high school should require its students to learn cooking as a practical skill. Of the three options, cooking is the skill most likely to be used on a regular basis. It is also the simplest and least risky, whereas the managing of personal finances and auto repair can often require the help of professionals. Finally, cooking classes would be the most interactive and likely capture the attention of the students more than the other two subjects.

Cooking is a practical skill that is immediately useful. High school students could literally go home after school and prepare dinner for their parents, based on what they learned in class. Of course, as the students become adults and move out on their own, the ability to cook will be even more appreciated in their day-to-day lives. The difference between microwaveable food, full of salt and preservatives, and a hearty home-cooked meal is quite noticeable. The simple fact is that human beings eat food every day and knowing how to cook food is endlessly beneficial. While being able to manage personal finances or repair an automobile are also useful skills, they aren't necessarily ones that will be used frequently or consistently. Some people don't own their own car or even have a driver's license. Many students don't have a regular income, so managing finances could seem like an abstract concept that they're not ready for. But everyone can connect with the idea of being able to prepare a nice meal for themselves and others.

It is also difficult to fail drastically at cooking. Yes, you can accidentally burn bread or add sugar to your stew instead of salt, but the negative results are still minor. At worst, you end up throwing the meal in the trash. The negative consequences of failing at auto repair or managing personal finances can be much more severe. Somebody could wire their engine incorrectly and cause it to catch fire, resulting in hundreds of dollars in damages. They could invest a large amount of cash in a risky stock, losing a lot of money in the process. Even adults often go to professionals for such matters. Forcing teenagers to gain a rudimentary knowledge of auto repair or personal finance might be frustrating and even a little risky if they get into difficult situations that they're not equipped to handle.

Cooking classes also seem that they would be the most interactive and engaging for high school students. Meals can be prepared in groups and then tasted by the entire class. Creating interesting and tasty dishes could actually be a fun activity, letting the students both compete in a friendly way and assist each other. Fixing cars or considering finances, on the other hand, are activities that more or less happen alone. While some students would surely enjoy them, others would be quite bored.

That's why I believe that it would be best for the high school to teach cooking as a practical skill, rather than auto repair or managing personal finances. Cooking is endlessly useful in daily life, it is the most difficult activity to botch, and the classes would likely be the most interactive and fun for students across the board.

**12**

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? To truly enjoy a vacation(holiday), people should leave their mobile phones at home.**

**13**

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The more money people have, the more they should give away to charity.**

I agree with the idea that the more money people have, the more they should give to charity. People usually require the help of others to become wealthy in the first place and therefore should be especially eager to give back to the community. Even people with small or moderate incomes will often make sure they give a little, so it only seems right that people with higher incomes should give a larger amount of money. Finally, at a certain point, owning large sums of money seems gratuitous and unnecessary. Being generous with cash can ease the mind and make one feel more fulfilled in life.

It's quite rare that people become wealthy all on their own. Maybe they took out loans to help start their business. Maybe they received scholarships or financial aid to help pay their way through law school. If they invented a product, their initial customers were graciously taking a chance on an unknown enterprise and helped secure the inventor's bright future. Nobody achieves financial success in a bubble. Other people help in both direct and indirect ways. That's why the wealthiest people should be the most generous when it comes to charity and giving to others. They personally know how much a small act of generosity can transform someone's life for the better.

Additionally, many people donate to charity even if they themselves are not exactly wealthy. They'll give five or ten dollars to a charity when they can spare it because they want to feel they are helping in some fashion. If a wealthy person could just as easily donate a hundred dollars

or a thousand dollars or more, they absolutely should do so. It would make very little difference to them but to the people benefiting from the money, it would be greatly appreciated.

Being generous also can make one feel quite at ease. It's not a good feeling to be selfish, hoarding your money away like a miser. Wealthy people who cut off their funds also seem to be cutting themselves off from the rest of the world. Once you have enough money to be comfortable, any excess cash just seems unnecessary and odd. I think that wealthy people who truly give generously to charity will feel more fulfilled and even peaceful, knowing they're helping their fellow man to the best of their abilities.

In conclusion, I absolutely think that the more money people have, the more they should give away to charity. People with a lot of money were probably assisted by others during their rise to success, so they should feel compelled to give back. When kind-hearted regular citizens are generous enough to donate small amounts of money, it only seems correct that wealthy citizens donate even more. Lastly, selfishness makes one feel isolated, but this burden is lifted when charity is given freely to those who need it.

#### 14

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? In the past young people depended on their parents for making decisions. Today, young people are better able to make decisions on their own.**

I agree that young people today are better able to make decisions on their own, because they have more knowledge, experiences, and resources. Therefore, when compared to young people in the past, today's young people do not depend as much on their parents to help them to make decisions. They know how to make many different types of decisions, they have had experience in going through decision making processes, and many resources are available to help them make informative decisions on their own.

First of all, young people have a strong background knowledge on how to make many different types of decisions, such as how to choose their own style of clothes, the kind of foods they like, what movies they prefer, who should they trust to be their friends, and what books they like to read. Making day to day decisions gives young people skills and experiences to use in the decision making process. The decision making process requires considerations before making a final decision.

Next, the experiences that young people have in going through the decision making processes helps them to determine the pros and cons of their choices. A process is a way of thinking and doing something to achieve the desired results. For many young people, they like to have input into the possible choices available to them. Participation in a decision making process validates young people's ability to make decisions on their own.

Finally, when examining the resources that young people can access today, compared to years ago, young people today can get information and advice with a call or a click. The Internet has numerous websites that provide details about decisions that young people are most interested. For example, they can learn how to apply for college, how to get scholarships and grants, what are the best schools for their major interest. Getting the latest up-to-date information and facts available ensures that young people can make timely decisions on their own very quickly.

All in all, the evidence strongly supports my position that young people are in a better position to make decisions on their own, because they have more knowledge, experience with the decision making process, and tons of resources online and offline that can assist them in making informed decisions alone without depending on their parents. While some decisions that young people made in the past are still left up to them today, the important thing is that young people are more empowered to decide for themselves.

15

Which is better for university students? Taking many courses in one semester or taking three or four courses instead in one semester?

For university education, there are no definite answers regarding what is right and what is not right in terms of taking courses. Some people think that students can take as many courses as possible in one semester, while others think that they should do something else and take only few courses. In my opinion, I am more in favor of the latter—taking three to four courses in one semester instead.

To begin with, taking fewer courses in one semester enables college students to search for their interests. With fewer academic workloads from the courses students take, they can have more opportunities to take part in extracurricular activities so that they can meet new friends, learning from one another. Many great entrepreneurs, such as William Henry Gates met Steve Ballmer, who co-founded Microsoft as well as Mark Zuckerberg, best known as one of five co-founders of the social networking website—Facebook—met Peter Thiel who invested in the company. Had they taken many courses and spend most of their time in the academic work, they would not have opportunities for those great encounters. Besides, nowadays students go to university not for what they really like, but by demands of their parents or even simply follow their friends. So, if they take fewer classes in one semester, they will have plenty of time to look for what they really desire to take and learn in college, which is not just advantageous for their career, but also for their devotion on the academic work.

In the second place, by taking fewer courses in one semester, students can pore deep over their academic work. Undoubtedly, for college courses, it takes not much effort to simply pass the course; however, for a more profound level, if they yearn to learn the course in a more professional way, they must take extra time out for it. Thus, if students only have to deal with a workload within their power, they can spare more time study not just the textbook, but knowledge relevant to it. For instance, for English major, they can read novels related to the author introduced by the textbook; they can also use their time to take part in volunteer jobs in International English Teaching Program helping the poor to learn English or in YMCA, Young Men's Christian Association, to really practice the language in such social groups. For Tourism major or Finance major, students can try to join groups to help them learn the market and people that will help them connect what they learn at school to what really goes on in the society and in the world. Without taking too many courses, students can certainly study more, learn more and perceive more by using the time more appropriately.

Of course, college students taking as many courses as possible in one semester have many advantages. For one thing, they can graduate from school faster so that they can make use of the time saved looking for jobs while their classmates who take fewer courses are still working on their credits. For another, taking more courses in one semester means they really need to organize their schedules well without leading a college life full of parties, part time jobs or fooling

around with no learning since average college students do not manage their time well. Nevertheless, college life is the time when students can explore their world other than books and take times out for interests outside books. Thus, I agree with the statement that taking few courses in one semester for college students is a more sagacious choice.

16

Children should only play sports for fun, or play sports in competition or contests?

Coins have two sides, so do all the issues that of course include our statement—should young children play sports just for fun, leisure activities or for a more serious one. Some people recommend that children should only play sports for fun, yet I find this point of view shortsighted and my viewpoint is-competition and contests are indispensable factors for children doing such activities.

First of all, competition is what motivates children to make fast progress as well as to develop a better

mindset for life. In other words, a competition or a contest means it includes “win and lose.” Winning

makes children feel good for themselves; that is why they will make all the effort possible to keep this feeling after they win, or learn something out from their failures. They are still young and they need to learn this matter as early as possible. Take tennis for instance, if a group of children play just for fun, they may stay equally low-level at it, being satisfied with the situation or even not doing such sports and turn to more sedentary activities, they should thus play sports for a competitive purpose. Through competition, however, they start to study why somebody wins and others do not and consequently try to figure out how to get ahead and prevail over others. Avid as they are, they will improve their skills, develop strategies and become physically stronger. Even if they lose, they know it is a part of life.

Moreover, playing sports should include competition for maintaining the “fun” purpose. When competition is not involved, “fun” itself fades away. A vivid example is, if a child does not care about the outcome of a game, he or she would soon feel tired of, such as, throwing the ball again and again into a basket, or waving the racquet against a wall all day. Think about playing card games without the factor of winning and losing! Participants would feel bored because it is indeed tedious. For young -children, this situation will strike even faster. In most conditions, lack of competition is the fastest way to make a sport boring. This principle is true even with those forms of individual sport, like running. If young children run just for moving around” from one place to another place, they will soon find it uninteresting and will try to do something more fun such as video games or watching TV. On the contrary, some young children may still have fun by simply just running around. Yet such feeling will not last long. When they discover something more fun, they switch to that] thing. Besides, if the sports are not treated in a serious level as in a competition or a contest, young children may hurt themselves by improperly straining their undeveloped muscles causing permanent damage physically and mentally.

Certainly, some people may think that we should not limit children in everything. In other words, they

should play sports only for fun. Why? Sometimes competition brings inappropriate conflict and depression when children lose; that impact might make them dispirited for their other work. However, to my mind, playing in forms of competition and contests is of no doubt the better choice for children. After all, children can have fun at many things and when doing sports they should do it in a competitive manner.

University students should not be required to attend classes. Instead, they should be able to receive credits through a final test or paper.

The benefits of attending classes:

1. Learning from peers. For example, when they do presentations, students can learn from the work of elite students, either in the PowerPoint designs, or in the comprehensive content demonstrated. Besides, they can learn how to present themselves in front of people, which is essential to students at college level from which they need to learn to express themselves clearly as the art of speech, including body language, gestures, speaking tonalities and so on. By attending classes, they can learn from one another and stimulate one another for perfection.

2\* Learning cooperative work:

A final test or a paper is usually individual work. Yet for the future challenges down the road, college students need to learn how to group with other people in a concerted work. Due to their future career, they need to learn this skill to make the project more powerful combining the advantages of others as a whole. For example, in music class, they can present the lyric with various music instruments, such as pianos, recorder, and lute together with a to-be tenor who can sing in high pitch for the complete presentation of the work. In history class, some students can pore over the history part; some students can take the responsibility of the "legend part" relevant and this will make the history project intriguing and attractive. With such great content, other students need to present the content with clips, music or even PowerPoint slides. They can learn more via attending classes. By doing so, they will discover more interesting facts about what they are doing. Taking exams is just what are said in the books and it is more on the rote-learning part.

3. They can make friends with same interests as well as those with various backgrounds from different majors. To be success, it is not all about books or tests, but social network. Attending classes, they have more chances of meeting different people and they have more time to talk and to understand each other. For example, students who love math may find someone their kind; students who enjoy reading and writing fictions can know they are not alone and become good friends; students who enjoy cooking may find someone who also loves doing this. They can all learn from one another. For high education, it is the intention that young students discover the world in diverse ways for a preferable future. Taking only exams or doing a paper for certain subjects for success or leading out one's potential is not possible. Students need more than just taking credits through such ways. We have many college students who graduate from prestigious school are not employed. Do they have earned all the credits? Aren't they eminent? The benefits of receiving credits only through exams or paper:

1. Exams and papers are the best way to know if college students learn properly. The best way of assessing what students learn from college is through exams or paper. When students are in the college level, what they learn is all specialized skills or knowledge. It is through textbooks that they can learn the best since those academic sources are proved and censored by professors. This process can be better facilitated by saving time not attending schools. Highly-motivated students can always finish what the professor says and read and do research. Whether or not they are "on the right track" of the learning process, exams and paper will reveal. In addition, if students are not motivated to the subjects, they do not learn well even they are forced to go to schools attending the class.

2. Save more time pursuing what they love for life\* College students have many skills to learn

which are not only bound in the academic work, such as socializing, exercising, doing part time job in their major relevant and so on. As we all know that not all the subjects are interesting and important to students. Being an academically specialized student, he or she has to spend more time on the subjects he/she likes and wants to do more research. So for such subjects, it is wise if they can just take the test or do the paper to receive credit without attending the class. With the time saved, they can dwell on subjects they enjoy and study more. In this modern world, societies prefer experts to those people who know everything, but master of none.



## 大范围四星级

1

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Parents should give school-age children money as a reward for getting a high mark (grade) in school.**

I agree and think parents giving their school-age children money for getting good grades is a nice idea overall. It can help motivate kids to get good grades, it makes younger kids understand the importance of good grades, and it keeps a dialogue open between parents and children when it comes to school.

When you're six or seven years old, you might have no interest in school. Or maybe you'll love science, but be bored with history and math. It might be hard for you to understand why you have to try hard and do well. All you want to do is play. What's the point of this school stuff? But if your parents are offering you money in exchange for getting good grades, that will motivate you really fast. You'll stay on track and do well and learn, because there is a physical reward that you can understand and appreciate.

More importantly, as you get older and continue this process, you'll begin to realize the other benefits of getting good grades. Classes might become more fun and interesting. Your selfconfidence might increase, because you are studying hard and understanding everything. You'll feel more accomplished, because there is someone actively encouraging you to do well. Your parents are telling you that they *know* you can succeed.

Connected to this is the fact that parents giving their children money for good grades keeps the line of communication open between them when it comes to school. It's always very sad when parents pay no attention to their children's schooling and the kids start to get failing grades. It can be a disaster if it continues into high school. But if the parents are giving money as a reward, it means that there is a system in place. The parents are looking at the report cards carefully, every quarter and semester, noticing any good or bad patterns. They are talking with their children about any issues that they might be having at school. They are paying attention and supporting their children, which is a very good thing.

That is why I think parents paying their children for good grades is a good idea. They are giving the kids an initial motivation for doing well in school, they are helping them understand the benefits of good grades, and they are communicating openly with their kids about school on a regular basis.

2

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Parents do not understand their children as well as parents did 50 years ago.**

"The more things change the more they stay the same," is certainly as true today as it ever was. Children have always believed that their parents cannot possibly understand the unique problems growing up entails. Parents have always believed they know what is best for their children. While some of the challenges that face young people today are different from what their parents experienced, the main difference is in the form those challenges take rather than

their inherent nature. Relationships, temptations, and doing well in school were issues for people now in their sixties, just as they are for people in their teens and early twenties.

Even though students today have a larger body of knowledge they have to master, than did their counterparts 50 years ago, getting good grades and being successful so as to get a good job is just as important as it ever was. Perhaps fewer young people expected to go on to college 50 years ago than today. Still they needed to prove mastery in their field of study then as now, even if the tools they used were different. Certainly students relied more heavily on what their teachers told them, than in today's world with the internet providing access to different ideas. But the goal of learning enough to get a good job, whether in the field of science, or history, or languages, or the arts, or engineering, has not changed. Children still study hard, worry about their grades, and are supported and encouraged by their parents.

Children have always been tempted to do what they see others doing, even if that is frowned upon by their families. Driving a car without a license, slipping out at night to be with friends, or yearning for items they cannot afford are things that children of 50 years ago experienced. Now that those children are parents, they clearly understand those same temptations that their offspring are facing. That today's children are being lured by iPods, different style clothing, or things they see on the internet, does not change the nature of the temptation, only the way the temptation manifests.

Friendships and having a boyfriend or girlfriend is another universal urge. There are more places for young people to meet out of view of their parents than there may have been 50 years ago.

However, even people who seem quite ancient by children, were worried about whether their friends liked them, or whether they might be betrayed. Parties, dancing, going to public entertainments whether movies, concerts, or street performances, have always been places for people to meet and form relationships, both friendship and romantic. Young people of any time find plenty of ways to meet friends and chat and flirt without their own parents being aware.

Youth today may be exposed to more risks than their parents experienced. The drugs are more dangerous, intimate encounters can lead to unforeseen results, failure can ruin career possibilities. The specifics are different, but the motivations and urges come from the same human source as they did 50, 100, or 150 years ago.

### 3

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The environmental issue is too complex to be handled by the individual.**

Although individuals can certainly do their part to help the environment, I believe that the problem is more complicated than that. I think that helping the environment is a massive issue that is best dealt with by attacking it from all sides, both on an individual scale and in a systematic way that incorporates large numbers of people all working together.

At the very least, individuals can do things in their daily life that help the environment. These don't have to be big things, just little changes to the routine. They can carpool, ride their bike,

or take the bus on their way to work or school, reducing the total amount of pollution released into the air. They can recycle their paper, plastic, and metal items rather than throwing them away to be added to a landfill. They can create a compost in their backyard (or even on their deck if they live in an apartment) and put their food scraps in it, once again cutting down on garbage put into landfills.

Individuals can also re-use items as much as possible to ease the production of new items at factories, which suck up energy and release chemicals into the air. Even using the same portable coffee mug all the time instead of buying a disposable cup every day can help.

As helpful as these individual acts are, there needs to be some sort of infrastructure in place to make it all work. For instance, if someone lives in a small town that doesn't have its own recycling plant or bins available, it would be very difficult for them to recycle at all, wouldn't it? Or if there were no bicycle lanes in a city and bicyclists had a very difficult time getting around and were scared for their safety, then riding a bike to work or school wouldn't really seem like a good realistic option.

These habits that help the environment need to be thought about by large groups of people, including local committees and city planners, and need to be promoted by society as a whole in order to truly work to their full capacity. A case of individuals all doing their part independently is admirable, but it's even better when it is a community doing its part to help the environment together.

**4[4 月 12 日命中此题，此题不用再看]**

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? It is more important for the government to spend money on improving Internet access than on public transportation.**

**5**

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Most business people are only motivated by the desire of money.**

I disagree with this statement and think that business people are often motivated by more than just money. First of all, businesses can cover almost any aspect of society and surely many business owners, managers, and workers first got involved in their job out of passion. There are also nonprofit businesses and companies that give large amounts of money away. Finally, some business people don't even make that much money at all.

I would think that for someone to invest all the time and money it takes into opening and sustaining a certain business, they would have to be passionate about said business. You don't sweat and scrub your new restaurant into shape for several months straight if you don't like cooking. You don't start making your own soaps and lotions and selling them at local Farmer's Markets if you don't really care about bath products. This extends to even the most wealthy and successful business people. Owners of computer companies love and excel in technology. Owners of car companies love the purr of a good engine. These people want to

make money because they still need to make a living. But they are in their specific field because they truly enjoy it and are good at it. Weixin:laoxikou.

Then there are the companies that are non-profit and have the goal of helping the needy. They might provide food for low-income families or give new clothes to homeless people. The people who are employed at these companies are working just as hard as those at businesses that make a profit. They earn a wage, but it sure seems like they have a generous spirit and desire to help people as well. If they were only concerned with making money, there are more fiercely profit-driven places they could go. Additionally, even businesses that make a profit will often donate large sums of money to charity. There are motivations to do good seen all the time.

Finally, going into business is not even a guarantee that you will earn a lot of money. "Business person" is such a broad term. You don't immediately become an executive, riding around in a limousine! It would be silly to commit to such a career if your sole goal is money. You must be interested in business in other ways.

That is why I don't think that most business people are motivated only by money. While there is certainly money to be made, you must first be passionate about your specific area of business to even thrive. Some businesses don't profit from their endeavors and other businesses still are generous in giving money away. And just because you are a business person, you won't necessarily be making a huge amount of money, depending on what you're doing.

## 6

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Students should not take part-time jobs while they are studying in the university.**

The majority of students in universities prefer not to work while they are taking courses. They believe that work will take away valuable time from their studies and cause them to get lower grades. They also do not want to work because it interrupts the social life they want to lead on campus. Many students believe that there is no advantage to be gained by working at a part-time job. The truth is, sustaining a part-time job can be a vital stepping stone not only toward a student's academic goals, but to the student's emotional and intellectual maturity.

Statistics indicate that working at a part-time job does not interfere with academic success. At Beijing University, for example, over half the students were employed either off or on campus and they achieved good grades whether working 12 hours or 30 hours per week. They set up schedules and managed their study time more effectively than many students who did not have jobs. They also assumed a greater responsibility for how they carried out their work and study assignments.

Contrary to popular belief, students do not experience a lack of socialization if they have part-time jobs. In fact, they are more likely to gain social skills by meeting diverse people and developing a network of contacts, including staff, faculty, employers and customers. They get experience in problem solving and how to handle crises. Given their skill at managing time,

they find ways to see movies, relax with friends, or attend concerts. They are not isolated or exhausted by having to work as well as needing to study.

Universities want to help students find work and spend a lot of time and effort matching students to jobs that relate to the student's ambitions and life goals. Work opportunities can include the chance for a business student to be an intern in a corporation, for a student majoring in psychology to work at a clinic, or for an engineering student to work on machines. Students can in this way gain career-related experience and build self-confidence. Such experience assists them considerably when they apply for full-time positions in the field of their choice.

Yet one other advantage to working at a part-time job is that students can reduce their need for educational loans. They can also help their families if that is important for them to do. Earning their own money brings a sense of accomplishment and purpose they might not otherwise discover. Not all students want to work, it is true. Some who do have a part-time job may feel they have no choice in the matter. Others may choose to work to gain experience and knowledge or to increase their skills. Whatever reason exists, in the end, students with part-time employment will most likely find themselves at a distinct advantage in the long run.  
Weixin:laoxikou.

## 7

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The telephone has greater influence on people's lives than television has.**

When it comes to television and telephone, an issue that has been discussed for several years emerges in my mind: whether the telephone has had a greater influence on people's lives than the television. Some people think that television has had a greater impact, while others hold the opposite viewpoint. I believe, however, that both have had an equal influence.

In ancient times, there was no television, so people could only obtain limited information directly from the other people who lived near them. When the television was invented, the era of the information explosion began. By watching television, people can gain a large amount of information without going outside, which means people can learn of events that are happening in other parts of the world. In contrast, the telephone cannot provide such convenience to people. On this level, I believe that television has had a much greater impact on people's lives.

Nonetheless, the telephone has its own merits, and has had a profound influence on the entire world. Could you imagine living in a world where you do not have and cannot use a telephone? I think the answer is definitely no because life without a telephone would be so inconvenient. For example, in ancient China, if the king wanted to tell a minister in another province about an important case, he had to send a person with a letter from Beijing to a place several thousand kilometers from the Forbidden City, which would require much time and be very difficult. Currently, however, making a telephone call allows people to be in contact with their families or friends even in remote places. Therefore, the influence of telephone has not been minimal.

In conclusion, it is inadequate to simply say that the telephone has had a greater influence on

people's lives than the television because both have some outstanding functions that the other does not. Consequently, I subscribe to the opinion that the two objects have both had a significant bearing on people's lives.

## 8

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Technology designed to make our life simpler actually makes our life more complicated.**

I, in some ways, agree with this statement. Technology certainly makes information easier to access and research. Yet, as technology gets more and more comprehensive in what it can accomplish, we become more and more dependent upon it. Tasks become less straightforward and yes, in many cases, more complicated than they would have been.

Take, for instance, the act of getting directions to a new place. Fifteen years ago, we would take out a map of our town or the surrounding areas, examine it, and then write down step-by-step directions for how to drive to our destination. Sometimes it was even as simple as memorizing the route. It would take a few minutes, but once it was done, it was quite easy to carry out.

Today, many people immediately look to their GPS system in their car instead. This technological innovation is meant to make the whole navigation process smoother, but can be riddled with distracted driving and glitchy machinery that can't find specific addresses or suggests routes that don't make sense. After hearing the grating GPS voice tell you about an upcoming turn three or four times in a row, you start to wonder if the hassle is worth it.

Similar issues arise when people have internet access on their cell phones. If out and about with a friend and wanting to grab some lunch, instead of just heading into a nearby restaurant and seeing what they have to offer, there can be internet searches for restaurant reviews and minutes of scrolling through prices and menu offerings, slowing everything down and disrupting the spontaneity of the moment.

Of course, GPS systems and smart phones and other such technological devices aren't horrible. They can be very useful. But when they start to become overused, reached for constantly without even consciously thinking about it, it can be problematic. We complicate our days with typing things in, pushing buttons, staring at tiny little screens a little too much. Why not trust our instincts and our environment a little more? Why not just walk or drive down the street with confidence, read road signs, head into a restaurant with no preconceived notions? We might be pleasantly surprised at what we find! I think once the technology is set aside until it is *truly* needed, we're able to think and act with much clearer minds.

## 9

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The food we eat today is much healthier than in the past.**

In the past decades, food and health have received a lot of attention. While some people claim that the food we ate in the past was better, I hold the opposite opinion.

Some people may argue about the environment, because the degree of contamination was much lower in the past and the growing environment for crops was better. But a good environment is no guarantee of the eating quality. Given the fact that the equipment for food preservation was simple and crude and the food hygienic standard was lower in the past, it's hard to say the food we ate was healthy. For example, just ten years ago, most people in my hometown were not able to afford refrigerators to preserve food. Considered that salt can prevent food from decay, people at that time prefer to have cure food and that have been proved bad for health. However, with the rapid development of technology, today we have more advanced equipment to preserve food from decaying and the logistical system for food transportation simplifies the conveyance process, which promised the freshness of the food. High technology leads to a more convenient and healthier life.

Some people may argue that food diversification leads to a worse lifestyle, because lots of young people choose to have fast food and that's bad for health. But we should admit that people live in modern times pay more attention to the nutrient arrangement and absorption value of food and drink, because even fast-food restaurants begin to provide menus that reflect how much creoles contained in their foods. There are more nutritionists than before who teach people not only how to arrange different food materials but also how build up a well-balanced diet that can help to fortify the body against disease. For example, more and more specialists encourage people to have organic foods, which have been proved to have more nutritious than conventionally grown food. What's more, some colleges start to create characteristic curriculum such as food research to help students construct good eating habit.

Last but not least, there are more health-care foods that specialized in particular health problems than before. For example, diabetic foods, which contain little sugar or no sugar, are especially for diabetic patients and good for their health.

All in all, with the more advanced science and technology and better eating habits, as well as more health-care foods in this day and age, there is no doubt that the food we have today is much healthier.

## 10

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? In the past, it was easier to identify what type of career or job would lead to a secure and successful future.**

I definitely agree with this. It's hard to know what jobs will lead to security and success these days. In the past, jobs were more defined and permanent, people were not encouraged to be so individualistic, and the internet was not around. Things were more straightforward back then.

I feel like jobs and careers used to be much more defined than they are now. You were a clearly a "teacher" or a "firefighter" or a "doctor" and so on. You would choose your career path and stay at the same job for decades. And although that still happens for some people, for others it is more complicated. Someone might work at a factory and then get laid-off, work as an assistant manager at a construction company for three years, then become an advisor in the chemistry department at a university. Careers are more fluid and the question "What do

you do?” becomes harder to answer. With things changing so often, it can be hard to know which path will bring security and success. If your job changes often, so does your salary.

We're also encouraged to be more individualistic than we were in the past. Not everyone has the mentality of needing to get a good job immediately and stay there for years. People are encouraged to follow their dreams. That can lead to leaps of faith and trying out new ventures where you have no clue what the money will be like.

People find jobs and work over the internet now, as well, when they didn't use to. If you're working odd hours online, rather than a regular 9 to 5 job, it can be difficult to know what your income is going to be. Once again, everything changes all the time. Maybe you'll get lucky and find projects that lead to more secure jobs, but maybe not. It's tricky to know what will have good results.

In conclusion, I agree that it's more difficult these days to know what jobs will lead to a secure future. Jobs are less permanent and defined now, people make all sorts of random choices because they are following their individual dreams, and the internet can contain jobs that have uncertain hours and positions.

## 11

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The rapid growth of cities has a mostly positive impact on the development of the society.**

I agree that the growth of cities and urban areas ultimately has a positive impact on society. Larger numbers of varied people living close together can give them more empathy and make people more open-minded toward each other. Larger institutions and companies thrive in cities, providing opportunity and jobs. Finally, despite worries of shrinking natural landscapes, cities and nature can still co-exist quite well.

From my experience, it seems that prejudice and ignorance can sometimes grow in isolated areas. There are people that have lived in small towns their entire lives and have only known people that are extremely similar to them, therefore finding it easier to judge and dislike those that are different from them. With urban growth, more and more people from all different backgrounds live close together. This forces them to confront prejudices they may have had and instead see their new neighbors as individuals, not stereotypes. That surely is better for society than blind and ignorant hatred.

Also, it's mostly in cities that you find big institutions like universities and companies. There's a reason why cities often have so many skyscrapers; they contain the offices of huge businesses! There's something comforting about knowing, when searching for a job, that there are plentiful opportunities in institutions that have hundreds of employees and positions. One feels like they're in a thriving environment with a bright future. The growth of cities only intensifies that.

I know that some people think of urban expansion as a bad thing because they picture the destruction of nature being a part of the process. But it doesn't have to be that way! The area of the earth is so massive, even compared to the most giant of urban areas. It would take an immense amount of development and building to even begin to overwhelm the natural beauty.



There will always be nature, especially with the national parks and reserves that are already in place and cannot be touched. Society will get to enjoy the best of both worlds.

So, overall I believe the rapid growth of cities benefits society. People become more open-minded through close interaction with others that are different from them, big businesses provide a multitude of jobs, and nature is still able to be bountiful. It's the type of progress we can embrace.

## 12

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Improving schools is the most important factor for the successful development of a country.**

When it comes to country development, many people believe that societal resource should BE GIVEN priority to education, which is the most essential ingredient for successful development. However, I (cannot) agree with this statement. It's worthwhile and necessary to develop education, but to say that schools improvement is the most important factor to develop a country is out of ORDER. Education (cannot) guarantee a successful development if other equally important aspects are omitted.

First, a country should not neglect to create enough job opportunities. Basically, if the economy does not generate enough good professional jobs to absorb the influx of highly educated young adults, improving in school seems to be just meaningless to a society. Worse yet, too many jobless graduates may even bring instability to a country. That's because unemployment can elicit their dissatisfactions and disappointments to the authorities and then spur the abuse of their intelligence.

Besides, neglect of THE social system can also threaten the development course regardless of toplevel schools. Suppose that when getting a good job is not much connected with capability but social connections, which facilitates the way for the offspring of nouveau riche and the politically connected. THAT MEANS A degree does not mean so much commercially, THEREFORE fresh graduates would be frustrated. This undoubtedly runs contrary to our expectation of improving schools if youngsters lack their confidence in upward mobility which education is supposed to bring them. In addition, many students studying abroad don't come back after graduation for the SIMPLE reason that they can enjoy better social security there.

Admittedly, education plays aN important role in a modern country, and gives the nation a competitive edge in this age of globalization. However, a country which desires a successful development should put THE same focus on not only education, but also other equally fundamental aspects of the society.

In light of these, I would like to say that I personally disagree with the statement that improving schools is the most important factor in successful development of country, and with my example I wanted to illustrate that a successful development depends on many aspects that a nation THAT wants to be more successfully developed should pay close attention to.

## 13

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? It is more important for the government to spend money on new buildings than to preserve historic or traditional buildings and homes.**

**14**

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? People can solve important problems by themselves or with the help from their family members so there's no need for the government to help them.**

*In this highly technological society, access to the internet has become an essential part of our lives. Some people argue that the government should provide more funding for the discovery of new uses for the internet because of its practicality and efficiency. However, I do not agree with this argument because I believe that the government should provide funding for other significant functions, one of which is ameliorating our public transportation.*

*Undoubtedly, we spend our lives in crowded cities, where we face the intractable problem of encountering traffic jams. Whether hurrying to work or returning home after a long day, we can easily become stuck in a large traffic jam, especially on the holidays, when the traffic situation becomes worse. We even experience traffic jams when taking buses so crowded that we can barely take a deep breath. Building more overpasses to let more transportation pass through and adding more buses to accommodate the population are positive responses to the traffic problem that should be taken as soon as possible.*

*The importance of the Internet seems less significant when compared with that of public transportation. The reason is that the internet can only equip us with knowledge and information that could be acquired from other media, such as the television or radio, while a well-regulated transportation system will not only provide us with a sense of satisfaction about our living environment but also create a positive impression of this city. Changing the color of the buses to the same color and limiting the number of the cars are both ways of creating a good environment within a city, and should be considered by the government. Therefore, to create a safe and pleasant living environment, improving public transportation is imperative.*

*In sum, although I admit that increasing access to the Internet will keep us more informed of current events and allow us to gain more knowledge, I argue that it is more important that the government provide funding to improve our means of transportation. Doing so will not only improve our traffic situation but also increase our satisfaction with our environment.*

**15**

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? In the modern world, we should never be impolite to another person.**

*"Frankly, I think you're boring." Why do we seldom hear people speak so honestly? Unless you want to end a relationship, you don't tell another person what you think of her or him like this. Failing to be impressed by a friend's collection of stamps, yawning when a golfer tells you about that great shot he made on the 14th hole, or falling asleep when friends show pictures from their last trip to Sault Ste. Marie are all things that educated people try not to do. This is*

what politeness is about: acting in a civilized way to avoid misunderstanding, friction, and conflict.

There are no laws enforcing politeness. Yet we cannot interact with others without some rules of behavior, rules that are set by some form of social consensus. These guidelines represent what a majority of people consider acceptable and what they consider unacceptable. Rude people are those whose behavior shows little respect for the rules that the majority follow. For instance, because they talk at home while the television is on, many people think they can talk at movies as well. They are not even aware that this habit will bother the other members of the audience.

Restaurants have smoking and non-smoking sections, and most smokers are polite enough to ask, "Do you mind if I smoke?" before lighting up. Restaurants should also have cellular-phone and no-cellular-phone sections. A new class of rude people has been born: the look-at-me phone users whose boring conversations are just as dangerous to our mental health as smoke is to our lungs. Sometimes, it is better to remain unknown than to make pimple hate you.

There are many children and adolescents whose behavior is generally unacceptable. They swear no matter who is around them, they listen to their Walkmans while the teacher is talking to them. Indifferent parents who refuse to discipline their children are not helping them. Kids who have no idea what being polite means will pay the price sooner or later. When they join the work force, their employers and associates alike will soon realize that the behavior of these rude young people is closer to that of animals than civilized individuals. When they lose a few contracts because they talk with their mouth full, or when they say "Bob" to someone who should be "Mr. Johnson," these grown-up kids, because of their ignorance, will never understand why others are getting ahead and they are not.

Every little bit of kindness helps. It is easier to look and sound attractive when we are polite to other people. Being nice and showing respect can give us an edge. Success in life often starts with a job we like, and since getting a job is usually based on making the right impression, it is always a good idea to be kind and polite.

**16**

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? It is important for governments to protect wild animals and wilderness areas for the future generations.**

**17**

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? People care more about public recognition than about money. Even if no money is given, public recognition can still make people work harder.**

I agree very strongly with this! Without government protection, these animals and wilderness areas are very vulnerable, once they are destroyed they are virtually gone forever, and their continued existence is very good for humanity.

With urban expansion, logging, mining, and all of these other things that are destroying the natural environment, wilderness areas and wild animals are very vulnerable. Many young adults have literally been hearing their entire lives about how the rainforest is being butchered all the time. Not to mention the countless animals, like elephants and rhinos, that are hunted and poached! The people that destroy these wild areas and animals do so fiercely and with greed. If there are not government policies protecting the wildlife and their habitats, who knows if the damage would ever stop? I fear it would keep spinning wildly out of control. I'm very grateful for the nature preserves that are already in place, because things could be even worse right now without them!

Once an animal goes extinct or a natural area is destroyed, they are pretty much gone forever. Of course, scientists try to experiment with DNA and cloning to help animals and natural areas *can* begin to grow back, but that takes a very, very long time. We would never personally see them come back and neither would our children or grandchildren. Sometimes the damage is just too severe. Think of the Dodo Bird, think of different types of tigers and lions that are now just memories. It's disturbing to realize that they used to roam freely, but are now gone from the earth.

If government programs had been around to protect them, they'd probably still exist today. It's sad because humans benefit a great deal from natural environments and wild animals! Being out in nature can inspire an inner calm and make you feel connected with everything. Viewing animals in a zoo or on nature programs can be exciting and beautiful. People need to be able to continue to experience this, both currently and in the future.

In conclusion, I think it is very important for governments to protect wild animals and wilderness areas. The animals and nature areas are vulnerable to greedy destruction and hunters, they will be gone forever once they are destroyed, and nature is a wonderful thing that humans need to be able to experience whenever they want!

**18**

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The car (automobile) has had a greater effect on society than the airplane.**

***e airplane has.***

With the advances in technology, the automobile and fixed-wing airplane have gradually become the major means of transportation. Many people argue that the civil aircraft has influenced our daily life profoundly. However, I believe that the widespread use of cars, an important symbol of modernization in civilized societies, has more far-reaching effects.

Admittedly, the aircraft has brought benefits to citizens. Firstly, long-term travel time has been shortened because of the availability of the jet plane. Passengers, for instance, would be able to fly across the Pacific Ocean, without enduring seasickness for months. Moreover, the introduction of airplane opens up opportunities for multinational businesses. For example, businesspeople are able to visit factories based in different counties. However, not all people prefer travelling by plane, as civil aviation normally require lots of money. Weixin:laoxikou.It will

cost passengers a fortune to purchase airplane tickets, not to mention the high airport tax and fuel surcharge.

Compared with airplane, however, automobile has greater advantages. To begin with, car is affordable for most people. The mass-production of the automobile offers individuals cars at a low price. Furthermore, the utilization of automobile is diversified. Cars can be effortlessly designed for multiple uses and this can be proved by such vehicles as sedan, bus, truck and construction car.

Most importantly, the benefits of aircraft may be discounted during unfavorable weather conditions. Instead, many cars such as SUV can be driven under terrible conditions, providing passengers with comfort regardless of weather and terrain.

In conclusion, although the development of airplane was a landmark in human history, the invention of the auto car has significantly reformed society since the availability of the steam engine automobile. Technically, most people prefer cars for its economical, multinational and comfortable.

## 19

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? To achieve successful development of a country, a government should spend more money on young children's education rather than on universities.**

The progress of any country is based on education. That is, education is necessary on the way to the successful development of a country. But how to use the resources well on education has been a heated debate for a long time. Some people think that elementary education is far more important than others. However, I don't agree with the idea. There are several viewpoints presented as follows.

Admittedly, elementary education gives children a good start in improving their personality, which can decide their attitude toward everything, and cultivate good habits for them in their daily lives. Once good habit to be fostered, children will know how to use a positive and active attitude to face many predicaments in the future, and they can know how to get along with other people to form lasting friendships. For example, one of my brothers, Tom, was taught to have positive thoughts to face any problems when he was young, and he always solved everything easily when encountering any problems. Because of his positive attitude, he acquires many admirations from his friends and classmates.

However, comparing with the young children education, I think the resources used in the universities are more efficient. The education in universities is irreplaceable. Many instruments which be used in experiments are so expensive that they need to invest a large amount of money before they can enjoy the final sweet achievements. Moreover, some universities who devote many resources to experiments don't expect equal results. Many unexpected situations can lead to the failure. But if they don't spend this money, they would never have any chances to get the good achievements.

What's more, the government should focus on the health of students. So many facilities are absolutely necessary, such as a swimming pool, a gymnasium and tennis courts. Students can

go to do exercises after classes with their friends and classmates. It is not only beneficial for their health, they also can bring up the habit to do exercise. Furthermore, unconsciously, students can learn how to cooperate with other people when playing basketball and how to persist to the end when having a Marathon.

In conclusion, from what I have discussed above, I think that all kinds of educations are important for countries. However, comparing primary education and university education, the latter plays a more important role.

## 20

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? In order to succeed in doing a new job, the ability to adapt oneself to the new environment is more important than the excellent knowledge of this job.**

A competent employer always matches the expertise of the employees with the work they will do. However, certain skills employers look for have nothing to do with particular job competencies. These skills indicate development potential and are favored over *knowledge level*. One of these skills is adaptability. An adaptable employee thrives on change and can work independently or collaboratively. Adaptability is more useful in the workplace than specialized knowledge. Employees must be able to meet the rapidly changing priorities of the companies they work for.

Employers are hiring fewer people to do the same amount of work. Workers rotate among jobs within the company and take on additional projects. Multi-tasking, working flexible hours and changing locations are common workplace demands. Employees cannot afford to cling to tasks specific to their area of expertise, no matter how essential. It diminishes their value when compared with similarly skilled, but more adaptable workers.

Today's workers must be capable of working independently to accomplish goals assigned to them. Employers are focused on outcomes. They don't have the time or the desire to micromanage employees. They expect their employees to solve problems, to self-direct, and to accomplish tasks autonomously. Having specialized knowledge makes employees valuable only if they can innovatively apply it in original ways that benefit the company.

Employers hire people who are likable and can work within a group. Collaboration is essential to increased productivity. Those who are open to new ideas work well on project teams or on committees. Their adaptability fosters creativity. Employees who cannot effectively communicate their specialized knowledge add little value.

In the knowledge-based economies of the world, there are far more available workers than positions. The best job candidates will have mastery over their area of expertise, but more importantly, they will eagerly demonstrate their adaptability. They will be able to work independently or collaboratively; they will embrace change and enjoy success.

## 21

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The most important problems in today's world will be solved in our lifetime.**

We live in a world with countless problems and personally I don't believe any of the most important will be solved in our lifetime. The truth is humans are still too selfish and greedy. We always think of our own benefit and comfort first and are unable to put aside our differences to solve worldwide problems.

War is a problem that has devastated the world for centuries and continues to be one of the world's biggest problems. Whether people fight for power, resources or racial and religious differences, it seems that we are incapable of living together in harmony. The Second World War was supposed to be 'the war to end all wars' but since then many wars have been fought and continue to be fought. Weixin:laoxikou. It is therefore unlikely that human nature will change and there is no indication that world peace will be achieved in our lifetime, if ever.

Climate change is also starting to take a serious toll as increased temperatures have resulted in flooding worldwide. An important part of tackling climate change is to decrease the amount of greenhouse gases, but as yet no real progress has been made. Individually we are not prepared to give up using our cars, or to use less electricity or gas. We are also unwilling to pay the extra costs or suffer the inconvenience of renewable energy. Nations are also unwilling to slow their development. While there have been numerous conferences and meetings to talk about tackling climate change, very little has really been achieved.

Overpopulation is a very serious and growing problem because the more people there are on the planet, the more waste and pollution is produced. The growing population is also straining the world's resources to the point where scientists are unsure if we will be able to feed the population in the future. In an effort to tackle the problem, China introduced a one child policy, which helped to reduce the growth of the population, but also create an ageing population where there are not enough young people to support the old. As yet there is no effective solution to solve this problem and it is unlikely to be solved any time soon as the population continues to grow.

In summary, the world's biggest problems will almost definitely be passed on to our children because, while we are starting to make progress in some areas, essentially we cannot make real progress until nations start working together to make policies instead of just talking. Individuals also need to try and make an effort to solve the world's problems.

**22**

**Some people think university professors should spend more time doing research while others think they should spend more time educating students. What is your view?**

Some people are critical of professors who spend more time on their research than with their students. They suggest that students are being neglected by the professors who are supposed to be educating them. However, this view is far too simplistic because it ignores how students can benefit from the research of their professors. Therefore, I feel that professors should spend more time doing research, because it benefits the students, as well as the world in general.

First of all, the research could have great importance in the real world and could one day lead to real breakthroughs, like a cure for cancer or a solution to global warming. This research could make a difference to millions worldwide. It, therefore, seems fair that a professor should spend more time doing research than giving lectures to students.

In addition, if a professor's research was successful it could benefit the university and the students in two ways. First, the university would be able to receive grants and funding to continue with further research. This money would help the university improve their research facilities, which would benefit the students who use these facilities. Secondly, recognition of the research would improve the reputation and standing of the university, which is something that would also benefit the students who studied there by association.

Moreover, a professor who continues to do research is more aware of recent developments and is kept at the forefront of the field. This makes the him or her a more knowledgeable teacher. The professor is also more likely to be a more enthusiastic teacher because they will be excited about the new discoveries they are making and be eager to share this enthusiasm with the students they teach.

Overall, research benefits the university, professors, students and society. It should, therefore, be given precedence over teaching. This does not mean that professors should in any way neglect their duties to their' students, but the professors should be allowed to focus more on their research.

## 23

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Patience is usually not a good strategy. We should take action now rather than later.**

Growing up, we learn that patience is a virtue, believing that good eventually comes to those who wait. However, society values instant and automatic. Fortune favors the bold, the decisive, and the risk-takers. So is patience still a valuable quality that we should learn and cherish? Absolutely.

Patience can still serve us in our personal lives, the business sector, and the sports world. It is reason in the midst of chaos.

Our personal lives present us with all kinds of exciting possibilities that require patience. Being patient can allow us to think more carefully before deciding what we need, or what suits us. It can help us in small ways, like avoiding an impulse purchase or staying calm while waiting in lines. Patience can also save us from our own bad decisions, like getting married before thinking it through. There is nothing wrong with being spontaneous as long as we don't become rash.

In the business world, a little patience is necessary to achieve a target. For example, it is better to do extensive market research before launching a new product, instead of charging into the unknown. It takes patient discretion to recognize the right moment to seek a raise in salary, rather than impulsively demanding one. The quick and innovative can make fortunes overnight, but the patient hold on to their fortunes.



Finally, patience can also be a powerful mental tool in sports. It's an effective strategy when confronting a tough opponent. In football, for example, often the offensively aggressive team does not win. The team who has built a solid defense and patiently waits for the perfect counterstrike opportunity prevails. A popular tee shirt reads, "Offense wins games, but defense wins championships."

In a modern society that values instant and automatic, patience has a place. It is virtuous; it guides you to take the right action in the right moment. Use it to weigh important decisions in your personal life. Make prudent business and investment decisions and save money. Win championships!

## 24

### **Should the government support artists or should artists support themselves?**

The government should support artists who contribute their skills and talents to improve their community. In my view, art is a necessity for a better quality of life. So, if the government supports artists whose works promote a better quality of life, then our environments will be more beautiful, people will be happier, and we don't have to worry about "starving artists".

First of all, let's take a look at our environments. If we look outside, we can see so much beauty that accompanies nature. Skilled artists have built sculptures, painted pictures, and drawings that signify the advancements of civilization, and tell a rich story of a culture's history. These artifacts will become an invaluable part of the history that will be passed down to generations later. Thus, the beauty that is built today will be honored tomorrow. It's not just the beauty; it's how we feel when we look at beauty. The good thing about art is that beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

Second, people seem to be generally happier when they are able to visualize the things in their environment. Having something pretty to look at generally aids in improving the overall happiness level. For example, if someone is depressed, being able to see a lovely painting or drawing will instantly give them a better feeling, and sometimes a sense of hope. The government should be able to support artists who work to make their environment more comfortable and creative.

Third, an even more important reason for the government to support artists is because we have too many "starving artists" who are extremely talented, but who can't find regular day jobs like other professions. Therefore, their income is often very sporadic, and unpredictable, so it's really difficult to budget and make a decent living. The word "starving artists" evokes images of artists who are "dying." However, what's really happening is that "art itself" is slowly dying. Therefore, governments can save art and the artists with support that stimulates the environment and the economy.

Finally, imagine a world without art. That would be a world with no beauty, and no happiness. That would be a world starving for art. Therefore, to keep our environments beautiful, whether inside or outside, on the floor, wall, or ceiling, it's imperative that government provide some much needed support for artists who often labor long for little pay. To enable artists to share their gifts and talents and to contribute to the betterment of the community, government

support of artists should ensure that we never have to live in a dull, colorless, and shapeless world.

**25**

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Teaching is harder than it was in the past.**

I agree that teaching is harder now than it was in the past. There are multiple viewpoints and cultures that have to be considered, it's harder to keep the attention of contemporary students, and some schools do not have enough money to properly teach certain things.

Topics that were discussed in school used to be more straightforward. Whoever was doing the teaching would take the point of view of their own culture (and the culture of his or her students). For instance, American schools used to teach that the explorers who discovered America, like Christopher Columbus, were brave and admirable. American schoolchildren were made to feel simply good about themselves and their country's history. That must have been easy to teach! But these days, we are so much more sensitive to the stories of other cultures. Teachers have to consider the feelings of the native people that the explorers mistreated and killed, to begin with. With *any* historical lesson, it is now normal for teachers to sympathize with the oppressed, the women, and the people that for centuries had no voice. And the beliefs of other cultures and countries are explored just as much as the customs of one's own country. This is a good thing, certainly! But it is more complicated and takes a lot more time to teach.

It is also harder to keep the attention of students these days, with so much technology everywhere. In class, they can sneak peeks at their cell phones and text their friends. If they are college students in a lecture hall where laptops are allowed, they might be playing games on their computer rather than taking notes. Students doing their homework on their computer can find the internet to be a distraction.

But technology can also be a problem if there isn't *enough* of it. The world has come so far in the world of science that a school can greatly suffer if it doesn't have the proper equipment. What if a biology class can't afford microscopes? What if a video editing class can't afford the latest editing programs? It can be difficult to keep up and that must make teaching harder.

Teaching is more difficult today than it was in the past because things are more complicated. Many different viewpoints must be taught, technology can distract students, and yet a lack of proper technology in the classroom can disadvantage students.

**26**

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? An effective leader should try to make others feel that they are part of the decision making process.**

We face many difficult challenges in our world today. An effective leader understands that the best approach to solving problems is through collaboration and cooperation. Therefore, she engages others and makes them feel that they are part of the decision-making process. Including others in decision making gains cooperation, develops better contributors, and finds the best solutions.

When a leader seeks the input of those affected by the decision, it gets everyone to take ownership of it. If they invest their time and effort into a conclusion, they will accept and believe in it. If it is a policy decision, they will be more likely to cooperate with it than to complain about it. If the decision solves a problem, they will try harder to make it work if they were part of reaching it.

A good leader knows that when group members feel valued they become better contributors to the decision-making process. Recognition is a basic human need; people gain confidence when they believe their opinions matter. It benefits the whole when confident people freely present their ideas and input. Members who feel valued will work harder for the good of the whole, so a good leader demonstrates appreciation for all ideas and viewpoints.

Embracing a wide variety of perspectives is vital to finding the best answers. Leaders know it is better to have the opinions and ideas of many people than of a single person. People think more creatively in an atmosphere of open exchange; each idea sparks another, creating imaginative solutions that one could never arrive at alone. Leaders also encourage critical thinking when they invite opposing points of view into the decision-making process. A true leader creates value by bringing together many perspectives.

Making others stakeholders in decision making, attaching importance to the input of others, and considering diverse opinions are essential to effective leadership. The world needs good leaders who value collaboration and cooperation. We change the world when we work together.

**27**

**Some people say that students should study many lessons during a semester, but others say that it is better for students to just take three or four lessons. Which do you think is better?**

I think it is better to take a small number of lessons or courses during a semester. The amount you have to read for homework will remain manageable, you will have gaps during the day to study or even sleep, and you will avoid feeling burnt-out toward the end of the semester.

Few things during college are more frustrating than that moment when you fall behind on your reading homework. Typically, it happens when you are taking a large number of courses. You have chapter eight of your chemistry book to read, the entire first half of a novel for literature, and so on, and they're all due tomorrow. There are a limited number of hours in the day and something HAS to be skipped! Then you sit in history class, not having done the reading homework, silently hoping that your teacher doesn't call on you. You feel like a failure. The other students around you seem so responsible and knowledgeable, answering the questions easily. What you must remember is that you're not stupid. You're overworking yourself! You

didn't do the history reading because you were doing a half dozen other readings for other classes. This misery can be avoided by just taking a more manageable course load to begin with. Then you can keep up with ALL the readings and feel satisfied, not upset.

Additionally, when students take a large number of courses during a semester, their school day tends to be pretty busy. They can find themselves literally running from one class to the next, with not even enough time to grab a snack. Then they come home at night, exhausted, with still tons of homework to do. The wonderful benefit of taking a small number of classes is that you get free gaps of time in the middle of the day. Sometimes you can have a good three or four hours between classes. You can eat, study, even take a nap at the library if you really need to! It balances your day wonderfully. Once again, everything is made manageable.

Finally, with a smaller number of classes, you are less likely to feel burnt-out at the end of the semester. Final exams can count for a very large percentage of your total grade. You really can't do poorly on them. But if you're juggling several classes, studying frantically, it is harder to guarantee that you're going to do well. Even if you've been doing decently for most of the semester, finals are where many overly-busy students crash and burn. They simply reach the end of their rope, staying up all night and still feeling like they're accomplishing nothing. It's a mess. By only taking three or four courses, you can avoid this.

That's why I think that taking a small number of courses is the wise thing to do. Your reading homework is light enough and still manageable, you have gaps during the day to study and relax, and you will not feel overworked and frantic at the end of the semester.

## 28

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? It is as important for older people to study or learn new things as it is for younger people.**

For old people, survival in today's constantly changing world seems to be a challenge; to study new things would be an overwhelming burden, a great source of stress and anxiety. Yet it is essential for the old to keep learning new things, just as the younger ones do, to keep their heads well above the water. It is something they cannot do without.

First, the simple job of exploring and discovery may bring joy and fun into people's life, despite age. We as human beings are inherently inquisitive, always curious about unfamiliar things around us. In seeking answers to the unknown, our curiosity is satisfied and our intellectual mind stimulated. This makes our life more exciting and fun, which the old needs no less than the young. That is why many people, when they get old, begin to learn a new skill such as painting, or playing a musical instrument. In doing so they have made their life more varied, more challenging and thus more interesting and fun.

Apart from being fun, it is also a must that the old people should constantly learn new things because otherwise they will be marginalized by the world they live in. It is not uncommon to hear older people complain about their loss of contact with the world of their children, about failing to

understand what today's young people are doing. In the cross-generation communication, it requires efforts on the part of both sides to make the move. Younger people need to be more patient and understanding to keep the old company while older people need to be more receptive to new ideas, notions and practices. By learning how to use twitter, facebook, or wechat, for instance, and the amazing things they can achieve with the newly acquired skills, the old may get to know better what the young are doing, and thus feel more connected to the world beyond their immediate circle.

For old people, who have seen and gone through many episodes of life, it is not undesirable to have a thought of rest, pausing "to smell the rose". However, ceasing to move onto new things does not necessarily bring about the long-expected peace in mind; rather, it may deprive them of the simple joy of exploring and discovery, and it may make themselves feel like strangers in such a rapidly changing world.

## 29

**When choosing a place for living, which factor is the most important one for you? 1. Living in an area not expensive, 2. Living close to relatives 3. Living in an area with many shops and restaurants.**

For me, the most important factor when choosing a place to live is that the area contains many shops and restaurants. I like to meet different people during my everyday routine, which isn't easy to do if you live somewhere isolated. I also like to see new products and feel like I'm connected to the current culture. Finally, I want to be able to show any guests a good time when they visit my neighborhood.

It's enjoyable for me to be able to meet many different people during the day. I don't want to make my coffee in my kitchen; I want to go to a coffee shop down the street and say good morning to the friendly people that work there. I want to stop by a bookstore after work and chat with the owner or fellow customers about what books they've been reading lately. Even walking down the sidewalk in a busy part of town can provide some fascinating interactions. That's why living in such a neighborhood is important to me. I'm sociable and wouldn't be able to thrive in an empty neighborhood without much going on.

Connected to this, I like to be aware of all the newest products and items available out in the world. It's quite exciting to be able to walk down my own block and see the latest fashions in store windows. I don't like feeling like I'm out of the cultural loop, so living in a solely residential neighborhood just wouldn't work.

When friends and relatives come to stay with me, I also like to show them a good time. My best friend and I will shop for shoes. I'll take my dad out to try to find the spiciest restaurant we can. I love providing them with fun options for their visit, instead of having no clue what to do. Living in an area full of shops and restaurants makes this very easy.

That's why I always prioritize finding a place to live that is surrounded by shops and restaurants.

I love daily encounters with several different people, which happen at such places of business. I make a definite attempt to stay updated on current products and culture. And finally, I want my guests to have an exciting and fun time when they visit.

30

**It is necessary for high school students to do household work after school because this can give them a sense of responsibility.**

In the past in many countries, children were valuable workers. For example, they helped in the family business in order to bring in money. Just a couple of generations later, attitudes have changed. Now children are hardly expected to work at all. Modern children often don't even do chores. This is sad because I think that they are missing something if they don't help out at home. Sharing in household tasks benefits children of all ages.

First of all, household tasks build skills. Very young children learn motor skills and classification skills when they pick up their toys and put them away. Talking about how to do things helps them learn to analyze situations. Older children learn skills they'll need as an adult. Cleaning and cooking may seem dull, but knowing how to do them well makes life a lot easier. How many young adults leave for college unable to do their own laundry or cook anything besides a frozen microwave dinner? It's amazingly common.

When everyone in a family helps out, the family is happier. Nowadays it's common for both parents to work. When they come home, they have more work to do. Life is stressful and there's no time for fun. By sharing household tasks, everyone gains. Children can help their parents with simple tasks such as picking up their own rooms, putting away their own laundry, starting dinner occasionally, or taking care of younger siblings. Then the family can relax together, and parent won't feel like servants to their "couch potato" offspring.

The most important thing children learn from helping with household tasks is responsibility. Handling everyday tasks teaches organization and time management skills. Children learn that chores have to be completed before they can play, or before they get their allowances. Children who understand that effort pays off will be more successful later in life.

Kids should not work all the time. A happy life needs balance. But if they can successfully handle tasks at home, they will handle life better too. They will know the satisfaction of doing a good job, be involved in family life, and become more confident and responsible adults.

31

**Some people say that we should use clean energy to protect the environment, but others say that we should use traditional energy sources such as coal and oil because they are less expensive. What is your opinion?**

I think that using clean energy is a very smart idea and the preferable choice. First of all, we need to take whatever possible steps we can to help the environment before it is too late. Traditional energy sources can be harmful to humans, which makes the fact that they are cheaper seem trivial. Finally, clean energy is more sustainable than traditional energy in the long run.

The environment has been so badly damaged over the past few centuries that we must do whatever we can to help and protect it. Pollution from factories and automobiles has certainly done a great amount of harm, so shifting to cleaner energy options is important. But of course

the problem extends beyond exhaust and smoke pollution. Our planet also suffers from global warming, overpopulation, and many other issues. Scientists have been proclaiming for decades that we must attempt to reverse the damage to the environment as much as possible, although there is no perfect solution. In a situation as serious and urgent as this, switching to cleaner energy sources should be an obvious step.

Although traditional energy sources like coal and oil may be cheaper than clean energy, the harm they can cause to humans is not worth it. It's quite disturbing to look at the skyline of a major city and see a thick smog hanging over the populace, knowing that people are breathing that air every day. When there are safer, cleaner options for energy like solar power and wind turbines, the choice seems clear. They may cost a little more, but the health benefits are so vitally important that they can't be ignored. It's somewhat akin to the juxtaposition between junk food and healthy food. It would be inexpensive for someone to eat nothing but French fries every day, but it would shatter their health. The risk is too great.

Clean energy is also more sustainable than coal and oil, meaning that coal and oil are finite resources but sunlight, wind, and other such power sources are virtually limitless. No matter how cheap coal and oil may be now, eventually it will be a struggle to supply them to consumers. We have already seen gas prices vary wildly in recent years as the cost of oil changes. Transitioning to hybrid cars and electric vehicles points to a more stable future.

That is why I think it is wise to start using clean energy more and more often. Any steps to help the damaged environment are beneficial and should happen as soon as possible. The health benefits of clean energy outweigh the inexpensiveness of coal and oil. And coal and oil are not sustainable in the grand scheme of things, so it is best to move away from them and find smarter options.

## 32

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Society benefits more from works of great artist than from political leaders.**

I agree with the notion that society benefits more from the work of great artists than from political leaders. Art can be so pure and immediate, whereas political leaders can take months or even years to make decisions. Artists can capture small and beautiful moments of humanity, with no real agenda, whereas politicians naturally have an agenda and can have their true feelings stifled by trying to please their voters. Political leaders can also cause a great deal of harm to society at times, whereas artists rarely do.

It is very easy for society to benefit from art. There are thousands and thousands of paintings, films, books, and other artistic creations freely available to people at any given time. These artworks can inspire, delight, shock, and inform people about the world with a certain immediacy and intimacy. They can aid people in discerning what qualities in life they value the most. It may sound simplistic, but many people really do grow and better themselves through exposure to art. Politicians, on the other hand, can be extremely slow to act. Certain laws can be beneficial to society, of course. But it can take months or years to enact laws, with a large amount of voting and bickering along the way. A person could experience countless pieces of art before a political leader did something that directly affected them.

Art also does not require a political agenda. Some of the most stirring artworks are ones that simply study characters or show snippets of human life, allowing us to feel whatever we may. On the other side of things, politicians by nature are going to have an agenda they are trying to push. Furthermore, the things they tell the public can be untrue or simply insincere attempts to

win votes. It can be disheartening to hear a political leader give a speech on something you are passionate about, such as the environment or healthcare, and realize the politician only seems to suddenly care about this topic because there is an election coming up. Politicians seem to repeatedly toy with our emotions in this way. At least with the work of artists, we know they are saying what they mean. Our positive reactions are based on something solid and genuine.

Finally, when political leaders do turn their words into actions, there can sometimes be dire consequences. Politicians can declare war, cut funding that helps the poor, and many other awful things. They can hurt society in real, substantial ways. Art, for all the influence it can have on people, very rarely does actual harm.

That's why I believe society benefits more from the work of great artists than from political leaders. Art is consistently available and can help people formulate their ideas about the world, unlike the somewhat stifled political system. Politicians can be conniving and always have an agenda to push, where art is more pure. And the actions of politicians can have horrible real life consequences, where art rarely hurts people in such a way.

### 33

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The government is not doing enough to educate people about the importance of good nutrition and healthy eating.**

Throughout the world people are paying more and more attention to their health. They try to stay healthy and fit, so they can work and enjoy life more energetically. However, often there is a lack of knowledge about the right ways of achieving and maintaining a healthy life, especially in today's world where there is an increasing variety of choices when it comes to food and other nutritional products. In my opinion the government is not doing a good job in this respect.

Firstly, in the school education system, there is little information about the knowledge of nutrition or healthy diet. From elementary education to college education, students have been studying core subject such as maths, English or physics, which are compulsory subjects mandated by the government. But they have little chance to acquire knowledge that is directly related with their daily diet. For example, high school students may be able to memorize the periodical table of elements, but they are unable to tell which nutritional element can be found in which type of food. This, in a sense, is the fault of the educational system that the government has designed. Secondly, to the general public, I don't think the government is doing a good job either. This can be seen in the countless advertisements about food and drugs that are present on TV, in newspaper or magazines. We can often find a piece of advertisement claiming how magical a type of food or drug is. But often this is exaggerated or even false. As a result the general public is confused about which food is really healthy or which nutritional products are really helpful for them. The government should have imposed a stronger censorship against these types of advertisement.

Finally, to some specific groups of people in the society, the government has ignored, sometimes purposefully, their responsibility of educating them about healthy diet. Take cigarette smokers as an example. As far as the cigarette industry is concerned, the government is obviously not doing what they can to reduce the sales of cigarettes. I think this is because the government is not really willing to do so, as this would significantly reduce the revenue of the government. A responsible government should explicitly inform smokers that smoking is dangerous to people's health and can lead to lung cancers and other fatal diseases. However, currently, what we see is only a small warning printed on cigarette packets. Smokers are already used to these warnings and have become insensitive to them. I think the government should think about new



ways of educating people of the dangers of smoking. The best way is to ban the production and sales of cigarettes completely. I think the same argument goes for other groups of people who are addicted to fast foods, or sweet foods, etc.

So in conclusion, there are many areas in which the government can do a better job in terms of educating students, the general public, or specific groups of citizens about healthy life styles and the dietary and nutritional knowledge associated with such life style.

34

**Scientists have been working to make technology easier and more human-friendly. How do you think has technology affected our lives? Give specific reasons and examples to support your answer.**

I agree that technology is easier to use and more human-friendly than it has ever been. As a result, we can access the internet at any moment and therefore perceive events in a larger, global way. Yet, the influx of technology in our everyday lives also tends to make us lazy, both physically and intellectually. Technology can also make us more disconnected from each other. Because we can now go on the internet when we are virtually anywhere, whether using a tablet on the bus or our cell phone while camping, we tend to have a broader view of the world. It's far less frequent in the 21st century for someone to go out and buy a copy of their local newspaper. Instead, they will pull out whatever electronic device they have and read the top headlines and news stories, which may be taking place on an entirely different continent. Even people in the smallest, most isolated towns can go online easily and speak with someone thousands of miles away. They could even videoconference with someone while going for a walk around the block. It's incredibly easy to have the world at one's fingertips. The world feels more connected this way, like there is less distance between everyone.

The negative side of having the internet and other technology so accessible is that it makes us lazy in many ways. A couple of decades ago, trying to remember a song lyric or bit of trivia would have been a fun conversation between friends. Now, more than likely, someone will just pull out their phone and look up the information, not even using any brain power. We used to have addresses and phone numbers memorized, but now our GPS and contact lists take care of the hard work for us. That's to say nothing of the endless hours many people spend lounging in front of their laptops. When things come to us too easily, the mind and body get soft.

Pervasive technology can also, despite connecting people on a global scale, detach us from everyday human interactions. When we're always staring at our cell phones, we fail to notice the people walking right by us. Simple things like friendly smiles or nods of recognition become rarer. Wearing headphones out in public makes the isolation even more severe. A person could reasonably spend the day running errands, using the self-checkout machine at the grocery store and choosing the ATM at the bank, and not interact with a single person. The tasks may have been easy and user-friendly, but the lack of human contact is troubling.

The ease of usage of contemporary technology has changed our lives in many ways. The pervasiveness of the internet means we now tend to think globally, rather than locally. But the large amount of information stored within technology also has made us intellectually lazy. Physically we are sluggish due to our screen addictions. Finally, daily human interactions suffer when we let automated machines and other devices distract us from one another.

35

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Schools should use computers as a tool of education for children aged 4 to 7.**

I agree that schools should use computers as a tool of education for children aged 4 to 7. Children need to become comfortable with computers because they are used so heavily in higher grade levels and the workplace in general. Such knowledge can become second-nature when it is learned very early in life. Lastly, there are numerous computer programs designed specifically to help young kids learn and their effects can't quite be replicated in non-technological ways.

Computers are already extremely common in high schools, colleges, and a great number of job positions. They are necessary tools for everything from writing papers to receiving correspondence from teachers and employers. One simply must be knowledgeable about computers to function in a higher education or professional setting. That's why, even if young children don't necessarily need to use computers at school yet, it's a good idea for them to get into the habit. Otherwise, it would be very jarring for them to suddenly be required to use a computer on a regular basis upon reaching a certain grade level.

Furthermore, children absorb information better if they learn it quite early in life. It just becomes commonplace to them. That's why you'll see little children who were raised bilingual from birth, speaking both languages completely fluently and with no struggle. Meanwhile, teenagers or adults can learn a second language, but it takes years of studying. It's the same notion with computers. It's better to have the kids start using computers in school early on and have the process become instinctual. The children will have to learn how to use them eventually anyway, so schools might as well make it easier.

There are also interactive computer games that can aid children's learning in engaging and unique ways. Some young kids don't respond well to worksheets or even classic learning tools like flashcards. Their minds start to wander and they don't care to pay much attention to the lessons being taught. But very few children can resist the lights, music, and exciting action of a videogame. Wisely, videogame developers have for years made games that discreetly teach young children things as they play. There are math videogames, spelling videogames, and so on. By using computers as a classroom tool and letting the kids play such games, teachers can perhaps reach even the most unenthusiastic students.

That's why I believe that it's a good idea to use computers as a tool of education for children aged 4 to 7. It's wise to prepare young children for the fact of computers soon becoming a necessity for them. It's also good that kids gain computer skills when they are young and soak up information like a sponge, so that it becomes second-nature. Finally, the children can play educational videogames on the computer and even resistant students will have fun and learn.

**36**

**If a city has given money to investment, which option would prefer: 1. build a public garden to provide a quiet environment to benefit all 2. build a sports field for students in a high school that doesn't have its own**

It is a complicated issue for the city to put its fund for a more proper utilization. Tricky as it is, the decision made will influence a great number of people in the area. Should this amount of money be invested in the public garden to benefit all the city citizens, or in the sports field for high school which does not have its own? In my opinion, I think I would side with the former~ using this sum of money to invest the public garden for a quiet environment to benefit all.

Firstly, the investment for the public will benefit more people. In other words, this amount of money belongs to city, not exclusive to the school. In a macro-perspective point of view, the decision of investing this fund should be used to benefit more people. If a public garden is built up, the citizens in this city will have more places to go. For nice-to-five worker, they are mostly under stress for their busy life. On the weekend, they can go to the garden to relax and enjoy a wide variety of flower scenery. Nature heals. Their pressure accumulated can be channeled and they can be more ready for the future challenges. For students, they also can go to the public garden with either their classmates or family. Pressure released, students can improve their academic performance. At the same time, they can also have more time being with their parents for a quality family time while relaxing themselves. Thus, only through investing this amount of money into the public area can the city make a sound option for benefiting all of its citizens.

Secondly, public gardens are suitable places to meet people. Living life in the fast lane, city people usually go to public places for not just releasing their pressure, but also for meeting new people.

According to Nature Journal, "Plants have the effect of making people feel better in both mind and in spirit." If a public garden is established, city people as well as students will have more chances to meet up different people, strengthening social relationship. For instance, due to lack of leisure time, people always try to do things that can benefit them the most. By visiting a public garden, people from all walks of life can meet people they know or talk to people they do not know, increasing opportunities to make friends. Besides, they can relax themselves by the nature power of plants. Contrarily, if the city decides to invest this amount of money to high schools that do not have their own sports field, this will only benefit a smaller number of citizens in this city. By taking the advantage of the public garden, high schools can also arrange field trips to the place and they can also benefit themselves with this option. One step further, they can also learn the knowledge of various plants.

Thirdly, the public garden can catch the eye of tourists from other cities or countries. In a wider point of view, the word "investment" means that it will not just bring ideal benefits to people, but lead to a more practical concept-the revenue. To be more concise, if the public garden is made, it will purify the air of the city, making this city more desirable for visitors. Pubic gardens can be a place where visitors will like to pay pilgrim to for total relaxation, such as the public gardens in Singapore or those in Philadelphia, just to name a few, in which those fantastic public gardens attract thousands of people to come and appreciate. They will spend money in this city while visiting the garden, which is a great means of increasing the revenue of the city. The amount of money made from all the commercial activities during their visiting public gardens can be used to improve the quality of the city, such as building up libraries, more hybrid buses and the forth. Hence, investing the amount of money into the public area is a win-win policy for all the people living in this city.

Coins have two sides, admittedly, some people may think that high school students are at the age when they need a lot of exercise for their future, be it the build-up of their physique or be it the outlet of channeling daily pressure from life as well as from school work. Additionally, many young people suffer from depression, loneliness owing to shortage of places where they can engage themselves for exercising. The best places for them are the sports field built within the proximity of the school. I do not deny those benefits and viewpoints. However, there are many places where those young kids can go to release their pressure and build up good relationship

with people, such as gyms, parks or even paths along rivers or mountains. It is the question of whether those young people long to do it or not. Furthermore, a city should spend the money on the places where they can do more good to people. The investment in the public garden is a decent choice that can—benefit all the people, provide more choices for meeting people in their leisure time and augment the city revenue for more merits of the city. Undoubtedly, if the city is considering the best investment from the two options stated, it is definitely not a decent choice for building up sports fields for high school that does not have their own, after all.

**37**

**Is it a good idea for professional athletes and well-known entertainers to pursue a career in politics?**

I do not think that it's a good idea for professional athletes or famous entertainers to pursue a career in politics. To begin with, because they have probably become extremely wealthy due to their successful careers, they might be out of touch with the concerns and problems of average, working-class people. Their commitment to governing might be questionable, since they have many other tantalizing options available to them. On the other hand, even if they are thoughtful and capable as politicians, others might not take them seriously because of their past.

It might be difficult for movie stars or professional athletes to truly empathize with regular citizens. Of course, they're aware that not everyone is a millionaire or lives in a mansion like they do. But when it comes to actually making political decisions about raising the minimum wage or cutting taxes that benefit the poor, I'm not sure if they could understand the potential weight of their actions. The issues would be distant to them, not grim realities that they have known well. This could negatively affect their decision-making skills.

The celebrities might also be only partially committed to politics. Typical politicians are absolutely immersed in the world of government, focusing on little else as they work their way up. But entertainers or athletes who suddenly decide to switch to politics could just as easily want to switch back to entertainment or sports again. What if a great offer for a television series or high-paying football contract comes along? The celebrity could find his or her focus drifting away from the political tasks at hand, especially if the tasks seem boring in comparison to glitz and glamour. It is probably wiser to support politicians that, at the very least, have been living and breathing politics for most of their adult lives.

Even if there are some celebrities that would genuinely make good, intelligent politicians, they might not be taken seriously. That could then hamper any important ideas they have. For instance, an action star could go into politics and introduce a bill that would improve education. But people might not vote for that bill because all they're thinking of is the action star and that dumb movie where he got attacked by robots. Any positive ideas would get lost in the silliness of fame, making the celebrity an ineffective leader despite the good intentions.

That's why I believe that famous athletes and entertainers should not try to enter into politics. Many are disconnected from the struggles of average citizens and wouldn't be able to properly make decisions on their behalf. The allure of the entertainment and sports worlds might distract the celebrities from their political goals. Finally, even if the entertainer or athlete proved to be a capable politician, their reputation might make them a target of ridicule and they wouldn't be able to get much work done.

**38**

**Some parents do not agree with the way teachers are teaching their children. Do you think that parents should express their disapproval to the teachers?**

I do not think that parents should express their disapproval to the teachers of their children if they disagree with certain teaching methods. To begin with, there is a strong chance that the teachers are following a mandated curriculum and couldn't stray too far from it even if they wanted to. The children might be exaggerating the teacher's methods to make them seem worse than they actually are. Finally, teachers work very hard for a relatively small amount of money. Since it is so likely that they are doing their best, they shouldn't be bothered with every minor complaint from parents.

Schools, especially those that teach young children, are typically quite strict in the subjects and methods that they teach. This is to ensure a standardization across several schools, making sure that the kids within a district are all generally learning the same thing and none of them are falling behind. This means that, if you think your child's teacher has chosen vocabulary words that are too difficult or is wasting time teaching the students about irrelevant moments in history, you're out of luck. Chances are, the teachers are simply sticking to the curriculum they were instructed to teach. Even if they wanted to divert from it, they probably wouldn't be allowed to change much.

It's also difficult for parents to assess how inept or unfair teachers are when the information is solely coming from their child. Kids are known to exaggerate things and parents are, of course, biased toward their children. A child could complain that their math teacher assigns impossible homework, but the fact could be that the child simply isn't paying enough attention during class. The parents are not in the classroom to witness the teacher and students in action, so it's hard for them to know the whole story.

Teachers generally work very hard for only a small amount of money. Even if there are a few rotten teachers here and there, it's much likelier that your child's teacher is dedicated and doing his or her absolute best. Because of this, it's probably best not to bother them with small complaints. If every parent whined about every small issue, it would be maddening. Teachers don't need more stress in their day. If a parent truly believes there is a major issue with the teacher's style of instruction, they perhaps should schedule a meeting with the school principal. With small issues, they should just let things be.

In conclusion, I don't believe parents should express their disapproval to teachers. The teachers are likely just following the school curriculum and any frustration about subject matter or lessons shouldn't be directed at them because it's beyond their control. Kids are unreliable when it comes to relaying information and the teachers might not be bad at all. Finally, in all likelihood, the underpaid teachers are doing the best they can and shouldn't have their day disrupted with small complaints. Anything truly important should be said to the school principal instead.

## 大范围三星级

1

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Students could receive a better, more efficient education if they spend 11 months a year studying.**

In most countries around the world, students study at school for less than 10 months of a year, enjoying the remaining 2 months mostly as a long summer vacation. This, in my opinion, is a less efficient educational system for the students. Students who take very long summer vacations tend to forget what they have previously learned. This means that when school starts again, much time is wasted on refreshing the memories of the students. Ending this cycle with shorter summers results in a stronger, more productive school year.

When students have long summer vacations and only attend school nine or ten months out of the year, they tend to forget their lessons. This is especially true of older students, who are learning more difficult subjects such as high-level math and world history. The numerous summer weeks drift by and students just laze around and have fun, giving little thought to school. Bit by bit, the equations of algebra start to become hazy. The details of World War I become muddled. However, if summer break is just a month long and the students attend school the other eleven months of the year, their brains will retain far more information. They're given just enough time to relax and then get right back to work. A two or three month summer break is dangerously long, which is unnecessary and damaging.

This loss of knowledge over long summers has even further negative effects on the part of the teachers. Teachers, at the start of the new school year, often notice that their students have forgotten their lessons from the previous year. To be able to move forward, the teachers have to repeat what they have taught previously. This could lead to an endless cycle of learning something, forgetting most of it, being reminded, over and over and over. Cutting short long

vacations, giving students no opportunity to forget, is therefore very conducive towards more effective teaching.

Some people might argue that studying for 11 months of a year may be too stressful for students, so they need to break away from school for 2 or more months to relax, and to develop an interest in non-academic subjects such as music and painting. However, they don't have to do so continuously over two or more months completely away from school. There is always time after regular school hours like late afternoon periods, or during the weekends, when students can enjoy the fun of exploring something different.

That's why I believe that a school year lasting eleven months would be a good idea. The very long summers where students forget information would be avoided. This would mean that the autumn lessons wouldn't be just reminders of old, forgotten information. The school year would therefore be more productive. It would be heavily-focused on new information, getting to the students faster and sinking-in better.

## 2

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Teachers should assign homework to students every day.**

Most students in this world struggle daily with their homework. Many teachers believe that daily homework is the key to education and school success. I agree with this opinion. Here are my reasons.

First, daily homework can reinforce the knowledge students learned at school. A student cannot concentrate every minute, and remember everything that a teacher taught in class. Daily homework is the best way for students to review what he learned during the day, and study on the problems that he do not understand, and prepare for the next day's work.

Second, daily homework is the basis for success in exams. This is especially true for those students who are not so bright, and the only way to succeed in school is doing homework each day. Whenever the homework flags the class behavior dips, the social behavior is muddled, and the grades take a nosedive. No matter what the ability of a student, daily homework is the key to students' school success.

Third, daily homework can help students develop good learning habits. Learning is not always an enjoyable experience and students always need to spend hard time on it. Daily homework can form a kind of habit of learning for students. Once a habit is formed, learning is not such a painful thing and a student can find it more and more interesting. Obviously this will greatly benefit to a student.

In conclusion, daily homework is crucial to students' success. Life requires us to keep learning in order to catch on with this fast pacing society. A good learning habit and method that we developed when we are students can benefit us for the rest of our life.

## 3

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Drivers have to pay a fee for driving in busy city streets when there is a great amount of traffic.**

I agree and believe that charging drivers a congestion fee for driving in certain busy areas of the city is a rather good idea. The inconvenience of the fee will force people to rely on public transportation more, which is better for the environment. Money earned from the fees will aid the local government and perhaps be less annoying to drivers than other driving citations. Businesses within the congestion charge zones would also benefit from a more pleasant daily environment, their shops being easily accessible to pedestrians and not adjacent to honking, dangerous cars.

First of all, this policy is tremendously helpful to the environment and local air quality. For those who would have to pass through a congestion charge zone on their route to work or school, being required to pay a fee twice daily would be an irksome inconvenience. There would be an endless succession of notices, deadlines, and payments. Most people wouldn't stand for it and instead would opt to take public transportation, such as the bus or subway. This obviously would reduce traffic congestion. And by doing so, exhaust emissions being released into the air from numerous automobiles would also be reduced.

The local government would also be assisted by a congestion fee, as it would be the one receiving the money collected. Of course, drivers never like fees or tickets of any kind. But perhaps, if the income from congestion fees was steady enough, other minor driving and parking violations would not be so strictly enforced because money was not so vital of an issue for the local government. The quotas would already be filled for the week or the month. It seems drivers would prefer the constancy of congestion fees to the frustrating surprise of a questionable parking ticket.

Finally, the neighborhoods and businesses inside the congestion charge zones would become much more pleasant, benefiting customers and business owners alike. With less cars clogging up the roads and zooming around haphazardly, those areas would become more pedestrian-friendly. The general atmosphere would also improve, with decreased horn honking and exhaust fumes. Everything would be quieter and relaxed. Both locals and tourists would likely be drawn to these neighborhoods, resulting in an economic upswing.

In conclusion, I believe that charging a congestion fee to drivers in certain areas of the city is an idea with a lot of merit. Drivers needing to regularly cross into a congestion charge zone would switch to public transportation, which helps the environment. The local government would be aided by the fees and perhaps be more lenient toward other minor vehicle violations. And the neighborhoods within the congestion charge zones would become cleaner, quieter, and more inviting, leading to increased shoppers and more money being put into the local economy.

**4**

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? In twenty years' time, people will lead a more leisurely life.**



I disagree with this. I think society is moving in a direction where people will be busier and working more than ever in the future. People will have more options to turn their passions into businesses, jobs and careers will be more appreciated, and people will feel more compelled to help others in their spare time.

Work and leisure used to be quite separated. Imagine someone in the 1950s, for example. They would come home from the office, put their slippers on, and watch some television in the evening. Maybe on the weekends they would do some woodworking in the backyard, building bird houses and end tables for fun. But in today's world (and looking ahead to the future), it is so much easier to make businesses out of our hobbies. If you're good at building bird houses, why not sell them online and get some recognition and money for your talent?

Weixin:laoxikou. If you think you have a good knowledge of wine, why not start a blog where you review the local vineyards? People still have fun, but the internet helps their spare time and hobbies be a little more productive.

In these shaky economic times, where jobs can sometimes be hard to find, I think that people are going to appreciate any work that they can get. Quitting your job to spend more time at home might not be a realistic or appealing option. There won't be any guarantees that you will easily get a job again when you need to. So I think most people will keep their heads down and just gratefully accept any work that they can get.

Finally, the world is generally more compassionate than it has been in the past. There are so many charities and non-profit organizations out there that are very easy to find and volunteer for. It has become almost expected to devote some of your spare time to helping others. This doesn't have to be a daily or even a weekly event. But it is a part of many people's lives and I think it will continue to be. And it is a form of work, rather than leisure. There just isn't any payment involved.

That is why I think people will have *less* leisure time in twenty years. Based on current trends, hobbies will become mixed with business, regular jobs will not be discarded willingly, and increased volunteer time will mean increased work for the average person.

## 5

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The best way to truly relax and reduce stress is to spend time alone.**

I agree with this idea. Although being with others is enjoyable when you're already in good spirits, it can be exhausting when you are stressed out. On the other hand, when you are by yourself, you are free to truly do nothing and let yourself unwind. You can also focus on your own particular little pleasures, rather than shared activities that might not reduce stress very much. Finally, when you're alone, you are given the quiet atmosphere necessary to organize your thoughts and plans.

When you are around others, especially friends, you feel an obligation to keep actively doing things. Rarely do people just sit in silence together! Maybe you go shopping with your friends a lot or go to the park down the street whenever people visit. Even if you're just sitting and talking with your friends, you are engaging with them. You're thinking, listening, reacting,

speaking, telling stories. Normally, this is fine and enjoyable. But if you're extremely stressed out after a hard day at work or school, it can be burdensome. Interacting with someone takes energy. If you're already exhausted and frazzled, it doesn't help things.

Alone, you don't feel this requirement to be energetic and fun. You can take a nap. You can meditate. You can lay on your couch and count all the ceiling tiles above your head—it doesn't matter! You can truly relax and try to recuperate from whatever has been stressful. Additionally, you can choose lazy activities that are particular and comforting to you. Even watching a movie is different when you're alone. There's no agreeing or compromising on what to watch. You can watch three cartoon movies in a row, if you want, and eat chocolate ice cream while you do it. No one is watching you. If it makes you feel less stressed, do it! Any silly little thing becomes a welcome relief.

There is also the benefit of not having any distractions or noises to bother you when you are alone. You can sit down, take a breath, and organize your muddled thoughts. You can think over your workday or recent assignment and contemplate how everything is going. If you need to make a change in your routine or set a new goal, you can plan it while you are alone and in a nice quiet space. This can potentially decrease your stress levels in the future. The key is getting that moment of calm and clarity.

That's why I think that, yes, the best way to relax and reduce stress is to spend time alone. You do not have to force yourself to keep up with the energy levels of others, you can be as silly as you want in order to relax, and you have enough quiet and solitude to gather your thoughts and plan your next steps.

## 6

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? It is better to spend money on something that lasts a long time, such as an expensive piece of jewelry, than on something that provides short-term pleasure, such as a vacation.**

I disagree with this. A lot of fancy and pricey items may last a long time, but they do not ultimately bring as much happiness as purchases that only last a short time. Many expensive items are hardly used, because the owners are so worried about accidentally damaging them. Short-term pleasures like meals at restaurants can be quite cheap, and therefore more frequent and varied. Finally, fleeting pleasures like vacations can create wonderful memories that do last forever.

Many people seem to have a handful of very nice, well-crafted, and expensive items in their house. Maybe it's a gold necklace. Maybe it's some fine silverware and dinner plates inherited from a greatgrandmother. Maybe it's a rare guitar only made for two years in the 1960s. A person can feel pride in owning these things. But at the same time, often such items are hardly used because the owner is afraid of damaging them. They might only use the silverware and dinner plates on Christmas day. The guitar might not even be played, but kept in a display case instead. How much joy is actually taken in these items, in the long run? So much money is spent, but then the item is hidden away for safe keeping. Weixin:laoxikou.

Then we have simple little pleasures like going out to dinner. The purchase doesn't last—your food is gone very quickly! But you do truly enjoy it. And since getting dinner is so cheap, you can do it frequently. Get Mexican food with your best friend on Tuesday and then grab some Greek food with your parents that weekend, and so on. Go to a new restaurant every time if you want. It will be fun, tasty, and always changing. I think experiences like these are definitely worth the money because of how often they add happiness and excitement to a person's life. The same idea could be applied to women buying make-up or perfume or other such items. Eventually the product will run out, but they will be used and enjoyed very often, maybe even everyday. Sometimes little delights like these enhance our lives more than we even realize.

## 7

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The purpose of television is to educate, not to entertain.**

I would have to disagree. Television can both educate and entertain; I do not think it should have to be one or the other. In fact, the two work best going hand-in-hand.

One of television's most striking attributes is the way that it can capture the attention of viewers with such force, making them sit up and pay attention to what is on the screen. First and foremost, with its combination of sound, image, and continual feed of programs, television is entertaining by design. Weixin:laoxikou.

Things get interesting when one considers the different ways that entertainment can be presented. Of course, there are the trashy television programs like reality shows about vain rich people and daytime talk shows where the audiences scream at the wild guests. There are the infomercials that air in the middle of the night and try, urgently, to convince you to buy a blender that you absolutely do not need. These things might entertain us. Their sheer silliness might make us laugh when we're bored or sitting around with friends, having a glass of wine. There is no education to be had there, but at least the viewing can be fun sometimes.

Then there are shows, such as skillfully-written dramas and even some comedies, that are both entertaining and educational in the way they provoke thought about human nature. Through empathizing with a broad spectrum of characters and following them through tangled and often intense situations, we come to see ourselves and others in a more open-minded and thoughtful way. These shows are put together with intelligence and viewers can indeed learn from them, while still utterly enjoying them.

Finally, there are programs that are the most traditionally educational, like documentaries and news investigations. They are easy to find on television as well and can teach viewers about endless topics, from popular subjects in history to obscure trivia. You can certainly educate yourself through watching them. And once again, the use of stirring visuals and narration will almost always entertain the viewer and keep him or her engaged, perhaps more than a dry textbook would.

My point is that television is always an entertainment medium. Saying that television should be solely education-based and not entertain the viewer is disregarding the basic way that television functions. Yet as the viewer is entertained, more often than not there is education of various types to be found within the programs. They are often learning something. It is each individual person's choice what specifically they want to watch and how much they want to

engage their intelligence. But the option for learning is always there and presented in a fun, enticing way, which is a great thing.

## 8

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? In 20 years from now on, students will not use printed books any more.**

I disagree and believe that, although digital books are becoming increasingly popular, printed books will still not be completely gone from the academic realm in twenty years. School and university libraries have invested a lot of time and money into their printed book collections over the years. Their transition to digital books will be slow and incomplete for quite a while. Also, many students still find it easier to study with books they can physically hold in their hands. Finally, there is a certain love for tradition and older technologies that a lot of people still hold on to.

Schools and universities have been building up their physical libraries for decades. Just go to any random area of a college library and sort through the books. There will be a lot from the 1960s, the 1950s...It's common to find books nearly a hundred years old! Schools used to pour a lot of time, energy, and money into improving their physical book collections. And although now the transition is starting for changing to digital books, I think it will be a very slow process. What will become of these thousands and thousands of books, taking up entire buildings, with their own history and worth? It's not as simple as just bringing them all to a thrift store. They will be around for a while yet. It would be wasteful to just toss them all aside.

I also think that students find a certain comfort and ease when studying with physical books. They can highlight important text, they can put bookmarks throughout the pages, they can toss the book in their backpack and bring it with them to class or to a coffee shop. These things can be done with digital books, to an extent, but the process is much slower and more complicated. When you own an expensive device, you worry about even taking it outside your home. With a book, you have no problem reading it on the bus or subway. You're also not straining your eyes staring at a digital screen for too long! Weixin:laoxikou.

Finally, the passion that many young people have for nostalgia should be noted. There are many teenagers, born in the age of the CD, that own record players and use them frequently! There are college students who decorate their apartments with old furniture and artwork more from their parents' generation. It comes from an appreciation for and interest in the past. These same people will probably never abandon books entirely, because they simply don't want to.

In conclusion, printed books will still be used by students in twenty years. School libraries will still likely be holding on to their large book collections, studying with printed books can be easier for some, and many people like physical books because they appreciate nostalgic items.

## 9

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Teachers should be paid according to how well their students perform.**

I disagree with this idea. Some teachers make a huge positive impact on their students that can't be measured by grades or tests, there are students that don't do well even if they have fantastic teachers, and having extra money as a possible reward could make some teachers unfortunately cheat the system.

Good teachers can have various effects on their students. Yes, some lead their students to get good grades. That's important, of course. But teachers can also inspire confidence in their young students, making them believe they can do anything they set their mind to. Teachers can give their students a broader view of the world. Teachers can spark the imaginations of the children they instruct. Teachers can be funny, exciting, and life-changing. They can do so much to help kids develop their personalities and sense of self. That is more important and far deeper than some grades on a test. I don't think it's right to reward just the grades and disregard the wonderful things that can't be measured.

Also, some kids just naturally struggle with schoolwork. They may have a learning disability that makes reading difficult. Or they may have a short attention span and struggle to pay attention during lectures. Not every student is going to get good grades, no matter how attentive and skilled the teacher is. Punishing the teacher with a lower pay also seems wrong in that scenario. Finally, as unpleasant as it is to think about, some teachers may cheat the system if they know they can get more money out of it. They could lie about their students' average test scores and make them seem better than they are. They could be lazy with their grading, giving A's and B's where lower grades were actually deserved. Greed for money can make people do awful things. And the students would suffer as a result, not actually receiving the strong education they deserve.

So, although it is a complicated issue, I don't think teachers should be paid according to how well their students perform. There are some teachers who are wonderful without focusing much on tests and statistics, some students get bad grades regardless of how good their teachers are, and some sneaky teachers could lie about grades in order to get more money.

## 10

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The ability to read and write is more important now than in the past.**

I agree with this. It was easier to be illiterate when one lived a simple and isolated life, but those lives are rare these days. Literacy is very common today, which makes illiteracy that much more odd and stigmatized. Finally, the internet is largely text-based and is a prevalent part of modern society.

Back in the days when people largely lived out on farms or in tiny villages, it wasn't necessarily a huge deal if they couldn't read or write. In fact, it was quite common! If they spent all day working with their hands and just interacting with a very small number of people, there probably wasn't much reading they needed to do. The men just planted crops, worked with wood. The women cooked and did chores around the house. Any basic knowledge they needed, they learned from their parents and passed on to their own kids. It was a simple, isolated life. Reading didn't factor into it. But that way of life is very rare now.

Continuing this idea, a long time ago, meeting someone who couldn't read or write didn't seem terribly strange. But today, illiteracy can be a source of extreme embarrassment and shame for people because it IS so rare. Now, not being able to read or write isn't just inconvenient in that it makes tasks more difficult. It also negatively affects social interactions. A long time ago, people didn't care so much.

Of the many aspects that make illiteracy so difficult, the widespread nature of the internet is one of the main ones. When you think about it, the internet is mostly made up of text. Say you're looking for a job, for example. Online there are text job postings, text communication, and so on. It's not as simple as walking into a local store and inquiring about a job. One can't rely on just face-to-face interactions. They dearly need to be able to read and write, too. They become cut off from society when they can't.

That's why I think the ability to read and write is more important now than it was in the past. A long time ago, reading didn't factor into daily life for many people. This meant illiteracy was more common, but today it is uncommon and embarrassing. One's place in society starts to crumble when they can't even navigate the internet to look for a job.

11

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Professional athletes, such as football and basketball players, do not deserve the high salaries that they are paid.**

A number of celebrities receive large amounts of money for what they do, and the public often argues that this level of financial reward is not justified. However, one group of highly paid celebrities who have earned their status and prestige through extremely hard work are the professional athletes who play in team sports. Many of them have gained acclaim not only in their own country, but around the world, athletes like Michael Jordan and David Beckham.

Professional athletes deserve the high salaries they are paid because it is their talent and skill that makes sports a multi-billion dollar franchise in the entertainment industry. They spend grueling hours every day practicing and refining their strength, technique and timing so that they can give their ultimate best on the field or court or ski slope. Their job is to win for themselves, their teams, their coaches, and above all, for the fans who are watching them perform. It is only fair that they should receive a high salary for that kind of dedication and commitment toward the sport they have chosen as their life's work.

Being good at a sport is not enough for professional athletes. They have to improve their abilities constantly. One of the well-known aspects of competition in professional sports is that when a team or player wins, the bar is always set a little higher for the next time. There is no stopping and settling for success. Rewarding them for going the extra mile seems entirely appropriate.

In addition, these athletes face intense scrutiny and their work is measured and critiqued by everyone. Sports fans in particular are famous for their fast criticism and often negative assessment of the athletes who play the games. They clamor to see their team win every time. As an example, Tom Brady of the New England Patriots has a phenomenal record of bringing

the Patriots to the Super Bowl. His talent as both a quarterback and a motivator show him to be a team leader of great power and effect. Yet although he led the Patriots to two Super Bowl wins in 2004 and 2005, when the team lost in 2008 to the New York Giants, Brady received massive criticism. It was as if the fans had amnesia about his previous, outstanding record. They wanted him to lead the Patriots to a final win all the time. This is an example of the enormous pressure placed on the shoulders of professional athletes. A high salary seems a just reward for accepting that level of stress.

It is only fair that professional athletes should share as well in the massive profits gained by management and corporations from professional sports. It is also fair that they should receive an above average compensation for the risks they take every time they go out onto a field or court to create the magic of the game and make it come alive for the fans who love it. In the end, however, all good professional athletes share one thing in common. They want to create something wonderful through the skills and talent that they have honed for so many years, some of them since childhood. We owe them.

## 12

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? It is better to take a secure job with a low pay than to take a job with a high pay but is easy to lose.**

Today, many people eagerly seek a high-paying yet insecure job in order to confront the great financial pressures surrounding us, such as soaring living costs. In contrast, others, who are inclined to lead lives of less abundance, prefer jobs with low pay that are more secure. As far as I am concerned, the sort of job an individual seeks should depend on his or her age.

The young, who need to prepare for their future lives, can afford to take a stab at jobs with high pay that are high-risk. Young people, full of vigor yet without the burdens of family, are well suited to risky jobs. Weixin:laoxikou. For example, one of my friends works for a big fund company, earning a high salary in a situation where the competition is fairly severe. Although he works long hours, the rewards he obtains from this job satisfy his demand for a house in the city as well as his need to prepare for a wedding and to support his future family. More importantly, he feels a sense of achievement by succeeding in the face of fierce competition. In this way, the job meets his needs both materially and psychologically.

Although a high-salary job might fulfill a person's desire for a decent lifestyle, such a job is not suitable for middle-aged people who cannot expend the energy involved in the work and who cannot risk losing their jobs. For example, unemployed people in their 40s and 50s cannot easily find a new job to make a living, as these people, unlike the young, cannot readily gain new skills in a short time, which leads to companies' reluctance to hire them. When people in this age group who earn high salaries lose their jobs, most of them run into a dilemma, as they are incapable of affording the high cost of raising children. Thus, middle-aged people are not advised to have lowsecurity jobs.

In summary, an apparently insecure job with high pay does not meet everyone's needs, and neither does a low-pay, secure job. Only when we become aware of our requirements can we make a wise decision.

13

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Playing sports teaches people more lessons about life.**

Many people, believing that life is life and sport is sport, maintain that sports cannot teach them anything about life. However, I think that sports have many aspects that are similar to life, and I would argue that people can learn important lessons from sports.

For instance, sports can teach people not to give up. All participants in a game have a strong longing to win, so they try their best to play the game, even if they have no energy. Even in the midst of exhaustion, persistence leads players to move in order to beat their opponents. For example, in the NBA game between the Houston Rockets and the San Antonio Spurs in 2004, the Spurs gained a 74-66 lead within the last few minutes, meaning that the Rockets were nearly beat by the Spurs. A large segment of the audience left the Toyota Center, but T-Mac, the heart of the Rockets, did not want to lose the game. Therefore, he kept moving; at the end of the game, he offered an incredible performance, winning an unbelievable thirteen points within 35 seconds to beat the Spurs. People can learn a lesson about not giving up from this basketball game and TMac.

Additionally, sports teach people about unity. In the 2010 South Africa World Cup, the Germans have embodied this spirit. The German team is not like the teams of England, Brazil, and Argentina, which have a large number of A-list superstars, but the members of the German team use their unity to beat their rivals one by one and earn respect. The coach of the Netherlands team remarked that the threat presented by the German team is not its offense but its unity. I believe that people can be deeply affected by the spirit of unity they see in sports.

Sports can be a mirror reflecting something meaningful in people's lives. I firmly believe that sports teach people lessons about life.

14

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? In order to celebrate major events, it's better to organize a big party with lots of people than to have a small party where only close friends and relatives are invited.**

When it comes to a birthday, or some other festivals, we usually hold a party to celebrate. In fact, there are a large amount of people who would like to hold a small one because it is much cheaper as well as easier. Weixin:laoxikou. However, I would like to invite my friends and relatives as well as related ones to a big party. The following would speak out my opinion in details.

Admittedly, holding a small party would save us a lot of money as only a few people would come. Also, the small one would be much easier to hold. Just several callings and messages would settle it. However, a larger party has many other obvious advantages as follows. First, the atmosphere of a larger party would be much better than a small one, as the more the people, the more activities would be held. Then, much more laughter would come out from so



many people. That would be very interesting and convenient. In such a big party, we could relax ourselves thoroughly.

Furthermore, in the process of holding a big party, we could learn much more than from a smaller party. Before the party, we have to make sufficient preparation for it, such as when and where the party should be held to fit so many people's table needs, what the people would eat, which kinds of activities should be held to satisfy the popular favor. All of them would help us to develop selfindependence and self-confidence, which would be useful in our future.

More importantly, as the big party is not limited to my friends and relatives, I would meet a great number of new faces. At the party, I could utilize the chance to make a lot of friends andshare each other's experience, which would broaden my horizon. At the same time, I could communicate with my friends and relatives with our joys and sorrows, the party would be a platform for us to communicate with everyone.

As the atmosphere of a big party is much better, and it could broaden my horizon as well as brings me some new friends, also it could strengthen some good qualities. There is no doubt that I would like to hold a big party to invite many people who are not limited to my friends and relatives.

## 15

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? People should buy things made in their own country, even if they are more expensive than things made in other countries.**

Numerous factors have an influence on the tastes of customers, including brand, quality, appearance, service, place of production, and technology. Some people prefer to purchase things made in their native countries because they believe that this inclination is a form of patriotism. I cannot agree with this perspective for a number of reasons.

To begin with, it is impractical to determine the location where products are made in many cases. To reduce costs and improve product quality, manufacturers usually employ technologies and materials from all over the world. As a result, it can be difficult to distinguish where a product's place of production is. For example, the brand of a computer might be Lenovo, but its central processing unit might be designed by Intel and its display might come from Sony. Lenovo is a company in China, whereas Intel is located in the United States and Sony is located in Japan. If a person buys a Lenovo computer, he or she is buying a product from a Chinese company but is also purchasing products from the United States and Japan. In the case of many products, it is not possible for people to buy things made entirely in their own country.

In fact, choosing products from various countries can benefit both customers and society as a whole. Of course, buying products from native companies can spur the development of companies in one's own country over the short term, yet I would argue that people can benefit more if they buy things from different countries over the long term. A variety of companies from different countries lead to competition among manufacturers. When this occurs, civilians can enjoy the benefits of low prices and good services. This reminds me of the Korean beef policy. The Korean government encourages citizens to purchase beef from their own nation and

forbids importing a large amount of beef from other countries. As a result, few people eat beef. What is worse, without competition, local technologies for producing beef have been stagnant. Therefore, I am not supportive of the view that one should buy things only from one's own country, no matter how expensive the product is.

In sum, because of the difficulty of distinguishing places of production and in light of the benefits resulting from purchasing products from various countries, I cannot agree with the idea that people should buy things made in their own country regardless of price.

**16**

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? A job with more vacation time but a low salary is better than a job with a high salary but less vacation time.**

It is true that a high-paying job allows people to gain more money to ensure a more comfortable and worry-free life. With a high income, people can buy delicious foods, live in good housing, purchase expensive commodities and afford high quality healthcare. Earning a high income also wins recognition, respect and admiration from others, which is why doctors and lawyers are among the most respected jobs in the world. However, personally I find these people not happy at all, if they have to sacrifice their leisure time for a high income. And I would rather do the contrary – to sacrifice a high salary just to be able to have more days off work so I can enjoy my vacation.

First of all, if people choose a less strenuous job with more vacation time, they can become physically healthier and emotionally happier. This kind of job means people have more spare time. They can have a good relaxing time on vacation, which is helpful to their health. On the holiday, they can do many exercises and play sports to reduce stress and release tension. When people have a lot of spare time, they can also enjoy more recreation and amusement, which are the elements of a happy life. In contrast, those people who have high a salary but less vacation time often focus too much on their work. As a result, they ignore their physical and mental health, and may be overwhelmed by pressure.

What's more, the relationship between a person and his/her family members will be much improved if he/she chooses a job with more vacation time because he/she has more time to stay with family members and join in family activities such as picnicking and camping. Consequently, he/she has more connection with family members, and this will prevent many problems usually found in families with a lack of communication. This is also true with relationship among friends. By comparison, those who have high-salary jobs often find themselves so busy coping with projects, sales targets, meetings, business travels, so on and so forth, that they cannot spare even one day for a friends gathering or a family trip. This is something I definitely would not want.

By comparing these two types of working conditions, one would easily see which is better. Of course there are always a few people in the world who are workaholic, or who are skillful enough to find an excellent balance between life and work. But I have to admit that I am not such type of person. If I had to choose between the two, I would have to sacrifice salary for personal time.

17

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? All high school students should take a course in basic economics.**

There is no such thing as a free lunch, as the saying goes. But many students leave school without any idea of how to manage their money. They arrive at college or start a job with the clear belief that the world does owe them a living; in other words, a lunch for free. From my perspective, it is without dispute that schools should teach basic economics at high school.

To begin with, there can surely be no argument that 'money makes the world go round. Therefore, to leave high school students ignorant of the basic facts of everyday life is a negative measure in this modern world. For example, they need to know about how to handle simple, but essential things like paying for their rent, travel, and living expenses.

Equally important, young people leaving school ought to be equipped with an understanding of how insurance, mortgages, pensions, and investments work, and how they affect all of our lives directly. For the most part, today's young people enter the real world largely ignorant of these fundamentals. As a result, many blunder into debt difficulties which could have been avoided.

Conversely, it is argued that teaching economics should be left until college years. However, what of those who do not progress to college? Weixin:laoxikou. For another thing, even many professors concede that college economics focuses mostly on theory, and not the required practical elements of everyday personal finance. Consequently, many would miss out on the early learning of handling their money in an efficient manner.

Overall, it is my contention that a basic understanding of personal finance cannot be ignored at high school. Are we to leave our young people blundering in the dark, and sometimes making serious mistakes, all because our schools have ignored a basic element of everyday life? Adults should take responsibility, through school life, of equipping our young people with the essentials to survive, let alone prosper in this globalised world.

18

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Movies and television programs should present stories in which good people are rewarded and bad people are punished.**

What is the primary purpose of movies and television? In my view, movies and television programs do not serve strictly educational functions; therefore, they do not always need to show good people being rewarded and bad people being punished.

I concede that movies and television programs have educational effects for teenagers. Teenagers do not have enough capacity to distinguish good from bad, and they are often enthusiastic about imitating characters in television or movies. Educational films teach teenagers how to behave properly, whereas programs filled with violence can make teenagers behave aggressively. For example, a movie called *The Guilty*, which tells the story of gangs, was popular fifty years ago in Hong Kong. The rate of juvenile delinquency soared at the time

because teenagers imitated the gang members in the movie. In contrast, suitable movies help teenagers to develop good conduct.

However, movies and television serve more than an educational function for their audience. Some movies just satirize society. A movie called *The Bullet*, for instance, depicts a corrupt and incompetent government. Increasing numbers of people are weary of platitudes and are eager to watch novel and distinctive programs. When viewers are able to predict the entire plot at the beginning of the movie, they may feel bored and may wish to stop watching the hackneyed film. Many modern films have complicated plots to keep viewers interested, such as a policeman becoming a robber or a robber giving up his old business.

Documentary films must stick to reality. We should not change history to make a film appear more instructive. As such, we should admit that not every great man in history received his due. We should not eliminate information from a documentary film just because someone experienced an unfair fate.

In summary, movies and television can be instructive for teenagers, but they serve more than educational functions for their audience. Therefore, in films and television programs, good people do not necessarily need to be rewarded, and bad people do not necessarily need to be punished.

## 19

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? In order to solve the problems in the present and future, it is necessary to understand the past.**

Ten years have passed since we stepped into the 21st century. We cause many troubles and we need to resolve them. A saying goes that in order to solve the problems nowadays and in the future, it is necessary to understand the past. I totally agree with the opinion, we need to understand the past and to absorb experience from the past.

There are a large number of painful lessons that our ancestors have bequeathed to us. They paid heavily to learn them. We should learn from their experiences and avoid doing what our ancestors done wrongly. For instance, we face a serious trouble called soil erosion. Ancient Babylonian people also faced this problem. They cut a huge amount of trees and satisfied their needs like we do now. But they did nothing about the soil erosion. More and more soil land became desert. Finally, the desert destroyed their country and their people. We should learn lessons from their experience and avoid what happened that time. We should do something to stop soil erosion.

On other hand, there are lots of positive aspects that we need to understand to make good for us. We Chinese have a good habit which our ancestors have taught us. We have a custom whereby we walk a lot. That means we Chinese all like to go to work on foot. We save much fossil fuel and reduce the carbon dioxide. This can help solve the energy shortage and make our environment clean. It is useful to know and learn from the past, which can help a lot.

Admittedly, some people say that it is useless today to understand the past because the times are changing and it is a waste of time. However, I do not agree with that. Even if the time is

different, some truth still remain. Newton found his mechanical law 300 years ago, but we still consider it as a truth. Our ancestors really gave us many priceless things.

Based on what I have discussed above, I can surely make a conclusion that we should study the past. The past can help a lot in solving the many problems that we face today. Our ancestors really gave us precious treasures that help us a lot. It is important to know the past and inherit that treasure.

## 20

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Young people today are less dependent on their parents than in the past.**

Today our society is more liberal and less conservative than in the past, which may lead some people to conclude that young people are consequently more free and independent of their parents. However, I disagree with the statement, as I believe that young people today are actually more dependent on their parents now than in the past because changing attitudes and circumstances have actually increased the dependence of young people on their parents.

Nowadays more young people have the means and inclination to enrol in higher education to obtain better jobs. This means that young people are dependent on their parents to help pay for their tuition and many will continue to live with their parents during university and for years after they graduate. This is very different from the past where a university education was largely restricted to the higher and middle classes and many young people would leave school after their high school education to seek a job or an apprenticeship. Therefore, more young people in the past were financially independent of their parents, which allowed them to leave home and start their own families at a much earlier stage in their lives.

Attitudes towards parenting have also changed, as people now place great importance on a child's upbringing in determining how successful they are in the future. This added pressure on parents has resulted in a more controlling parenting style which encourages parents to be much more personally involved in their children's lives. This is very different from the more casual attitudes of the past, which allowed children much more freedom to do what they liked and make their own decisions. As a result of this controlled upbringing, young people today are now far more dependent on their parents to offer them advice, instead of making decisions for themselves.

Overall, the change in circumstances and attitudes means that it has become acceptable for young people to be dependent on their parents. Therefore, young people today are not only more dependent on their parents for advice, but also financially dependent on them for a longer period of time.

## 21

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Printed books have greater effects on society than television has.**

Whether printed books have had a greater effect on society than television has had, has been a controversial issue for many years. Some people often spend most of their free time watching TV, but others use this time to read printed books. As far as I am concerned, television has a greater impact on society than printed books do because television is more prevalent, more convenient, and cheaper.

First of all, television is more prevalent than printed books. Nowadays, every household has their own television. They can watch their favorite movies, news programs, or even advertisements. Thanks to watching TV everyday, people can acquire a great deal of knowledge, gain a lot of experience, know about up-to-date news in their OWN countries and all over the world. In contrast, printed books seem not as popular as television. Some people even feel bored when reading books. Hence, television dominates printed books in general.

Second, watching television is more convenient than reading books. We can watch television ANY time and anywhere. We can watch television at our home, on streets, at our offices. Television offers us a lot of channels that can satisfy THE different tastes of people, and a lot of channels are NOW broadcasting 24 per day and seven days per week. ON the contrary, printed books ARE not as convenient as television. We have to CARRY them TO where WE want to read THEM. It would be hard for people, especially the elders or children, when they want to read books that are really heavy, but cannot bring THEM to everywhere they want.

Last but not least, watching television is cheaper than buying new books. Most of THE channels broadcast on television are free. People just have to pay for their electricity and enjoy their favorite programs or movies. Printed books on the other hand, are quite expensive. A lot of books have a price that is equal to the price of a television, and THAT of course is not AN affordable price for many people. Moreover, in order to buy some interesting books, we have to go far away from home, even purchase them from other countries. It is really time-consuming and might waste a lot of money for travel and shipping.

In summary, although printed books bring us a great deal of knowledge, I think television more outweighs printed books in terms of its affect on society. By watching television every time and everywhere they want, people can acquire a massive knowledge with convenience and AT A reasonable price.

## 22

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? One of the characteristics of successful leaders is the sense of responsibility for accepting their mistakes.**

To be a successful leader you must be honest with your supporters, because people will only support a leader they can trust and respect. By trying to hide or deny their mistakes, leaders do not only lose the trust of their followers, but their respect as well. I, therefore, strongly believe that accepting responsibility for one's own mistakes is important for a successful leader.

Those who disagree with the statement might argue that a leader who admits their mistakes loses credibility, whereas a leader who hides from them can never be fully implicated. However, when it comes to scandals surrounding important figures, it is almost inevitable that

the truth will eventually come out. When that time comes, the leader does not only lose all credibility, but is despised for their cowardice and deceit. Once trust is lost it is never fully regained, and it is far better to openly admit a mistake at first, rather than be exposed as a liar at last. In actuality, a leader who willingly and openly admits their mistakes is admired for their dignity and integrity, which increases the loyalty of their supporters.

Furthermore, a leader should accept responsibility for their team and the decisions they make as a team. This is because a leader is both part of and the head of his team. He or she is therefore expected to be accountable for the decisions they make, even when they are bad decisions. A leader will, therefore, very quickly lose respect if he is continually trying to deflect blame away from himself onto other members of his team. Blame is never a constructive solution and if a leader begins to blame his team instead of accepting the problem, it creates a negative atmosphere and wastes time. By accepting a mistake, the leader can work with the team to find a solution and learn from the mistake.

Overall, accepting responsibility for a mistake demonstrates that you are a strong and responsible leader. This is the kind of leader people will respect and have confidence in. Moreover, by accepting the mistake, the leader can organize and command his team to deal with the problem more successfully. It is therefore an important quality in any leader.

## 23

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? One can learn a lot about a person from the types of friends this person has.**

Many people argue that people with the same or similar traits are usually more likely to be associated with each other. From this perspective, it seems plausible that we can judge a person by looking at what kind of friends he or she has. However, from my personal observation, such a belief may not be impeccable.

True, people with similar concerns tend to be more closely related to each other. On a higher level, this fact is also true with countries. Back to the Cold War, countries with similar social system fell into two major categories: the capitalist west led by US and the socialist east led by USSR. By looking at a country's alliances, people could easily know what kind of country it was. On a lower level, people with similar social status or interests are more inclined to hang out together because their ways of life are subjected to similar factors (such as money and time) they share: housewives may become acquainted with housewives in the supermarkets; millionaires know their kindred spirits in a luxurious golf club. However, I still challenge the idea that we can really know about people by what kind of friends they have.

In the first place, the personalities of a person can be multifaceted and it is too simple to appraise him or her based on the friends he or she has. On different occasions, a person can behave totally differently; a seemingly serious person may act casually privately and vice versa and thus have totally different kinds of friends. Take my uncle Jeff for example. My uncle Jeff is a professor in a top university and he has a lot of friends in academic circle. From this fact, many people may judge that Jeff is a martinet, like many of the cynics living in the ivory tower. However, privately, he is a big fan of comic books and also has a bunch of "fanzine" friends who are usually dressed in costumes.

Secondly, people with different social status may also end up being close friends for various reasons. Thus, the information about them we get by looking at their friends may not be accurate. In the famous sitcom "Friends", 6 people of different social background and distinctive characteristics become closely related. We may never know who Joey Tribbiani, a broke actor, is by looking at his friend Ross Geller, a paleontologist. Thus, it is somewhat naïve to say that knowing a person's friends can help us really know a person.

I concede that great minds and humble minds both think alike but it is also true that "the great" can sometimes be "humble" and the belief that knowing a person's friends is knowing a person is not tenable.

## 24

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Working at home using computers or telephones is better than working in the office.**

As human society has developed, methods of working have evolved for increasing efficiency. Today, many people maintain that the traditional mode of working in an office does not fit the demands of modern life. Many people prefer working at home using computers and telephones. However, working in an office has irreplaceable functions and definite merits.

First, working in an office benefits people by allowing them to focus their energy. The environment in which people perform activities is important. For example, studying is often most efficient when it occurs in class, running is often faster on an athletic track, and driving is more rapid on a highway. Similarly, work tends to be more efficient and professional in an office. People typically feel that they should do work when they are in an office surrounded by colleagues. In contrast, when working at home, people experience less pressure to perform. The environment of home makes people more relaxed, thereby reducing the efficiency of work.

Second, working in an office makes communication among coworkers more personal. Communication is a significant aspect of working. By communicating in person at work, one can form relationships and receive important information. Relationships and information are crucial to a person's career. When interacting face to face in an office, people have opportunities to gain critical information about their trade and market that they would not have if they worked at home.

Moreover, working in an office is convenient and can cut down on unnecessary expenses. An office has a full set of working accommodations. Workers can use any appliance they need in an office, whereas if they work in home, they may have to buy their own equipment. In this way, working at home wastes money and resources. Furthermore, professionals in some fields cannot buy their own equipment. For example, doctors cannot buy all the tools they need. Therefore, working in an office is convenient.

It cannot be denied that working at home has certain advantages, such as developing fast and unlimited in scope. However, compared with working in an office, it has more drawbacks.



25

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The best way to improve the quality of education in a country is to increase teachers' salaries.**

Education plays an essential role in the development of a country. In the advancement of a society, the enhancement of educational quality is crucial. Some maintain that the most efficient method of improving education is to raise teachers' salaries; others disagree with this opinion. I hold the view that teachers' salaries are significant because teachers play the most important part in the process of education. Students' knowledge of their subjects from primary school to university can be improved only if it is possible to motivate teachers.

High salaries satisfy teachers and inspire them in their work. A few days ago, in my hometown, teachers from a primary school went on strike, forcing students to gather on a bridge and creating trouble for traffic. The main cause of the strike was the low salaries teachers receive. Teachers have stated that their income is not high enough for them to afford the expenses of daily life. This example illustrates the importance of teachers' salaries. Teachers, like all normal people, desire higher incomes.

Additionally, high salaries would motivate teachers to pay more attention to teaching. Money is the most efficient means of encouraging people to work hard and contribute to their organizations. With high salaries, teachers would see their work as more valuable and feel more passionate. Some high schools have inspired teachers to cultivate more excellent students by increasing teachers' bonuses when students do well on an exam or receive awards in a specific field. In this way, all teachers can be motivated to try their best to foster outstanding students, which is the ultimate purpose of education.

Finally, we should never ignore the attraction of money for talented people. A job with a high salary will be desired by numerous people; higher salaries would mean more candidates for the position of teacher. For a high salary, highly qualified people would give up their present jobs to work as educators.

Only by increasing teachers' salaries is it possible to improve education in a country. Money is the most powerful tool to inspire teachers' passion.

26

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Two people can still become good friends if one of them has more money than the other one does.**

The most important thing about friendship is that you feel good around the other person. A good friend is someone you feel completely comfortable around; someone you can trust and relate to. I therefore disagree that two people could become good friends even if one had more money than the other because financial differences would inevitably create some tension or uneasiness between the two people. This would probably not go so far as to prevent them from becoming friends, but it would prevent them from becoming good friends.

First of all, tensions, whether big or small, would inevitably arise between friends from different financial backgrounds. If you had less money than your friend you might feel envious of what

they had and feel inferior because your friend was more successful than you. This might affect your self esteem. On the other hand, if you had more money than your friend you would worry about upsetting or offending them by speaking about a new expensive purchase or a promotion with a higher salary. It would also restrict the activities you were able to do together. For example, if you had a high salary you may be used to a lifestyle where travelling and eating at expensive restaurants was the norm, but if you had a friend that couldn't afford to do these things this could be restricting and maybe even frustrating. These kinds of feelings wouldn't allow either to feel completely comfortable around the other and might prevent them from feeling good in the others presence. It would consequently become an obstacle to the two becoming good friends.

Secondly, having these different lifestyles would make it harder for the two people to relate to each other. To take an extreme case as an example, a poorer person might worry about how they were going to pay the mortgage and buy food, whereas the richer person might worry about whether to buy a Mercedes or a Ferrari. If these two were to try to become friends, neither would ever fully understand the others problems or lifestyle, which would prevent them from truly getting to know one other. Not only that, but if the poorer friend is having financial trouble the richer friend, might feel obligated to lend money to the poorer. If the friend continued to ask for money, the wealthier friend may begin to feel exploited and begin to distrust their friend. On the other hand, the poorer friend may start to feel indebted or guilty about borrowing money. Either way the unequal financial status would put a strain on the relationship that would prevent them from confiding in one another.

Overall, money is very important in modern society. It becomes a part of who we are in terms of the hobbies we enjoy, the places we like to eat or the things we buy. A friend that couldn't share your hobbies, relate to your lifestyle or sympathise with your problems would be an unlikely friend as neither would feel completely comfortable in the other's company. It is therefore impossible for two such people to become good friends.

## 27

**Which kind of universities do you prefer, universities whose graduates can find good jobs or universities where there are famous professors?**

The main reason students attend university is in order to improve their job prospects, and today there are more university graduates competing for jobs than ever before. It is therefore important to choose a university where graduating students are likely to find a good job. This means choosing a highly regarded university where the students achieve good results. A university with famous professors by no means guarantees either of these, and I would therefore prefer the former.

A universities reputation is often an important factor in terms of differentiating yourself from other graduates, since employers will give students from better universities preference over other graduates with similar qualifications. Some might argue that universities with famous professors also have good reputations through their association with these professors. However, a university's reputation is based more on the results and achievements of its students rather than the abilities of its professors.

It could be argued that famous professors are better teachers, who help their students attain good results. However, professors are usually made famous for their research rather than their teaching abilities. As a result, these professors may have no real talent for communicating with, or teaching, their students. Indeed, it is more likely that a professor who becomes famous will prioritize his research over his students, whereas a professor who is not famous would have more time to devote to the students. Finally, even if we were to assume that famous professors were better teachers, students who attend a university with famous professors would not necessarily come into contact with them. After all, even if these professors taught in the same department as you, they might not be teaching the modules you were interested in, or their course might be full. Therefore, famous professors by no means guarantee good results, and the students with the best qualifications will have the best chance of getting a good job. Accordingly, it is important to attend a university which prioritises this over the research of its professors.

At the end of the day, we live in a world with serious economic problems where a high percentage of graduates cannot find jobs, so personally I would choose a university which offers me the best chance of finding a good job. Indeed, the benefits of going to a university with famous professors are few and far between in comparison.

**28**

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Teachers had a greater influence on young people in the past than they do today.**

Teachers play an important role in a student's life. They serve as role models and mentors to students. The role of a teacher in students' lives has not changed much. Monday through Friday, students still go to school and spend a large amount of time interacting with their teachers. Teachers today, as in the past, continue to make a significant impact on students' lives.

First, the role of a teacher has gone largely unchanged for at least the past 60 years. Maybe a few classroom procedures have been altered and textbooks have of course been updated, but in general school schedules and the basic classes offered have not drastically changed. If schooling systems had adopted a radically different approach to education, I would say that teachers' roles might be different. This has not happened, and therefore I think the amount of influence a teacher has on a student has not altered much.

Some might argue that technology has created a disconnection between teachers and students, but I think technology has only made the connection stronger. Technology has helped improve teachers' lessons and enables teachers to reach out to students even more. Using technological tools like SmartBoards help make teachers' lessons more effective, possibly making more students interested in school. Email is also something that helps teachers develop a stronger relationship with their students. If a student has a problem, they can easily communicate with their teachers. Technology has probably increased the influence of teachers.

Finally, the role of a teacher is to help guide his or her students. Teaching comes with many responsibilities, not just the responsibility of teaching lessons. Next to their parents,

teachers probably play the largest role in influencing students' future. I still remember my seventh grade history teacher. She is the one who inspired me to study history in college. Her lessons literally brought history to life. There may be some teachers who just stuff their students' heads with boring facts, but there will always be those teachers who are able to inspire a deep thirst for knowledge in their students. These special teachers will always be around. They are a constant.

To say that teachers had greater influence on their students in the past is false. The general system of education has not changed drastically enough to change the role of the teacher significantly. In addition technology has probably helped teachers make a larger impact on their students. The call for a teacher to be a role model and mentor has also not changed. Teachers will always play an influential role in their students' lives.

## 29

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? If a student is having difficulty studying a course, it is better for the student to turn to a friend who is good at this course than to turn to his/her teacher for help.**

There are often times in our academic lives when we have difficulties with a certain course, like a hard math problem or a challenging essay assignment. Unlike a few hard-working students who are always independent problem-solvers, most students would immediately turn to someone who is better qualified for help – a friend who is good at this subject, or more directly, the teacher himself/herself, although sometimes it is hard to choose between the two, as one is not necessarily better than the other.

Turning to a friend for help is seemingly the more convenient option of two, especially if you live in a dorm room, because you can just turn around and say to your friend “Hey, could you help me with this?” Your friend might not know everything about this subject or is not very good at explaining ideas, but you will always have plenty of opportunities to approach your friend for further clarification. Another important benefit of asking a friend for help is that this friend may have encountered the same or similar problems before so the friend's previous experience of handling such problem becomes the most valuable lesson you can learn from in order to solve your present problem.

However, making an appointment with the professor and asking for his or her help could also be a smart option, because obviously no one can explain the solution to a problem better than someone who has personally "invented" the problem. And as trained teachers they know how to clarify ideas and concepts in ways that are easy to understand and entirely relevant to the core of the question. Some smart students in this process might even figure out what important points the professor is paying special attention to or is implying, which would probably help the student study for tests more effectively. That's why I always bother my teacher with all sorts of questions right before the final exam.

Personally, I think there is no need to choose one or the other. The student can always try the option that looks more suitable from the first sight. As we all know sometimes things are not what they seem at first, so if either does not work one can always go for the second option.

Luckily in this case options are not mutually exclusive – the students can always turn to both friends and teachers for help.

**30**

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Compared with people who live in urban areas, those who live in rural areas can take better care of their families.**

Agree

People who live in rural areas are not as busy as people who live in urban areas, so they can spare more time to take care of their family members.

Compared with people who live urban areas, those who live in rural areas often live close to their family members and so they can visit and take care of each other more often.

People in rural areas generally lead healthier lifestyles than their counterparts in cities, and are more likely to encourage their family members to lead such a healthy lifestyle.

**31**

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Parents should allow children to make mistakes and let them learn from their own mistakes.**

It is difficult for a parent to sit back and allow their child to make a mistake. Most parents go out of their way to protect their children from everything from bumps and bruises to emotional upset. However, at some point part of being a good parent is letting go and watching them move through unfamiliar territory and make mistakes. No matter how much we want to help our kids, they need to have the freedom to make mistakes and learn from them.

Trials and errors can be the greatest lessons. Children experience what it feels like to do stupid things so they learn that making poor decisions leads to things not turning out well for them. These experiences will leave a lasting impression on children and they will learn to consistently make good decisions and avoid making the same mistakes. When I was studying in high school, one day I forgot to bring my homework to school and. I needed it in order to pass this class. So I called, my mom to bring me my homework, but my mom said I'm sorry you forgot your homework. but that is your responsibility." I failed that class, but I learned a lesson, and since then I always wrote down any important things I need to put in my schoolbag in case I forget.

In addition, perhaps the best way to free children's creativity is to ask them to stop being afraid of making mistakes. "Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new." The great inventor Albert Einstein said. Indeed, what mistakes do is offer us the opportunity to explore beyond where we thought we were going – they introduce that rare element of 'chance' into our work. So if a son comes to his dad with an apparently unpractical "science project", just let him do it and allow him to make a mess, instead of warning him against the risk of making mistakes, because there is a chance that a series of mistakes or failures may eventually lead to a bright and creative young scientist.

In conclusion, if we want our children to develop a sense of responsibility, make good choices and become more daring and creative, we have to let go and allow them to make mistakes. After all, parents cannot protect their kids forever; eventually children need to learn to live their own lives.

### 32

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Competition between friends always has a negative effect on their friendship.**

Humans are obsessed with competition. We seem able to turn nearly anything into a contest. Although it is not a negative concept, it becomes problematic when we fail to keep it in perspective. We do not benefit if rivalry erodes into antagonism, battle, or struggle. However, it can play a healthy role in the relationship between friends if used wisely. Competition in a friendship can push us to be our personal best, teach us to withstand pressure, and build our character.

Friends in a healthy rivalry push each other to be the best they can be. In the Olympics, for example, a country sends an entire team to compete in sports like track, swimming, or gymnastics. Often, two or more individuals may have to compete against each other in the same event. They have been training and competing together for years, and making friendships with each other. They know they must push each other to excel while also trying to win.

A friend who deliberately provokes or challenges us in competition can strengthen our resolve. Pressure is a natural byproduct of competition. A friend's remarks can test our limitations, resolve, and resilience. Pressure shows us we can do more than we thought possible. It demonstrates how far we are willing to go without quitting. If prolonged or intense, pressure teaches us that if we fail we can try again. When a friend is the one challenging us, it prepares us to endure pressure in other situations.

Competition in a friendship can help us grow in character. If a friend has more things, wins more often, is more popular, or appears more fortunate, how do we feel inside? Competition gives us an opportunity to examine our personal values. Do we feel joy for others' successes or jealousy? Do we congratulate them or make excuses for ourselves? If we are the ones on top, do we brag and show off, or are we compassionate and grateful? How we respond to the outcome of competition with a friend can show us who we are.

Rivalry can strengthen a relationship if both people agree to value the friendship more than the competition. Each must know that no matter the outcome of the contest, the friendship will survive. Our connections will be stronger and we will be better individuals, when we embrace the challenges of competition in the context of camaraderie.

### 33

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? It is much easier for people to achieve success without their family members' help now than in the past.**

In the past, people had to rely more heavily on family to gain an advantage in the job market. If your father worked in a company, maybe you could get an entry level position there. If your mother owned a small business, you could be next in line to run it. These are still valuable connections, but they're no longer your only options. Today, you can make connections, create opportunities, and find funding all online.

The Internet offers almost unlimited ways for young entrepreneurs to succeed. Groups of like-minded people from around the globe can work on commercial or social projects. "Web publishing, affiliate marketing, creating an online store, and offering consulting services are just a few of several ways to make money. Teaching others online how to do these things could be the biggest money maker of them all. A great idea, a little ingenuity, and a lot of hard work can help you achieve success independently.

Traditionally, starting a business meant first asking family for money. Now people can turn to crowd funding to finance their dreams. Crowd funding sites like Kickstarter, Crowdfunder and Indiegogo fund creative projects and business start-ups. It's possible to raise serious money for your ideas. One young New York City woman created an open source initiative on the Internet for her homemade hydroponics window garden. Three years later, she raised over \$100,000 through Kickstarter to manufacture it. You can even start a blog on "WordPress, or a store on Easy or Cafe Press for free.

Social networking has replaced a small circle of family connections with a wide and varied network of associations. Announce to fifteen hundred Twitter followers simultaneously that you just finished culinary school. Tell your five hundred Facebook friends that your band is playing at a local club Saturday night. Put your freelance writing resume on LinkedIn. Collaborate on a new project with fellow gamers in a Google+ hangout. The possibilities for making meaningful and rewarding connections are endless.

It is a lot easier to independently create your own success than it has been in the past. The Internet makes it possible for nearly anyone to launch a profitable career. Now, you can find the connections, opportunities, and funding online to make your dreams a reality. The Internet can never replace the love and support of your family, or your own vision and hard work, but it can make things easier.

### 34

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Colleges or Universities should offer more courses to prepare students for the future before they start working.**

I wholeheartedly agree with the statement because I believe universities and colleges do not adequately prepare students for the world of work. Weixin:laoxikou. University courses only prepare students by teaching them about their chosen degree subject. This provides students with the qualifications needed for the future, but does not prepare them in other important areas such as making career choices, job applications and other skills they might need in the workplace.

Universities should offer more courses that allow students to explore what kinds of jobs they are best suited to in terms of their skills and personality. They should also provide more

information about what jobs are related to their degree. It is because of this lack of preparation that students either graduate with no idea of what kind of job they would like to do, or end up doing a job that they actually have no interest in.

It is also important to provide students with information on job hunting including applications and interviews, but also salary negotiation. Many students graduate unaware of the best methods of searching for a job or how to negotiate an appropriate salary. There should therefore be courses that inform students about this and offer advice that will help to single them out from the other applicants, as well as ensure that they obtain a fair wage from their employer.

University courses should also make students more aware of the importance of transferable skills in the workplace and help them to build on them. This includes skills like teamwork, networking and time management. While the university does prepare students to some extent with these skills, it does not prepare them for the different emphasis that is placed on them in the workplace. For example, while courses may occasionally utilise teamwork skills for group activities in class, it does not prepare students for the daily necessity of working with and obtaining information from your colleagues in order to complete a task.

Therefore, universities should provide students with more career direction before they leave university to ensure students are happy in their chosen career. It should also equip them with the skills they will need to do the job in order to decrease the stress of making the transition from full time education to working life.

### 35

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? People who have learned many different skills are more likely to succeed than those who focus on learning only one skill.**

Success, however it's defined, requires action, and deciding on the appropriate action to take requires skills. Some of these skills are taught in school, some are taught on the job, and others we learn from our general life experience. In order to be truly successful, a person needs to possess different types of skills rather than relying on only one skill.

It can be argued that possessing one particular skill, especially if it is a highly professional one, can guarantee a stable, highly rewarding and therefore successful career. Examples of these skills may include artistic skills such as painting or sculpting, a sports skill such as swimming or playing tennis, or a specialized skill such as watch making or even flying an airplane. In these cases, the person has focused on learning one skill long enough to become an expert in his field and no one can challenge or replace him/her, which is largely considered to be a sign of great success.

However, most of the ordinary people in the world are not experts in any field. They are just common people in an ordinary profession. For them, to become successful does not rely on one specialized skill, but a combination of different skills, and the more skills they have learned, the more likely they are to succeed. On the top of the essential skill list is numeracy skills. This involves the ability to work with figures, to calculate sums quickly, make fairly accurate estimates and to understand things like compound interest and basic statistics.



Socializing skills are also important because a large social network not only creates ties to a body of people but also creates a network of relationships, which allows access to a large pool of resources and opportunities. Other skills such as decision making, critical thinking as well as public speaking are also important general skills that will help anyone to get ahead in practically any field.

We live in a diverse world and consequently it is necessary for a person to have a range of different skills in order to achieve success. We use these skills, consciously or unconsciously, to help us solve the problems we face in our life or at work and to lead us towards success.

**36**

**Which way do you think is the best for a student to make new friends? 1. joining a sports team 2. participating in community activities 3. traveling**

Friendship is an important aspect of life at all stages, but particularly so for young people. In youth, people forge friendships that have the potential to last a lifetime. Even though childhood friends are often separated as adults by distance and the demands of life, they nonetheless maintain a special bond with the friends they had when they were young. There are many ways for young people to make friends. One way is by participating in some sort of community activity. Another way is to travel and meet many different kinds of people. One particularly effective way to make friends, however, is by joining a sports team. By playing sports, one can meet a variety of people, work cooperatively with them, and develop the kind of rapport that comes from struggling to achieve success.

By joining a sports team, one is sure to meet a broad range of people who share similar interests. Depending upon the type of team, one might meet dozens of new people, many of whom could be potential friends. In order to develop friendships, people must have regular contact with each other. Sports teams generally meet several times a week, thereby giving people ample opportunities to get to know one another.

"When teams get together to practice, team members must learn to cooperate with each other. Otherwise, the team will not function effectively. Cooperation skills are vitally important when playing on a team, and they are equally important when developing friendships. Friends who do not learn to cooperate with each other will not remain friends for long. Thus, by learning to cooperate on a sports team, people practice skills that will serve them well when forging friendships.

When playing sports, one develops a special rapport with other team members that comes from the struggle of competition. Sports games are often very intense, with each team member giving all of his or her energy towards winning the game. In the process of working together to gain a favorable outcome, team members develop a kind of cohesion that is conducive to forming lasting friendships.

While there are certainly many ways of making friends, playing sports is among the most effective. One can meet many new people, have regular contact with them, and develop the kinds positive and constructive relationships that come from working together to accomplish a common goal. In doing so, one has the potential to make lasting friendships that will be of great value throughout life.

37

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? It is easier for people to become well-educated now than in the past.**

It is the information age. If you have a computer and an Internet connection, you have all the information in the world at your fingertips. That should mean it is easier than ever to become well-educated. Sadly, this is not true. Institutionalized education has failed to deliver, socio-economic barriers have not been overcome, and only one definition of “well-educated” prevails in the developed world.

Institutionalized education around the world is failing students with its promises of a better life. The two most important skills that students learn in school are memorizing facts and taking standardized tests. There are no jobs that demand these two skills. Employers want employees who can quickly understand new information and immediately apply it to solve real problems or create new opportunities. This system has created millions of unemployed college graduates around the world.

There continues to be disparity in education access between students from well-off families and students from impoverished families. Those who already have substantial assets are in a better position to take advantage of educational resources like private schools, school readiness programs, tutors, and college. For example, when children from a non-cash agricultural economy where nobody gets rich but nobody starves are put into a competitive system of success and failure, a few lives may get better, but most will get worse.

We need to change our definition of well-educated. Developed nations assume cultural superiority by creating education aid projects, which overtly aim to help children escape to a better life. In a global society, wealth and poverty and knowledge and ignorance need to be redefined. We need to acknowledge the role of institutionalized education in the destruction of traditional sustainable agricultural and ecological knowledge, in the breakup of extended families and communities, and in the devaluation of ancient spiritual traditions.

In conclusion, we should develop an education system that is not structured on competition with winners and losers, and we should redefine what it means to be well-educated. When we have respect for all learning, when every community's knowledge is accepted as valid, that is when we can claim that it is easy to be well-educated.

38

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Students should spend at least one year working or travelling before they go to the university.**

It is quite common these days for young people in many countries to have a break from studying after graduating from high school. This trend is not restricted to rich students who have the money to travel, but is also evident among poorer students who choose to work and become economically independent for a period of time. In my opinion, exposing oneself to

some experience in independent living will benefit students in many ways and therefore should be encouraged.

In the first place, students will be less hesitant in deciding what to major in as a university student after a period of work or travel in the real world. If they have worked one or two years, students may get to know what kind of knowledge or skills they need in order to have a decent job in the competitive society. Thus they know what they need to learn before entering university.

In the second place, some hands-on experience will help them better understand the courses offered in university. For example, a student of business administration will find his experience with a multinational company helpful to him in his study of the relevant courses. Unlike those who have never been to any business firm, he knows what a typical company is like and how it works.

Last but not least, some work before college years will make a student more independent. Nowadays high school students are generally well taken care of either by their parents or by teachers. This unfortunately leads to their being too dependent on the others, especially in times of difficulty. If they work with a company for some time, even on a part-time basis, they will become more independent. And this kind of independence shall contribute a lot to their success in university years.

A year away from school working or traveling may be just what is needed to give young people the life experience and confidence that will better prepare them for college. This short break should not be viewed as a waste of time. On the contrary, it is an excellent opportunity to discover and develop one's interests and talents and figure out long term goals. Some of the most important learning experiences in life are best acquired outside of school.

### 39

**Some people spend a lot of time watching sports programs on TV or following their favorite sports teams. Does this have a negative influence on the lives of these people?**

I don't think that watching sports or investing time in your favorite sports teams is a negative thing in a person's life. If anything, it can be pretty positive. Watching the games can be a bonding experience for families, the games and players can be inspiring, and following sports can make you feel more connected to your community.

For some families, watching sports games can really bring them together. Parents dress their babies up in little soccer jerseys. The whole family gathers around the TV on the weekends, watching football and cheering while they laugh and crunch on popcorn. Dad takes the kids to baseball games in the spring and gets them their own catcher's mitts on the way home. It's

important for parents to build fun, joyful memories with their children. And for some families, watching sports together is the perfect way to do that.

Watching sports frequently can also be inspiring. You start to hear more and more about the personal lives of the players and can't help but be impressed by what they have accomplished. There are many athletes who were always small for their age or were raised by a single parent or struggled in some way. But when you see them, healthy and thriving and playing on a professional sports team at such a young age, you just want to smile. These are people who worked hard and made something of their lives. And of course, their sheer athletic ability is also inspiring! The way they run, leap, and move so quickly and skillfully just makes you want to be better yourself.

Additionally, being a sports fan can make you more tuned-in to your community. Just seeing someone at the grocery store wearing the colors of your local sports team can make you feel more warm toward them, like you have something in common. Go to a bar to watch a game and you'll feel the palpable energy and excitement of being a crowd, everyone cheering together. Suddenly a win by your local team is a win for your *city*, and that makes you feel overwhelming good will toward the people *in* your city.

In conclusion, I think being a definite sports fan is not a negative thing at all. It gives families fun and memorable activities to do together, sports and athletes can be inspiring, and they can help bring communities together.

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**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? It is better to relax by watching a movie or reading a book than doing physical exercises.**

For many years, research has shown that doing exercises helps to alleviate a number of health complications, leading to a healthy body, soul and mind. However, some people use all excuses to justify reasons as to why they lead a sedentary life. This essay seeks to look at benefits of physical activities as opposed to reading a book or watching television.

Doing exercises offers many benefits to one's physiological processes. As opposed to watching TV or reading a book where energy expenditure is low, physical exercises aid in efficient blood flow and cardiovascular fitness. On the contrary, lack of exercises often leads to a number of health problems such as high blood pressure, heart diseases and obesity. To be able to truly relax one must possess a healthy body, and this has to be achieved by healthier activities like jogging, fitness training, or mountain climbing, rather than sitting in a chair all day long.

Moreover, exercises help people utilize their leisure time more constructively. People gain motor skills and other relevant traits like strength, flexibility and coordination. On the other hand, some books and programs on television end up making the viewers imitate bad habits which they see from the actors or read in the books. Since these groups of people lack time to release their stress, the chances of them developing bad habits is very high compared to those who engage in sports, games and exercises.

Finally, some forms of exercises encourage socialization and team building, which is a much greater way to relax than being alone. Examples of these exercises include many of the collective sports people often do such as soccer and basketball. In these sports, people meet and play as a team, share their happiness and excitement with each other and as a result achieve much higher levels of enjoyment and satisfaction. By contrast, watching TV or reading a book is often solitary experience, involving little interaction with others, which is boring.

In a nutshell, doing exercises is much more beneficial than watching television or reading a book. Our bodies require regular exercises to make us remain active and healthy. A fit person is more productive in the workplace since he/she can effectively accomplish responsibilities, and can also be more relaxed after work because he/she is more actively involved with the nature or other people around him/her.

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**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Parents should set strict rules to their children if they want them to succeed in the future.**

I disagree with this. Although parents do need to discipline and set boundaries with their kids in a general way, I don't think they need to have a strict set of rules in place to lead them to success. Children respond better to positive encouragement. Super strict rules can be kind of random and don't help much in a child's upbringing. Additionally, children can begin to resent parents who are very strict and act out in harmful ways as they get older.

The notion that children will only work hard and do well in school if their parents are really strict with them is not always true. In fact, kids who constantly have parents nagging them and forcing them to study for hours every day may just crumble under the pressure instead. They don't feel like success is within their grasp; they feel like miserable failures who can't even please their own parents. A calmer approach, like letting the children know that they are smart and can accomplish anything they set their mind to, may yield better results. The kids will want to do their homework because they are inspired and encouraged, not because they are scared.

It also seems that extremely strict parents can set rules in place that are somewhat random. "Only an hour of television a week!" But isn't television a nice way for kids to relax, briefly, after a long day at school? "Do your homework at your desk in the den!" Maybe a change of rooms would be different enough to revitalize a bored student. Or maybe even let him or her study outside? Such strict rules don't seem to actually help much. They just make everything needlessly complicated. A little spontaneity, a little silliness can make everything run smoother and better. There can still be rules in place, but they don't need to be harsh and they don't need to be etched in stone.

Finally, it is common that whenever parents are too extreme in a certain direction, their children will rebel and go in the complete opposite direction. In the case of really strict parents, their kids can become lethargic, angry, depressed, or worse. Forget going to college; they might even drop out of high school just to escape the constant scrutiny. There is absolutely such a thing as pushing kids too hard.

That's why I think that parents should not push their kids to succeed in the future by inflicting strict rules upon them. Kind and positive encouragement works better, strict rules can be needlessly complicated and unhelpful, and kids can become very unhappy when they get older as a result of the regulated home they grew up in.