1. This question is related to 2A, “Finding inspiration in the past”. Artemisinin is a chemical compound that is effective against malaria. Before 1972, there is no effective way to extract it from a plant named sweet wormwood. However, a scientist Tu Youyou, remembered one of the recipes she copied to her notebook. It is an ancient Chinese medicine formula that contains the method of extracting artemisinin. After the breakthrough and further research, she obtained a Nobel Prize. Without the notebook containing the crucial recipe, she might not discover the method of extracting the chemical compound that can save lives. Do you have any experience about a time that a piece of note you took helped you in an unimaginable way?

I remembered once when I was doing a project about networking. The method that I was using has a critical performance issue in some circumstances. Then I remembered that I copied an example implementation of a different method to my notes. After considering the effectiveness of using this new method, I applied it and get good results.

1. This question is related to 2B, “Features and benefits”. In the article “A New Way to Innovate”, the author introduces us to a new concept called “reverse innovation”. We can see that modern innovations often come from past inspirations instead of creative ideas that are completely original. Do you think modern innovations rely too much on these past inspirations, or are we entering a new era of creativity?

I think we rely too much on the past. Let’s take smart phones for example. They were invented over a decade ago, and we still use them now. Obviously, there are problems about smart phones such as the size of the screen, making it not optimal for a device we use every day, and it should be replaced by better ideas. There are newer attempts, but none of them are refined to be convenient for most people. Now we are stuck on this cycle that companies use old creations without the courage to invent.