



2022 年第二季度口语机经库
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学雅思
就上新东方在线」

◆ Topic Pool——Part One (2022.05-08)

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Concentration	Public parks/gardens	New places	Headphones	

◆ 注：红色为必备话题；蓝色为本季新题；黑色为保留旧题。

Study

1. Do you work or are you a student?

I'm a student at Tsinghua University in Beijing.

I'm a student, and I'm a freshman in Tsinghua University.

I'm a student, a high school student.

2. What subject are you studying?

I'm studying for a Master's degree in Tsinghua University, specializing in the field of Math Studies.

3. Why did you choose that subject?

I chose math because I liked it in high school. I was always strong in math and science, so it seemed like a natural progression. Also, I did some research on career opportunities, and it seemed to be a subject with a promising future.

4. What would you like to do in the future?

I would love to be a teacher. Most of the women in my family are teachers, they have a huge impact on my life. I think it is wonderful to get to change people's lives by what I say or do on the stage. It requires a person to be responsible and caring, and I want to be such a person.

5. What are the most popular subjects in China?

It's hard to say nowadays. You know, due to the globalization, our country is much more developed than ever. Every subject has something to offer to the society.

Students just choose their subjects based on what they are interested in, which then, in turn, can become a trend.

6. Do you think it's important to choose a subject you like?

Definitely! I think interest is the best motivator, if I choose something I'm keen on, I will be willing to sacrifice my leisure time because it is a worthwhile sacrifice to me. In addition, when I face some difficulties, I will do my best to overcome the problems. Quitting in the middle will never be an option. We should consider carefully our choice from the start, rather than carelessly choosing the wrong path, then regretting it.

7. Are you looking forward to working?

I have been wanting to work full time, that's for sure. I can now imagine myself waking up early in the morning, getting my business attire on and sitting behind my office desk. I wonder how it feels to work with other professionals and with the boss always around... It could be stressful but interesting, I guess. The best part I would say would be to finally receive a salary and spend my own money. I would not have to bother my parents then. But, like most things in life, it really depends on what the job is and whether the environment is positive or not.

8. Do you like your subject? (Why? / Why not?)

Honestly, I don't. I am halfway through my college career. But reality struck me when the material we learned in class was much more difficult and the assignments weren't fun. I'm thinking about changing my own major now.

9. Do you prefer to study in the mornings or in the afternoons?

I am not a morning person, I'm afraid. But to be honest, studying in the afternoon is even worse. I get really sleepy from one to four in the afternoon. So, actually, my brain is at its best in the evening. It works better then. I can stay sharp even until very late at night.

10. Is your subject interesting to you?

Absolutely. I find computer science really stimulating. Imagine creating something useful just using codes and numbers. It requires a good level of imagination and quite a good level of number skills, critical thinking and logic skills as well as a keen ability to solve problems.

11. Is there any kind of technology you can use in study?

For studying I use a computer and my phone. I often download research papers and read them on my phone and make notes onto the notes section of my phone too. I use my computer to actually write essays and do other homework tasks.

(1. What work do you do?

I am a teacher at a high school. I started there in Jan 2015 after graduating from

college. I would say it is a pretty challenging job.

2. Why did you choose to do that type of job?

Teaching is my passion. I don't view my career as a "job" per say. I see it more as my calling in life. It is my life's purpose.

3. Do you like your job?

Definitely! I enjoy the variety and special projects where I can take ownership of the final product. My job provides me with both, so yes, it is a good job and I find it very rewarding.

I'm not interested in my job... because it is so mundane and repetitive, two traits I despise and try to stay away from. I hope to find a better job that challenges me to aspire to new heights.

4. Do you miss being a student?

I definitely do! Sometimes I just wonder what would have happened if I had studied harder when I was in university. I just miss the days when I had nothing to worry about but the exams. Now, all the pressure from work and family is difficult to deal with.

5. Is it very interesting?

Most of the time, yes! The daily challenges from new projects provide constant opportunities to learn new things and to some extent re-invent myself. Every day is unique. My colleagues provide me with support but also healthy competition. I find my job most interesting when I am challenged to reach outside of my comfort zone.

6. Is there any kind of technology you use at work?)

I use mainly a laptop computer and my phone at work. Sometimes I also use a photocopier scanner, and a video camera if I'm making short promotional videos with my company. But mainly, I just use a computer.

7. Can you manage your time well when you work?

Yes, I am a project manager in my office, so I am quite good at managing my time and the other people's time on the team. I've worked as an IT manager for several years now.

8. Who helps you most at work?

My team members – I have a great team and they are all hardworking, supportive, smart and attentive to the needs of others and the project goals.

Hometown

1. Has your hometown changed much these years?

Absolutely! Take traffic as an example, the most common transport facility used to be

buses, it could be really crowded sometimes since people didn't have any other options. However, today, BRT and subway systems have made people's lives easier than ever.

2. Is that a big city or a small place?

This city is so huge. I often get lost here. Like the other day, I travelled to a new neighborhood that had this restaurant people were raving about. I made a wrong turn and it took me 20 minutes to figure out where I was.

3. How long have you been living here?

For about half my life, so that is about 10 years. I went to school here, and now I'm working in the same city. In fact, time has gone by really quickly because so there's so much to do here and I've been so active.

4. For you, what benefits are there living in a big city?

Well, first of all, there are a great number of opportunities for both education and job-hunting in big cities, which explains why people from small cities, towns and villages are flooding to big cities nowadays. Plus, the fact that cities offer more modern facilities and conveniences makes them even more attractive to people.

5. Is there anything you dislike about it?

Unfortunately, this city has a huge problem with pollution, especially air pollution. The air is so contaminated that we all have to wear masks every time we go out of the house. This problem has escalated to a serious level that it's been catching the attention of the international community. I hope that the government will be able to save this city before the problem gets worse.

6. What do you like most about your hometown?

What I love the most about it is the mystery. I mean there are so many places inside this city that I have yet to explore. I could spend years checking out every restaurant and attraction Beijing has to offer.

7. Where in your country do you live?

I live in Beijing. However, since the city is so big, it would take hours to even scratch the surface, but to sum it up, Beijing is the political and cultural heart, and one of the major economic centers of the world today.

Accommodation

1. Are the transport facilities in your city very good?

Honestly, I wish they were better. I have to walk 20 minutes to the bus stop, and the subway takes another 30 minutes when I get to work. My dream home is a house located right next to a bus stop or subway terminal.

2. Which room does your family spend most of the time in?

My family loves to stay in the living room as this is the only place in the flat where we can do a lot of things together. We play board games, watch films and TV programs. We play cards sometimes and we spend time working on huge puzzles together.

3. Do you live in a house or a flat?

I live in a flat, and my flat is situated in a quiet little neighborhood on the north side of city. My parents first moved there in 2000 when they wanted to start a new life and raise a family.

4. Do you plan to live here for a long time?

Not really! I want to blaze my own trail and live in a place that forces me to reach out and meet new people. I was thinking about moving to Shanghai for a few days to gain a bit more cultural experience of the world.

5. Do you live alone or with your family?

I'm a student at the moment, and I live with my parents. Actually I quite like it, because my mother is the best cook that I know - it's always wonderful to have a tasty meal after a day of school work. We also talk about our days with each other while we're enjoying dinner, it just feels good.

6. How long have you lived there?

I've lived there for three years and I really love my place. Since it's on the 11th floor, it's well ventilated and there is plenty of sunshine. I love to sink into the soft sofa to watch TV and eat snacks. There's a large shopping centre within 5 minutes' walk so it's very convenient for me to go shopping, watch movies and eat out. I wish it was my apartment.

7. What do you usually do in your house/flat/room?

At weekends, I spend most of my time studying and sleeping in my room. On weekdays, I spend time in the kitchen, baking some cakes or sweet stuff for my mother. Sometimes, we watch films in the living room. On Sundays, we usually clean the house and do some laundry.

8. Which is your favourite room in your home?

I think it must be my bedroom. My bedroom is not that big but quite neat. There are some posters of Kobe Bryant on the wall because he is my favorite basketball player. My room is kind of a private space for me - I usually play some video games, do my homework and play the guitar in it.

9. What's the difference between where you are living now and where you lived in the past? (If you want to say you have not lived elsewhere)

I have not moved home at all. I have lived in the same flat since I was born. I love our small place. I have a lot of good memories here, and I treasure them. I'd happily stay

here for many more years?

10. What can you see when you look out the window of your room?

I can see the whole community from my window. In the morning, people are going to school or work, everyone is in a hurry. However, in the evening, it is not that fast-paced anymore. I can see parents taking a walk after dinner and children playing games in the neighborhood.

11. Would you be willing to live in the countryside in the future?

In the future, probably. There is a peacefulness I enjoy when visiting the countryside. People there are friendly and always willing to start a conversation. I think when I retire, living in the countryside is a nice option to me.

Talents

1. Do you have a talent, or something you are good at?

I think I have a few talents, to be honest, but the one I am most proud of is my ability to draw. I'd say I am pretty amazing at drawing, actually. It's something I've always been good at – but I then started having art lessons about 5 years ago and became quite professional.

2. Do you think your talent can be useful for your future work?

That's a good question. Perhaps. Artists don't usually make that much money unless they are really popular and successful – so if I want to become rich, then it's certainly not so useful! However, in terms of career, I could focus on graphic design and illustration – I might be able to combine my talent with a fairly lucrative career that way.

3. Do you think people in your family have the same talent?

My father is an architect, in fact. And he is always sketching buildings as well as doing technical drawings. He's got a great eye for perspective and he introduced me to drawing when I was a child.

Feel bored

1. Do you often feel bored?

I rarely feel bored, actually. I'm always quite busy – I've got my studies, sporting activities and a fairly busy social calendar. I'm a very active person and I never seem to have time for all the things I want to do – so I've certainly no time to get bored.

2. What kinds of things would make you feel bored?

When I feel bored it's usually when I'm commuting and stuck in traffic. I find travelling by car quite frustrating in the big city, and it really affects my mood when there are big traffic jams. So, getting stuck in traffic or moving really slowly in traffic makes me feel both frustrated and bored.

3. What would you do if you feel bored?

If I feel bored I usually get quite annoyed, and that makes me want to talk to friends to get things off my chest. So, usually I will message my friends or give them a call and talk about my feelings, ask them about their day, gossip about daily life... things like this. This kind of thing usually relieves my boredom and frustration temporarily.

Meeting places

1. Where do you usually meet your friends?

I usually meet friends at places where we do sports together. I'm a really sporty person and I like to spend my free time playing basketball and tennis. These are my main hobbies. So, whenever I've got free time and my friends want to play, then we will meet at a local sports club where we have memberships, and play. Sometimes we meet in a café in a mall not far from home or a restaurant.

2. Do you think there are some places suitable for meeting others?

There are a lot of places suitable for meeting up with other people. I mean, it really depends on what kind of things you do – some people meet in bars, or cafés, others, like myself, always meet up at the gym or sports club. Others tend to meet at shopping malls... It really depends.

3. Have the meeting places changed now compared with the past?

I think today, especially in cities, people have a wider range of options of things to do and places to meet. There are more activities and entertainment facilities compared to the past, for example, so often people will meet at those places, according to their hobbies and interests.

Collect things

1. Do you collect anything?

I don't collect anything really. I used to collect small plastic figurines when I was a kid – characters from cartoons I watched, in fact. But now, I can't think of anything I collect... nothing really. My brother, however, collects football T-shirts!

2. Are there any things you keep from childhood?

I don't keep much from my childhood to be honest. We have moved house so many times, and always to fairly small flats, that I never really managed to keep or collect much. I have some old family photos and some books – that's about it.

3. Where do you usually keep things you collect?

Well... I don't actually collect anything, but if I were to collect things, I'd keep them in my room. That's what my sister does with her collection of soft toys – she keeps them in her room – some on her bed, carefully arranged, and some in the wardrobe.

Computers

1. In what conditions would you use a computer?

I usually use a computer for work. I used to use a computer for playing games and reading the news, too, but now I do these things on my phone and tablet – so, yes, I only use my computer for work really.

2. When was the first time you used a computer?

I first used a computer when I was in middle school. A friend of mine invited me round to his house and his father had one. I can't remember what type it was now, but it had some fun games. I was very excited about it at the time.

3. What will your life be like without computers?

Well, I can't imagine how I'd write essays and do my studies, but apart from that I think my life would be okay – I do everything else on my phone and tablet.

4. In what conditions would it be difficult for you to use a computer?

It would be hard for me to use a computer while on public transport, or in my grandmother's house in the countryside. You see, I work online mainly, and the internet is terrible in her village.

Watch

1. Do you wear a watch?

Yes, I wear a watch – I have a smart watch which I wear all the time. I use the watch to set calendar reminders, send short messages, make quick calls and make notes, as well as monitor my health stats and daily steps.

2. Have you ever got a watch as a gift?

Yes, the smart watch that I wear almost all the time – this was a gift from my uncle a few years ago.

3. Why do some people wear expensive watches?

Some people genuinely appreciate a fine, precision-made watch, and others enjoy the status symbol of having an expensive watch. Some people care about both!

Old buildings

1. Have you ever seen some old buildings in your city?

Yes, I've visited quite a few old buildings. I'm a big fan of history and so I enjoy going to the famous sights, but also when my family visit Chengdu to see us, I enjoy taking them to the most famous old examples of architecture and culture.

2. Do you think we should keep old buildings in cities?

We should always strive to preserve our history. History is an important and meaningful part of a country's culture and heritage and it's important to renovate and preserve old buildings.

3. Would you prefer living in an old building or a modern house?

I'd prefer to live in an old building, which has been modernized inside! So, I would like a bit of both! I like the charm of old buildings, but the functionality of modern living!

Sitting down

1. Where is your favorite place to sit?

My favorite place to sit is in the balcony of my home. I have a lot of plants there, a comfortable chair, a small bookshelf. I love my balcony and it's south-facing too, so it gets plenty of sunlight.

2. Do you always sit down for a long time?

I often sit down on my balcony and read or just let my thoughts drift off for a while. I enjoy sitting and resting for quite a long time. I'm not a social person, so in my free time I like to be alone sitting down.

3. Do you feel sleepy after you sit down for a while?

I feel a little sleepy maybe. It depends on whether I'm tired or not. Generally, I sleep quite regular hours, so I don't feel tired until bedtime.

Reading

1. When do you read books?

I usually read in the evenings, when I'm in bed relaxing before sleep. I read books on my phone most of the time, although I do enjoy reading physical, print books more, really. It's just that in my dorm it's not that convenient to turn the light on at night to read. The light of my phone screen is dimmer and more convenient.

2. How often do you buy books?

I read every night. It's almost like a ritual of mine. Even if I am studying a lot, I always read a novel or a story at night. I usually have a novel on the go, a romantic one, that I read bits of each night.

3. Have you ever read a novel that has been adapted into a film?

I have yes. I've read Jane Austin's *Pride and Prejudice*, some of the *Lord of the Rings*, and a few others I can't recall off-hand. I've read a few. I enjoy reading the novel first ideally, then watching the film.

4. Which one do you prefer, reading books or watching movies?

I think reading books. That's just my preference. I know that today most people prefer to watch films, but I have always been a book person. And it's part of my daily routine, to read in the evenings before sleep.

Advertisements

1. What kinds of advertisements do you watch?

I detest adverts and I get annoyed when they come on TV or on apps on my phone.

There are all kinds of adverts and I try to ignore them or skip them if I can. There are adverts for pretty much any product or service you can imagine.

2. Where can you see advertisements?

Online, on mobile apps, on websites, on the subway, in elevators. There are adverts pretty much everywhere in our lives where we are in commercial places, cities, malls, transport facilities, online, everywhere.

3. Have you ever bought something because of its advertisement?

I guess I have subconsciously. That's how advertising works, you get presented with ideas when you see adverts and then they affect the decisions you make. I recall buying lots of meal deals because of adverts I've seen online or in the elevator at work on screens.

4. Do you watch advertisements from the beginning to the end?

Usually not. As I said before, I try to ignore them or skip them. But If I'm standing in the elevator going to the 18th floor, and there is nothing else to look at, I find myself watching the adverts on the TV screens there, over and over again, so I guess I do watch some adverts from beginning to end. That's how the power of advertising works!

Evening time

1. Do you like morning or evening?

Personally, I prefer the morning than the evening. The mornings are the times when I really can focus on my studies the best and my concentration is at its peak. That's mainly because I am someone who sleeps early and wakes up early feeling very refreshed.

2. What do you usually do in the evening?

In the evenings I like to relax, basically. Just rest and listen to music on headphones, or watch a TV show or something like that. I have friends who always study in the evenings. Not me. I like to rest in the evenings. I don't even go out much.

3. Are there any differences between what you do in the evening now and what you did in the past?

Yes, most certainly. When I was a bit younger I would have a much more active social life in the evenings, and I also used to try to study in bed at night too. Now, I have a much more organized life. I always get up early, get things done in the morning and in the day, and rest at night.

The area you live in

1. Do you like the area that you live in now?

Yes, I like the area where I live. Since I have lived there for a long time it makes me feel comfortable. There is a saying: "Home is where the heart is". My family lives

there and we enjoy each other's company so my heart is there. I like the phrase from one old movie: "There's no place like home."

2. How has your area changed in recent years?

Some positive changes are that the pollution is getting better. It was a lot worse a few years ago. Recently, the government has made some changes to the factories nearby you see. This has had a positive effect on the air quality. Some negative changes are: first, there are too many public bikes such as OFO and Mobike. They clog the sidewalks and there isn't enough room for pedestrians to walk sometimes. Secondly, there are not enough taxis. It is very difficult to get a taxi if you are in a hurry or it is raining.

3. Do you know any famous people in your area?

In my district of my city, I don't know any famous people. I think famous people tend to live away from the crowds in China, in places where they will be left alone and not bothered by people or the press.

4. Where do you like to go in your area?

I like to go shopping and hang out with my friends. When the weather is nice, I like to go to the park and enjoy the nature. It makes me feel refreshed. When my friends go with me it is even better.

Websites

1. What kinds of websites do you usually use?

I use a number of websites very regularly. These are usually online shopping websites – two in particular. I buy a lot of things online – from clothes and shoes, to kitchen accessories and food and snacks.

2. What is your favorite website?

My favourite website is one I do not use that often. It's a website dedicated to trainers... to sneakers... you know, sporty shoes. I love trainers. So, when I need a new pair I always go to this particular website which has more unique styles and combinations of colours and designs.

3. Are there any changes about the websites you usually use?

Websites have recently become a lot more user-friendly, slicker, smoother, easier to use and more secure in terms of how they protect your personal data.

4. What kinds of websites are popular in your country?

Just like I mentioned, shopping websites. These are most certainly the most popular websites in my country. Everyone buys things online – it's convenient, reliable and you can buy pretty much anything you need from several online companies.

Taking photos

1. Do you like to take photographs?

I love to take photographs. Sometimes I will take up to 30 photos of exactly the same item, but in different modes, angles and settings. The real fun starts when I manipulate, crop, edit and Photoshop them. After many hours, I upload my selected ones to my Wechat moments.

2. Do you ever take photos of yourself?

Well, call me a narcissist but, I'm kind of obsessed with taking selfies. It is just the quickest way to show where I am, who I am with, what I am doing and how I am feeling. It would take a lot more time to describe that in texts.

3. What is your favorite family photo?

My favourite family photo is one with my whole family, my parents, grandparents from both sides, cousins and their neighbours, at my auntie and uncle's house in Ankang, in the countryside in Shanxi Province. The photo brings back great memories of the Spring Festival that we spent there on my uncle's farm outside the town. It was a fantastic occasion, and the last photo that we took featuring my 98-year-old grandmother before she died.

4. Do you want to improve your picture-taking skills?

I think I already take pretty good photos. I've always been into photos, and care a lot about portraits and getting a photo to look good and balanced. So, I don't think I need or want to improve really – I'm not aiming to be a professional photographer – I think I'm more than good enough for my needs!

Cinema

1. Did you usually go to the cinema when you were a child?

I didn't really no. I went occasionally with my sister, but not very often to be honest.

2. Do you often go to the cinema with your friends?

Nowadays I go to the cinema about once a month – there's a new cinema complex right near my home in a mall. It's a fantastic cinema and they have all the latest movies.

3. Do you still like the same kind of movie which you liked when you were a child?

Pretty much. I've always liked fun, romantic and lighthearted films. I still enjoy a lot of animations and cartoons too.

Art

1. Do you like art?

Yes, I love art. I like many different types of art, actually. I love traditional Chinese paintings and calligraphy, but I also really enjoy looking at western art, art from different periods in history, as well as abstract art, sculpture and even performance art. I'm a big fan of all types of culture and so I enjoy visiting museums and art galleries when I go to another country or when I visit another city in China. Art is an important

part of life and children who learn about art usually end up being thoughtful, creative and innovative people when they get older.

2. Did you learn drawing when you were a kid?

I learned drawing in school – in art lessons – drawing and painting. I also learned a little bit at home because my father is quite a good artist and enjoys sketching. And my mother does sewing designs, so she often sketches the designs on paper before she starts a new sewing project.

3. Have you ever visited an art gallery?

I've visited lots of art galleries, in my city, Beijing, as well as in other cities. I enjoy modern art galleries the most, but I also like to see painting and artwork from history as well. There are quite a few different art galleries in my city and I sometimes go to the temporary exhibitions at one gallery in particular that is in the famous art district, 798. I know the manager of that gallery too, so I enjoy going there, chatting to her and perhaps taking a coffee at one of the boutique arty coffee shops nearby.

4. Is there any art work on the wall in your room?

Yes, I have a couple of pictures, they are prints actually, of course they are not originals. One is the famous picture of the Great Wave, by the Japanese artist, Hokusai, and the other is a painting by Salvador Dali, the eccentric Spanish painter who painted quite strange and abstract works. I can't remember the name of the Dali painting, but it's a painting of a stone man looking at his own reflection in the water. It's quite mysterious and evocative. I think art is good to have in the home – it helps us reflect on life as well as creating a certain atmosphere in the house.

Sports

1. Do you like watching sports programs on TV?

I don't really. I am not much of a sporty person. I follow some of the Olympic events, but apart from that I have very little interest in televised sports, to be honest.

2. Do you watch live sports games?

Actually, you know, I've never been to a live sports game in my life. Well... apart from those on sports days in school, and sometimes watching my friends play basketball on campus.

3. Who do you like to watch sports games with?

When I watch sports, I enjoy watching them with a couple of my classmates. They're fun people to watch games with. I find it's a lot more exciting watching sports with other people, especially people are really enthusiastic about the sport. The excitement can be contagious.

4. What kinds of games do you expect to watch in the future?

I really don't know to be honest....perhaps football. I enjoy football, because I

followed a lot of English teams when I lived in the UK, and I also enjoy watching football, so I think I will continue to follow a lot of the major football games. Especially the World Cup.

5. What kind of sport did you do when you were young?

I did quite a lot of sports, actually. I'm a pretty sporty person and always have been. When I was young I mainly played football and basketball, and took part in school physical education – like ball control games and things like this. I love sport, especially team sports and competitive sports, more so than running or jogging and individual sports, I'd say.

6. What's the most common sport in your country?

For most Chinese, I would say football. People both watch it and play it. For one thing, it's pretty easy to do since all you need is a few players, a ball and a field. Also, the rules are simple, even little kids can handle this. In addition, football really brings people together for fun, and so it is a great way to make friends in a relaxing social atmosphere.

7. Do you like outdoor activities?

Well, if I'm completely honest, no not really, I don't actually enjoy doing things outside, I'm quite a homely person so I tend to prefer staying in, but I know it's important and healthy to be active and get involved in some outdoor activities, so I do actually do some. I just wouldn't really say I like doing them.

Mobile phone

1. Do you remember your first mobile phone?

I had my first mobile phone in university. I remember it very clearly, it was a Nokia phone and I loved it. It was tough, and lasted many years, and almost never broke. Then, sadly, it got stolen on a bus one day when I was going into town.

2. Do you often use your mobile phone for texting or making phone calls?

I use my phone mainly for texting. I text a lot with friends and use messaging apps to communicate, so I don't make many phone calls really. I don't really have the need to.

3. How has your mobile phone changed your life?

Mobile phones have given me the freedom to be constantly connected to friends and family. They've saved me a lot of time in arranging meet-ups with friends and things like this. Mainly the benefits have been social.

4. Will you buy a new one in the future?

I usually buy a new mobile phone every two or three years. They go out of date quite quickly these days – I mean, they stop performing optimally, and new more advanced models come out needing software that your old phone might not be compatible with.

Street market

1. What do street markets sell?

Well, from my own personal experience, I would say that people sell all sorts of things at street markets – ranging from delicious traditional Chinese cuisine that is affordable, to countless souvenir shops, and of course amazing department stores where you can find the latest fashions.

2. Do you prefer to go shopping in the shopping mall or the street market?

I prefer to shop in street markets, really. But it does depend on what I'm buying and how much time I have. Street markets are more fun for me, but malls and supermarkets can be more convenient, especially if I've got a tight schedule.

3. When was the last time you went to a street market?

Lots of street markets have closed down in my city, which in some ways is a shame... Let me think... it's been a while... perhaps about 2 years ago.

4. Are there many street markets in China?

Yes, there are actually, you know in China in almost every local neighbourhood you can find street markets filled with stalls selling daily produce such as fruit and vegetables, fresh meat and fish and things like that. There's one quite near my home actually. They're really quite popular.

Emails

1. Do you often send emails?

Yes, I send emails all the time. My university assignments are all submitted via email, and I correspond with my family regularly via email still, although a lot of communication today takes place over wechat, our messaging app in China.

2. Is sending emails popular in China?

Yes, sending emails is quite popular, although using more mobile applications for messaging and sending and receiving documents is getting pretty common.

3. Do you think sending emails will be more or less popular in the future?

I think we will send emails less and less as mobile messaging apps are able to send much larger files, and smartphones are much better at dealing with productive work-tasks like writing, editing documents and creating presentations.

Lost and found

1. What will you do if you find something lost by others?

If I find something someone has lost I will likely find a police station and hand it in. Or maybe ask around the local shops and places in the area.

2. Have you ever lost anything?

I rarely lose things. But I did lose my phone once, after a party with friends. I was

really stressed about it. I think I left it in the taxi on the way home.

3. Will you post on social media if you lose your items?

It depends what the item is. I will certainly post a note on social media if I was in a certain venue and I think there is a chance that someone else there might have found it. If I lose something randomly in the city, then no I probably won't.

Time management

1. Do you make plans every day?

Sure I do. I use my phone apps to organize my schedule for the upcoming week. You know, I like to set reminders for important events or mark them on my calendar. I also set alarms in case I forget something.

2. Is it easy to manage time?

I find it pretty easy, really. I am a very organized person, in general. I use phone apps to organise myself – the calendar function and notes section. And I just have a good memory and a methodical, pragmatic approach to managing tasks and time.

3. Do you think it's useful to plan your time?

I find planning every half hour increment is essential to maximize my productivity during the workdays. Although I'm very spontaneous on the weekend and I try to relax a little bit and not think about time unless I really have to.

4. Do you like being busy?

I quite enjoy being busy, if I don't have too much to do that it becomes overwhelming. As long as I have enough time to do everything I need to do, and that most of the tasks are not unbearable, then yes, I enjoy being busy.

Memory

1. Why do some people have good memory while others just don't?

I think some people are born with great memories to be honest. Others have more self-discipline, perhaps from their home and school education, or just because of their personality.

2. Why do more people rely on cellphones to memorize things?

Cellphones are really handy. And the organizational features are getting increasingly better – the way the calendars integrate with your notes and stuff like this – and how they give you alerts and advanced warning of events. They are so handy.

3. Are you good at memorizing things?

My family and friends always say that I have a very good memory, a very strong memory and it's true; I can remember things really far back... Even to when I was about 3 or 4 years old.

4. Have you ever forgotten something that was important?

I've forgotten a few things yes. I have a habit of getting into long conversations with friends when we are out at a restaurant or somewhere, then leaving my wallet or cellphone on the table. I've done this a few times – and once even lost it – as I went back and it was gone!

Mirrors

1. Do you like looking at yourself in the mirror?

I am not sure whether I like it or not, but I do it every day before I go out of the house. I need to check my face, my hair and make sure I am looking as presentable as possible before I head out to the office.

2. Have you ever bought mirrors?

Yes, I have often bought little mirrors to take in my handbag, so I can check myself sporadically during the day. Perhaps before a meeting or after lunch, or if I am going from work to a dinner or something like that.

3. Do you usually take a mirror with you?

Yes, I usually take a small mirror with me. However, in more recent years, I don't use it. I tend to use my mobile phone - many people do these days - you know, you put the camera on selfie mode, and then you can look at yourself just as if you are looking in a mirror.

4. Would you use mirrors to decorate your room?

I have never used mirrors to decorate my living space, but I think it's a good idea. If you put mirrors in certain places in your house they can make it look bigger, or lighter or change the space in a positive way. So, yes, I would use mirrors to decorate my room, certainly.

Dreams

1. Do you often remember your dreams?

I sometimes remember my dreams, but not that often. I usually remember my dreams when I'm on holiday and have time to lounge in bed and slowly wake up, rather than on work days when I wake up and have to rush to get ready.

2. Are you interested in others' dreams?

I think dreams are interesting and can be very revealing, so yes, I am always interested to hear about other people's dreams. I think they can tell us things about the unconscious worries or aspirations people have.

3. Do you want to make your dreams come true?

Well... the good ones, yes! I would like the good dreams to come true of course, but not the nightmares or scary dreams. I think everyone would like their best dreams to come true.

Science

1. When did you start to learn science?

I started learning about science in school in my first year. We had basic science lessons, in which we learned a bit about biology mainly, and some physics.

2. Is there any technology that you think is helpful in daily life?

Sure, computers, smartphones... these are the main types of technology that are most widely used today. In fact, they are indispensable – we couldn't live our daily lives or work without them. They are not just 'helpful', but in many cases they are absolutely necessary to communicate and get work done, and even complete financial transactions and all sorts of stuff. So, there was a time, maybe over ten years ago, when information technology helped us do things, yes, but now, this kind of technology is absolutely essential for us to get almost everything done!

3. Do you think science classes are important?

Science teaches us about our planet, about the basic laws of nature, and science forms the basis of how we construct things, how we build human society, how we understand the natural world, how we develop medicine and medical technology... everything is rooted in science to some extent. So, science is indispensable to human development.

4. What is your favorite subject of science?

My favourite subject is physics now. That's because I'm really interested in space and the universe and I'm particularly good at mathematics. There's a lot of complex math in astrophysics and I find it that really exciting.

Pets and animals

1. Did you have any pets when you were a child?

Yes, my family had a dog and a cat. These are fairly normal domestic animals to keep, really. I do remember once having a small snake in a plastic box that I bought at a street market, but it died within a few weeks.

2. Do you like to see animals in the zoo?

Yes, I've always liked it. When I was a little girl, this was my favourite family activity on the weekends, because you know it greatly satisfied my curiosity about wild animals, like peacocks, tigers, monkeys etc. but now, since I am pretty bogged down with studies and work I don't get much chance to go to the zoo.

3. What's your favorite animal?

I'd probably have to say dogs, it's hard to explain why though. I guess it's because they are really loyal and quite affectionate and playful, much more so than cats who I think tend to be a bit more indifferent and aloof. So yeah I'd say I'm much more of a dog person than a cat person.

4. What is the most popular animal in China?

I'd say a cat or maybe a dog is the most common animal. Today, slightly more obscure animals are gaining in popularity though – for example, my friend has a chinchilla, a very cute animal!

Car trip

1. Do you like to travel by car?

Sometimes, it really depends. If I am going on a trip out of the city I enjoy being in a car out on the open roads. But, in city traffic like Beijing, no, I don't enjoy it at all, the traffic is a nightmare.

2. Where is the farthest place you travelled to by car?

The farthest I've been in a car is probably to Gu Bei water town, which is about 2 or 3 hours outside of Beijing. It's a lovely drive actually, actually, and is especially nice to do that trip in summer.

3. Do you like to sit in the front or back when travelling by car?

I enjoy sitting in the front, in the passenger seat. I like to see the road ahead and you get a better view if you're travelling through a picturesque area where there are mountains or rolling hills.

Weekends

1. What do you usually do on weekends?

On weekends I do a variety of things. I rest, I read, I go out with friends to a park or go to the cinema. Occasionally I go have dinner in a restaurant – there are lots of new restaurants opening up in my city so I often go with a group of friends to a restaurant, usually a hotpot restaurant. I like eating out with friends and family – it's a popular communal activity in my country, actually.

2. Would you say weekends are important to us?

I think they're very important. It's when we get time to spend with family and friends and kick back and relax and forget about work or the hassles of daily life. Weekends are when we can wind down, recharge our batteries and relax a bit after a working week. I think everyone should have free weekends.

3. Do you often go to the cinema on weekends?

From time to time, depending on what's on. I wouldn't say I go that often, perhaps once every couple of months. But when I do go I enjoy it immensely. I love seeing a film on the big screen and eating popcorn and maybe going to dinner afterwards and discussing the movie with my friends.

4. What do you plan to do for next weekend?

I have no plans next weekend. In fact, I've got some work to catch up on so I will

work half of the time and the other half of the time I'll do odd jobs around the house, run some errands in town and then just get an early night. These days I don't go out much on weekends really. It's been a busy few months for me and I've got all sorts of random things to do by the time the weekend comes around.

Daily routine

1. What is your daily routine?

Generally my daily routine is quite stable and predictable. I get up early, around 6am, I study as soon as I'm dressed and awake. I spend the day going to classes, occasionally doing a little sports or meeting a friend in a café. Then in the late afternoon I do some more studies, then in the evening I relax.

2. Have you ever changed your routine?

I have tweaked my routine a bit here and there, but for the past few years my routine has largely remained the same.

3. Which part of your daily routine do you like best?

I like the evenings, especially when I feel I've ticked off all the things on my to-do list, and I can just relax on the bed, listen to music, read, or watch a film.

Colours

1. What's your favorite colour?

Definitely black. I think it's really posh and stylish. What's more, the color black goes well with almost everything. I mean you can't go wrong wearing black. It's an elegant color, too. It goes pretty much with everything you can wear.

2. Do you prefer dark colours or bright colours?

I prefer bright colors because they are uplifting. They draw the eyes attention but I have to use them sparingly, because people get dizzy looking at them, for example, if I wear neon yellow sneakers, I will pair them with black pants. Or if I carry a pink handbag, I will match it with a white dress.

3. Were colours important to you when you were a child?

Yes, they were. One of my favorite activities growing up was to play with my crayons. I loved drawing Barbie wearing a pink dress, or a spider man wearing his red and blue suit. It was real fun to express my creativity on paper.

4. What colours are the walls of the rooms in your home?

My room is painted in ivory color. When I first painted it, I defaulted to white because I didn't want any strong color in the bedroom. But as it turned out, I found it harder to choose white over other colors since there were 20 shades of white...like cream, pearl, vanilla, snow, ivory...

Getting lost

1. Have you ever lost your way?

Yes, I've lost my way lots of times. I have a terrible sense of direction, and if I am in a new place or a new area of the city looking for somewhere, I will easily get lost without help from an app.

2. How can you find your way when you are lost?

I usually go to my navigation app on my phone or ask people in the street for help. Though I am a bit nervous or shy about asking strangers for directions, to be honest.

3. Have you ever helped someone who got lost?

I have helped people yes. I live in an area where there are a number of quite famous tourist sites, so occasionally during the spring or summer I end up being asked by tourists how to find the way to one of those places.

4. Would you use a map when you get lost?

I would certainly use a map, but usually a navigation map app on my phone mainly. This is a common and very user-friendly and efficient means of finding one's way these days.

Public parks or gardens

1. What do you usually do when you go to a park or garden?

Well as I said I really don't get much of chance to go to parks, but when I do, I just stroll around, looking at the trees and plants and enjoying the green open spaces. I know a lot of people go to parks to do physical exercise but I'm not really into that.

2. How have parks changed today compared to the time when you were a child?

Yes, I think public parks today are better kept and have wider varieties of flowers and plants and other attractive features, compared to when I was a child. They're tidier and more beautiful.

3. Would you prefer to go to a personal garden or public garden?

Well, it depends on what the garden was like really. But, in general, I'd prefer to spend time in a private garden, most certainly. I like privacy and peace and quiet. Public gardens can be busy and sometimes crowded.

New places

1. Have you been to a new place recently?

Yes, only last week my friend introduced me to a café in a shopping mall not far from where I live. A sort of modern, funky café that sells French pastries and serves bubble tea and coffee.

2. What's the difference between this place and other places of the same kind?

This place is a bit different because it's a very modern and unique design, with all sorts of artwork on the walls. It seems to attract a cross-section of very

fashion-conscious young people.

3. Do you feel nervous when you travel to new places?

When I travel to new places... well, yes, I guess so. If they are far away or very different from place in and around where I live, then maybe I will feel a little nervous. It also depends who I am with.

Headphones

1. Do you use headphones?

I use headphones a lot. In fact, I really enjoy the sound of music on headphones. Today the quality is really good, and headphones have improved a lot in recent years and are more comfortable too.

2. When do you use headphones?

I usually wear headphones when I am commuting to work, when I am in bed at night and want to listen to podcast or some of the my favourite music before sleep. I also use headphones when I am chatting on the phone sometimes.

3. What type of headphones do you use?

I use the standard headphones that came with my mobile phone. They're pretty good quality. I know some people buy really special expensive headphones, but mine are a normal brand and I think they're really good.

4. In what occasions will you not use headphones?

I don't use headphones when I'm hanging out with friends, or when I'm at work. I think that's a bit rude. Usually I only use headphones when I'm alone really. Yeah, I tend not to use headphones when I'm in the company of other people I have to, or want to, interact with.

◆ Topic Pool——Part Two (2022.05-08)

(蓝色为本季新题, 黑色为保留旧题)

◆ People: 4 (9)

- ◆ Describe an interesting neighbor.
- ◆ Describe a family member you want to work with in the future.
- ◆ Describe a popular/well-known person in your country.
- ◆ Describe a person you enjoyed talking with.
- ◆ Describe a person you follow on social media.
- ◆ Describe a person you only met once and want to know more about.
- ◆ Describe someone you really like to spend time with.
- ◆ Describe a person who makes contribution to the society.
- ◆ Describe a person who impressed you most in your primary school.

◆ Object:

(具体) 2 (8)

Describe a traditional product in your country.

Describe an invention that changed the world.

Describe something you received for free.

Describe a toy you got in your childhood.

Describe something you cannot live without (not a computer/phone).

Describe a piece of equipment in your home that you broke and then fixed.

Describe a piece of clothing that someone gave to you

Describe a gift you would like to buy for your friend.

(抽象) 3 (10)

Describe something you do to keep fit and healthy.

Describe something that surprised you and made you happy.

Describe something that helps you to focus on study/work.

Describe an ambition that you haven't achieved.

Describe a song or piece of music you like.

Describe a rule that you would like to change.

Describe a story someone told you and you remember.

Describe something that helped you learn a foreign language.

Describe a difficult skill you have learned from an old person.

Describe a difficult decision you once made.

◆ Place: 2 (5)

Describe a quiet place where you like to spend your time.

Describe an important river/lake in your country.

Describe a place in the countryside that you visited.

Describe a city that you think is interesting.

Describe an apartment or a home that you would like to have.

◆ **Event: 11 (21)**

Describe a time when you used your cellphone to do something important.

Describe a time when someone gave you positive advice on your work.

Describe an occasion when you lost something in a public place.

Describe a contest/competition you would like to participate in.

Describe an important event you celebrated.

Describe a positive change you made in your life.

Describe a special day out that didn't cost you much.

Describe a time when you helped a child.

Describe a time when you were caught in a traffic jam.

Describe a time when you were very busy.

Describe a recent change in life that helps you save a lot of time.

Describe an interesting conversation you had with someone.

Describe an occasion when you had a special cake.

Describe a lesson that impressed you a lot.

Describe a time you visited a new place.

Describe a happy event you organized.

Describe a long walk you have been on.

Describe a time when you waited for something special to happen.

Describe an activity you usually do that wastes your time.

Describe a time when you felt proud of a family member.

Describe a time when you gave a piece of advice to another person.

◆ **注：二、三部分具体题卡如下**

◆ Topic Pool——Part Two & Part Three

People:

- ◆ Describe an interesting neighbor.
- ◆ Describe a family member you want to work with in the future.
- ◆ Describe a popular/well-known person in your country.
- ◆ Describe a person you enjoyed talking with.
- ◆ Describe a person you follow on social media.
- ◆ Describe a person you only met once and want to know more about.
- ◆ Describe someone you really like to spend time with.
- ◆ Describe a person who makes contribution to the society.
- ◆ Describe a person who impressed you most in your primary school.

Describe an interesting neighbor.

You should say:

Who this person is

How you know this person

What he or she does

And explain why you think this person is interesting

The neighbour I find the most interesting is an old man called Mr. Liu. He has lived next door to my grandparents for as long as I can remember. He's a wise, talkative and friendly old man with a lot of interesting stories and insightful pieces of advice. He has a big mop of white hair. He's fairly tall, and always walks with a decorative wooden walking stick with a carved bone handle. Because the weather is really warm most of the year where I come from, I often see him sitting on the wall outside his home reading novels. I sometimes stop and chat to him and he discusses news, history, the stories he has been reading, or talks about his garden. He enjoys gardening and has a small garden at the back of his house. He is almost always seen with a wooden cage with two birds in it. He's one of those older men you sometimes see in my city who take their birds in cages out 'for a walk' and talks to them and feeds them in the sunshine. I think he's a fascinating man and I've got a lot of time for him. I think most people in our street feel the same about him. He's also very helpful to the other neighbours and there was a time I remember quite clearly when an old lady up the road got sick – he made her soup and bread every day and took it round to her. So, he's popular too and nobody has a bad word to say about Mr. Liu.

Part 3

1. Do you have a good relationship with your neighbours?

Yes, we have a good relationship with most of our neighbours. But, like a lot of people, I don't think we really have much to do with their neighbours. In modern society today, people are quite estranged from the people who live near them.

Everyone keeps a distance and doesn't really associate with them much. It's a shame really. This sense of community has largely been lost, especially in cities.

2. How can we improve our relationships with neighbours?

Generally I think it's a good idea to have a relationship with the people who live near us, and try to keep it on friendly and amicable terms. This can be done by being a little generous, occasionally giving gifts, or sharing food and making a point of stopping to chat when you meet them going in and out of the house.

3. Do you think neighbours are important?

Yes, of course. Everyone needs to feel a sense of community – we are living in a social world, not isolated in bubbles! So, neighbours are a normal and important part of daily life. I think it's a good idea to not be too close to neighbours though – maintain a good friendly relationship but not get so involved in each other's lives or personal life.

4. Do you think people's relationships with their neighbours today is the same as it was in the past?

No, I think people are way more distant from their neighbours than they were in the past. Today people tend to live in apartment blocks in cities, and usually they don't want to have that much to do with all the other people living next door to them. Sometimes people are even suspicious of each other, to be honest. I think in smaller towns and places in the countryside there is more closeness between neighbours, but it seems that as societies develop and modernize there seems to be more distance between people and those that live around them. I'd say it was a sad, but natural consequence of development.

Describe a family member you want to work with in the future.

You should say:

Who he/she is

What he/she does

What kind of work you would like to do with him/her

And explain how you feel about him/her

A family member I would love to work with in future is my uncle. He is fairly young and full of energy and determination. He founded a small furniture business in Chengde, mainly specializing in old and tasteful home furnishings – handmade and certainly more interesting and elegant than most you'll see in the high street. He is a very good businessman with a keen eye for art and culture, so he has combined two skills and interests into a fairly successful business. He also does a certain amount of interior design, and has a small design team consisting of a couple of my cousins and some other employees who studied design in university. So, he is expanding his furniture business to embrace a wider field of interior design and is hoping to get

some clients in the hotel industry. I think with my international experience and ability to connect with people from other cultures, and I speak English fairly fluently, I could play a PR or marketing role in my uncle's company, or work with client engagement and sales. I'd love to do this, as I am also quite into artistic pursuits and I believe I have a good eye for design, and would like to learn more about the world of business. Furthermore, I'm a people-person and I enjoy interacting with people and I believe I have a good aptitude for nurturing relationships. I feel that my uncle would be a marvelous person to work with, and I would be very happy to work with him – he's patient and tolerant, but also very focused, ambitious and determined. I think these are great qualities to have if you're going to run your own business successfully.

Part 3

1. What kinds of family businesses are common in China?

There's a whole range of different family businesses really – like in any country. I am not totally sure which types are the most common, though... Well, I think maybe today a popular family business is buying and selling – something that has moved online a lot. Where people are engaged in selling products that they source from huge manufacturers, and make them available to everyday people either online or through stores and shops in their hometowns. This is something that is quite common. A friend of mine had a family who owned a whole chain of restaurants across the country – so in my childhood I knew a few families in the restaurant business – though I am not sure if this is hugely popular, but it certainly was amongst the people I knew. Chinese people love food culture and enjoy eating out, so a popular pastime is going to restaurants, and there are a lot of family restaurants in every town and city.

2. Why do people want to do family business?

Family businesses are a lot more personal than working for a big company. And although there can be more stress and pressure on the one hand, on the other hand there can be a greater sense of reward, personal freedom and independence and pleasure. Also, a family business usually means that there are other family members always on hand to help and share the burdens of responsibilities as well. In addition, skills are passed from generation to generation so sometimes it's more comfortable to get involved in your family business than to strike out on your own and craft a career for yourself – it can be a less stressful option for some.

3. What are the benefits of working with family members?

It's great to work with family members if you actually respect and get along well with them! I guess that's the same for anyone you may work with really. But, people shouldn't assume that working with family is a good thing, always. It's not if you have tensions and don't see eye to eye. But, if you get along well with them, then the benefits are numerous and include mutual understanding, support, emotional understanding and the sharing of burdens and responsibilities beyond that which is possible with strangers or colleagues in a company. These are the key benefits of working with family.

4. Is it easier to get promotion in big companies?

It depends, sometimes it can be harder and sometimes easier. For example, if the company is a very competitive, cutting edge IT company, then it can be really hard to get a decent promotion unless you are at a certain level and have exceptional skills. Also, you might need to foster and maintain a good relationship with your superiors, which isn't always an easy task if you are in a highly competitive environment. So, sometimes you can get ahead faster if you are in a smaller company. It all depends on the type of company, how popular it is, how successful it is and how skilled you are in your job and personal relationships.

Describe a popular/well-known person in your country.

You should say:

Who he/she is

What he/she has done

Why he/she is popular

I would like to talk about Ieoh Ming Pei. I am not sure if he is so well known to most Chinese people of the younger generation, but for students of architecture, like myself, he's really famous. He's actually a Chinese-American, but he was born and raised in Shanghai. He was hugely inspired by the traditional Chinese gardens of Suzhou, a city not far from Shanghai, famous for its ornamental gardens and canals. He moved to the United States as a boy and studied in Pennsylvania, but he always referred back to his Chinese heritage in his art and philosophy.

He is really popular amongst those who study architecture or have an interest in the evolution of design and urban planning. China has gone through some interesting periods of urban development over the past thirty or forty years, so it's an interesting field to learn a bit about.

One of I.M Pei's most famous, and globally recognized examples of architecture is the glass pyramid of the Louvre museum in Paris – not many people know that was designed by a Chinese-born architect, actually. He also designed the iconic Kennedy Library, dedicated to president John F. Kennedy, the famous Hancock Tower in Boston, and the Fragrant Hills Hotel just outside Beijing, in China, and don't forget, the Bank of China building in Hong Kong!

So, yes, he's popular in the field for his wide range of style and diversity – he's designed so many different types of buildings in different places, inspired by all sorts of different architectural styles and movements, that he's quite admired the world-over.

Although there are now lots of contemporary famous architects both in the world and in China, I still feel quite inspired by the life and works of I.M. Pei and I think that it's interesting to review the different things he's worked on over a period of more than a whole generation. I find it interesting to read and learn from these iconic characters.

Part 3

1. What kinds of people are popular at work?

The kinds of people that are popular at work are almost always the people who are positive, give a good impression to others, keep their personal emotions a little bit to themselves, and are kind to their co-workers and get their work done without complaining or making a fuss.

2. Are bosses more popular than employees at work?

I wouldn't say that bosses are more popular, as such, but one certainly has to pretend they are. Bosses are bosses, and we always give more outward displays of respect to bosses – we have to show that we admire them, that we follow them, that we are aligned with their visions, goals and projects. So, in that sense, I guess you could say they are more popular, but really it's a kind of obedience that happens in the workplace – we always follow our bosses if we want a nice working life!

3. Which one is important, keeping a good relationship with colleagues or doing well at work?

I think both are equally as important in my opinion. I think that the atmosphere at work is quite important as we have to spend so much time there with colleagues, so I believe that maintaining a good relationship with colleagues, as well as being ambitious and dedicated in one's work, is important. Some people put career success ahead of relationships with colleagues, and maybe they do achieve promotions and other benefits, but personally I believe that one's social dynamics with key colleagues we have to work with on a daily basis, are very important.

4. What benefits can children get if they become popular at school?

Well, it always helps one's self-esteem if one is popular – it boosts your confidence. So, that is one clear benefit of being popular. Also, the more popular you are, the more likely you are to be invited to get involved in different activities, by both teachers and other pupils, so this can broaden your horizons, and further increase your confidence. So, it's a compounding thing really – popularity can be very good for people.

Describe a person you enjoyed talking with.

You should say:

Who he/she is

When you talked

What you talked about

And explain why you enjoyed talking with this person

I am a fairly chatty person, so I think I attract people who are talkative and who like sharing their feelings and personal anecdotes about life, so I am often bumping into people who are pretty interesting that I enjoy talking to. I am also pretty extrovert and I go out a lot – I love going to gallery openings, bars, restaurants, events, all sorts – I have friends who work in the media too and I'm training to be a journalist, so you could say that it's part of my job, my career, to be open and talk to people. The one person that really stands out in my mind that I have really enjoyed talking to was a Dutch artist I met in 798 Art District in Beijing. He was a fascinating individual, and he was there for the opening of his art exhibition entitled "Erotic Art of 21st Century Asia"... Yes, a fairly daring title... And his paintings and sculptures were even more daring, I can tell you!

When I first arrived at the event, I mingled with the other attendees for a while, grabbed a couple of wines, walked and talked with random people and looked at some of his sculptures and paintings. Everyone had a lot to say about them as they were quite risqué and bold – and, as you might know, Asian people tend to pretend to be reserved and shy about this kind of thing on the surface. As I drank more wine and became more confident I realized that I should try to talk to the artist himself, to get some material for an article for the magazine I was working with. Eventually I managed to corner him by a huge bronze and clay statue of a cubist naked ballet dancer in the far corner. He was an exuberant and flamboyant man, who just didn't stop talking as soon as I introduced myself and said I was working for the college art magazine. He told me all about his life, his travels, and the personal and spiritual motivations behind his art work. He was probably the most fascinating individual I've ever spoken to. We exchanged phone numbers and agreed to meet the following day to talk about his pursuits in more depth. And, well... that's another story!

Part 3

1. What do young people talk about when they meet up?

Young people talk about all sorts of things, it totally depends on what kinds of young people you're talking about. There are people who are into sport and love talking about their teams, and how they are doing. There are young people who are really into music, and they spend a lot of time chatting and comparing music they have recently discovered or enjoyed. And, of course, there are people who just enjoy random gossip about the news and celebrities. So, anything really!

2. Do you think it is necessary to be honest when talking with friends?

I think in general if you are a relatively honest person you will make more long-term good friends than if you are someone who is not honest. Generally speaking that is. If you are too honest and direct you also run the risk of offending people, so I guess you could say there is a balance between being direct and honest and being diplomatic with friends, depending on the situations you find yourselves in.

3. On what occasions do we need to talk with strangers?

We talk with strangers in shops, when ordering food in restaurants – with the people serving us. These are often strangers, in a way, I suppose. But, other times we may talk to strangers might be at social events like parties when we are introduced to new people and end up chatting and socializing – perhaps even on our first days in a new job or a new university or at conferences, presentations or things like that. It really depends on the lifestyle we have and the situations we find ourselves in. Weddings are also occasions in which we often meet people for the first time and end up chatting to them.

Describe a person you follow on social media.

You should say:

Who he/she is

How you knew him/her

What he/she posts on social media

And explain why you follow him/her on social media

Someone I follow a lot on social media is a blogger who does articles and videos on tick-tock. She does reviews of restaurants and cafes in the city. It's a really interesting blog and she has become incredibly popular in recent years, and I think gets sponsorships and funding from various food and beverage sources in the city. She tends to review about 4 or 5 different places every week, so I imagine it has become her full-time job, really. I found out about her through a friend when we were looking for a place to host a birthday party. After that I started looking at her posts almost every day, and found them really useful. She reviews pretty much anything, from new milk tea shops, ice cream stores, big franchise coffee houses, small cafes and boutique eateries – everything really. So, whenever my friends and I feel like going out on weekends to eat, drink or snack or even have a really nice fancy meal, we look at her latest posts and see what she recommends. She can also be quite critical, too, but I think she is fair and impartial and does not work for or support any particular enterprise, or get any money from the individual places she reviews. So, she has built up a reputation of great trust in the community and many people rely on her opinions to make decisions about where to eat and drink and have fun on weekends.

Part 3

1. Do you think old people and young people use the same kind of social media app?

I think that today most people, regardless of age, communicate using the same social media apps. There are a few that are really popular, today, and everyone seems to be connected to each other through them. They have revolutionized the way we obtain and share information, so I would say that today these social media utilities have crossed generations and are used by all.

2. Do old people spend much time on social media?

I think the majority of older people spend less time on social media than younger people. Although I know quite a few older people who use messaging apps to keep in touch with family and friends, I don't think they tend to be so addicted to social media as most younger people. They don't tend to follow people's 'moments' much or watch videos on tick-tock and things like this. Although some of them do, I would say that they engage in this kind of more multi-media stuff less than the younger generation.

3. What can people do on social media?

People can do all sorts today on social media – from messaging, blogging, vlogging -video blogging- or video calls, conference calls... almost everything can be done on social media today. In many ways social media applications, and smartphones, have basically replaced computers.

4. Are television and newspaper still useful?

Both TV and newspapers still have their value, but they are obviously not as popular as they were before the days of cellphones, apps and social media. There are still people who sit and watch the news on TV, and a lot of newspapers can be read online today, too. So, they are still popular but not quite in the same way as before.

Describe a person you only met once and want to know more about.

You should say:

Who he/she is

When you met him/her

Why you want to know more about him/her

And explain how you feel about him/her

A person that I once met, but only briefly, that I'd like to get to know more about, is a famous writer from South America. While I was in university studying International Relations and Spanish, I was quite a fan of the writings of Gabriel Garcia Marquez. I loved his romantic stories, and his sense of humour and the magical twists in his tales. While I was studying in Madrid in about 1999, I had the chance to go to a literature conference, where lots of Spanish-language writers and poets were. Garcia Marquez did a talk there, and I went to get his autograph after the talk. We chatted just for a minute or so. But, for me, that minute was wonderful. He was just how I'd imagined, soft, wise, kind and with a wry sense of humour. I would like to know more about him, even though he is dead now. At the time I was so involved in my studies I didn't have chance to explore his works more, especially his poetry, and since then I seem to have got busy with life, my career, raising a family and all sorts, and never really got back into that literature period of my life. I'd like to have a relaxing holiday, perhaps preferably alone, where I can get back into his works, the ones I really am already familiar with as well as the ones I have not read. I feel he is an inspirational writer with a deep and positive philosophy on life.

Part 3

1. Is it important to have the same hobbies and interests when making friends?

I think to some degree it is important, yes. I mean, I think that people connect when they share mutual interests, and things they can talk about together or do together. So, yes, I think it's pretty important to share some of the same interests. Also, people tend to have different friends who they share different interests with. For example, I have friends who are really sporty, who I play basketball with, and other friends who do not like sport, with whom I go to restaurants and discuss life and relationships with and TV shows. I believe a lot of people are like this.

2. What qualities make true friends?

True friends are generally people with whom we can share mutual interests as well as being able to trust each other with intimate personal secrets or feelings. Friends are always there when you need a shoulder to cry on or someone to listen to you, or even give you careful, considerate advice.

3. On what occasions do people like to make friends?

People often make friends on their first day of university, or at least during their first week. Perhaps also when they join a new company, they might gradually become friends with some of the people in their company that they 'click' with and find they feel comfortable with. Usually, it's these occasions in which we make friends.

Describe someone you really like to spend time with.

You should say:

Who he/she is

How you knew him/her

What you usually do together

And explain why you like to spend time with him/her

I love spending time with my father, actually. Of course, I've known him all my life! When I was a child he was really fun and used to take me out on trips into the countryside a lot, for long walks, to rivers, mountains and things like that. And we still spend time together when I go back to my hometown. He is really into photography, and always has been for as long as I can remember. So, he often likes to go to places of natural beauty, especially mountains. In the holidays we sometimes go down south to the mountains in Yunnan, and tea plantations in Fujian, and all sorts of places like this. He enjoys taking photos around the karst mountain countryside of Guilin and Yangshuo, and we've been there twice together already. So, we always had, and still have, cool adventures together – we hire local guides, we take camera equipment and we enjoy walking, learning about the local area and taking nature photos. Sometimes we do some sketching as well – he's quite a good artist. I feel I'm lucky to have a father who is so into these kinds of creative pursuits, and lucky to be in a country with such varied examples of natural beauty. I find outings and

excursions interesting, inspiring and fun.

Part 3

1. What kinds of people are easy to get along with?

Well, that totally depends on one's personality and interests. Some people connect with one type of person, and others, with another. But, as a generalization, people who are slightly more extrovert, humourous, welcoming and sincere, are people who tend to get along with others better. Shy people – those who are more introvert – either take longer to get to know, or are not so easy to get along with, because they find it harder to open up to others.

2. How do leaders get along with their subordinates?

Leaders come in all sorts of shapes and sizes!!! There are leaders who are warm and encouraging and easy to get along with, and leaders who are cold, more 'old-school' and superior in their attitude – those types of people are harder to get along with as they fit the model of the more traditional boss. They might still be good leaders, but not necessarily people you can get along with or connect with on a more personal level.

3. Do people have extra time for themselves nowadays?

People tend to be very busy these days, but yes, depending on one's job or study pressure, then yes people have free time. Not always a lot of free time, but some free time. I think that with the introduction of better labour laws, people can achieve a slightly better work-life balance than they did a few years ago. But all this depends on their family responsibilities as well, and other factors, like their economic situation and where they live in relation to their work, and things like this.

Describe a person who makes contribution to the society.

You should say:

Who this person is

How you knew him/her

What type of work he/she does

And explain why you think he/she contributes to the society

A person I know about who makes a great contribution to society is someone I've seen on TV. He's a famous singer from Thailand. I forget his name now... well.... to be honest, I just don't know how to pronounce it! Anyway, he's a famous Thai singer... at least he is well-known there. I know about him because one of my friends works in Thailand, and I go almost every year and stay with him each summer holiday. He has introduced me to all sorts of aspects of Thai culture. And this one famous guy sticks in mind very strongly. He is basically a pop singer who shot to fame in the late 1990s, and after becoming incredibly rich and popular, he decided to spend a lot of his free time working with disadvantaged children and poor people, and getting involved

in funding all sorts of ecological projects in Asia. He does charity concerts, is on the board of directors of multiple charitable enterprises, and gets involved in a lot of related stuff. He's often on television in Thailand promoting all sorts of good causes. I think he is just motivated to do this kind of thing because he's a kind and empathetic person who genuinely cares for others. Thailand is also quite a poor country in many ways, so I think he feels obliged to help less fortunate people, having had the fortune of becoming very famous and wealthy himself. So, I think that he's just a kind-hearted person with a generous spirit. Some famous people are like this – it's a very encouraging thing and sets a good example for their followers and admirers.

Part 3

1. What kinds of jobs are well-paid?

Well, there's a lot of highly-paid jobs – firstly, specialist doctors, surgeons, lawyers.... these are highly paid jobs. Celebrities end up earning huge salaries as well, because they are so popular. Some famous artists have a lot of money because their art work sells at very high prices.... I can't really think of any other professions really... footballers! Top footballers and sports people – they usually have really high salaries too – again because of their popularity and market forces, I think...

2. What are the changes in working conditions?

Working conditions have changed a lot in the past twenty years in my country. There are much stricter labour laws – regarding how many hours people can work, overtime, maternity leave and things like this – and there is a more coherent and cohesive HR system in most companies, that takes into account ethnic diversity, equal opportunity and things like this. Offices are also much better equipped than before, and usually have more comfortable, modern facilities.

3. Do you think younger people should be less paid than older people?

To some extent, I do, yes. This is because younger people are often less experienced than older people so they deserve lower salaries. But, again, it really depends on the profession, the qualifications and experience of the individual and the position in the company that they hold. But, as a general rule, I'd say that younger people should be lower down the pay scale than older people for the simple reason that they usually have less experience and expertise, although this is not always the case.

Describe a person who impressed you most in your primary school.

You should say:

Who he/she is

How you knew him/her

Why he/she impressed you most

And explain how you feel about him/her

A person who really impressed me in primary school is my friend, Lola. She's still my

friend today, in fact. I met her on our first day at school and we were both very shy, like most of the other pupils. What impressed me about her was her confidence. I remember it vividly although it was such a long time ago. She was confident, but not over-confident or arrogant. She just exuded a sense of balanced outgoing confidence that struck me from the first moment. Yes, like I said, she was initially shy, like all of us, but she didn't feel embarrassed to speak out as soon as the teacher started asking us questions, and she assured me things would be okay when I felt really nervous. We ended up sitting next to each other and getting to know each other really well. She also had a strong aptitude for most school subjects, and a curiosity for life that I found really fascinating. I was quite influenced by her, actually, and I feel I was lucky to have met her. As we grew older together, we got to know each other better and experienced some of life's changes throughout school, shared good times and hard times, and she was always there offering a listening ear and good advice, especially when I felt confused, frustrated or down. I'm not sure where she got her warm sense of understanding of people from, but she really did make me feel good. Today she lives in the same city as me, and although we do not see each other so often, we meet from time to time, and whenever we get together it always feels like it always was – natural and comfortable. I think it's important to have a friend like this, and in life these kinds of friendships don't come around very often. So, I'm very grateful to have known her so long.

Part 3

1. Why do people always miss their childhood?

Everyone thinks of their childhood fondly, I think. Well, mostly everyone I think. Childhood is a time when we are more carefree. We can have fun and don't have too many worries or responsibilities. In fact, we are basically looked after and all the real burdens are taken on board by our parents. I think that that feeling soon goes away when we go to primary school, though, and start having to seriously learn school subjects, get given lots of homework and deadlines and things like this. It's a bit like a death of innocence that takes place, and we never really get our childhood back after that. So, we always feel we miss our childhood.

2. Are kids happier than adults?

I think in general children are happier than adults. They have less responsibilities and are allowed to have fun and enjoy themselves and are given a lot more liberty to say and do as they please. Children are also just discovering the world, and this means it's an exciting time for them – they are constantly experiencing new things and being exposed to new experiences. All of this makes them happier than adults, who can become a bit jaded with life.

3. Why do people still remember many of their friends from primary school?

I think people remember their school friends because they had a lot of fun with them. Also, because school is a formative time in our lives where we are just learning how to really interact with each other and other people, discovering new things and

enjoying life. We share those experiences with our friends, and we grow alongside our friends, which creates a special bond.

4. What kinds of primary school teachers will impress students?

Teachers impress students if they are fun, entertaining, intelligent and patient. I think that teachers that impress students are usually also a little bit firm, and command a sense of respect too. This combination of qualities leaves a strong impression on students.

Object: (具体)

- ◆ Describe a traditional product in your country.
- ◆ Describe an invention that changed the world.
- ◆ Describe something you received for free.
- ◆ Describe a toy you got in your childhood.
- ◆ Describe something you cannot live without (not a computer/phone).
- ◆ Describe a piece of equipment in your home that you broke and then fixed.
- ◆ Describe a piece of clothing that someone gave to you
- ◆ Describe a gift you would like to buy for your friend.

Describe a traditional product in your country.

You should say:

What it is

When you tried this product for the first time

What it is made of

And explain how important this product is

A traditional product that I really like, which is very typical in China, is tea. I love Chinese tea and have quite a large collection of it. I also have a couple of tea sets, too. I like tea because it is not only good for the health, the mind and the body, but it is part of an ancient tradition and has its roots way back in our country's history. It reminds me of the more civilized, meditative and sophisticated times in China's history, before the crassness of communism or the current obsession with over-capitalist materialism and greed. It takes me back to a time when we sat and enjoyed calm philosophical and cultural conversations and enjoyed art and literature and discussion and debate. Tea, and the whole process of making tea and sharing tea, is a very peaceful, almost spiritual product. I know quite a bit about the different varieties of tea as well, and the slightly different ways of brewing them. I am also really into the different equipment and jugs and cups and ceramic tea pets and all the things associated with Chinese tea.

I first tried this product at a fairly young age because my father's brother, my uncle, had a small tea shop in Xiamen. I live in Beijing, so Xiamen is quite far away, but we used to go during the summer holidays. It's really hot there, so we spent a lot of time sitting in the cool tea shop, around the big wooden polished table, sipping tea and chatting with the locals who came in. It was a wonderful atmosphere in there and I've always held this memory quite close to my heart and tried to recreate it in my own little way at home in Beijing.

Part 3

1. Do young people admire traditional products?

I think there are more and more young people today who are rekindling an admiration

for traditional products. I think until recent years young people were not so interested, but now, I think they are beginning to develop more interest in our traditional culture. To some extent, I think this is a good thing. There are many traditional aspects of Chinese culture which are worth delving into and learning about and embracing.

2. Why is it important for children to learn about traditional products?

Children should learn both traditional and contemporary history really. I think that learning about traditional arts and crafts, and products, if you like, is all part of this. And when I say this, I don't mean just related to our own country, but the traditional products and customs from around the world, too.

3. Does the government have responsibility to protect traditional products?

Yes, to some extent, at least in terms of historical relics and also places of historical interest and everything associated with them. But generally, I don't think it's really the responsibility of the government – it's more down to individual respect and care for traditions and history. I guess the government has a responsibility to ensure this is encouraged in society, yes.

4. Do you think traditional products have better quality than modern products?

Very often, yes. In the past people made things by hand more, and certainly with a lot more care than today. We live in a bit of a throw-away society today where things are made cheaply on production lines in factories and people are a bit spoilt so they don't really even think about buying a more traditional item and taking good care of it. People cared about things more when they were made closer to home and by hand, most certainly.

Describe an invention that changed the world.

You should say:

What the invention was

What it can do

How popular it is

Why it is an important invention

I'd say an invention that really changed the world, is the car. Since the car was invented, people have been able to get from A to B faster and easier than ever before. Distances between towns and villages became much shorter, and trade improved. In many ways the car, or the motor vehicle, I should say, because this includes lorries and trucks and haulage in general, have transformed the world of business and transportation. Of course, today, the car is a normal and natural part of life for most people, and many of us could not survive without a car. So, it's very popular today, and I would argue that perhaps it is too popular – if you look at the traffic jams in cities and the terrible air pollution... So, this is another dimension to the invention. After all, everything has its downsides too.

So, yes, all in all, the motor vehicle has been a very important invention and has enabled people to do more trade and also travel around independently much more than ever before. It's changed the way we live, the kind of places we choose to travel to and how quickly and how often we travel there. So, for individuals the car has contributed a lot, to what we can do, in terms of shopping, going on holiday, dropping the kids off at school, and all of these things. It has had a big impact on more aspects of our lives than we perhaps realise. Perhaps we even take it for granted these days, like a lot of things.

Part 3

1. What kinds of equipment are important in schools?

Well, in terms of equipment I think that for education it's important today to have computers. Teachers need to use multimedia in classrooms, and also children need to learn to become proficient at using computers because IT is an important skill to learn in today's increasingly computer-dominated age.

2. Which invention do you think is the most useful at home?

In terms of inventions in the home I'd say the washing machine, without a doubt. It saves people a lot of time and energy. Before the washing machine people spent hours every day washing and drying clothes – something that takes up a lot of time and a lot of space. But today, with washing machines with built-in driers, this operation can be done quickly and with very little effort.

3. Do you think there will be no teachers in school in the future?

I think there certainly will be teachers. I believe it will take a very long time for real human teachers to be replaced by robots or by some form of AI, and I believe that humans need other humans to learn with and to learn from, and this is an instinct that cannot be replaced by a computer or form of AI robot. So, no I don't think teachers will be replaced and disappear from schools. Not at all.

Describe something you received for free.

You should say:

What it was

Who you received it from

Why you received it for free

And explain how you felt about it

I have received a few things for free over the years. But the one thing that really sticks in my mind that I think was especially fantastic was a 2-night stay in Gubei Water Town. I got the free tickets when I entered a competition in a local online magazine. I won second prize – and that prize was two free tickets to the 5 star hotel in Gubei. I was really pleased with that! All I did was answer a few questions in a survey and

then invent an amusing caption for a photograph – it was this kind of competition. I received the tickets from the Beijing Tourist Authority, who had sponsored the competition in the magazine.

Not only is Gubei water town a great location, but it's only a few hours by car from Beijing, my hometown. So, it was a brilliant complimentary gift. I felt really good about this, because I went to Gubei water town once with my family, and loved it. And I wanted to go there with my boyfriend and have a sort of romantic stay over there. It was also spring time which is the perfect time to go, and you get fantastic views of the mountains and the great wall from the hotel windows. So, yes, this was something I got for free that I was especially delighted about. And, of course, we both had an amazing weekend there – we ate in lovely restaurants, enjoyed performances and loved the sheer comfort and luxury of the hotel.

Part 3

1. Do you think people should pay for higher education by themselves?

This is a good question – well... I am not sure. I think perhaps it would cost the government far too much money to fund education at a higher level, for everyone who wants to go. But it would be ideal. It's important that the workforce of a country is highly skilled and one way to ensure this is to make sure as many people as possible get a good higher education – this also means that not only the wealthy families get to give their kids the best further education.

2. What free gifts do companies usually give to their customers?

Companies often give their customers and employees Spring Festival gifts of rice, oil, shopping coupons, and things like this. These are the most common today. In fact, nowadays, with the popularity of online shopping, most companies give a coupon or gift card for a certain amount of money. That means the customer or employee can spend on whatever they want at one or two of the most common online shopping platforms.

3. Why do customers like to receive free gifts from companies?

Free gifts give people a sense of personal worth. Gifts are reminders that we are valued and appreciated and respected, so people in general, not just customers, like to receive gifts. In terms of customers and partners, free gifts also ensure the loyalty of their clients and keep strong relationships alive. This is an important factor. So, if a company reminds its customers they are special, they have been respected, remembered, and appreciated, the customer is bound to feel good and keep buying from the company.

Describe a toy you got in your childhood.

You should say:

What it was

When you got it

How you got it

And explain how you felt about it

One of my favourite toys was a train set. Actually I still have it today. Well... I mean, it is still at my parents' house in my hometown. It's a brand of train set that is called Hornby, which is quite famous. It's not only a toy, actually, some adults also have Hornby train sets and if they have the space in their homes they build an entire landscape of mountains, trees, sometimes small towns and stations, that the train track goes around. It's an electric train set you see, with different engines and carriages. I'm still very fond of it today, although it is in its box in pieces and it isn't set up anywhere.

I got given the train set for my 11th birthday by my mum and dad. I remember feeling really excited when I received it and my dad and I spent hours setting it up in the attic room above the house. I loved playing with it and I still have really happy memories of it to this day.

In fact, I was thinking about it recently, and I decided that if I have a child one day, especially a boy, I might give him the train set to pass this gift down through the generations.

Part 3

1. Do boys and girls like the same kind of toys?

Boys and girls usually are given different types of toys, at least traditionally. Typically girls are given dolls and things that are associated with beauty, clothes, accessories and so forth. And boys are given more typically masculine toys like trucks, cars and dinosaurs. However, there are still a lot of stereotypes in how girls and boys are brought up, and so sometimes I think these stereotypes are confirmed and asserted too strongly by TV and parents and media.

2. Why do you think some parents buy lots of toys for their kids instead of spending more time with them?

Some parents think that children should be given everything they want, and also if they do not have much time to spend with their children they try to compensate by buying them gifts all the time.

3. What are some of the differences between the toys kids play with nowadays and those they used to play with in the past?

One of the main differences is that children today play a lot with tablets, phones, you know, mobile devices. Whereas in the past they did not really have these forms of

entertainment. Kids would read more, play with physical toys more, things like this.

4. Are there any kinds of electronic games or computer games that can have educational benefits for young children?

Yes, there are lots actually. There are some real benefits to playing games on tablets and some games are quite educational, related to learning vocabulary in foreign languages, or even one's own language, number games and all sorts of things like this. Electronic games can be great, but parents must be careful to not allow children to get too attached or even addicted to such devices.

5. What do parents usually buy for their children to make them happy?

Some parents indulge their kids a lot with sweets and toys in order to make them happy. It's often said that many wealthy parents spoil their children by giving them everything they want, and that isn't a way to create a good longer-term bond with children. So, a lot of parents try to get a balance between giving their kids things that make them happy, and ensuring they learn that you can't have everything you want in life, whenever you want it.

Describe something you cannot live without (not a computer/phone).

You should say:

What it is

What you do with it

How it helps you in your life

And explain why you cannot live without it

One thing I cannot live without is my bike. I love cycling, and I am part of a cycling club. Cycling has become a really important part of my life, more than just a hobby or an interest. I took up cycling about five years ago, primarily to keep fit, and then I got quite into it. Then I met some people who became my friends, who were part of a local cycling club. I joined the club, and then my hobby took off! I invested in a couple of really good bikes... one for off-road cycling – a kind of mountain bike – and one for road biking. The road bike I also ride to work, too. So, my little adventure into keeping fit became a serious pastime that is a part of my life. So, I couldn't live without my bike. In my free time I always go cycling, even if it's just a short one-hour ride. And on weekends I often go with the club to the mountains – we follow certain routes, choose different places each time, stay in guest houses and hotels, or mountain villages overnight. It's a fantastic way to spend time, get away from the world of work, get out of the city and enjoy being close to nature, compete with yourself and keep fit and healthy, and enjoy the companionship of fellow cycling enthusiasts all at the same time! So, I would say that this bike does help me with my life – hobbies and interests are important in life, and people who have healthy hobbies and goals tend to be healthier in mind and body, I reckon.

Part 3

1. Why are children attracted to electronic devices?

Children love all sorts of games, and today some of the most exciting games, that are so easy to start playing and set up, are basically on tablets and phones. Children like to play colourful, entertaining games, and electronic devices now have tonnes of apps and games for all different tastes, for all different types of people. Tablets probably have the biggest range of games that we've ever seen in the history of humankind, actually. So, kids and adults love them – and sometimes even get addicted to them.

2. Why do some adults hate to throw away old things, such as clothes?

Some adults are really like this. Especially people from the older generation who lived in times of greater austerity. They think that wasting things is not good, especially if you can repair things yourself or continue to use them. I can see this point of view, because we live in a very wasteful society – with the increase in consumerism and standard of living, some people forget the importance of trying to take care of things, and teach children to respect toys and possessions. So, there are still quite a few adults who believe we should have a greater respect for things we have and not just throw them away frivolously without thinking.

3. What do you think influences people to buy new things?

Adverts and peer pressure. People are highly influenced by what others buy – friends and family – and what adverts tell us to buy. We are surrounded by media today – online media, adverts in elevators, subway stations and on the sides of buses... everywhere. So, they have a strong conscious and unconscious influence on the way we think and the things we want to buy. People where I am from can be said to be 'fashion victims' too, and to save face they must follow the latest trends. Some people.

Describe a piece of equipment in your home that you broke and then fixed.

You should say:

What it is

How you broke it

How you fixed it

And explain how you felt about it

A piece of domestic equipment that broke once, that I managed to fix myself, in fact, was... not really a piece of equipment exactly, but I think it counts, anyway... It was a problem with the tiles in my shower. This may sound a bit strange, but I didn't want to call a workman to come out – because they are never on time, they always charge too much, or you have to argue about the price and ... well... I quite like fixing things, actually. I remember my uncle was really good at fixing and mending stuff around the home, so I think I get this tendency from him.

Anyway, my shower tiles had lost a lot of their grouting and some were coming off the walls altogether. I don't really know how they came off – perhaps just through time and not being repaired sooner. In fact, one had already fallen off the wall, but had not entirely broken, just cracked. I went to the local hardware shop, and talked to the man in there, and took his advice and bought a type of grouting. Grouting is like a sort of cement in a little pot that you use to put under and between bathroom tiles – after about 24 hours it dries hard and keeps the tiles in place and seals them from getting water behind them, which then causes them to fall off. I found a video online of someone doing this with their own bathroom tiles, followed their steps and did it myself. I was very pleased with the process and the result. I felt a great sense of satisfaction from repairing something myself, rather than just calling someone up and getting them to come. It took a few hours, and I listened to music while I was doing it. I quite like this kind of thing. I think that more people should learn to fix things themselves, actually. It's good to develop these basic skills.

Part 3

1. Are IT-related jobs valued more by society?

I would say they are valued quite a lot yes. I am not sure if they are valued more than other jobs – it depends. But, yes, they are highly valued, as technology is the thing of the future, and everything is related to tech developments – at least a lot of things. So, I think that IT is a valued industry that a lot of people are keen to join, and work hard to progress in – it can guarantee a strong career. So, yes, many people value IT professions quite a lot.

2. Is the quality of products worse than before?

I think some products have increased in quality over the years, and other products are worse really in quality. It really depends. I think that, to be honest, since I was a child, the quality of products has increased, due to tighter restrictions on maintaining quality, and a stronger market demand for higher quality products.

3. What kinds of things do people like to repair by themselves?

Most people today do not repair anything themselves. We've become a bit useless in this regard to be honest. But the things that people might repair themselves could be things like ... let me think... my mother often repairs socks – she sews them. And sometimes she repairs clothes if they are slightly ripped. I can't really think of much else really, to be honest. I think we live in a throw-away society today where people chuck things away if they are broken, or they hire a repair person to come to the house to do the jobs for them!

Describe a piece of clothing that someone gave to you.

You should say:

What it is

Who gave it to you

When you got it

And explain why this person gave you this piece of clothing

A piece of clothing that someone gave me that I still have today, which I really love, is a long black coat that my parents gave me for my birthday a few years ago. It's a very elegant coat made from Cashmere. It's a simple coat, of very simple design, but it's a very timeless kind of style. I absolutely love this kind of coat as it looks both elegant and sexy at the same time. It's perfect for wearing with long dresses to events and special occasions, because the coat goes almost down to the ankles. It has buttons on both sides and a fairly wide collar. Cashmere is a lot softer than wool, so it is amazing to the touch, although it is not floppy or easily creased. I think it must have been around my 21st or 22nd birthday when I was given the coat. You see, my birthday falls at the beginning of autumn, just when it starts to get cold in Dongbei, where I am from. So, it was a perfectly timed gift, just before the temperate went down. Also, at this time, I was going to quite a few classical music concerts and elegant venues, so the coat was ideal for wearing with fairly formal clothes to such events. I think that is why my parents gave me the coat – I had just graduated from music college and was attending a lot of music events with my teachers and colleagues, and they felt that I deserved a more mature item of clothing to match the occasions.

Part 3

1. Why do people dress casually in daily life and dress formally at work?

People usually have to give a more serious impression when they are at work. When you work with other people, have meetings, and possibly meet clients and partners, it's important to be more formal, to look more formal, and to give a more serious impression of yourself. When you're out with friends, relaxing, going to cafes, restaurants or having fun, then you can let go more and it's not so important to look mature and serious and conservative. It's as simple as that really. It's about respecting others, your job, and giving a serious, sensible impression.

2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of wearing uniform at work and school?

A uniform has the advantage of making all the people at work or school look the same, look equal, and look conservative. This can give a unified, good impression of a company or school, and a sense of strong identity to those working there and the institution itself. The disadvantages, according to some people, might be that a uniform stamps out individual style and personality, and makes everyone look too much the same. And this can be uninspiring, especially if you want to encourage

innovation, personal flair and creativity in a workforce or body of students.

3. Why do people from different countries wear different clothes?

Well... throughout history cultures develop and grow for different reasons, and they also develop different styles of clothing for both practical and fashionable reasons. Firstly, clothes are usually made from the materials that a country has immediately to hand, and materials that are best for the climate of that country. Secondly, creative styles and design evolve for multiple reasons, for ethnic or religious reasons, for example. Cultures are quite distinct from each other, and so obviously their clothing styles and fashions also vary considerably.

Describe a gift you would like to buy for your friend.

You should say:

What gift you would like to buy

Who you would like to give it to

Why you want to buy this gift for him/her

And explain why you would like to choose that gift

The friend I would like to buy a gift for is my best friend, Jean. She was my dormitory mate in university and since then we have been very close friends. We've shared a lot of things in life together, from relationship troubles, struggles with our studies and issues with our parents. So, I always give her a well-considered gift on her birthday. I would like to buy my friend a voucher for a new restaurant in the city centre. I like this kind of gift. The restaurant I have in mind is a kind of modern Chinese-Western fusion restaurant, run by a famous chef from Guangdong. They issue really beautifully designed gift vouchers and coupons for special meals. I will buy her a voucher for a meal for four, as she can then take her sister and parents. The reason I would choose this as a gift is because she is a huge lover of food. She adores trying out different restaurants in the city, and she has a personal blog about them. She's kind of become a local food expert in a way and a lot of people follow her blog. She goes to all sorts of restaurants, local eateries to international fine dining establishments. The restaurant I would buy a voucher for is a new restaurant that I know she has not been to yet. So, it's perfect.

Part 3

1. When do people send gifts to others?

People in China usually give each other gifts on their birthdays, and perhaps sometimes at Christmas. Some people follow the Christmas tradition, although it isn't really our festival. What is more common in China is giving people money. This is a strong tradition, perhaps because it is more practical and people can then spend it on what they need the most.

2. Do people give gifts or red packets on traditional festivals?

Yes, people usually give both. In fact, when you arrive at someone's house for a traditional festival, you'd likely take some wine, some fruits or other food gifts. And for certain family members you would give a red packet with some money in it. Nowadays, with a lot of online shopping and digital spending, people can give digital red packets with their social media apps on their mobile phones.

3. Is it hard to choose a gift?

It can be hard to choose gifts for people. It really depends on the person. Some people are easier to buy for than others. Some people are happy with books or simple gifts, and others have higher expectations of gifts and are harder to buy for because they also might have very specific tastes. It can be tricky to choose gifts for some people, and a little bit stressful.

4. Will people feel happy when receiving an expensive gift?

Most people will feel happy because they will feel that the person really cares for them. On the other hand, there are people, like myself, who will feel a bit embarrassed. It can feel awkward receiving a really expensive gift, and put a pressure on a person to reciprocate when it's time to return the gesture on their birthday. So, it can be a bit awkward.

Object: (抽象)

- ◆ Describe something you do to keep fit and healthy.
- ◆ Describe something that surprised you and made you happy.
- ◆ Describe something that helps you to focus on study/work.
- ◆ Describe an ambition that you haven't achieved.
- ◆ Describe a song or piece of music you like.
- ◆ Describe a rule that you would like to change.
- ◆ Describe a story someone told you and you remember.
- ◆ Describe something that helped you learn a foreign language.
- ◆ Describe a difficult skill you have learned from an old person.
- ◆ Describe a difficult decision you once made.

Describe something you do to keep fit and healthy.

You should say:

What it is

When you do it

Who you do it with

And explain why you think this method is

I run every day. I don't go to the gym – I dislike gyms – I run. I run for about 40 minutes every morning, and I choose a different route each morning. Well, I have about 4 or 5 routes programmed into a special app on my phone and I choose one of those each morning. I love this way of taking exercise, and it's not only good for keeping physically fit, but it keeps the mind healthy and alert too. The morning is the best time of day for me to do this, because I always get up early anyway, so I can take a run for about an hour and a half, then come back home, shower, get changed, and go into work. This is my usual routine. It's great, and by the time I arrive at the office I feel energized and refreshed and ready to start the day productively and positively.

My routine, my method of keeping fit, is effective, because it's ideal for my lifestyle and my personality. I like a certain amount of freedom and I'm a fan of nature. Where I live is pretty close to two parks and a very scenic area of the city, so when I run I usually take routes through the parks and areas where there are lots of trees and flowers and plants. This, to me, is much better than going to a gym and being surrounded by machines and technology and depressing walls. So, in my mind combining a love for nature and a morning run, is the best way to get fit physically and mentally, and is a fantastic start to a day. I usually run alone, almost all of the time, actually. But occasionally, a friend joins me. He's also passionate about running, but usually can't coincide with my routine because of his job. He joins me in the holidays and sometimes on weekends. But, frankly, it's fine for me to train alone. I like my own company, especially when running.

Part 3

1. How do old people keep fit?

Older people keep fit in all sorts of way. One typical way that you may have seen is old people exercising in local community gardens and parks on those kind of exercise machines. These exercise machines are fixed to the floor and are good for moving your legs, arms and swinging and cycling on the spot. Other ways they keep fit might be to walk in parks, do square dancing in groups with friends, or play badminton. Some old people still enjoy tai ji.

2. How can parents help their children to keep fit?

Parents usually don't have to do much, because children usually love running around, playing games and getting involved in sports and activities. Also, in schools, kids have to do a certain amount of sports, anyway, so this also contributes significantly to them getting fit and keeping fit.

3. Do you think it is useful for governments to use celebrities to help people raise health awareness?

I'm not sure. I think that celebrities already get involved in helping raise people's fitness and health awareness, especially sporting heroes. But perhaps, if the government want to encourage people to keep fit more, and not lounge around, especially teenagers who spend a lot of time on computer games and mobile phones, then it would be helpful if famous stars helped to promote fitness, sure.

Describe something that surprised you and made you happy.

You should say:

What it is

How you found out about it

What you did

And explain whether it made you happy

There is one thing that really surprised me that I would like to talk about. That's the time when I won a singing competition in university. I love singing, and I am a pretty good singer – in fact, I think I am a really good singer and it's been my main hobby for years. I'm not a sporty person and I'm not that social either but I love singing. So, I spend a lot of time listening to, and singing along with, and practicing my favourite songs. I go to KTV at every opportunity I have with friends, and I often go to a little bar near to campus where they have a KTV set-up. So, I'd say I get quite a bit of practice in.

Anyway, the second-year students on campus arranged a singing competition just before the summer holidays. I, of course, put my name down as one of the contestants, and I have to say, I was really quite confident about winning. However, after registering, I discovered that loads of really talented students had also registered. I saw them at some of the meetings and saw the rehearsals in the sports hall... I couldn't believe how good they were – they were amazing. I then started to really

worry – I mean – I am quite a competitive person to be honest, and this is my only real talent, so I for some reason I cannot explain fully, I was really thinking I could win easily. After seeing some of these other guys practicing, I felt really demoralized – they were brilliant.

So, I put in a special effort to practice and drove my dorm-mates crazy in the process. I practiced as much as I possibly good. The same song, an Adele song, over and over again. Although my dorm-mates were sick of it, they were also very supportive of my efforts and really were gunning for me to win.

Anyway, on the day of the contest, everyone performed really really well. I honestly thought that if I was lucky I might get third place. You see, I still felt I couldn't properly hit the vocal range of Adele and get to and sustain those high notes while singing.

Well, the surprise was – when the votes came in from the judges, I won! I came first! I couldn't believe it! Everyone, including the other contestants, were actually really praising of me and thought that I deserved to come first. Of course, I was super-happy and also I felt that my hard work, efforts and determination had paid off in the end!

Part 3

1. Is it good for people to be happy?

Of course, it's good for people to be happy! Happiness is a very important thing in life, and also from a biological point of view if someone is happy then it is good for their body as well as their mind. It improves general health, motivation, all sorts. So, yes, happiness is incredibly important, and also I've heard that studies show that having good friends and family is very important for health too – being happy with an active social life is also a key to longevity, they say.

2. How do people express happiness in your culture?

Some cultures are more expressive than others, but I think that all cultures have some common ways of expressing happiness. We laugh, we smile, we tell jokes, we talk about the positive things that are happening, and we feel more active. People behave in a more lively and vibrant manner when they are happy and this is expressed in their everyday behaviour and attitude.

3. Do you think happiness has any effect on people?

So, yes, all in all, I believe happiness has a very positive effect on our mental and physical health and enables us to improve our self-esteem, achieve more in life, and become even more happy. So happiness is something that effects people strongly – it compounds.

Describe something that helps you to focus on study/work.

You should say:

What it is

How often you do it

When you start doing it

And explain how it helps you concentrate

What really helps me focus on my studies is classical music – light classical music. I always put violin or cello music on when I am studying, or clarinet music. I don't put it on loudly. I just put it on in the background, and I choose really calm concertos and pieces of music that are not too fast or too erratic. This helps my mind detach from the stresses and strains of daily life, and helps to make my thoughts calm and focused. It's a habit I've had for many years, which started, I think, when I was in high school, and a teacher recommended it. I began doing it in my dorm at university almost every time I had to study and I found it worked wonderfully. In those days I used to listen to music on headphones, because I shared the dorm with others, but now I have my own room. I play it on speakers from my computer. I am a person who needs to be in a quiet place when I am studying – a place where I cannot hear the sound of traffic on the roads or anything like this – so putting on calming, relaxing classical music can also help to drown out any of the sound of the city that might come in through the window. So, yeah, this is my main method of concentrating and relaxing when I really need to focus on studies and shut out the outside world.

Part 3

1. Why do children nowadays find it hard to concentrate on study?

Children always have short attention spans so they find it more difficult to focus on one thing for any length of time. Today, there are more distractions because there is more they can do – playing online games on phones, watching TV or tablets, and getting involved in all sorts of different activities with friends or family. Because there are just so many options today children are a bit spoilt and have higher expectations and want to constantly have fun! This means that today their concentration spans can be even worse than before!

2. What kinds of distractions are common in your life?

In my life common distractions are usually centred around my cellphone. The cellphone really is a dominant factor in our lives – way too much – and it's quite unhealthy to be honest. I'm constantly receiving messages, or waiting to receive messages or curious about what friends are doing, so I'm sending messages! It's crazy when I think about it – just how much mobile phones have come to dominate our lives. I'd say some people are even addicted to them.

3. Why do children need to learn to focus?

Children need to learn to focus because as they get older it's a skill that is necessary

for studies and work and getting on in life. Focusing on something calmly is also related to patience – and we must develop patience to survive! Especially in cities where we are always having to wait for things and grapple with all sorts of practical issues to get things done. Being able to maintain calm and patience and focus on something without stressing out is even more essential today than ever!

4. What kinds of jobs require higher concentration?

I believe that jobs that require high levels of concentration are things that require attention to detail – like being a surgeon, or a programmer or something like this. You know, professions that are high stakes, but require the person to really concentrate so that they do not make a mistake. So, I'd say that any job which is potentially dangerous, or requires a high level of attention to detail, is something that requires a person who can concentrate well.

Describe an ambition that you haven't achieved.

You should say:

What it is

Why you haven't achieved it

What you have already done

And explain how you felt about it

An ambition that I'd say I haven't really achieved, is to be able to sing professionally and make a career of it. I think I am quite a good singer. And now I sing part time in a small band. We play jazz music and other styles of music, but the band isn't that popular or successful, and far from being a professional career! As a child, I was always a fan of music, and I loved singing. But I really wanted to take it a step further and become really good at it – so after I finished my studies, while I was looking for work, I spent a bit of money on having weekly singing lessons. I already played the piano, so I had a basis in music theory and practice. But I wanted to learn about how to use my voice more, how to sing in a more jazz and operatic manner – how to cover a larger, more varied vocal range, so that I could sing both pop songs as well as more complicated classical tunes. It's more difficult than it seems, actually, to sing really professionally! Anyway, I had lessons for about two years, and took part in a number of performances with drama and theatre groups, classical music groups and also pop and jazz bands. I got really into it. It became a central hobby for me. And I must admit, it took at least two years for me to reach a level where I can now confidently say that I am a pretty good singer. However, I have not achieved the level of talent, success and connections to be able to be a professional singer and make a true career of it. I can only say that I improved my skills a lot, and became pretty good, and it's a little more than a hobby, yes, but certainly a long way off being a professional singer which I had dreamt of... and aspired towards at some point. So, yes, I'd say I didn't really succeed in this ambition, but I'm okay with that now. I am happy enough with where I am in life, nevertheless.

Part 3

1. What ambitions do children usually have?

Children have all sorts of adventurous ambitions sometimes. That's the great thing about being a kid – I remember I had classmates who wanted to be astronauts and go into space – others who wanted to be soldiers, and fight for the country... and then others who had more down-to-earth ambitions, like becoming computer programmers. Older children tend to be attracted to more realistic and perhaps money-oriented ambitions.

2. Why are some people very ambitious at work?

Some people are just more driven and ambitious than others, really. That's a question of personality. Some are really concerned about career progression because they want to achieve more and more and gain more expertise and responsibility. Others need more money because of family expectations and economic demands. It depends. There are a few key reasons why some people are just more driven than others.

3. Why do some people not have any dreams?

Some people prefer to have a more relaxing life where everything they want is within reach. I think that's okay, too. I think that today's world is too competitive and that can cause a lot of stress. So, some people don't have high aspirations and big dreams. Though, I believe they do have dreams – they are just more humble and modest dreams, easier to obtain and lower stress.

Describe a song or piece of music you like.

You should say:

What the song or music is

What kind of song or music it is

Where you first heard it

And explain why you like it

A song that I particularly like is "Thank U, Next" by Ariana Grande. I think it's by far her best song. She released it just after a huge relationship drama she had with her boyfriend. As well as being a really powerful song, it's also quite philosophical and reflective. It's almost like a ballad really – it has a grace and resonance to it which certainly touches your heart. There's no doubt about that! I first heard the song when I was at a party with some ex-classmates. It was a kind of reunion party. Normally I don't like those kind of parties, because everyone sits around and shows off about their great achievements in life, but this was different somehow. People spoke their hearts more, talked about their real feelings, and shared their opinions about life and their relationships. It was a meaningful occasion, and at a certain point in the evening when we had finished dinner and moved on to a KTV, the song came on, and a classmate sung along to it brilliantly. I felt instantly moved with both the melody and

the lyrics. So, I like it because I think it's a fantastic song and has a lot of meaning and sentiment, but also for nostalgic reasons: it reminds me of this occasion at my classmates reunion and the great night we all had together.

Part 3

1. Do you think young people and old people enjoy the same kind of music?

Not really no. Most of the time old people enjoy more traditional styles of music, and younger people like more upbeat, perhaps slightly rebellious types of music – or at least music which is faster, perhaps easier to dance to, be active to, or music that stimulates those kind of moods: the mood for dancing, being highly active and doing things quickly or even rashly. I think that this reflects the stage of development and the energy that young people have. Older people, having been through similar stages in their own youth, tend to get a bit more tired with that kind of thing, and want more relaxing and conventional lives. As a general rule, this is the case anyway. Although, I must say, there are some older people who do keep up with times, follow a lot of modern music, and have a genuine interest in different musical styles – those kinds of people are likely to share the musical interests of their kids and the younger generations in general. So, there are older people, too, who are music enthusiasts and do follow current musical trends, but not so many from my experience.

2. Why are many music competitions popular in China?

Music contests are really popular because the Chinese people have always liked stage performances and live entertainment. It's something that brings people together. They like to follow a contestant on their journey, and they also like the strong idea of competition – it's exciting. TV music competitions are also light-hearted in a way, and give everyone a good break from the stresses and strains of daily life.

3. What are the differences between live concerts and online concerts?

Live concerts are lot more exciting than watching concerts on TV or online. If you're in a live concert you also enjoy a better sound quality and a more intimate feeling with the rest of the audience and the performers on stage. The whole experience is more personal. The disadvantage, of course, is that you have to buy tickets and travel to the venue – and that can be a bit of an expense and a hassle.

Describe a rule that you would like to change.

You should say:

What it is

Why you want to change it

How others feel about the rule

And explain whether you have followed the rule

A rule that I would like to change is the rule that you cannot use roller skates or roller blades or skateboards in the university campus. This may sound a bit silly, but I am

part of a skating club – and there are plenty of great places on campus to skate or go on rollerblades. But there is this ridiculous rule that we cannot – apparently for safety reasons – but I do not understand the logic of it – we are adults, basically, and our own safety is important to us, and we know more about these sports than the people who make the rules!! It's not a sport which is dangerous to others either... and there should at least be a designated area on campus where people who are into skating can get together, share the latest tricks, practices techniques and show off their moves. It's a brilliant hobby and has become quite fashionable these days. So, to skate or rollerblade, my friends and I have to go to the local skate park, which is a bus-ride away. That's not so convenient. So, all of us feel that this rule is pretty unfair and affects what we believe to be a very healthy and wonderful hobby. A hobby that is also good for our physical and mental health. I really wish they would change this rule. When the rule first came out we didn't pay much attention, but the campus security kept clamping down and scolding us, so we basically had no choice but to follow it. I would certainly petition to have the rule changed if we had that right.

Part 3

1. What kind of rules do schools in China have?

Schools in China have all sorts of rules. Pretty much like schools anywhere I guess. Children cannot wear scruffy or outrageous clothes or fashions, or dangling earrings or dyed hair, and things like this. Those are dress-code rules. There are other rules, too, like you aren't allowed to take mobile phones into the classroom, you can't run or shout in the hallways, and you can't be seen kissing or engaging in romantic activities in public places. I can't think of any more off the top of my head, but there are, indeed, lots of little rules to govern how students behave on the school premises.

2. What rules should children follow at home?

Children, at least in my opinion, should be obedient to their parents, and follow the house rules – if the house rules are fair and realistic! Children should not interrupt adults when they are talking about important things, and they should also learn to tidy up after them when they get toys out or make a mess. Some parents think older children should also help with domestic chores in the home. I think this can be good for them, to a certain extent.

3. Do people often violate the rules in China?

I don't know if people in China violate laws more than any other country to be honest. It's hard to say. On the one hand Chinese people can be very obedient, but on the other hand they can also flaunt rules and ignore regulations if they are not imposed strictly, and if they are not penalized by the authorities for breaking them. In this way I'd say the Chinese are quite childish – they will follow rules if the authorities punish them for not following them. But if they are not threatened with punishments or loss of face, they might just totally ignore them and not even think about the consequences of their own actions on society. But, having said this, I think a lot of people in the world are like this. I'm not sure it's right to compare.

4. Do you think people sometimes should break laws?

Well. It depends really. Generally speaking they should not because they will likely bring about trouble for themselves, their family or their associates. It's generally a good idea to keep to rules, even if you don't really agree with them. We all have to live in society and even if we don't like certain rules, life is easier if we obey them. However, there are rules that we perhaps should protest against – if we really think certain laws and rules are deeply unfair, people should at least voice their feelings to the rule-makers, but perhaps it's not advisable to break the laws, really.

5. Why do you think children should be taught to obey rules?

Everyone needs to grow up understanding that rules must be obeyed. Society is full of rules and regulations and as we get older we have to conform to them in order to live a comfortable and normal life. Whether it be working rules, driving regulations, rules if you have your own business and all sorts of different laws. Everybody has to learn to follow rules... and so, children should be taught at a young age that rules exist and it's just part of life to have to follow them.

6. What kind of penalty is appropriate for small crimes?

I think it depends on the crimes. I think penalties and punishments could change from a small fine, to community service – which is doing useful work several days or hours a week to help the local community. I don't think people should go to prison for most small crimes, but there should be some level of punishment that will deter them from committing the same or similar crimes in the future.

Describe a story someone told you and you remember.

You should say:

What the story was about

Who told you this story

Why you remember it

And explain how you feel about it

A story I remember is one that my uncle told me when I was a child. It was a magical story about a secret door to another world that was located in the back of an old wardrobe in a huge, old manor house in England. I think it was called The Chronicles of Narnia... and was originally written by C.S. Lewis. My uncle did not have the book, but he remembered most of the story and so he would tell it to me at bedtime every time we stayed in his house.

The story starts with a group of children that move to live with their great uncle in a large country home. They are very much left to their own devices to entertain themselves in this huge, rambling mansion. They spend the days exploring all the different rooms, playing in the gardens and enjoying the novelty and freedom of being

away from the confines of city life. It really is an exciting experience for all of them... One day they are playing hide and seek in the massive house, when one of the girls decides to hide in a big wooden wardrobe in the corner of one of the darkest, dustiest rooms. As she pushes her way through the coats hanging in the wardrobe she realizes that she seems to be going on and on and on, and there is no back to the wardrobe. Suddenly she ends up in a snowy woodland of pine trees... And it is there that the adventure begins. She meets a fawn, a kind of mythical half-man-half-goat, called Mister Tumnus, and she gets involved in an adventure with talking animals, and a snow queen who casts evil magic!

Anyway, my uncle told me this story many times as a child, and then I realized much later in life that they had even made a TV series from the original novel. It's a great story and has always remained fondly in my memory.

Part 3

1. Do young children like the same stories as older children?

Young kids tend to like similar stories to older children, but simpler versions. Because younger children have less life experience they cannot really grasp more complex stories so they tend to be attracted to a lot more basic and simplistic interactions between people. They enjoy animals, colourful images, and simple exchanges. They are also very attracted to things that are bright and cute, and get scared a little by darker stories. Older children are much more sophisticated and can grasp a lot more nuanced aspects of human interactions and darker tales. This is evidenced by how Harry Potter stories have developed. The early Harry Potter stories, for younger kids, are more innocent, and the later Harry Potter stories are much darker and more scary.

2. How has technology changed the way of storytelling?

Technology has basically enabled us to watch more films, listen to more stories through audio books and apps, and access a wider variety of stories online. However, because children have ipads and tablets and lots of electronic devices, parents are less likely to read children bedtime stories at night, and so in a way, technology has reduced the amount of traditional bedtime stories that parents might read to children. So, it really depends on people's attitudes to parenting more than technology itself.

3. Why do children like stories?

Children have very colourful imaginations, and they are in a stage in life where they are more free than adults – they can allow their imaginations to run wild, fantasize and let their thoughts explore magical and adventurous lands. So, they are particularly drawn to stories... to fiction and fantasy.

Describe something that helped you learn a foreign language.

You should say:

What it was

What language you learnt

Why you chose to learn that language

And explain how this thing helped you

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The language I learned was English, because it was a core subject in school. But the lessons in school were a bit boring. I chose English simply because that was the only option at the time, so I guess you could say I didn't really choose it! Something that really helped me learn that foreign language was a TV series I watched when I was in school. It was a series called Science Adventures, and it was all in English, with subtitles in English and Chinese. It was hosted by a really entertaining girl, who spoke with a slight American accent, and was really inspiring. I used to watch every episode of it. Each episode they did a different science experiment, with a lot of fun stories related to the topic. It wasn't too heavy on science language and vocabulary, and everything they talked about was related to our everyday life and fun and interesting facts about daily scientific phenomenon – like, why water swirls in a certain direction when you take the plug out of the bath, or why the sun burns you when it's hot in summer, and stuff like this. So, in fact, it was excellent for picking up everyday English language. It was also quite modern, so I learned quite a few new phrases and expressions, which were more useful than the rather dry, old-fashioned stuffy things we learned in school textbooks. So, all round, this TV series exposed me to a wide range of vocabulary and expressions, helped me polish my grammar, and presented everything in a fun and interesting context.

Part 3

1. What difficulties do people face when learning a language?

There's a number of difficulties people encounter when learning another language. Firstly, it's harder at first, and without the right motivation and learning context. Then having the inspiration to study is quite tough. So, first and foremost it's important to be inspired and interested in learning the language. Secondly, having the discipline to learn the boring parts – the rules, the grammar, the things that are not necessarily so interesting at first. Learning all this requires a sense of discipline and regular study.

2. Do you think language learning is important?

I think it is to some extent, but it largely depends on what field you wish to go into in the future. If you want to work in a local company, in a local capacity, then no, learning another language is not always helpful or useful. If you want to work in a more international context, then learning another language is essential – in business, in education or in international relations. So, it really depends on which direction in life you wish to go in and what you aspire to do in the future.

3. Is studying abroad a good way to learn a foreign language?

Most certainly it is, but it also depends on your attitude when you study and live overseas. If you go overseas and really make an effort to mix with people from that country, spend time with them, develop relationships with them and talk a lot, your

confidence and language ability will certainly grow.

Describe a difficult skill you have learned from an old person.

You should say:

What it is

Why the skill was learned from this old person

How you learned it

And explain how you felt after you learned the skill

A skill that I learned from an older person is writing calligraphy. I have already been very attracted to calligraphy since I was very young – and my auntie in Xi'an taught me from around the age of 8 some of the basic strokes and techniques. My auntie was an excellent painter and calligrapher. She learned from her father, who had spent years studying and teaching Chinese traditional art and painting. She was also incredibly passionate about calligraphy, and enjoyed learning new styles and practicing, both at home on paper with ink brushes, and more recently on tablet software she uses – a much less messy way of practicing!

She first taught me the basics, and then gave me a special brush, stone and ink for my birthday. I just picked it up gradually from then on. I never found it boring at all. And I always had a strong sense of self-discipline to practice on my own. So, my learning curve was an enjoyable one. I was happy to practice for hours on end, watching videos online, copying experts and learning different techniques. I think a big part of learning a new skill, is motivation and discipline, and I had both of these qualities – so I was pretty lucky really. So, I felt really good about learning. I think, to be honest, it's all down to my auntie and her wonderful demeanor and her positive and encouraging way of teaching and inspiring me as a child.

Part 3

1. What can children learn from parents? What about grandparents?

Children can learn a lot from parents. Everything from basic education, manners, good personal habits, politeness with strangers and friends and family – pretty much everything to do with everyday life and living, really. Likewise, with grandparents – family members are often those that teach children the fundamentals of daily living, from washing and personal hygiene, to language, to ways of doing things in the home, and all about the world.

2. From whom can children learn more, parents or grandparents?

Children can learn more from whoever is their immediate carer, really, whoever they spend most of their time with, to be honest. If a child is brought up by their parents, predominantly, they will learn more from their parents. If they are brought up largely by their grandparents, they'll learn more from them! It totally depends on who they are brought up by, and the attitude of those people – how much they care about educating and teaching the child.

3. What kind of help do you think old people need?

Old people need a lot of practical help, really. Help doing basic chores that might be very tiring or difficult. This is basically because as people get older they are tired more easily, suffer problems like bad knees, or more serious health issues, and need more physical care. So, a lot of older people might need help with some of the daily domestic chores, and, depending how healthy they are, other tasks like shopping, for example.

Describe a difficult decision you once made.

You should say:

What the decision was

When you made this decision

How long it took to make the decision

And explain why it was difficult to make the decision

I'd say the most difficult decision I made was when I decided which university overseas I wanted to study at. I actually got really good grades, so I was lucky enough to have a choice. I was also fortunate that my parents could afford to send me overseas to study, so I do feel that my decision was perhaps a luxury in many ways. But still, it was a difficult decision. I did not know whether I should go to Australia or go to the UK, to Scotland to study. I looked in detail at the two universities in question, and they both offered pretty much the same course that I wanted to study, and they both seemed like fairly good universities. I just couldn't decide which place would be better for me, or more interesting for me. I spent quite a bit of time weighing up the pros and cons of both places, and I couldn't reach a conclusion at all. Some people advised me to read about the social life, the academic life, the environment, and others advised me to go with my gut feeling and choose the place that resonated more with my personality and how I felt. However, I'm quite an indecisive person, and I question myself a lot, so that meant that every day I changed my mind. Each place seemed equally as good, equally as exciting and equally as interesting and geared towards my future career ambitions. There didn't seem to be any one factor that made me choose one place over the other. In the end, I am not sure why, I just decided to go to Edinburgh, because I was sitting at home watching a nature programme with my grandfather and they mentioned the place. I then decided there and then – okay, I'll choose there. And I did. And that was that. I guess sometimes it's best to go with your gut feeling when you've a hard decision to make, or wait for some sign from the universe!

Part 3

1. What decisions do people make every day?

People on a daily basis make a range of decisions, like what to eat for lunch, what clothes to put on in the morning before going to work – how to do their hair. These

decisions are largely based on mood and preference. Some days we simply feel in certain moods and not others for no particular reason. Other decisions might involve what kind of music to listen to, when to go to bed early or late, and which friends to meet for dinner or workmates to have lunch with. These are the kind of everyday decisions that most of us make. Then, there are decisions we need to make in our jobs, depending on projects we are working on and timelines and deadlines and the way we prioritise our working day.

2. Which one is easier, making a decision by yourself or making a decision after a group discussion?

It's sometimes easier making a decision by yourself, because you don't have to consider all the different views and opinions that a group of diverse people might present to you. Having said that, difficult decisions are sometimes best made when you have different opinions to consider. So it really depends on the type of decision that needs to be made, and the kind of people in the group.

3. Why are many young people unwilling to follow their parents' advice?

Many young people feel that their parents might give out-dated advice. Times has changed a lot since our parents were younger and sometimes their fixed ideas about things are not so applicable today as they were in their days. So, there are often generational conflicts that arise from this gap.

4. Why would middle-aged people tend to give their decisions a second thought?

I think as people get older they develop a greater capacity to question themselves and reflect on their thought processes and possible decisions. I think as we get older we have more experience and that equips us to reflect more on things, and see other perspectives. I think that's the main reason why some middle-aged people might be more inclined to give things a second thought.

Place:

- ◆ Describe a quiet place where you like to spend your time.
- ◆ Describe an important river/lake in your country.
- ◆ Describe a place in the countryside that you visited.
- ◆ Describe a city that you think is interesting.
- ◆ Describe an apartment or a home that you would like to have.

Describe a quiet place where you like to spend your time.

You should say:

Where it is

How often you go there

What you do there

And explain how you feel about this place

A quiet place where I like to spend time sometimes is a specific corner of my community garden. It's an area in the far north corner of the community, almost hidden behind a number of trees and bushes, and with a small paved patio area with wooden benches around it, and a trellis with climbing plants. I really like this area, and I go there when I want to read in spring or summer, or when I want some peace and quiet and to get away from my family members or the children that are often playing in the gardens. It doesn't seem that many people go there because every time I go there, it's empty, there's nobody else there. I love being around nature, and it's hard to find quiet places in my city where there aren't any people, or traffic noise or hustle and bustle, so I have become quite attached to this quiet area in the gardens. I sometimes just go there and sit and think or play with my phone, chat to friends on Wechat, play games, things like this. At other times I take a physical book, like a novel, and sit and read. It's an ideal place to wind down and it's very secluded. I must say they tend to the gardens in my community really well, and that's the positive side of the area where I live - despite being very central and very convenient, it's actually an area with a lot of trees and the local community make a lot of effort to keep the gardens looking nice, plant new flowers at certain times of year and look after the borders and the pond in the middle. It's important for some people, like me, to get to find a particular place that feels like your own, where you can escape from everything, so I feel very lucky that I discovered this small area tucked away in the back end of the community gardens, an area which seems to be very unpopular with other people - I don't know why - but I hope it remains like this because it has turned into my personal little safe haven.

Part 3

1. Is it hard to find quiet places in cities?

Usually, yes. In china, especially. There is such a large population in China, and so many people and so much noise from traffic and construction work and things like

this, that it means it can be quite difficult to find a place which is not only quiet, but actually pleasant to sit in too. This is the problem with modern developments and modern cities - they attract so many people that they can lose their sense of tranquility as they become more modern, more developed and more built-up. But there are a lot of nice parks and gardens in most Chinese cities, and in those parks and gardens it's usually possible to find quiet, aesthetically pleasing areas where you can relax and escape from the world for a bit.

2. Why is it quieter in the countryside?

Well, quite simply, the countryside is not built-up, has a much lower population, and therefore is more peaceful. That's simply a product of being in a less populated environment, away from the big cities. The downside, of course, is that you can get bored, because there is less variety of entertainment and activities in a country location, so if you're into a more cosmopolitan lifestyle, you know, going to fancy international restaurants or bars or cinemas and things like this, then you will most likely get very bored in a countryside location. However, if nature is your thing, and you prefer quiet contemplation, then country towns can be the nicest places to settle down.

3. Compared with young people, do old people prefer to live in quiet places?

Older people live a slower and calmer pace of life usually, so they will often prefer peace and quiet, whether it's staying at home more, or being in a generally quieter place. Younger people are often in search of excitement and entertainment and often want to go out with friends, discover new things, spend time in lively and more noisy places, and engage more with the outside world, beyond where they are brought up. This explorative tendency is common amongst most young people, so they tend to feel that countryside places are rather tedious and lacking the novelties and thrills of the big city.

Describe an important river/lake in your country.

You should say:

Where it is

How big/long it is

What it looks like

And explain why it is important

An important lake in my country is Qinghai Lake. It's actually the largest lake in China and it is located in Xining, well... outside Xining actually, in the hollow of the Tibetan plateau. It's a very famous lake in my country. I know the lake fairly well because I am from that province, from a town not too far from the lake. I am not sure exactly how big the lake is, but I'd say it was about 3,000 or 4000km square. It's massive! It's really massive and pretty deep too. It looks pretty impressive to be honest. It's an iconic symbol of the area, and it's located in an area of stunning natural

beauty. The lake is important for the area as it used to be the one and only real source of fresh water, a key fishing area, and a natural attraction. People in the villages nearby also believe the lake has a strong power... I guess you'd call it a lucky power. There are a lot of older, superstitious people in my town and they all seem to believe that the lake houses some powerful spirits or something like that. I'm not sure I believe that, but I can imagine that in the past many people told mysterious and magical stories about the place. For me, however, the lake is important for different reasons – it's the first place I ever went fishing with my father, and also it's the very first place I learned to swim!! With my uncle!! So, as well as being an incredibly important feature for the province and the surrounding towns and villages, it's also got a special significance for me. Maybe the lake is enchanted, after all!

Part 3

1. How can rivers/lakes benefit local people?

Lakes have been incredibly important since the dawn of time. They have been a major source of water and of fish for people for centuries, millenia in fact. Today, they continue to be important for local communities for the same reasons, but tourism has taken off in the past few decades, and this offers a good source of revenue for the local community. Hotels have sprung up in towns and villages near large famous lakes, boat trips can be arranged, and walking tours and hikes nearby. These all bring fame and a certain amount of money to the local areas.

2. How do rivers/lakes affect local tourism?

The downside of the tourism that lakes attract is the damage to the environment. Especially in a country where there are so many people and tourist sites are inevitably packed with crowds – and often crowds that are not necessarily that respectful to the natural environment. So, although lakes have a huge effect on local tourism, attract thousands of people who want to see them, fish in them, go on boat trips on them, and bring great revenue to an area, the lakes and the area itself can be negatively impacted from an ecological standpoint, which is a shame.

3. Are rivers/lakes useful for transport?

Yes, of course – rivers mainly. There are a number of famous rivers in China which are all still used today for transporting goods and people from one place to another. Transport along rivers takes longer, but most certainly is a fairly common and reliable means of taking heavy loads from one place to another – especially through areas where the roads are bad or snaking through high mountain passes. Rivers provide a stable, reliable, if not slightly slow, means of transporting goods. And, of course, tourists – some tourists go on river cruises!

Describe a place in the countryside that you visited.

You should say:

Where it is

When you visited this place

What you did there

And explain how you feel about this place

A place in the countryside I visited was an old castle when I was on holiday in Germany. I can't remember the name of the castle right now, but it's pretty famous. It is located on a hill in south east Germany on the edge of a vast, dense forest. I visited the place two summers ago with my friends from work – it was a company trip where the company subsidise a group trip. Four of us went together and stayed in that area and went to various places sightseeing. This castle was really impressive. A huge stone structure with pointed towers and battlements. Inside it was made to look exactly like it would have done in its time. Large rooms with impressive old wooden furniture, rugs and tapestries and suits of armour and swords on the walls. It was magnificent. it reminded me of fantasy novels and films about princesses and knights that I had seen when I was a kid. It was really amazingly decorated inside, too, and there were all sorts of fun family activities that visitors could get involved in – like candle-making, dressing up in traditional medieval costumes and having your photo taken – things like this. Oh, and I forgot to mention: there were incredible views of the hills, fields and forest from the top floors of the castle. So, it was a wonderful trip to the countryside that I'll never forget.

Part 3

1. Is there anything special about the countryside in China?

Yes, the Chinese countryside is quite unique in that it's so large and offers so much variation. There are mountains, plains, grasslands, sunny beaches, tropical zones... pretty much everything nature has to offer can be found in the different regions of China. I'd say this is quite special, as it means that for domestic tourism people have a huge range of options to choose from if they like to enjoy nature.

2. What do people usually do when going to the countryside?

Again, it really depends on people's personalities and interests. Because there is such variety, there's something to cater for every taste. Steep mountains to climb for hikers, beaches for those that like the seaside, tea plantations and even tropical jungle-like areas. So, imagine the range of activities you can do: relaxing, exercising, taking photographs, getting involved in different sports. All sorts.

3. Do you think more people will live in the countryside in the future?

I think that as cities expand and perhaps become more overcrowded, and as facilities improve and develop in the countryside, more and more people will move to the country towns. Although, at the moment, most people prefer to live in cities. I think

this is partially because of the stigma that the countryside is poorer, and partially because there are so few job opportunities in country towns. Cities, therefore are currently the most attractive places to live. But I think this might change as country towns grow and develop more.

Describe a city that you think is interesting.

You should say:

Where it is

What the city is famous for

Why it is interesting

And explain how you feel about it

The city I think that is really interesting is Paris. Paris is in Europe and is the capital of France. Paris has a reputation for being a very romantic city and features in many films and songs. It's remarkably famous for its architecture, including the famous cathedral of Notre Dame, which sadly suffered a great fire in April 2019. I visited Paris a few years ago in Summer with a few friends from my university. We stayed in the north of the city, which is a little less touristy than the central areas, but still very interesting – near the area of Montmartre. Paris is most famous for the Eiffel Tower, built in 1889 from iron. It's an iconic structure dominating the city skyline, and you can even go to the top via thousands of steps, or in an elevator. There is also a restaurant not far from the top offering stunning views of the city. I, however, really like the area of San Michel, in the centre of the city. It is the historic quarter and is often called the Latin Quarter of the city. It's a rather fascinating district of cobbled streets and fantastic architecture, including the famous fountain – whose name I forget! There are all sorts of museums in Paris and art galleries. I think my favourite art gallery is the centre Pompidou, a gallery of modern art. I love Paris, and I enjoy the culture and history which constantly surrounds you when you wander the streets. It makes me feel excited and inspired.

Part 3

1. What advantages can tourism bring to a city?

Tourism brings jobs, money and development to cities. As cities attract more visitors, consumerism increases, and more money can be generated to make cities more attractive and more appealing. In this regard, the house prices increase, the area becomes more affluent, and people ultimately can live better and with better infrastructure.

2. Why do some young people like to live in cities?

Most young people prefer to live in cities than in country towns. This is mainly because cities are where all the good jobs are, all the career opportunities, and offer a lot more in terms of entertainment and leisure. Cities also become centres of finance and centres of culture.

3. Do most elderly people live in the city or in the countryside?

I'm not sure to be honest. I think there are a lot of elderly people both in the countryside and in cities. It really depends on where they grew up. There are, indeed, a lot of older people in the countryside, because in recent generations younger people in my country have migrated to the cities, leaving a substantial amount of older people in their original country towns.

4. Do you think well-developed tourism will have negative effects on local people?

Tourism can indeed have negative impacts on an area as well as positive ones. The impact of a heavy flow of tourists to an area can mean that local culture is destroyed or commercialised in favour of fancy developments. Locals can find they are living in a much more expensive area, with much higher costs. And for those that do not want to sell their houses, they find themselves with a higher cost of living, in a place that is much busier and more crowded than before.

Describe an apartment or a house that you would like to have.

You should say:

What it is like

Where it would be

Why you would like to have such place

And explain how you feel about the place

I'm going to talk about my dream house which would be a one-level home close to the seashore. When you sit outside on the back porch you can hear the ocean waves and the seagulls. It would be very relaxing.

Speaking of the reasons I think the building would be perfect, well, the exterior of the house would be made of light-colored reddish brick with some beautiful stonework around the entry. The garage would be large enough for two cars and also have enough space to have a workbench for projects that are too messy to be done in the house. Also, the garage would have a large sink so we could wash things in it that are too messy for the house sinks.

Other than that, the house would have three bedrooms so we could have overnight guests. The kitchen would be large with plenty of work area. The flooring would be made from wood stained with a light color. The color of the flooring would be dark enough so as not to show every hair or crumb that falls on the ground though. I would like this kind of house because it would be relaxing to live there and easy to maintain.

Part 3

1. Is it expensive to buy an apartment in China?

Yes, it is increasingly expensive to buy an apartment in China. In fact, it's absolutely ridiculous. For the poor quality and size of the homes, it's crazy. The real estate

market is hugely in debt because it has been taken advantage of by top officials to make themselves very wealthy by selling off land to developers, who then make themselves wealthy by selling over-priced apartments to people.

2. Do people usually rent or buy an apartment in China? Why?

Most people want to buy an apartment because that means they have something to pass on to their children after they pass away. Also people want to buy apartments because it is seen as a way of investing for the future.

3. What are the differences between the houses that young people and old people like?

It depends on the town or city really. There isn't that much difference in cities, really. I think older and younger people pretty much like the same kinds of places. We like modern apartments because they are usually more reliable, or at least people think they are likely to be.

4. What kinds of factors will influence people to buy an apartment?

The key factors that influence people's purchasing decisions are usually price, location, budget and the quality of the apartment, the facilities in the local area and community, and whether there are good shopping malls, markets or decent schools in the area. These are the main factors that govern people's decisions about where to buy a place.

Event:

- ◆ Describe a time when you used your mobile phone to do something important.
- ◆ Describe a time when someone gave you positive advice on your work.
- ◆ Describe an occasion when you lost something in a public place.
- ◆ Describe a contest/competition you would like to participate in.
- ◆ Describe an important event you celebrated.
- ◆ Describe a positive change you made in your life.
- ◆ Describe a special day out that didn't cost you much.
- ◆ Describe a time when you helped a child.
- ◆ Describe a time when you were caught in a traffic jam.
- ◆ Describe a time when you were very busy.
- ◆ Describe a recent change in life that helps you save a lot of time.
- ◆ Describe an interesting conversation you had with someone.
- ◆ Describe an occasion when you had a special cake.
- ◆ Describe a lesson that impressed you a lot.
- ◆ Describe a time you visited a new place.
- ◆ Describe a happy event you organized.
- ◆ Describe a long walk you have been on.
- ◆ Describe a time when you waited for something special to happen.
- ◆ Describe an activity you usually do that wastes your time.
- ◆ Describe a time when you felt proud of a family member.
- ◆ Describe a time when you gave a piece of advice to another person.

Describe a time when you used your cellphone to do something important.

You should say:

When it happened

What happened

How important the cellphone was

And explain how you felt about it

The time I recall using my cellphone for something pretty important was when I went on a short trip with a few friends to Pingyao, in Shanxi Province, just outside Taiyuan. It was the national holiday and we had about a week off. I was responsible for booking the hotel, and my other friend was in charge of organizing the transportation – basically the train and the bus.

Anyway...In the days before the trip, I got into a really stressful situation at home. I don't really want to go into all the details now, but lots of things happened at once – there was a sort of tragedy of sorts in the family in Changchun, and I had relatives, including my mother calling me a lot, I had a falling out with my landlord, because he wanted the rent in advance and there had been a problem with the bank transfer, and I fell out with my boyfriend over something really stupid, in retrospect. So, because of

all this, I completely forgot to book the accommodation for me and my friends in Pingyao, for the trip. I just totally forgot.

So, on the morning of the trip we met at the designated meeting place, by Beijing railway station, and as soon as I arrived and heard them all talking about it, I realized “Oh no! I’ve not booked the accommodation”... In fact, we had some time to wait for our train and we were sitting in a fast food outlet having breakfast and I quietly on my cellphone looked up a few places and found, luckily, there was availability for the six of us at this really nice courtyard hotel near the centre of Pingyao old town. I quickly booked it, there and then using my phone, and then when everyone asked, I said “yeah, no worries, I booked it days ago”... and nobody knew any differently.

Now, in the days before online payment systems and bookings, this would have been impossible! So, I feel really happy about this kind of method of booking! Also, I must say I was quite lucky, because during national holidays in China everywhere is usually really full booked, so you can’t often find places you want at the last minute. So, I admit, I also got quite lucky this time. I felt great about this, of course, and it improved my mood a lot as well.

Part 3

1. What do you usually do with a cellphone?

With my cellphone I usually just chat with friends, on social media, read a bit of news, play a few online games if I’m on transport or in bed at night, stuff like that. Sometimes I watch TV series and films on my phone, too. But not so often. Mobile phones are basically like small hand-held computers these days, so the majority of people use them in that way – to write emails, to edit photos and to play games and engage with social media.

2. What are the differences between young people and old people when they use cellphones?

Today there are not so many differences as there used to be when mobile phones started to become ubiquitous. Today, old people and young people use cellphones in pretty much the same ways. There are a lot of older people who now play games on their phones as well. I’d say that older people are not so into social media as younger people – they use messages for more practical communication, and not so much chatting or posting of photos and stuff like this. However, times are changing and with people travelling less these days, there are more and more older people communicating using various social media tools on their phones.

3. Do you think there should be a law to stop people from making phone calls in public places?

I think there should be some sort of restrictions, but not a law as such. I think that people should be encouraged to be quiet on the phone in subway stations, subway trains and public places. But I do not think there should be laws for these things. To be

honest, education is the best way to encourage good behaviour, rather than living in a society where there are laws for every single thing we do or say.

Describe a time when someone gave you positive advice on your work.

You should say:

When it happened

Who the person is

How the advice affected you

And explain how you felt about it

There is one time that sticks in mind when someone gave me positive advice about my work. I'll try to tell the story. You see, I worked as an intern in a technology education company in Zhongguancun, in Beijing. It was a young company, and I spent a summer working in the sound recording studio. You see, the company hired all sorts of voice actors to record online spoken materials, in a number of languages but mainly Chinese and English. I studied media studies in university and I have been moving in the direction of working with sound recording and editing since I got back to China a year ago. Anyway, I got this job as an intern, well, in some ways more than an intern because I was responsible for the whole studio for that summer – from the setting up of the equipment and the organizing of the schedules, and the recording and editing itself. I didn't have to hire the voice actors, but I had to guide them through the process, on arrival, and coordinate all the recording sessions and so forth. The best advice I received on this job was to really maintain a great relationship with the people we hire to come and act for us. This sounds silly maybe.... but it is in this job that I realized the real importance of treating people not only with respect, but going that extra mile to make them feel really welcome. Especially as it was a small company and we couldn't afford to pay them that well, it was even more important to keep them happy. You see, because I'm used to working in front of a computer all the time, and in sound studios, I don't often mix with people that much and I can be unintentionally quite standoffish and quiet and not especially engaging with outsiders. When my boss gave me the advice to be extra nice and polite, and make a real effort to be positive and display a more "American style optimism" I thought that this was a bit pointless... but then after a month or so I realized that it really did make my job easier, because the same people would come back every time we needed them, and it made scheduling really easy and saved me a lot of time on the job, too, because I didn't need to explain our system and processes each time – they just came in, sat down. I handed them the scripts and they did their job. It really speeded things up and helped to build positive relationships, and have the same voices for a range of our products. So, all in all, that simple piece of advice about nurturing positive relationships with a more engaging and extrovert attitude, really really helped me. It's often these little things that can make a big difference in life, and we all should remember this more often.

Part 3

1. Is it important to give children positive feedback?

I think it's very important to give children positive feedback. Children are especially sensitive to criticism and encouragement, and often if you encourage them positively they will become more confident and make more efforts in certain areas, and if you criticize them they will go the opposite way... So, all in all, I am a firm believer in the importance of positive feedback and encouragement for children. It makes them enjoy things like study and therefore they succeed and perform better.

2. What would happen if parents overly encourage their children?

If parents are too encouraging of their children and never criticize them then this is also a form of spoiling your kids. They can become over-confident, arrogant and competitive with others in the wrong way. By 'the wrong way' I mean they can become aggressive in their attitude to competition and their attitude to others. There is a fine balance between praising and encouraging children, and spoiling them and turning them into over-confident arrogant individuals. Parents need to be judicious in this regard.

3. Do you think negative feedback is more important than positive feedback?

I do not think that negative feedback is more important. I think positive feedback is more important, and also, remember, positive feedback can also highlight areas that need to be improved as well. We do not have to see such a strict division between negative and positive feedback. You can give constructive feedback that highlights strengths and weaknesses – it's really all about how you deliver the feedback and your attitude to presenting it to people. That's what makes the difference.

Describe an occasion when you lost something in a public place.

You should say:

What you lost

When and where you lost it

What you did to find it

And explain how you feel about this experience

The time I lost something in a public place that really sticks in my mind is when I lost my glasses. It was awful. I was in a crowded place, an outdoor music event in the park, and there were lots of people all crammed together in a thick crowd near to the stage. I was excited to see the band close-up and so I pushed to the front with my friends. When we were there the band became really animated and played their most popular songs – and at that moment the crowds just went wild – people were dancing, flailing their arms around, basically being crazy and not paying any attention to those around them. I was also getting excited and carried away myself.

Then suddenly as I swung my head strongly to the music my glasses flew off my face

and over the people and somewhere into the crowd! I couldn't believe it! I panicked!!

I suddenly stopped dancing and tried to push my way through the crowds of dancers to where I thought my glasses might have landed. I was pushing but at the same time to trying to apologise and appeal to the people to move out of my way, that this was an emergency because I'd lost my glasses. But, of course, nobody seemed to notice or care – the music was so loud and the crowd was so wild that nobody seemed to notice my desperation. I felt terrible.

Now, fortunately for me, and by way of some miracle, maybe, a man suddenly turned around, and was holding my glasses in his hand, above the crowds... I went towards him as fast as I could through the thick masses of dancing people, and I could then hear him saying "whose are these, whose are these? I nearly trampled on them!"..... I greeted him and we shouted over the music words of appreciation and thanks. I then invited him for a drink and we both made our way through the crowds and shared a beer together at the food and drink tent in the park. I felt great, and very grateful and lucky that day!

Part 3

1. What kinds of things do people usually lose?

Normally, people lose cellphones and wallets mainly – sometimes they lose their bag by leaving it on a bus or a bench or some place like that. People often lose things when they are distracted, either because they are really excited and not thinking straight, or because they are nervous or stressed and in a panic. These are the two main reasons why a person might lose things.

2. What do people often do when they lose personal belongings?

People usually start with panicking, frantically, then they gather their composure, and start to retrace their steps in the mind – where they went, who they talked with, where they may have lost the item. Usually it's a lot easier to deal with such things if you retrace your steps very calmly and try to visualize in your mind the different places you went to and where you stood or sat. Then, people will usually go back to the key places where they think they may have left the item, and ask around.

3. What kinds of people often lose things?

Well, anyone can lose things, but the kinds of people who *often* lose things might be people who are inclined to be easily distracted, people that don't focus on the moment very easily... emmm... also some people are just more absent minded than others... people who are perhaps drunk... people who are tired. Children have a higher tendency to lose thing than adults, perhaps because they are always moving from one thing to another and getting really excited about things and not thinking about the importance of personal possessions. Emmm... I think that's about it.

Describe a contest/competition you would like to participate in.

You should say:

What the contest is about

Where the contest will take place

When it will be held

And explain why you would like to participate in it

I would like to participate in a fashion design contest. In fact, I've taken part in a few before... I love such design events, functions and parties. I'll tell you why – I am studying fashion design in university. I studied one year in Milan, and I am now in my final year in Shanghai. When you study design you spend a lot of time reading news and watching fashion events. And, to some extent, taking part in smaller fashion events hosted by the department at university. But, there is a particular fashion design contest hosted in Shanghai every year, in one of the top hotels in the city. It's a huge event and all of China's best designers take part in it – and get to watch the best models in the industry walking on the runway, wearing their designs.

So, basically, one day, I'd like to have one of my clothing designs taking part in this particular fashion competition. It's a big ambition, and I'm a long way off yet, but it's good to have ambitious goals for the future and I think it's not unobtainable. I've had some small successes already in the field, won some minor contests and got myself into a couple of fashion magazines. So, if I continue to come up with innovative and interesting designs, look for greater inspiration and practice my skills at design, I think that I stand a good chance of taking part. For this particular competition, I don't even care about winning – just being able to take part would be prestigious enough. If you can get one of your designs on the catwalk at this contest, you're pretty much guaranteed to succeed in the industry. So, yeah, I'd love to participate in this contest for that reason – I want to become a well-known female clothing designer!

Part 3

1. What are the contests commonly seen on TV?

On TV the most popular contests are singing talent shows, quiz shows and perhaps sports contests of sorts. That's about it really. I also saw a painting contest once – that was quite popular in Europe, but not really very popular in China, really, so I am not sure if many people have seen that – Portrait Artist of the Year, it's called.

2. Why are competition shows popular?

People like the spirit of competing with others, the sense of excitement, the fact that it pushes you to do your best, and even more, it pushes you to exceed even your own expectations sometimes. It can be a really good thing for people to compete – it can be motivating. And so, people also like to see others competing too, and get involved in the tension and energy of a contest. Especially from the comfort of their sofa – watching it on TV!

3. Do you think it is necessary to encourage people to compete with others in companies?

I think competition in companies is important only to some extent. People will naturally compete anyway, for promotions, higher salaries and more favourable positions in a company, so I don't think it's really necessary to add any extra encouragement. I think there are more important things to encourage in a company culture than competition – like sharing, collaborating and innovating together, rather than competing against each other.

Describe an important event you celebrated.

You should say:

What the event was

When it happened

Who attended the event

And explain how you feel about the event

An event that I celebrated that I really enjoyed was the birthday of my friend, Lala. She is a really fun and inspiring girl, who always chooses to do things a bit differently to other people I know. She held a special birthday party, which she arranged totally by herself – and invited a few of us. It started in the afternoon at the opening of an art gallery which belonged to one of her friends – there were snacks, wine, some talks about art, and some really fascinating and interesting people there. Then five of us moved on to a restaurant nearby, a Yunnan restaurant, and had a fantastic meal. She loves the more tropical-themed places of south China so she almost always chooses restaurants like this. After eating and presenting her with her cake and gifts, we went to a jazz club where we had cocktails and sat and watched some live jazz music. The singer was incredible. We stayed there until the very end, then moved on to a nightclub which was more loud and raucous and much less sophisticated – but by this point we were pretty drunk and wanted to let our hair down and have fun and dance. So we danced for hours, almost until dawn, actually. It was a fantastic occasion, and I enjoyed how varied the day was, and how I met and chatted with so many interesting and random, cool people. Lala is a great friend and I'm really looking forward to her next birthday, actually! I felt great about the whole day and it gave me a renewed inspiration for life in my city – especially as I had been feeling quite down about things at the time.

Part 3

1. What kinds of events do people usually celebrate?

The main events people celebrate in a year are annual festivals like Spring Festival, birthdays, maybe a wedding sometimes. People might also celebrate the birth of a child, or the 100th day after a child is born – these are the key important events that people might hold celebrations on. Religious people may also celebrate some special

religious festivals, as well. These can be quite interesting – I remember taking part in a Tibetan celebration in Sichuan that was very interesting and colourful, with lively music and dance.

2. Do people often celebrate events with a large group of people or just few people? I think that both, actually. Most major festivals are celebrated in the family, so it depends how many family members you have! Most get-togethers of this nature are quite large as lots of family members might gather in one place to eat and drink for a few days. However, if you have a smaller family, then maybe there won't be so many people at such events. So, a lot boils down to the size of your family and where you all live – today families are much more separated by distance – family members living in different cities many hundreds of miles apart. So, such events can be smaller today than they were in the past.

3. Do people often celebrate festivals with families? Yes, usually festivals are celebrated with families, both in China and over the rest of the world, too. Usually that's the case anywhere – festivals are times of family celebrations first and foremost, although people may also invite friends or hold dinners with friends or work colleagues as well. Especially in a country as large as China, where families can be separated by vast distances, national holidays and festivals might be the only times of year people can spend time reunited with their family members.

Describe a positive change you made in your life.

You should say:

What the change was

When it happened

How it happened

And explain why it was a positive change

A positive change I made in my life was to decide to take up mixed martial arts, MMA, as a hobby. I was never especially good at sport, or that bad at sport really – but I was not really that interested or enthusiastic about sports, so I never got involved in much. And that also meant that I didn't really get much exercise. I enjoyed walking a lot, but living in the centre of a huge city, well... it's not an ideal place to go for pleasant walks. Anyway, one day I was eating in a restaurant and a guy was going round handing out leaflets. I took the leaflet and looked at it, and it was advertising a martial arts centre really near to my home. I stopped the guy and asked him a few questions – the type of martial arts looked different to traditional Chinese ones like wushu, and it attracted my attention, it piqued my interest. We got chatting and he said that I could go for two free sessions before committing to a membership – that way I could decide whether I liked the classes or not.

So, I decided to go for the trial lesson the following day, and I loved it. I went to the second free session, and I loved it too. I'd never felt inspired by a physical activity or sport like this before, so it was quite a novelty for me. I signed up and started on the course, and months have gone by and I'm still going twice a week and sometimes also on weekends to. I am aiming to enter a competition this summer – I've made loads of new, motivated and interesting friends, and I've got myself much fitter and stronger.

So, all in all, this was a really positive change I made in my life that I'm still really happy with.

Part 3

1. Is it easier for young people to change?

Compared to older people, yes, it's usually easier for younger people to implement changes in their lives or routines. Not only do they have the energy, but they also have the spirit of motivation and the idea that they have their life ahead of them to carve out new pathways and develop in new and interesting ways. However, there are an increasing number of older people who are less traditional, these days, and who are making all sorts of interesting changes in their lives and embracing new ideas, new hobbies, new interests and even new careers. So, it's more of an attitude than an age thing, I think.

2. What are the disadvantages when people keep making changes in life?

Making a lot of changes in life, however, can be a bad thing. Some people do not settle on one thing and stick to it, and they don't give things a chance, before moving on to something else. This can be a terrible habit, as you also have to learn in life to stick with things, through good and bad times, and not just try to change your path or your lifestyle as soon as times get hard. Like most things in life, you have to be wise and make judicious decisions.

3. What are some of the major changes that occur to people throughout their lives?

The main points of change in people's lives are when they first go to school, when they go to university, when they get their first boyfriend or girlfriend, when they get married, when they move out of home, and so forth. And, when they maybe have children. These are the classic rites of passage in most people's lives – although people are breaking away a bit from the traditional model of life these days and we are seeing greater diversity – for example some people do not want to get married or have children.

Describe a special day out that didn't cost you much.

You should say:

When the day was

Where you went

How much you spent

And explain how you feel about that day

A special day that I will always remember is one I had with a bunch of friends last summer. In fact, it may not sound that special really – but to me, to us, it was really marvelous. It was during the summer holidays, and many places were closed, and we didn't have enough money to leave the city or go on an excursion anywhere, so a friend of mine suggested that we buy some food, some drinks and take some chairs and cushions and arrange a big picnic in Chaoyang park with as many classmates and friends that we could get together. It ended up being amazing – we invited literally everyone we knew, and they invited everyone they knew, and so on. In the end there were more than 50 of us in a huge and fairly secluded area of the park, eating and drinking and chatting and playing games and music together in the park. I think in total I spent about 40 yuan on some drinks and some snacks – and because we all pooled our resources and shared, and all spent more or less the same amount, we had loads of food and drink for everyone to enjoy. I made a lot of new friends, had some great conversations. We played some fun games and all in all it was a fantastic time. The weather was magnificent and really warm and sunny. We had a shady spot by some trees and I spend the hours as the sun set just lounging around and chatting. It was a fantastic and very memorable day.

Part 3

1. How do people spend their leisure time in China?

People spend their leisure time in a variety of different ways, depending on their interests and personality, and, of course, what they can afford to do. Some people get involved in a lot of sporting activities and take it very seriously. Others spend time shopping online or in malls, and others like to go out to bars and clubs and restaurants in a highly social capacity. There are all sorts of things people enjoy doing during in their free time. And in most cities there are a lot of things people can do – lots of clubs, societies, adventurous activities, and a whole range of cultural options too.

2. How does technology affect the way people spend their leisure time?

Technology has greatly influenced how people spend their free time. Firstly, I think a lot of people have become very lazy about doing things in person with other people, and can spend hours, days or even weeks watching TV series online, playing online games, chatting with friends on social media – all without actually leaving the flat – all through their cellphones. I think there's a big downside to this, and although technology has connected us in so many ways, it has also resulted in a lot of people living very sedentary lives and only communicating with others through their phones.

3. Do you think only old people have time for leisure?

Old people often have a lot more leisure time because they have already retired. They may not be as active as they used to be in their youth, but they certainly have a lot more time to read, listen to the radio, lounge around and take it easy. Some old people are responsible for looking after grandchildren, so they are more occupied than others,

but generally speaking older people have a lot more time – and especially if they have a decent pension, they often find it's the time in their lives when they can relax more and rest more and live a calmer and more comfortable life.

Describe a time when you helped a child.

You should say:

When it happened

Who you helped

How you helped him/her

And explain how you felt about it

There is a time that really sticks in mind when I helped a child. In fact, it's a rather interesting memory and quite amusing in some ways. I was at my grandmother's village in the countryside one holiday, and I was taking walk just outside the village. I saw a young boy, maybe he was about 7 or 8 years old, crying and pointing up at the sky. I stopped and asked him what the problem was... he had lost his kite. I looked up to where he was pointing, more closely. It was not actually the sky at all, it was the top of a large chestnut tree. I squinted and looked more closely and saw that his kite was stuck right up the tree... right at the top of the tree.

I was quite hesitant at first. I mean... I thought about climbing up the tree, but frankly I was scared, not very good at climbing trees, and feeling a bit lazy about it. However, when I looked at the boy again, and saw how sad and desperate he looked, I gathered my energy and thought that I'd give it a go. I climbed up the main trunk and then pulled myself up onto the branches. It wasn't actually so hard, and the branches were quite sturdy. However, it was a really tall tree and it was a little frightening to have to go so high up. I tried not to look down, as that made me feel a touch of panic, and eventually I reached up to where the kite was. I had to walk along a branch, that was the scary bit, then reach over the grab the kite. I then climbed down.

When I got to the bottom and handed it to the kid, he was absolutely delighted. He was staying at his grandfather's house about 20 minutes walk away, and we walked back together and sat and ate lunch with his granddad, who seemed very happy and amused with the whole story, and pleased that the kid had got his kite back! I felt good about the whole experience and happy that I had made the decision to help him rather than not tried. It also meant that I had gotten to know two more people in the village that I hadn't got to know before – the child and his grandfather. So, all in all I have fond memories of this occasion.

Part 3

1. Do you often help kids? How?

I am not often in situations when I can help children really, to be honest. I don't really see kids that often. I work in an office full of adults. I commute to work in my car

each morning, and on the weekends I play tennis with friends and go to bars and restaurants. There aren't many families with kids living where I live, and my cousins live in another city! So, all in all, I hardly ever see children in my daily life really.

2. Why is it necessary to do volunteer services?

I don't think it is necessary at all. But it is certainly beneficial to get involved in voluntary work. It really helps us to learn about the value of supporting others, without the motive of personal financial gain. Voluntary work can be quite a learning experience and can really help us nurture the qualities of empathy for others. I certainly think that every student should be encouraged to spend some time and energy helping in a voluntary organization.

3. Who benefit more from the volunteer services, the volunteers or the people they help?

Both benefit. As I mentioned earlier, the volunteers benefit a lot in gaining experience in the field, and foster greater qualities of empathy for others at the same time. The people you help benefit, of course, from whatever the voluntary initiative focuses on, but they also get an emotional boost from simply knowing there are people out there who want to help them, who care, and who are there to give a helping hand for purely altruistic reasons. This, in itself, is very emotionally encouraging to people in need.

Describe a time when you were caught in a traffic jam.

You should say:

When it happened

Where it happened

How you passed the time while waiting

And explain how you felt when you were in that traffic jam

I've been caught in traffic jams countless times. Really. So many times I can't begin to count them! You see, I live in Beijing, and we have some of the worst traffic jams in the world – with the possible exception of India. It's insane. Sometimes you can spend hours trying to get to a place which should ideally take about 20 minutes, just because of the sheer volume of traffic on the roads. However, the time which infuriated me the most was when I had set off two hours early to go for a really important job interview in Haidian – that's a district a little far from where I live, but, again, on a good day it should only be 30 minutes in a cab, at most. So, I hailed a taxi. The traffic looked bearable – and we set off. As soon as we hit the third ring road there was an incredible traffic jam – it was not even moving. Thick thick traffic as far as the eye could see, and not even moving an inch. The driver told me that he had heard on the radio, or seen on his app, that there had been a car accident up ahead which had caused the traffic to come to a standstill. I sat there, quite patiently at first, but then I started to lose patience. An hour went by, and we had progressed about 200 meters up the road, and were literally crawling along. Then a thunderstorm hit, and

this slowed the traffic down even more. In the end I arrived at the interview over 40 minutes too late, I was soaking wet getting from the taxi to the building, because the driver simply couldn't find a place to park, and I was really in bad spirits. The funny thing is – they actually ended up giving me the job!!! I couldn't believe it! So, all in all that was a really memorable traffic jam!

Part 3

1. When do traffic jams usually happen?

Traffic jams happen all the time in most Chinese cities. We simply have too many people with too many cars. But the worst times are, of course, rush hour times. This is when most people are going to, or coming from, work. At these times there is a high volume of traffic on the roads at the same times and this causes some pretty big traffic jams.

2. What are the causes of traffic jams?

Well, too many cars, buses and vehicles on the roads at one time cause traffic jams. It's simple really. And perhaps not having enough road space to accommodate such a large volume. It's a real problem if you're in a city with a huge population – and especially a city where people's wealth has increased quickly over the past decades – you end up with a sudden rise in people driving private cars, and the roads are not really capable of taking that much traffic at once, and public transport may still be crowded and inconvenient.

3. Do you think the problem of traffic congestion will be eased in the future or will it become worse?

I think it will always get better as cities develop – especially if the government put enough time and resources into developing public transport and promoting the use of public transport over private car use. There are already quite a few restrictions on traffic in China today, and they have put a lot of effort, also, into improving the subway systems and bus routes. So, I am quite confident that traffic congestion will get better rather than worse in the future. But it may take time.

4. What would you suggest as possible solutions to the problem of congested traffic?

One solution which I think needs to be addressed faster, is to make sure subway trains have enough carriages so they are not so crowded. Quite a few more wealthy middle class people, and managers and executives in China, simply do not want to go on a densely crowded subway. Not only is it very uncomfortable, but they feel it is not in line with their status. I believe, like in London, New York and Tokyo, if the subway trains were greater in number and there was more space in carriages, executives and white collar workers would be more willing to take public transport instead of driving private cars.

Describe a time when you were very busy.

You should say:

When it happened

Where you were

What you did

And explain why you were very busy

There have been many times when I've been really busy, but a time that immediately comes to mind is when I was preparing for an art exhibition with a friend in university. I'll try to explain what went on. Basically, I was in charge of an art exhibition of paintings from a South American painter for the university Spanish department. You see, I was one of the main students, let's say, in the third year, and so I got involved in all sorts of exchange programmes and things like that. Anyway, there was this South American art exhibition which was to be hosted for two weeks in one of the gallery spaces in the next campus. I was in charge of making sure all the paintings were unpacked and put up in the gallery after the shipment arrived at the department, and advertising the exhibition, and organizing the opening event. You see, there's always an opening event at art exhibitions, where you provide wine and snacks and there's a little talk and an introduction to the artist and some of their paintings, and all of that. You see, the artist herself could not attend, so I was kind of representing her.

The reason I was really busy was because I had to juggle different things all at the same time, or at least it seemed like it. I had to not only ensure that all the paintings were unpacked very carefully, then put up on the exhibition walls in the exact way that the artist had explained (she provided a diagram and explanation of how to lay them out), then stick labels under each painting, that corresponded to the labels on the back, and then work with some computer designers to make fliers, and advertisements for the event, make an invitation list.... then organize the catering, the snacks and wine.... you can imagine! All of that to host a gallery exhibition opening. And I was determined to do a good job, because, on top of all that I had to manage a photographer and videographer to take photos and film the event, to put on the artist's website.

So, basically for several weeks before the exhibition, and especially in the days preceding the exhibition, I was incredibly busy, and quite stressed out, and trying to keep everything and everybody who was involved in the project, in order and properly organized so the event was a success.

Part 3

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages when people keep busy?

The advantages of keeping busy are that you are always engaged in something which keeps the mind and body active, and that's pretty good for your mental and physical health, they say. As they always say "if you want something done, ask a busy person".

The disadvantages of being busy are that if you are too busy you can get quite stressed and overwhelmed and you might not have time to fit in all the things you need to do, as well as get sufficient time to rest and relax and recharge your energy levels.

2. What kind of stressful things do people experience at work?

People at work can experience a range of different things that may cause them stress. Firstly, some jobs might be high pressure in terms of tight deadlines and complex tasks; other jobs may require managing people and projects and be difficult due to external factors, like customer demands. In other cases a job might be stressful if you don't have a good relationship and communication with your boss or co-workers. There's a variety of reasons why someone might get stressed at work.

3. Who do you think undertake more pressure? Adults or children?

Adults usually experience more pressure than children, in general, as they have the pressures of family life as well as work and other responsibilities. However, as children get older and go into middle school, for example, the pressure builds up as they have an increasing amount of homework – this can get more intense the older they become. So, it depends on the age really, as to how much stress people endure, as well, of course, as their individual life circumstances.

Describe a recent change in life that helps you save a lot of time.

You should say:

What it is

What you have done

How it helps you save time

And explain how you feel about this change

A recent change in my life that really saved me a lot of time was when I moved house to live near to my workplace. You see, I work in a small company in the West of Beijing, set in one of the hutongs. It's a boutique interior design studio. I used to have to commute for an hour or more to get from my home, where I lived with my parents, in the south of the city, to my workplace, and it was not pleasant. I had to change subway lines twice and travel in the thick crowds of rush-hour. I hated it. So, when I got a bit of a promotion, I decided to rent an apartment near to my workplace. I found a really nice loft apartment literally 2 minutes walk from our interior design studio.

As you can imagine, living right next to my place of work was so much more convenient than living over an hour away. Not only did I save time getting to work, of course, but I completely cut out the painful and horrid subway journey. I now only have to walk down a pleasant little narrow street, listening to the sound of the birds, before turning left at the corner, and arriving at work. It's fantastic. So, not only did this change save me a lot of time, but also saved me my sanity too!!! I am a sensitive person, and these things can really make a huge difference to my mood in general,

and as a result, my work performance too.

Part 3

1. Do you think technology helps people to save time?

Technology usually helps people save time, or at least should do. However, there are also incidents when technology can actually cause more hassle and more problems than doing things the traditional way. It's a double-edged sword, really. But, ideally, most forms of modern technology are designed to streamline processes and save time, most certainly.

2. Do you think parents and schools should be responsible for teaching children to save time?

That's a bit of a strange question in my view, but... anyway.....I think that both at home and in school time management skills are important. And there are slightly different ways people should learn to manage their time as they get older. In school time management is key to getting homework done and hitting project deadlines. At home, likewise, parents need to supervise kids doing homework, to some extent, and raise their awareness of how best to manage their time so they balance schoolwork with leisure time. So, in different ways I would say teaching "saving time", or "time management" is the job of both parents and teachers in school.

3. Do you think it will be easier for people who can manage time well to become successful?

I think that successful people have a great sense of discipline, usually, anyway, and are excellent at managing their time. At least this is the impression I get. Most people I know who are successful in life are excellent at concentrating, dividing up their time between social life and work life, and knowing how to focus when they need to, on the things that matter, when they matter. So, yes, I think it is easier to become successful if you are a good time manager.

Describe an interesting conversation you had with someone.

You should say:

When it was

Who you had it with

What you talked about

And explain why you think it was interesting

An interesting conversation that really sticks in my mind is one I had with a student in Beijing Language and Culture University last year. It was with a Tunisian student who was studying Chinese there. We met in the Muslim cafeteria on campus while waiting in the queue for food. We started chatting, because we were waiting quite a long time for them to finish baking some naan bread, and I was complaining a little bit. He told me it was good to be a bit more patient, and then we started to talk about the

similarities and differences between Muslim food in China and in other Islamic countries like Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Lebanon, and Turkey too. He had travelled quite a lot in the Muslim world as well as in the West and Asia. So, he had some really interesting perspectives on how different nationalities think and feel about things – not just food, but cultural and political issues as well. We talked for a long time and ended up eating together. Most of the time I listened to the interesting experiences he had had, and asked him questions about Tunisia, the family there, the role of religion in society, and the education system. He came from a family of diplomats and alongside Chinese language studies he was studying International Relations, which is one of the reasons why I think he had such a knowledge and interest in cultures, societies and political systems from different countries. We became friends shortly after this and have been quite good friends ever since.

Part 3

1. When do children normally begin to form their own views?

I think children start to have their own views and opinions and ideas around the age of 3 or 4 years old. Toddlers absorb a lot more than we think they do, and learn very fast, and by the age of 5 years old they have really quite strong ideas about things they like or dislike, things they want to do and things they hate doing.

2. What do young people usually talk about?

Young people talk about all sorts of things. It totally depends on the kind of young people we're talking about, their social backgrounds, their educational backgrounds, their personalities and their family backgrounds – even the place they come from. If you come from a small town you find people talk more about local gossip and small circles of family friends; if you come from a big city you are perhaps more likely to have been exposed to more international ways of thinking and you might talk about wider issues beyond just very local gossip. So, it really depends. Beyond this, popular topics are things like celebrities, the latest movies, family issues, studies and the pressure of finding a decent career, or love and relationships and the struggles of trying to get along with their romantic partners. Things like this are pretty universal really amongst the youth

3. In what industries do you think communication is a necessary skill?

In most industries a level of communication is essential. However, jobs that require more advanced levels of communication might be those related to law, education, diplomacy and international relations... and perhaps to some extent HR and marketing... Jobs that consist of working a lot with a range of different people and negotiating sometimes subtle and complex issues.

Describe an occasion when you had a special cake.

You should say:

When this happened

Where this happened

Who gave you the cake

And explain why it was a special cake

Well, there's a few occasions I've had a special cake – almost every birthday over the past ten or fifteen years. You see, we have a strong tradition of giving people cakes on their birthdays, and in more recent years there's a lot of fantastic and quite amazing cake companies in China. The last time I had a fantastic cake was my last birthday. I had a dinner with my girl friends in a Japanese restaurant, and after the dinner they presented a huge box with ribbons tied around it. I opened it and inside was this amazing, tall, peach-coloured cake. The cake was decorated with the most incredible flowers and designs all made from different coloured icing and cream. It was probably the most fancy cake I've ever seen, actually. It's hard to explain or describe, but it must have been done by a real expert in cake design, as it was almost a work of art! The cake came with candles, which we put in it, and I lit them, made a wish – of course, they turned the lights off for my wish – and the whole restaurant joined in as we sang happy birthday. I enjoy this birthday tradition, and I like the fact that everyone seems to follow it each year. Though it becomes a little difficult because when it's your friend's birthday you have to try to find an equally nice cake, or even better cake to surprise them with! So, it can get quite hard to keep up!

Part 3

1. What's the difference between special food in China and foreign countries?

Well, that's quite a difficult question to answer, really. Special food is different in all countries. And China is a huge country, with many different types of cuisine, which all differ from each other, and all have their more or less 'special' dishes. So, it's not really easy to say, in short, what the main differences are between special food in China and in other countries. Most Chinese people think their food is the best in the world – so – maybe they would say the difference is that Chinese food is simply all way more special than food anywhere else! I'm not sure.

2. Do Chinese people usually cook special food in traditional festivals?

Yes, I would say that every family has a number of dishes that they make for traditional festivals, those are special for those occasions. It's not that they do not eat them at other times of year, but that they make all their favourite special dishes on festivals.

3. Do Chinese families like to eat together during traditional holidays?

Yes, absolutely. It's our main occasion during the Spring Festival really. Chinese love to dine together and have a lot of different dishes to share. And most people invite a

lot of family members to the house for festivals, so there's always a huge meal, lots of snacks, wine and conversation. The dinner is in some ways the focal point of the festival.

4. Why do people spend more on special food on special occasions?

People like to be generous and celebrate their lives on special occasions, and so they always buy all the best foods and wines and fruits. It's quite normal, I think everywhere in the world, that festivals are special and therefore feature all the best things that a family can afford. It marks the occasion and sets it apart from normal everyday life.

Describe a lesson that impressed you a lot.

You should say:

What the lesson was about

Where you took the lesson

What you did in the lesson

And explain why it impressed you a lot

A lesson that I remember well that impressed me a lot was when a visiting art teacher came into school to teach us about silk screen printing. I found this really fascinating. It's quite a traditional style of textile printing that consists of transferring your pattern on screens of fine silk mesh, one screen for each separate colour, and then placing the screens down one by one onto paper and rubbing paint across the silk screen. The paint goes onto the paper in the shape of the design you've put into it, and it produces quite a unique result. It's quite hard to explain actually... Anyway, the teacher was an eccentric woman in her fifties with a very engaging and inspiring manner. She was very good at taking us through the initial steps of setting up our screens and preparing for printing. She made even the fiddliest and potentially boring aspects of the process seem really interesting. She began by showing us a PowerPoint featuring some famous paintings and works of art that have been made with the screen-printing method. And she showed us some examples of her own work – pictures of landscapes, buildings and abstract designs. Then she took us through all the steps, in pairs, of how to prepare our own screens, designs, and start printing. The lesson was a long one.... basically, almost a whole day, and was several hours broken down over several classes really. By the end of the day we had all learned a lot, and most of us had produced some really impressive pieces of artwork that we would never have imagined we were capable of. I felt really good about this lesson... this workshop... and was proud to be in a school where they arranged such lessons by visiting artists.

Part 3

1. Which can help you remember things better, words or photos?

Oh, it depends on the person, to be honest. Some people need visual cues to remember things, and other people have a great memory for words. Our minds all work

differently. I, for example, always remember people's words, and have a poor memory for photos and images, whereas I think that a lot of people are the opposite, and remember photos and visual imagery a lot more clearly than words.

2. Why do some people have better memory?

Some people have an amazing ability to remember even the smallest of details, and others forget things very easily. I am not sure why. I think in part this can be genetic – some people are simply born with a better memory than others. In part I also think it is one's mental disposition – some people are more easily distracted and do not concentrate as well as others, and they are more likely to forget things, as they've not been paying as much attention.

3. Can technology help people remember things better? How?

Technology, of course, does a lot of work for us. We have calendars on our phones, with alerts, we have all sorts of apps that help us organise things, plan things, write things down, recall things. There's a host of features on computers and phones today that help us do things by remembering things for us, basically. Technology helps remember things for us, while we can focus on the truly creative and innovative side of things. That's one way to look at it, anyway.

Describe a time you visited a new place.

You should say:

Where it is

When you went there

Why you went there

And explain how you feel about the place

A new place that I remember quite clearly that I visited was a small cinema in the centre of Sanlitun, a commercial area in Beijing. It's located on the top floor of a shopping centre. It's called Cinker Pictures, and it's a very unique place! It is designed in the style of an old New York art Deco cinema, with a cocktail bar and a restaurant, with deep red walls, and tasteful decorations. I went there with a friend of mine one Saturday night, for dinner and to see an old film – Roman Holiday. My friend actually invited me – well, to be honest it was a kind of romantic date. It was truly fantastic actually, I absolutely loved the experience. We had cocktails on arrival, a light meal, and then were ushered at the appointed time, into the small cinema that he had booked. It was a cinema designed for intimacy with dark red sofas, and a screen just for us! I did not think a cinema like that existed. It was probably the best cinema experience I have ever had. It was very personal, and quite a sophisticated environment to be watching an old film in. I would certainly like to go there again if I had the chance, even though it's a little expensive.

Part 3

1. Which one do you prefer, living in a city or only visiting it as a tourist?

I would ideally prefer to live in a city, but a small city. Cities are more exciting places to live in than country locations, and there's a lot more in terms of entertainment and leisure options, as well, of course, as career opportunities. I would much prefer to live in a city, but I am not really keen on huge cities or capitals – I would much prefer to live in a slightly smaller city. The countryside in my country is too remote and there simply isn't enough going on in most country towns to keep me inspired – or enable me to develop a career.

2. How do children react when they go to a new school for the first time?

Children are often quite nervous when they go to school for the first time. They are understandably shy, reserved about meeting their new classmates and teachers, and sometimes intimidated by being in a place with so many people they do not know. Most of the time kids get used to these experiences and make friends quite quickly though, especially if the environment is quite positive and welcoming.

3. How do young and old people react differently to new things?

Young people are usually more energetic and excited about new things than older people. Older people are not so excited about fresh, new things, possibly because they have experienced many new things in their lives and do not welcome new experiences as much. Older people might prefer to be in situations they are more familiar with, and comfortable. Whereas younger people still have a thirst for life and discovery.

4. Why do some people want to go to college that are far away from home?

Most of the time people want to go to college in a place which has a lot of opportunities, both academically and in terms of entertainment and social life. Cities are often the places where most good universities in my country are located, and so the majority of younger people will choose to live in a city, and go to university there. There are not many universities in towns in China. In addition, it is usually the case, unless you live in a capital city, that most young people want to go to one of the universities in the capital. So they will leave home at that time. China is quite big, so everywhere is quite far away!

Describe a happy event you organized.

You should say:

What the event was

When you had it

Who helped you to organize it

And explain how you feel about it

A really happy event that I organized was a birthday celebration for my friend and classmate, Jean. It was going to be a surprise party, but that was too hard to arrange, as she shared a dorm with us and she would catch on while we were planning it and buying things for it. So, we discussed the birthday idea with her, and told her we

would plan it... She seemed quite touched with that. Also, we all wanted a good excuse to have some fun. We didn't just have a party – we made a whole day of it. We arranged to go to a theme park, Happy Valley, outside the city, for about 5 hours. Then we had a dinner in a fantastic hot pot restaurant in the city, then we went to a cocktail bar, and then we all went to KTV! So, we had a really action-packed day. At the dinner we presented her with a great birthday cake that we had bought online from a specialist cake-making company. We also gave her gifts at the dinner. At the cocktail bar we got the bartender to prepare special drinks for her and give us all a group deal. And at KTV we made sure that we selected all the songs she liked. It was a very tiring day, and took some organization and planning, but all turned out well in the end. We had a fantastic time. I and my friend Mary were the main organisers, but everyone helped a little bit, and another friend, Mike, organized the minibus from place to place throughout the day, so we could all travel together. It was a truly amazing day and I think the best birthday Jean has had in a long time.

Part 3

1. How can parents help children to become organized?

Parents can start teaching kids to be organized at quite a young age. They can get them to clear their toys away in an orderly fashion, fold their clothes after taking them off... and teach them where things go in the house and how to put things back properly after use. These are the first things you might try to start teaching a toddler. And as the children grow up, they should teach them more about time-keeping and scheduling tasks.

2. On what occasions do people to be organized?

People need to be organized with work, with studies, with household tasks and with responsibilities and things that need to get done for the family. In terms of occasions, people need to be especially organized when they are arranging meetings, planning things like weddings and events, or organizing trips and holidays. These are some examples that spring to mind of when organizational skills are essential.

3. Do people need others' help when organizing things?

Sometimes it's easier to organise something yourself, rather than involve other people. But with other things, it's best to get help from others. It totally depends on the type of things that you need to arrange. You usually need help from others if you are organizing something like an event – a wedding for example, which involves multiple different types of tasks in order for the whole event to go well. If different people are allocated with different tasks in an orderly and clear manner, then this will make the planning and the event itself go smoothly.

Describe a long walk you have been on.

You should say:

When this happened

Where you walked

Who you were with

And explain how you felt about this long walk

A long walk that I once went on was with a friend of mine and his uncle and auntie, outside Dali, in Yunnan province. It was a fantastic walk, and took us through country villages, fields, plantations, hills, and over rivers and through woodlands. It was a truly amazing walk. We followed a map that was in a guidebook that I borrowed from the guest house we were staying at in town. We went on this trip because my friend's uncle and auntie are huge photography fans, and they often go on holiday to picturesque places of natural and historic interest in China, and spend their time taking photographs. They're members of a photography club in Shanghai – they're a very arty, creative family with lots of cultural interests. Anyway, my friend had invited me along on this trip with them, and from beginning to end it was absolutely fascinating. And the long walk we went on was probably the most interesting part, to me. It was the best part because I felt that I saw so many different things, and in the villages we passed by we met quite a few locals who were incredibly welcoming, introduced us to their homes and families, offered us food and snacks, and gave us directions. The warmth of the country folk in Yunnan is really amazing and rather touching. So, all in all, this is the one long walk that really stands out in my memory very strongly.

Part 3

1. Do women have more leisure time than men do?

It totally depends. That's a bit of a generalization! Some women do, others don't. Some women do all the house work, while their men go off to work all day. Very rich women may have a lot more leisure time, perhaps. I really can't say to be honest – it depends on a lot of things: family background, income, how much wealth or property they have, which country they are from and what the social customs may be... all sorts of factors are involved in such things.

2. Is leisure time important to everyone?

Leisure time is very important to everyone, as it gives us all a chance to relax, charge our batteries, give mind and body a good rest, and save energy for the tasks, duties and responsibilities, or get exercise, engage in sports, social activities – and forget about the world of work and study! Some people need more rest or leisure time than others. Some people need more social time or physical activities than others. Everyone has a different idea of what 'leisure' really is, and varying needs.

3. What are the differences between the outdoor activities children did in the past and now?

In the past children were less afraid to get dirty, and play outdoors – and their parents were less worried about these things too! Today, it appears that children are coddled much more than in the past, and outdoor activities are a lot more controlled, take place in more modern sports centres, and involve a lot more equipment and, in my opinion, unnecessary fashion accessories. In my childhood, kids would have fun kicking a ball around in the mud in raining winter weather, but today it seems a lot of children are given specialist sport lessons, play basketball on professional courts, and must wear the latest brand sports clothes! That's my impression anyway!

Describe a time when you waited for something special to happen.

You should say:

What you waited for

Where you waited

Why it was special

And explain how you felt while you were waiting

A time I remember waiting, actually for quite a long time, for something special to happen, was when my friends and I arranged a surprise birthday party for another friend. It's really fun arranging a surprise party. We actually rented a room in a bar-restaurant, and decorated it with balloons and happy birthday signs and things like this, and organised with the bar owner to lay on a menu of drinks and snacks. Anyway, because it was a surprise party, we obviously didn't tell him that we had arranged all this. One of us simply sent him a message and asked if he'd like to meet for a drink in that bar, on Saturday night. He replied yes. And they arranged to meet there at 8pm on that Saturday. In reality, all of us were waiting there – about 15 of us in total – all with birthday gifts and streamers and so on. So, Saturday night came and we all waited there... and we waited... and we waited... 8 o'clock came and went... and he still hadn't arrived.... We started to get worried. That one friend who had arranged to meet him, texted him, but no reply.... And we continued to wait.... And then it became 9 o'clock... and still he hadn't replied or turned up. We began to get incredibly concerned. It was very out of character for this friend to be late, let alone ignore a text message. It was very strange. In the end, we found that he had had an accident and had to go to hospital. It was not a serious accident, but that's what had delayed him. And in the accident his mobile phone battery had died and he couldn't receive messages. And that's why we had to wait!

Part 3

1. On what occasions do people usually need to wait?

People usually need to wait when they want to take public transport like buses, trains, and especially taxis. More recently taxis are booked online through apps and sometimes it takes a really long time for drivers to pick up. Another situation in which

people routinely wait is when they have a doctor's appointment – they can wait a long time in queues for such appointments, especially in really busy places.

2. Who behave better when waiting, children or adults?

Adults are usually better at waiting. We learn, as we get older, to be more patient about things in life and not expect instant gratification. Kids are much less patient largely because they don't understand the need to wait for things, and want things to happen immediately when they expect something. Patience is a quality which is sometimes very hard to nurture in children, as they have very emotional reactions to circumstances.

3. Do you think waiting is harder now?

It depends. In cities in China, yes, population is dense and there are lots of crowds. It seems that in recent years, I think mainly because of the traffic in my city, I seem to wait longer and longer for everything. I reckon this is becoming common for pretty much everyone, and instead of getting more patient, I think many people are becoming increasingly less patient the more that they are frustrated by long queues, taxi waits, and all sorts of measures and protocols that are involved in going to different places these days.

Describe an activity you usually do that wastes your time.

You should say:

What it is

When you usually do it

Why you do it

And explain why you think it wastes your time

Haha, there is one thing I do a lot that I'm ashamed to say, but it's really a waste of time, if I'm honest. I spend way too much time in bed at night looking through my mobile phone at my WeChat contacts, their moments and photos and chatting with friends on the messages. I have to say that sometimes I wish I did not go to bed with my phone, as I waste a lot of time on this kind of idle activity. Before mobile phones I used to read novels and really enjoyed them. However, now I hardly read at all, and I've become so easily distracted with random conversations with my friends online. I really wish I could control myself more, put my phone away at night, and just turn on the bedside lamp and read a proper book, rather than picking up my phone. I'd say it was a sort of addiction really – I think a lot of people suffer from this these days, too, not just me.

I think that phones were in some ways a quite bad invention because we constantly feel that we are able to contact people at any time of day or night. It's as if we are not totally on our own or free to do other things – like I said, like reading a novel – because we are keen to keep looking at our phones to see if someone has messaged us, or pick up on random silly chats, or catch-up on gossip between friends that we have missed. I think I am going to make a concerted effort to plug my phone in and charge

it in another room from now on, so that I can discipline myself to read or do productive and wholesome activities before bed, instead of just sitting and playing around whimsically with my phone.

Part 3

1. How do you balance life and work?

I am pretty good at maintaining a decent work-life balance, actually. Generally, I am a fairly organized person and I'm able to divide working tasks and study tasks from leisure activities by simply structuring my time well. I think that a lot of people manage their time quite poorly, to be honest, perhaps because they are not disciplined enough with themselves and they don't divide up the tasks and duties they have to do, from the free time they have. It's really a case of being organized and strict at the same time, really.

2. Will you continue doing something when you aware that it's a waste of time?

I generally think that yes, I continue doing things even though I'm aware they might be a waste of time – like playing with my mobile phone too much before bed. I think a lot of people are like this, actually. However, I must say that because I'm pretty organized, I never let this habit affect my work, or essential tasks I need to get done. I always get my work done and studies done. It's just that I think that wasting free time isn't a good thing either, and I'd like to spend my free time a little more productively and read more, rather than play about with phone on social apps.

3. What kinds of things make people feel pressured?

People feel pressured in life by all sorts of things. The main things that cause people pressure are work, money and relationships. We have all sorts of expectations of ourselves as well as needs. Also, when in a relationship, the other person also has expectations of us as well, so this increases the pressure we feel, and in today's society this can be quite overwhelming, especially as life is more competitive than before, as well as more expensive – we tend to have higher expectations of ourselves and expectations of others.

4. Why do some people refuse to abide by rules?

Some people are just more unruly than others. This is down to personality really – some people tend to be more conformist, and other people more non-conformist. Some people think that rules are to be followed by the letter, and are almost scared to kick against the established rules, whereas other people are a bit more independent and free-thinking, and feel a bit above abiding by rules. Creative people can be a bit more daring in this sense, I think. People who like to think for themselves more seem to be more attracted to bucking the trend and not conforming.

Describe a time when you felt proud of a family member.

You should say:

When it happened

Who the person is

What the person did

And explain why you felt proud of him/her

A time when I felt really proud of a member of my family was when my elder brother completed a 28 mile marathon around the city. This was a huge achievement, as a marathon is a pretty long run. He gathered a lot of sponsorship from people, and the money went to an animal rescue charity. He trained for months to run the marathon. He didn't just want to walk the distance like some people – he wanted to actually do the best he could and run the whole 28 miles. He's not really much of a sporty person, so I was surprised that he wanted to do this, and put so much effort into the training. I'm also really surprised how well he did. He was in the top 30 people to cross the finish line first – there were hundreds of contestants in the race.

I'm proud of his achievement because I think it's really admirable when a person decides to take on a challenge which comes difficult to them at first. Like I said, he isn't really much of a sporty guy, so it was more challenging for him than some guys who love sports. This is what I admire the most – it's not easy to take on something that doesn't come so easily to you, and I am not sure what motivated him, but he seemed really inspired to run this marathon and to put all his energy and effort into it. So, I admire him for this, and I think this kind of determination is a very good quality in a person. My family and I watched him from various places along the route, and cheered him on as he passed. It inspired me to want to do something similar when I get the chance. I think I will take part in a marathon next time my city hosts one, or a triathlon or something like this. I think people can get very motivated by seeing and supporting the achievements of others. My brother really motivated me both with his attitude and his success in entering and running this marathon.

Part 3

1. When would parents feel proud of their children?

Parents usually feel proud of their children when they make an effort to do something and they perform well in it. Some parents are concerned only with the end result and the achievements – like getting good grades and so on. But other parents are inspired and proud when they see their kids actually put an effort into something. I think we should reward effort more, and encourage children based on their level of effort and diligence more than the results they actually achieve.

2. Should parents reward children? Why and how?

Parents should certainly reward children for effort, yes. But I think they should be careful about how they reward them. I don't think financial rewards or material rewards are always good for children, because this can encourage them to aim for things for materialist reasons. I believe that parents should be careful how they

motivate children, and also ensure that they give praise in a way which is encouraging. I think that rewarding children with trips out with the family to interesting places is better than rewarding children with money or physical gifts.

3. Is it good to reward children too often?

Parents and teachers should be moderate in how they reward children. If you reward children too often, they will take it for granted and stop realizing why they are being rewarded. So, I believe that parents should reward children when they see they have made a real effort, a sacrifice, or struggled to do something which is difficult, and really achieved it. Rewarding kids too often for too many small things can make children turn out too spoilt and they might end up taking things for granted or expecting rewards for the slightest little minor achievement, rather than something they've really put their heart into.

4. On what occasions would adults be proud of themselves?

Adults have plenty of occasions in which they should be proud of themselves. Adult life can be tough, and full of all number of challenges. I think adults should feel good about themselves when they get a new job, perhaps after passing a difficult interview. Adults also should be proud of themselves for social reasons – handling a difficult situation well, for example – solving a dispute between friends or co-workers or solving a family issue through diplomacy and negotiation. These are the kind of things I believe adults should be proud of themselves for.

Describe a time when you gave a piece of advice to another person.

You should say:

Who you gave it to

Why this person needed your advice

What advice you gave

And explain how you felt about the result

The time I gave a piece of advice to someone that I remember most clearly, was a time only a few weeks ago. It was to a good friend of mine, probably one of my best friends actually. She had fallen out with a friend of hers, and they had not been speaking for some time, and she was very upset about it. Without going into all the personal details of the fall-out, suffice it to say that it was a pretty big fall-out and the other friend was really upset with her for hurting her feelings and being way too direct about her opinions. My friend talked to me about this and I listened very carefully to the whole story, and had a good think about it before offering any advice. I advised her that she should first make a peace offering – approach the friend, apologize for being a bit insensitive, and offer her a gift, a simple gift of flowers or chocolates, and perhaps an invitation to coffee or a dinner. Then I suggested that she, after apologizing for her part in the disagreement and fall-out, explain her own feelings about the whole thing and try to then establish a mutual understanding. My friend

decided to follow my advice. At first, I must admit, she didn't want to because she's quite a proud and stubborn person and does not like to apologize for anything. But I convinced her that some degree of apology is usually a good idea to show the other person you respect them and diffuse some of the negative feelings. I also advised her not to talk or gossip about this to other friends, but keep it quite quiet, so that it doesn't blow more out of proportion. Things often get worse and blow out of proportion if more people talk about it and add their own opinions and feelings and perspectives. So, my friend did follow my advice and the two of them did meet for coffee and the result was very positive. Actually, I think it strengthened their friendship more in the end. I was happy that I had given very considered and sincere advice.

Part 3

1. Is it good to ask advice from strangers online?

It depends what that advice is. There are some kinds of advice which are really good to ask people that you don't know, on online forums or chat groups and things like this. Like, for example, computer issues, or technical issues, or advice on the quality of certain things you might want to buy online. But when it comes to very personal issues, family issues, and matters of the heart, I would say that it's almost always best to seek the advice of someone who is close to you, who knows your personality and personal history.

2. What are the problems if you ask too many people for advice?

If you ask too many people advice on an issue, especially a complicated emotional one, then you can get too many diverse opinions and get more confused. Sometimes it's a better idea to ask one or two close friends or family members and not a whole range of different people. It's a tricky one, in some ways, because it's also good to get a variety of opinions on things, and not just one or two, because people can sometimes surprise you and offer solutions that you'd never thought of or that your close friends and family hadn't thought of. But generally it's best to be a little careful and moderate the amount of people you share your personal problems and dilemmas with.

3. What are the personalities of people whose job is to give advice to others?

There are quite a few jobs related to giving advice. One that instantly springs to mind is that of a counsellor or therapist – someone whose profession is giving advice and listening to your emotions and feelings. The kind of person who is good at giving advice in this kind of profession is usually someone who has a high degree of empathy with other people, and quite a bit of experience at understanding people from different backgrounds and with different types of problems. As well as possessing empathy, this kind of person usually is also quite pragmatic and practical – which is very important in helping people get over personal issues or solving personal problems.

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