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28	When you choose a university, would you prefer a school with high employment rate or another with famous professors?	学校
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30	Students must take a class in which they learn a practical skill. School administrators are trying to decide whether to hold a class in cooking, managing personal finances or auto repair. Which do you think the school should require students to take?	学校

1. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? People should take several different kinds of jobs before they take a career in a long term. 【工作】

Today's economy is diverse and full of opportunities. While there are some people that are able to study a subject or skill and then upon graduation jump right into their career, more and more people are choosing a less traditional path to their careers. Before starting their careers, they try many different kinds of jobs. I believe having many different kinds of jobs helps establish a foundation for success in one's future career.

The most compelling reason that recent graduates nowadays are choosing to work many different kinds of jobs is that it helps them figure out what they truly want to do. People are realizing that if you find a career you love, you will not have to work a day in your life. In the long run, this is a very smart move. If people take the time to test out many different jobs, they will know which one is the job they want to do for the rest of their lives. I know many people in older generations that talk about how they did not have a choice in their career. They always explain how they started teaching or nursing simply because that was the best option. They are not happy with their careers and with regret that they could not choose the best career. Working many jobs helps young workers determine their future careers.

In addition, gaining experience in many different kinds of jobs helps make people more competitive. When companies hire employees, they look for applicants with diverse backgrounds and a range of experiences. This is practical business sense, since a person with many different experiences can be expected to do many different kinds of jobs. For example, an information technology company cannot just hire employees who know about computers. They must hire people who are familiar with the content. If the company is responsible for creating an educational database for history teachers, having employees who have had prior experience in education and history is the most valuable. By holding many different jobs before starting a career, a person can be more competitive in the job market.

Once you start your career, having a diverse background will help you accomplish more with your job. For example, my father first worked as a waiter before he became a writer for an advertisement agency. One of his first accounts was for the restaurant T.G.I.F. My father used his experience as a waiter as inspiration for the advertisement campaign they ran. The restaurant was so pleased with my father's work that they signed an exclusive contract with his company. Soon after that he was promoted and later went on to become the youngest manager of the creative department in the history of this advertising agency. Using knowledge from past jobs gives you the perspective to rise quickly in your career.

Holding many different jobs before starting your career is a smart thing to do. Building your resume with a range of jobs helps you decide which career is best for you. The various experiences not only make you more competitive than other job applicants, but they also help you be a more valuable and resourceful employee. (外教Anna, 529 words)

2. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Colleges and universities should offer students better job preparation before they start working. Use specific reasons to support your choice. 【学校】

Nowadays, how to get a better job is a popular topic among students and parents. Some people believe that colleges and universities should offer students better job preparation

before they start working. Personally, I support the idea, because job support programs would benefit not only the student, but also the university and in turn society.

First, better job preparation benefits students seeking better jobs. For example, thanks to the help of the training courses at my school, I now work as an editor for a multimedia production company. When I was sophomore, the office of employment guidance in my university offered a course called job preparation for students. The course taught us how to choose our careers, how to plan our future and how to apply and interview for jobs. With the skills I learned in this course, I found a job before graduation.

Second, better job preparation benefits the fame of the university. For instance, the competition of education has greatly increased in recent years. If universities can offer students better job preparation before they begin to work, more and more students will want to apply for these universities. Job preparation programs will also create more successful graduates, who will want to donate more money to their former university. More funding will allow the university to improve their facilities and hire better teachers. As a result, the whole level of university will rise, and the reputation of university will grow.

Finally, better job preparation benefits society as a whole. For example, better job preparation will prepare students to enter the workforce with more ambition, inspiring them to create more advanced products. For example, when my cousin was a senior at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, the school helped him to find a part-time job of composing piano music. He really liked this job, and he realized his passion for composing music for radio and television studios. If he had not done this internship, he would have never realized his potential. More inspired workers means a more productive economy, which in fact strengthens society. Therefore, better job preparation in universities is not only important to students and schools, but also to society.

Considering the above analysis, it is clear that universities should offer students better job preparation before they start working, because it benefits the student, university and society.
(外教Anna, 390w)

3. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

The best way to improve the quality of education is to increase teachers' salaries. 【学校】

The issue of how to improve the quality of education has attracted the public attention all over the world. Some may argue that raising teachers' paycheck is the best way to achieve such goal. In my opinion, despite several benefits, this proposal is not the best solution.

Admittedly, raising teachers' salaries is a good way to boost better education performance. Since a high salary represents a highly valued and appreciated job, to give teachers a more decent paycheck may improve their self-esteem and propel them to optimize their syllabus. Besides, a higher salary makes the job market more competitive. In the past, the brightest intellectuals may pick more challenging and profitable jobs; however, with the salary-raising policy, teachers would become more desirable. Since quality of teachers largely determines that of the education, we could expect better education with the boom of highly qualified teachers. However, to say raising teachers' salaries is the best option is definitely an overstatement.

In fact, teachers receiving higher paycheck means students having to afford more tuition fees. In this case, more families would have to face heavy financial burden, where kids can be easily affected. Some from poor families would even have to drop out. According to a recent survey conducted by Chinese Academy of Social Science, after polling hundreds of teenage drop-outs, most respondents claimed that considering the increasingly high tuitions fees, working at an early age becomes a better way out. It seems to me that there must be other ways to improve the education without making it an unaffordable one.

In addition, schools can provide trainings to teachers. This is a more direct and effective way to promote educational development. My college is a good case in point. Last year, among all the sophomores, only three in ten passed College English Band 4. But this year the number soared to seven in ten. The secret is that all the teachers received a one-month training. Trainers were several returned alumni majoring in TESOL. Not only did they impart theoretical knowledge, but they also shared experience on communicative and interaction skills. After those lectures and seminars, English classes became more student-centered. Obviously, offering teachers better teaching aid is more efficient than just handing out material rewards.

All in all, although raising teachers' salaries can improve education level to some extent, it is by no means the most favorable way and other methods should also be taken into account. (BaoLei, 409w)

4. Agree or disagree: It is often not a good thing to move to a new city or a new country because people will lose contact with old friends? 【社交】

It is generally nice experience to start a brand-new life in a new place. Yet some people may hold a negative attitude due to the possibility of losing old friends. As for me, it is senseless to be so pessimistic.

For one thing, moving to a new place does not necessarily mean the loss of old friends. Thanks to the modern technologies, keeping in touch with a friend across the ocean is no longer beyond reach. With web-cam and microphone, every facial expression and tone of speech can be delivered just as a face-to-face meeting. So we can still catch up with old friends through the marvelous internet, updating latest status in Facebook or joining the chat-room in Skype. So even one moves to a new environment, s/he still gets to share laughter and tears with his/her old friends. After all, real friendship goes beyond distance.

For another thing, even old friends drift apart; it is still a good thing to move to a new place. Firstly, a new living space provides one with great opportunities to make new friends from diverse social background but sharing same interest. Secondly, a new living environment also means a new way of living. It is not hard to imagine a Chinese immigrant would find it unforgettable to taste curry or practice yoga in India. The exotic cultures and customs offer an individual a great experience that couldn't possibly be available otherwise. Thirdly, a new working environment helps an individual to discover their inner strength and potential. Take my brother for instance. He used to work at a local factory with a modest salary and little chance of promotion. However, things began to change when he moved to U.S. An advertising company offered him a position in the arts department, which stimulates his interest in designing and gets him out of his shell. He showed a good performance at work and it wasn't long before he got a promotion. So it seems clear to me that it was the move that changed his life path and pointed him in the right direction.

Even sometimes moving may be an unpleasant experience; it is a result of inability to adapt to new surroundings, instead of the loss of old friends. Just imagine the feelings one experiences after leaving their familiar home culture to live in another entirely different social environment. We can constantly hear immigrants complaining about cultural shock. A peculiar cuisine that's hard to swallow can give an individual a strong sense of homesickness; or the language barrier can easily ruin a shopping trip when bargaining is no longer the way it is back home. Such frustration gives rise to a bad moving experience, not the slim chance of losing old friends.

All in all, with the help of modern technologies moving to a new place no longer means to compromise old friendship. Instead, it is definitely rewarding for the benefits of new social network, cultural experience and working opportunities. Even sometimes it may turn out to be frustrating, failure to adjust is to blame. (BaoLei, 518w)

5. Agree or disagree: An effective leader should try to make others part of the decision making process. 【成功】

History remembers great leaders—kings, presidents, CEOs, and the like—largely for the decisions they make. However, what we often forget is that these decisions are rarely made alone—leaders will often rely on the help of others when weighing their options. While some leaders may prefer to make decisions alone, I think the most effective ones will involve others in the decision-making process.

Firstly, letting others participate in the process creates stronger bonds and more trust between the leader and the rest of the group. When others in the group are brought into the decision-making process, they will feel more valued and more essential to the group's success. This will engender a stronger sense of camaraderie and belonging, and subsequently, will lead them to work harder to see their group succeed at their task. Also, they will gain some insight into how the leader makes his or her decisions. This will make the leader's decisions seem less mysterious or arbitrary. The group will come to trust the leader's decisions more in the future—even when they are not part of the decision-making process.

Secondly, a leader must attend to many things that demand his or her attention, and making so many judgment calls without the aid of others can be extremely tiring. In fact, studies have shown that the act of decision-making actually fatigues the brain, and that people can only make a limited number of decisions per day before mental performance starts to dip and bad decisions start to be made. This is why people often agree to add needless and expensive options to a new car purchase at the car dealership—after hours of haggling with sly car salesmen over the details of a purchase, they are sapped of all their decision-making sense, and suddenly adding an expensive package to your purchase might not seem like such a bad idea. For the same reason, leaders should involve others when making decisions so that they stay sharp for as long as possible.

Finally, when leaders have others involved in the decision-making process, they have people to double-check the quality of their decisions. This is related to the above point about decision fatigue—since leaders usually make the most decisions out of anyone in the group, they will inevitably make a bad decision once in a while. No leader will be working at 100% efficiency all the time. However, if a leader can rely on others to set him or her straight, then it is okay if he or she slips up once in a while because others can point out the problem and

set the leader back on the right course.

So involving others in the decision-making process not only helps leader prevent fatigue-induced errors, but it also minimizes the damage when these errors do occur. (外教Richard, 471 words)

6. A/D: People should insist on a challenging plan rather than a practical plan. 【成功】

As a Chinese ancient proverb goes, a man with plan is a man with hope. When it comes to plan making, some may stick to a practical thought while others may prefer a challenging one. Basically, I'd prefer the latter one.

Firstly, a challenging plan enables one to be more efficient. Inevitably, task performers, concerned about hidden risks and challenges, tend to be more cautious in every step of the way, taking precautions even before problems show up. Take my sister for instance. When she decided to apply for a master's program for chemistry, her family suggested her consult a study abroad agency, which is more convenient and practical. However, she chose to DIY her application, despite her poor English. Unlike those who relied totally on agents, she worked like a dog. To prepare for her essay, she usually burnt mid night oil to hit English version books or search materials online. And finally due to her arduous effort, she was admitted to Stanford with full scholarship. Thus it seems to me that a person couldn't have been so self-motivated and efficient if s/he hadn't chosen a road less traveled.

In addition, a challenging plan leaves room for innovation. It is because to accomplish a challenging task, one has to think outside the box, instead of turning to old-fashioned routines all the time. Take the card-reader invention of Square for instance. If Jack Dorsey had just conformed to the conventional way of payment without trying to get rid of paper receipt, Square would never have come into being. With one swipe, not only can customer simply sign on electronic screen, but it also allows them to learn of the merchant's twitter handle, face book page and Yelp account. This innovative invention has made conventional payment a new form of communication. But it isn't possible without a challenging plan in the inventor's mind at the beginning.

It is not to say being practical is trivial. After all, practical plans may guarantee a relatively easy and smooth success. Since being practical means access to routines and previous problem-solving approaches, one can count on experience without taking risks. Yet the fact is, most practical planners tend to underestimate or even overlook the potential challenges lying in the task. A blind confidence can easily hamper their performance, resulting in failing the task eventually. Challenging plan, on the other hand, keeps one alert and innovative.

All in all, despite certain seemingly good qualities about a practical plan, it also comes with limitations. Yet a challenging plan allows the task performer to be more efficient and creative, thus deserving more merits than a mediocre and practical one. (Bao Lei, 446w)

7. A/D: a low paying but secure job is better than a job with higher salary but less security. 【工作】

Some job-seekers contend that stability accounts the most when entering the workforce while others give priority to material gain that comes with the job. I, however, think this issue should be analyzed case by case.

First off, if it is the young people that we are talking about, a high salary is definitely what they should be going for even it can be a job that's easy to lose. It is because the youth tend to be more adaptive to new surroundings and more willing to accept challenges. In this case even this highly profitable job falls short of stability, it is never too hard for the young to start over and find another livelihood somewhere else. As long as they can acquire certain skills during their previous occupation, this life experience is itself worthwhile already. Not to mention there is a high salary that comes along. Young people are quite in need of accumulating wealth so that to pave the way for future abundance. As known to all, the early years of their adulthood offers a great opportunity for the young to learn about the essence of diligence and frugality. I've once heard about a story that can be a good case in point. It is about the owner of the biggest car wash chain in China. He used to be a car salesman in his 20s. It was a golden age for mobile business in the end of last century. This young man was really good at dealing with people and worked harder than any other employees, so it wasn't long before he won a good reputation of good service and earned quite a fortune. While a friend of his received stable but limited income in government service, he lived on commission and it could sometimes even double what his friend earned. Later in his life he lost the job due to the bad economy, but at that time he already acquired enough funds to start his own car wash company. So it seems clear that a less stable but high-paying job can benefit the young people to a larger extent.

On the other hand, if it is the older generation that we've now turn to, the optimal choice is the other way around. As for the senior or the middle-aged, they normally have a family to support or some health problems to attend to. They wouldn't have that kind of stamina to try out other job options. For them, sustainability is the first factor that determines their quality of life. My dad is a tenured college professor. He receives a modest paycheck but he enjoys his daily routine of lecturing all day without the slightest fear of losing his job one day. I was raised in a happy family thanks to my dad being the bread-winner for all these years. We feel safe because the welfare is guaranteed with such job. If my dad had chosen another more profitable but unstable job, we would have had to worry how to get by in case of an economic recession.

To sum up, the ideal job type varies according to different age groups. (Bao Lei, 528w)

8. Some people advocate students going to school for 9 months a year in a row and take a rest for 3 months, while another point of view favors three months of school with one month of rest.

Which do you prefer? (2015.10.10ML) 【学校】

When it comes to school arrangements, opinions vary from person to person. Some educators believe learning for 9 consecutive months can promote performance while others argue that students need a break every other 3 months. If I were to decide, this problem should be answered case by case.

Consider K-12 kids. They have shorter attention spans, so lengthy school years would do more harm than good. In primary and secondary education, students are mostly required to memorize facts and figures or to comprehend how the world works, all of which can be rather demanding. Studies have shown that we learn better when our brain cells are switched on and off, or with short periods of learning and breaks in between. Spaced three-month learning enables children to achieve more and retain the knowledge for longer. Besides, rest can be vital to recovery. A child would easily burn out if school is in session for so long. So it takes time for children to recover from the learning fatigue,

which would otherwise take a toll on learning efficiency. When my sister was an eight grader, her mom put her on a super full schedule, piano lessons for the weekends, maths and language training for summer/winter vacations. She had to stay up late every night to get projects done and made up for schoolwork while she was away for music festivals. That crazy year went by and eventually, she ended up with falling grades and fell victim to mild depression. According to her, she felt worn out and tired of it all. So it seems to me the spaced three months of learning would serve young school kids better.

As for college students, nine-month school arrangement won't be a bad idea. Young adults need to grow not only intellectually but also emotionally. To put college years into good use, they should go on adventures, learn about the world and strengthen social relationships. In this case, travel experiences and internship opportunities would be a must. Let's assume school days spread out for three one-month breaks in between. This time window would not be big enough for an undergraduate to land an internship. Big companies recruit on a quarterly basis, so the school arrangement would be a problem. Similarly, a college student who plans on a trip to Europe would be crunched for time if school is out for only one month. However, if students can concentrate and study non stop for nine months, they can make full use of the three months of vacation to gain working experience or to broaden their horizons abroad.

To sum up, the school arrangement should vary according to different age groups. (447w, BaoLei)

9. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? People today can solve many important problems so they do not need help from the government. 【政府】

It has been argued that government is no longer indispensable since people nowadays are able to handle problems on their own. I disagree.

First of all, people can hardly tackle all the important problems without government's intervention. Consider homeland security issues. If the country is invaded by a superpower, without the military force, how is an individual or a family supposed to weather the turmoil? Consider transportation. To alleviate the traffic congestion, is it possible for an individual or his family to build new railways or widen the highways, just on their own? It is not possible without huge amount of subsidies and infrastructure policies, which are the obligation of government. Consider medical care system. Even with much money, one still won't feel secure if it is severe diseases, or even incurable ones, that we are talking about. But government can fund on medical projects and experiments for the cure of illness, which is simply unattainable by individual effort.

Moreover, even if some important matters can be taken care of by citizens themselves, people still need government to make life better. After all, it is government's obligation to satisfy the needs of community members. For instance, most families are now capable of sending their children to college, but government is still essential when it comes to the improvement of higher education. A salary-boosting policy is instrumental in optimizing the quality of professors and lecturers; a government-sponsored student exchange program makes it possible to encourage a more critical and creative way of learning. Another good case in point is work. Most people can now find a job, yet not many are quite satisfied with what they do for a living. So it goes beyond personal effort to make working conditions better. However, government can just fill in the gap. By working out more employee-friendly policies, government can urge companies to offer more vacations or eliminate overtime work.

All in all, when it comes to big issues we still need to rely on government's assistance and its role cannot be neglected.

10.If you need to discuss upsetting or controversial problems with others, you will use e-mail or text messaging, OR use the telephone or voice-messaging. 【社交】

A hundred years ago, we rely on word of mouth to convey messages and news. Thanks to modern communication technology, people nowadays get to enjoy various ways to keep in contact, such as cell phones. But for upsetting or controversial problems, I would definitely choose ways like texting or E-mail to contact others.

Consider the awkward case of breaking up. If I chose to call him on the phone, he might freak out and hang up on me even before I could finish. Then the upsetting problem remains unsolved. However, if I try to write down my thoughts, I wouldn't be interrupted. Besides, the written form is better organized and makes it easier to clear things up. When he gets the message, he could read it through and then realize my intention means no harm. And we can probably stay friends afterwards. So in order to avoid unpleasant arguing scenes, it is wiser to explain the issue in written form.

Consider the decision-making process of college major. If I try to convince my surgeon dad that literature fits me better than meds, talking on the phone is not going to solve the problem. It is because he would be too stubborn to get tricked by a few lines on the phone. By contrast, I need to straighten up my arguments and list all the pros and cons. In this case, a nicely organized E-mail would help me to win this discussion. Therefore, to avoid stuttering or chickening out on the phone, the written form gives me more time to think calmly.

Consider business negotiations. If I try to confer an upsetting issue with a client on the phone, courtesy issues need to be seriously taken into account. How to talk to a client on the phone? When is the right time to call? What am I supposed to do if he consults matters that I have no idea? However, things become much simpler if I choose to write an E-mail. First I could ask colleagues for tips on business correspondence. Besides, unlike phone call, E-mail doesn't interrupt meetings, so I don't have to worry about bad timing. Lastly, I could note in the letter for further contact if he would have any problems. Therefore, the written form allows room for consideration and preparation.

All in all, I think the written form is more effective when it comes to discussing upsetting or controversial matters. (Bao Lei, 407w)

11. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: improving schools is the most important factor for the successful development of a country. 【教育】

I agree. Schools are the most important factor in a country's successful development.

First of all, schools provide a country with an educated and competent workforce. This workforce is what will drive the progress of different industries and determine the economic trajectory of a country. Look in any first-world country today and you're sure to find an educated labor pool. Jobs in highly specialized areas like aerospace engineering, law, finance, IT, and medicine all require extensive knowledge that can only be acquired through rigorous

schooling. Without improving its educational institutions, a country has no hope of ever cultivating enough professionals to match the development of better-educated countries. Who will design planes? Who will interpret the law? Who will tweak the economy, manage computer networks, or heal the sick? Schools are clearly necessary for producing these experts.

Second of all, schools help a country create a wiser and more conscientious public. This is important because a country will often face ethical dilemmas in the course of its development. Questions will arise about how to deal with growing income disparities, how to manage the effects of industrialization on the environment, and how to settle conflicts with other countries. Without a well-educated public, wealth inequality will be allowed to run unchecked, environmental exploitation will be allowed to proliferate, and aggression will be allowed to dominate foreign policy. Some would argue that such is the case in the U.S.: a generally ignorant public coupled with tremendous economic success has resulted in a society with huge differences between the rich and the poor, serious environmental problems, and a continuing policy of aggression towards other countries. These problems are far less serious in better educated countries.

Lastly, schools help a country produce a richer and deeper culture. Nowadays, countries are judged not only on the merits of their economy or ethics, but also on the quality of their arts. China, for instance, receives a lot of respect on the international stage for its extensive traditions of literature and painting. A country cannot merely rest contentedly on past achievements, however, so schools are necessary to help culture continuously evolve. Foreigners appreciate the beauty of traditional Chinese art forms, but they do not look at modern Chinese tastes with an equal amount of respect. This is because China is still playing catchup on many fronts—Chinese painters in the Western style, for example, do not come from as long of a tradition of painting as those in the West, and Chinese fashion sense still falls short of Western standards, as evidenced by the lack of a Chinese fashion capital on par with Paris, London, Tokyo, or New York. Better education, however, can breed more sophisticated culture and change this.

Schools provide a country not only with economic benefits, but also more abstract benefits in the areas of ethics and culture. All three are integral to the successful development of a country, so it stands to reason that improving schools should be a country's highest priority. (外教Richard, 497 w)

12. Agree or disagree? If children want to do well in school, parents should limit the hours of watching TV programs or movies. 【媒体】

How to improve children's academic performance has become a big concern for most parents. Therefore, some experts advocate parents limit children's television-viewing hours. However, I disagree.

First of all, there is no relation between TV-viewing and performance at school. Even parents manage to cut down the time children spend on watching television; there still are other distractions that would take up the time saved from watching TV. You can always see mouse potatoes hiding in their bedroom playing video games on line or teenage girls talking on the cell phone for hours. So to help children make progress at school takes more than merely restricting the TV-viewing hours.

What's more, keeping children away from television may also keep them away from infotainment programs that could enrich their knowledge outside the classroom. Discovery channel, for example, covers a wide variety of geographic and biological knowledge. With vivid pictures and detailed explanation, children get to learn the facts and figures in an interesting way. By this way they become more attentive to the world and get to concentrate more easily. My sister is a good case in point. She used to hate geography and thus test results were always dissatisfying. But things began to change when she spent a large quantity of hours in watching National Geographic. She began to take an interest in what she used to call boring stuff and her transcript also began to look really good since then. She admitted that watching TV did take up a lot of time, yet she believed it absolutely rewarding. So it seems to me that a good television show stimulates children's interest and benefits the academic performance.

Admittedly, if it is undisciplined children that we are talking about, restriction on TV-viewing hours is quite necessary. Naturally, by saying no to a 3-hour animation the parent wants the kid to work on a math problem or memorize formula. It is hard to imagine a little couch potato could voluntarily review what has been learnt at school or to do some research for his group project. So at times like this, parents should intervene and urge their kids to spend more time on study. But it does not necessarily apply to all children.

To sum up, for those who have little self-control, parental supervision on TV viewing is really necessary, but simple restriction on TV viewing hours is not going to solve the problem. Instead, informative and entertaining programs should actually be encouraged. (416w)

13. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? A university should focus more on its facilities, such as libraries, computers or laboratory, rather than on hiring famous teachers. 【学校】

The tertiary education has long been the center of public attention. Some educators argue that compared with professors and lecturers, advanced school facilities should be given more emphasis. It may sound reasonable at first glance, but if you take a closer look, it is the quality of staff that determines a university.

For one thing, not only do teachers impart knowledge, but they also offer inspiration. To purely pass on knowledge, a human may be no better than a machine or high-tech equipment. The difference, however, lies in the potential inspiration and creativity stimulated by renowned teachers. Take my favorite professor Edward for instance. Apart from teaching in our business school, he also owned a famous consulting corporate. Whenever he came to class, Edward would raise tough cases for discussion and shared with the class his experience and solutions. Thanks to his real-life cases, I got the hang of many business rules and marketing strategies. That's something a mediocre lecturer or a piece of equipment can never achieve.

For another, universities with star teachers tend to have higher graduate employment rates. It is not hard to imagine teachers with connections can give students a competitive edge in job hunting. Recent studies have shown a strong correlation between the quality of professors and job prospects. For example of graduates. For example, a politically-connected professor can help land an intern job in the mayor's office. Similarly, a law student would

stand a better chance of making partners if his college mentor happens to be on the board. By contrast, students swamped in labs or libraries would have to realize that you need a platform to show the world what you've got. A well-connected professor is someone who can open up that opportunity for you.

It is not to say universities should completely ignore equipment and facilities. Spacious and bright libraries do offer students an ideal place to work on papers; computer centers also help foster a self-governed way of learning. However, such school equipment is more of a luxury than a necessity. Students managed fine before the advent of the cutting-edge technologies, but they still needed great teachers for enlightenment. If the equipment failed tomorrow, students could still learn by hearing lectures and attending discussions. But if good teachers were gone tomorrow, students would end up learning very little.

All in all, despite its instrumental role in facilitating learning, facilities fail to generate more practical merits to students. Recruitment of talented teachers, on the other hand, deserves more attention. (Bao Lei, 423w)

14. Professional athletes, such as football and basketball players, do not deserve the high salaries that they are paid. 【工作】

Professional athletes can make a lot of money. The best often receive salaries of millions of dollars or more. Some claim that this is ridiculous, especially since people like teachers and humanitarian workers are paid next to nothing, but I believe this type of thinking is unfair to professional athletes. They go through a lot, and they deserve a large share of the revenue they bring to their industry.

Being a professional athlete is amazingly tough on your body. I doubt that most people could ever endure the kind of physical stresses that professional athletes do. Take me, for example. I go to the gym five times a week on average. I deadlift around 280 pounds, which is far more than 99% of the people in my social circles can lift. Getting to that point was incredibly difficult—every week I have a new ache or pain, and every day I have to remember to stretch and massage my muscles to prevent major injury. People often tell me that they could never imagine themselves training as hard as I do. Yet professional weightlifters can easily double or triple my numbers, and the suffering they have to endure to is proportionally higher. Those competing at the professional level often have a very short “shelf-life,” so it seems reasonable to receive a high compensation in exchange for putting your body through so much.

Additionally, professional athletes are constantly under a tremendous amount of mental pressure. The best athletes are performing for millions of viewers or more across the globe. Every mistake they make—be it on the court, in an interview, or while just living their lives—is recorded and endlessly scrutinized by people who don't know them and don't understand the pain and determination it took for them to get to where they are. Most people cannot cope with this kind of pressure, and even longtime professionals can eventually burn out due to the constant exposure they get in the media. For many, making a high salary is only a small consolation for having to live that kind of nightmarish life.

Finally, we have to ask ourselves this: if professional athletes didn't receive these salaries, where would the money go? Professional sports are incredibly profitable—revenue from advertising, merchandising, network contracts, and ticket sales generate a ton of revenue for sports leagues. If athletes aren't paid these salaries, then the money would just go to owners and executives. I think this alternative is far less equitable, since athletes are the ones bringing in revenue. In every field, people are rewarded for being exceptional—this is true whether you're an athlete, doctor, lawyer, or artist. Perhaps athletes could do with less money, but if we pay athletes less, we should apply that standard to all professions.

People frequently complain that professional athletes are overpaid. However, athletes are no different than those with other occupations. They best must put their bodies and minds through hell to get to achieve greatness, and as in any profession, those who work hard and prove themselves exceptional deserve to be rewarded. (514w, 外教Richard)

15. Do you agree or disagree: we should never be impolite to others. 【社交】

Courtesy plays a vital role in the modern world. Thus it has been argued that one should never behave rudely to others. I, however, disagree.

Admittedly, in most cases courtesy is appreciated. After all, as a landmark of a civilized society, it is usually required by social norms. That's why people stand in lines when waiting outside the dentist's or talk quietly in public places like the library. Besides, courtesy may also give us the edge over competitors. It is not hard to imagine a well-mannered young man is more likely to win the employer's favor in a job interview. However, to say we should never be impolite to others is an overstatement.

Consider emergencies. In such cases it would be senseless to overemphasize politeness. Imagine a man driving his wife to the hospital. She is about to give birth, but he still tries to maintain good manners, waving goodbye to the security guard at the front gate or apologizing nicely to the overtaken vehicles. The pregnant woman might end up suffering more because her husband fails to get her to the ER in time. Undue manners in emergencies might cause harm. Similarly, during a fire, if the firefighters are afraid to make noises or are reluctant to slam open the window, there could be serious consequences. Thus in emergent cases, it would be ridiculous to overemphasize courtesy.

The same logic applies to crime scenes. When criminals have resorted to violence, there's no reason for the police to mind their manners. It is hard to imagine when arresting a suspect, the police officer would whisper in the ear and ask nicely, would you please lower your gun? I'd like to talk to you. Quite the opposite, the right thing to do is to shout, "Freeze!" and handcuff the criminal. Apparently, shouting and handcuffing are anything but politeness, yet it is direct actions that work in such circumstance. If a policeman tries to talk to a kidnapper in a polite way, the criminal might run out of patience and shoot the hostage. Therefore, to fight against crime, the never-impoliteness rule obviously does not apply.

All in all, in most cases we should abide by the social norms and behave politely. However, exceptions do exist and in cases like emergencies and criminal scenes we should learn to improvise. (394w)

16. Our society today is so busy and crowded that people do not need to be polite to each other.

【社交】

People today enjoy great material wealth due to hard work, but some complain that people today are less polite than they used to be. Extremists argue that people do not need to have the conventional social norms, such as saying hello to other people, because those manners are a waste of time. However, I think politeness is important in many aspects of modern life.

First, in dealing relationships with family and friend, people need to be polite and considerate. Many young people today claim that they are too busy to call their parents and contact their friends. Once, I refused to spend time talking with parents, using the excuse that I had too much work. The consequence was that my mother got angry and hung up the phone. Our relationship was strained, but I soon realized my rudeness and apologized to my mother. My mother forgave me because I showed my respect and concern for her. This situation is also true for friends. Politeness is a bond in relationships with close family members and friends.

Second, in a working environment, one needs to obey the basic social norms of courtesy for interpersonal communication. Consider a rude colleague who is always short and unpleasant with his coworkers. Not many people are willing to work with him, because he does not show any basic skills or ability to deal with people. On the contrary, a coworker who smiles and acts respectfully towards others will certainly be more popular and easier to work with. Obviously, politeness will never be outdated, no matter how busy the world becomes.

Third, in the political realm and entertainment industry, celebrities need to show a gracious and friendly manner in order to maintain a positive image. All politicians have a hectic agenda. But when they are giving a speech to the public, politicians need to dress appropriately and speak in a certain way. Patience when answering questions is also a must. Similarly, a famous movie star or a pop singer needs to show a friendly attitude towards any crazy fan. Otherwise, the printing media will make a big deal out of his/her unappreciative manner towards fans.

In conclusion, though the world today drives people to work like machines, politeness is a prerequisite for people to have a satisfying home life and a fulfilling career. (外教Anna, 386 words)

17. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? In order to become financially responsible adults, children should learn to manage their money at a young age. 【家庭】

To foster children's sense of financial responsibility, some educators advocate that children should be encourage to manage their money at an early stage. As for me, reasonable as it may sounds, this view does not hold water.

Admittedly, financial management at a younger age may allow children to be more responsible and organized. It is because when parents ask children to budge their pocket money, instead of taking care of everything, children are actually treated like an independent adult. This sense of trust and expectation may not only motivate kids to become more attentive to price and market, but also teach them to resist shopping urges when they grow up. Besides, it is conceivable that those who have received early money-managing education would hardly get into debts or make reckless investments.

However, the results are not always so optimistic. Since children are still minors who have weak judgments about money issues, money autonomy at a premature age may lead to some serious problems. For example, some children may be distracted from schoolwork, worried about how to get by with the last two hundred RMB or how to save money for the new IPHONE. As a result, academic performance will actually suffer. As known to all, there is no better time for study in our entire life than the early youth. So it is unwise and unreasonable to compromise formal education for the dubious merits of money management. Besides, teenagers can be quite competitive at their particular stage of their lives. So it is not hard to imagine a kid with more disposable allowance would pick on a less privileged one. School, which otherwise is called an innocent land, would become a lot more materialistic.

In addition, there are better ways to train students' financial responsibility. For one thing, parents can be role models for their children. Seeing a frugal mom comparing prices in grocery stores, a kid would learn how to lead a more economical life. Similarly, a dad, who uses coupons and knows bargain tricks, can as well show his kid possible ways of saving money. Besides, educational books and TV programs enable children to learn about financial management without causing any side effects. The life of Steve Jobs, for instance, enlightens children about how to make money from scratch and how to invest wisely.

In summary, despite several merits, children's money autonomy comes with more potential harms. And the financial responsibility can be fostered by other means. (Bao Lei, 409w)

18. A/D: Future career success relies more on relating to other people more than studying hard at school. 【成功】

The definition of success varies from person to person. Some may attribute a successful life to diligence while others argue socializing abilities should be given more emphasis. As for me, success depends on communicative skills, teamwork spirit and social circle, which are easily available in a person who relate well to others.

Firstly, people who are good at bonding with others tend to know more about communicative skills. A man who used to chair student union has a better chance of winning in his future career. Since in the election of student union chairperson, the most popular boy/girl gets the most votes, people with such experience tend to have better interpersonal relationship. To assign tasks to teammates in organizing school affairs, one must know how to give clear description about task requirements and how to motivate others to contribute to collective activities. In this way his/her communicative skills is expected to increase accordingly. //On the other hand, those who are swamped in labs and libraries all day long barely know how to deliver an inspiring speech or persuade others into completing a task. So they fall short of necessary communicative skills to help them win in the pursuit of success.

Secondly, people who know how to relate with others also tend to show better teamwork performance. It is because collaboration plays a crucial role in a team. No matter how skillful a basketball player is, he can expect no career peak if he knows little about teamwork spirit. Michael Jordan rocked the world with his 3-pointer shoot at the last three seconds in the 1988 playoff. But without the pass from his teammates, he can hardly win the game. So cooperation and teamwork are taking on more importance in today's world, without which personal strength cannot be given to full play. So if a man knows how to relate to others

since school days, he surely won't have such problem dealing with interpersonal relationship.

Thirdly, people who know how to win popularity tend to have more friends. Such social network is essential to future success. It is conceivable that a politically connected friend can easily help win a government contract for a real estate developer. Similarly, a writer gets to publicize his motivational books to college students if he has connections with school authorities. It is especially true in countries like China. Table culture, which means doing business while dining and drinking, entails one to be sociable and outgoing. If he has no interpersonal skills, it is hard to imagine the banquet is leading the business anywhere.

19. A/D: Your job has more effect on your happiness than your social life. 【工作】

The definition of happiness varies from person to person. As for me, it largely depends on material life, family and self-improvement. In this case, a decent job, rather than social network, is more likely to ensure a happy life.

Firstly, it is a decent job that determines a good material life. A well connected man may find it satisfied with friends around all the time, but even the most supportive and loving friends cannot pay for your food or rent for the rest of your life. When it comes to an abundant material life, one has to be self-reliant and earn a living for happiness. With a decent salary, one gets to taste a rich variety of cuisines in fancy restaurant, afford highly equipped apartment with sound securities and go on trips all around the world. Only when basic needs of life are fully satisfied can one feel relieved and focus on other aspects of life.

Secondly, a decent job also provides better conditions for family. It is hard to imagine a working-class dad struggling to make both ends meet could afford a luxurious family trip or send children to first-class boarding schools. Even when he has a delightful social life, troubles of real life don't go away automatically. Besides, when an individual spends too much time on parties or social banquets, he can hardly squeeze time for family, either for a troublemaker son or a parent in sickbed. That is why divorce rates tend to be rather high in such households. No matter how resourceful and connected he seems, gratification coming from a happy family can never be replaced by anything else.

Thirdly, a job can also offer one a sense of self-betterment, which leads to happiness. By dealing with complaints, a receptionist learns how to improve his/her conversing techniques and comfort customers with patience; by giving presentations to clients, a marketing director learns to overcome shyness and develop his eloquence to speak in public ; and by arranging daily business schedule, a secretary gets to train her organizing and communicative skills. Naturally, being a better self brings great joy and contributes to future career, which also indicates a better chance of happiness later on. So work, undoubtedly, makes it possible for an individual to taste the bitterness of confronting challenges, and then the unspeakable happiness of conquering it; meanwhile the improvement of expertise and experience gives rise to more joy that no social gathering could possibly offer.

All in all, since happiness is mostly determined by material life, family and self-betterment, which can all guaranteed by a successful career. So compared with social life, work plays a more decisive role in the pursuit of happiness. (Bao Lei, 453w)

20. A/D: now it is easier for people to become educated than in the past. 【教育】

Education has long been regarded as a life-long process. It has been argued that in modern times education has become much more accessible than ever. I agree.

Firstly, more schools have become available now. In the past, those who failed College Entrance Exams had no choice but to work for a living. Yet now they get to further their education in vocational schools where they can get useful expertise and specific trainings. Similarly, white collars used to find it hard to squeeze time for study since they had to work in daytime. But nowadays they can easily enroll in a training course in night schools to develop professional skills for promotion. It is the same case with senior citizens. They no longer have to stay in nursing home watching endless TV series on friendless nights. Community college provides them with great opportunities to have a second chance on learning something new.

Secondly, way of learning has become more diversified. It is not hard to imagine decades ago, children who met with difficulties after school might feel bewildered and helpless since conventional school was the only way to access education. However, it is not the case in current society. Thanks to modern technologies, children get to do research on line for their project or turn to Wikipedia for answers. With one click of mouse, the whole world is presented in front of them. Colorful pictures and videos on educational websites allow them to learn in a more vivid way, while in old days tedious descriptions on textbooks could hardly arouse any interest in teenagers. Besides, communication technologies also enable students to have discussions or debate on forums or chatting rooms, where great experience can be shared and ideas exchanged.

Thirdly, government has also played a more positive role. Children from poor families used to miss out on school due to economic reasons, yet in contemporary China, the Nine-year Compulsory Education policy guarantees that every child is given the equal right to learn. As for higher education, study loans and scholarship are instrumental in settling financial burden on college students. And government-sponsored exchange programs make it possible for them to travel abroad for more learning experience and critical thinking abilities.

All in all, people nowadays are enjoying easier and better educational experience, which was barely conceivable in the past. (Bao Lei, 390w)

21. A/D: It is impossible to be completely honest to friends. 【社交】

Since we constantly hear about honesty is the best policy, some may hold that we should be completely honest to friends. I, however, believe this is an overstatement.

More often than not, courtesy calls for a lie. Let me stress that I'm talking about white lies, not black or gray or even off-white lies. Consider a friend holding up her newborn baby and saying, "Isn't she cute?" You take a look, but it is just a splotchy, scrunched little face. Committed to complete honesty, you might blurt out "Well, she really is... a baby." That would be an insensitive response, rude even. Such honesty does no good but to hurt a friend's feelings. Instead, we are supposed to cover up the hard truth, telling her it is adorable. //When it comes to such matters, white lies can protect friends' feelings.

Besides, when it comes to upsetting or private matters, it is quite understandable that we wouldn't want to burden friends. //It does not mean we are being unfaithful to friends or intentionally keep them in the dark. We are doing so only because friends have got their own lives to attend to, and we just want to spare their worries.// For example, if a friend just failed an exam, I guess I wouldn't ask her to come over my house, hearing me whining about a bad relationship with boyfriend. Instead, I would rather keep my trivial trouble to myself and encourage her to try harder next time.

Admittedly, honesty is a good quality and a prerequisite to friendship. To consider someone as a friend, we'd expect him/her to be reliable and trustworthy. When the world is being indifferent, friends would come over pointing out your flaws and show you how to make up for it. We can count on such friends to tell us the truth.// No one would like to make friend with someone who smiles in front of you but stabs a knife in your back. So, honesty is a good quality to expect in a friend. However, this honesty we are talking about does not preclude/exclude possibilities that in some cases white lies do seem a better idea.

All in all, in most cases honesty is the best policy, but it does not apply to situations where hard truth may cause bruise or burden. So it is quite understandable for friends to resort to white lies at such times. (Bao Lei, 405w)

22. A/D: People who keep their room clean and tidy are more likely to be successful in the future. 【成功】

Whether people could be successful is largely depends on the abilities and virtues that they have. Some people say that, if a person could keep room tidy and clean his chances of becoming successful is greater. I agree with this idea for the following reasons.

To begin with, keeping rooms clean and tidy could help people foster patience. It is because a person who always has a neat room must allow for a margin of error. For instance, in order to keep a room tidy, a person must face many jobs to do, like sweeping the floor, cleaning the window, vacuuming the carpet and dusting the furniture. And any of these small jobs are time-consuming and requires repeated efforts of the host who wants his room to be well-kept. Nobody would imagine that the host could reach his aim with one move, for there is always some imperfection after his first attempt, such as a spot on the floor, a piece of dirt on the corner of the window, or even worse, messed up garbage pile cause by naughty pet's sudden visit. After coping with all these obstacles, the room becomes clean and tidy, yet, what's more important, the host is getting increasingly patient, which is good for his future success.

Moreover, keeping rooms clean and tidy could help people become well-organized. It is because a person who always has a neat room must enjoy a remarkable ability of space management, which successful people would never ignore. It is all too easy for us to pick up the names of one or two our friends or relatives who have terrible bedroom in chaos. One of my cousins, John serves as an example. When he was 12 years old, he missed the opening ceremony of new semester for he failed to find his school uniform. When he was about to graduate from college, he had to participate in a very important job interview with his face unshaved and in casual clothes, because he forgot where he had left the electronic razors and washing his suit with soup stain on it totally skipped him. Guess what he is now? He just passed his 35 years' birthday as a basic-level employee in a small local company. Therefore,

without the ability to get organized, people are less likely to be successful.

Keeping rooms clean and tidy could let people be more independent. It is because a person who always has a neat room must plan their cleaning and try to figure out the problems they may encounter by themselves. For one thing, before starting cleaning, people need to make a plan, indicating the order of these chores. For another thing, along the process of cleaning the room, people need to tackle some problems by themselves. For instance, with what material the windows could be cleaned more efficiently; in what way to sweep the floor is more time-saving; in what order the books should be collected on the bookshelf so that you could find them as quickly as possible when you want to read them. In this way, people's independence, which contributes to the success considerably, will be gradually developed.

To sum up, keeping one's room tidy and clean will help people to be more patient, well-organized and independent. All these qualities could greatly increase the possibility to make a successful man of an ordinary person. (561 words, Written by Sun Wei)

23. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Only movies about real life are worth watching. 【媒体】

When it comes to movie watching, many people hold a judgmental point of view, believing only movies about the reality are worth watching. As for me, it is true that practical movies are educational, but to say it is the only watch-worthy type is an overstatement.

Admittedly, movies about real life tend to be more educational and informative. Take documentaries for instance. They document the natural world and capture living creatures in a realistic way. By watching Animal World, kids get to understand the law of jungle in a more vivid way; by watching Mystery about History, kids get better informed about the historic facts and figures in a more interesting way; and by watching The Life of Steve Jobs, kids get a closer look of their role model and of how marvelous ideas came out from such a genius.

However, if one watches nothing but realistic movies, he may feel bored or even fed up. It is because most people turn to movies for relaxation and leisure. A person, with no outlet for stress and pressure, keeping swallowing down knowledge and realistic matters, would soon find it hard to concentrate, either on work or leisure activities. In this case amusing movies like sci-fi or animations would seem more worth watching. They provide audience a temporary escape from the real world. Take Kungfu Panda for example. The lovely panda won huge popularity with his funny appearance but yet inspiring experience. Besides all the laughter in cinema, this Hollywood blockbuster also fosters children an important value in life: take actions to fulfill your destiny, even if at first you think you suck. It seems to me amusing movies are also instrumental in teaching children important values about real life.

Moreover, movies unrelated to real life can also inspire young people with imagination and creativity. Sci-fi movies are a good case in point. They are mostly fictitious and ahead of time. Intrigued by the fantasies in movies, children would later relate the plots with real world, and thus they become more attentive and creative. It is not hard to imagine when seeing flying brooms in Harry Potter, kids would start to think about a more eco-friendly way of transportation; and when seeing automatized palace in Howl's Moving Castle, kids tend to visualize robots applied in household chores one day. Therefore, watching movies that goes beyond the reality actually encourages a more adroit way of thinking.

To sum up, movies related to reality are educational and informative, yet only watching such kind of movies is not enough; and it is always worthwhile to turn to other types like amusing ones. (Bao Lei, 441w)

24. Which do you think is the best way for a student to make friends: joining a sports team, participating in community activities, or traveling? 【社交】

Extracurricular activities can bring students numerous benefits. Getting to know more people is definitely one of them. If asked to recommend a best way for students to make more friends, I'd go for traveling.

It is true that if one signs up for a sports team, s/he is bound to acquaint with teammates who share the same interest. But we should not forget that most friends we make are already those we share a lot in common with. What difference does a sports team make? Traveling, on the hand, enables an individual to meet people from diverse backgrounds and ethnic groups. It is a fantastic experience to young people since they get to learn about exotic cultures and customs. It is noteworthy that cultural differences avail one with more insightful perceptions. Traveling to India, you can ask yoga buddies for tips on meditation; traveling to Prague, you'd get a better idea of LGBT and show more empathy to other human beings. In this way, not only can you meet a variety of people, but you can also learn from the traveling experience.

Community service is another form of extracurricular activities. Volunteers get to know more people around the neighborhood. And their good work can surely win them some friends, but it is only restricted to a certain area. Besides, community service requires commitment and patience. Volunteers have to give full attention to the work they are committed to, rather than hanging out with community members when they are supposed to get work done. By contrast, when you are on a trip, you have no burden of volunteer work. You can go sightseeing with people you befriend along the tour and talk about next destination. You don't have to feel guilty because the friend-making fun compromises your serious community work.

In summary, compared with attending a sports team and community activities, traveling comes as the best way for young people to make friends.

25. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? To increase economic growth, the government should ignore environmental concerns. 【政府】

Increasing and developing economic growth is a key focus of many governments. In fulfilling these economic goals, many countries have debated whether or not the environment should be taken into consideration. I believe that in order to sustain a prolonged period of economic growth and development, governments should promote policies of environmental sustainability.

A problem that many developed nations face now, is that many of their factories are several decades old and are no longer able to produce at the same rate as newer factories. Not only are their machines outdated and inefficient, but they also require huge amounts of energy and resources. Consequently these factories are not financially or environmentally

sustainable. Converting and updating these factories is costly and time consuming, creating a challenge for developed countries who wish to remain competitive in the global market. Therefore, building factories and developing technology that are environmentally sustainable from this start is in the better interest of the long-term success of an economy. Even though the initial costs might be higher than building a traditional, non-environmentally friendly factory, in the long run it is better business to implement environmental policies now than later.

Not only would the government enforcing eco-friendly regulations promote the financial sustainability of the national industry, but it would also create more overall stability in other sectors of economy. When governments neglect to enforce environmental regulations on industries and businesses, pollution and other environmental hazards increase and negatively affect the overall health of the population. A factory that dumps toxic waste into the surrounding regions main water supply will cause disease and other health defects of the hundreds of thousands of citizens living in the area. As a result, the local and national healthcare system is burdened with a large percentage of patients with serious health issues, stretching the resources and funding of a very expensive social program. If the government had enforced one simple law, it would not have to spend millions of dollars in healthcare and it could have spent the money on further developing the economy.

In addition, economists all agree that green energy and green technology is a burgeoning market that has not yet been tapped by many developed countries, such as the US. A developing country that wants to gain a competitive edge in the global economy would be wise to get ahead of the competition and invest before the other developed countries come to their senses. Governments who want to give their countries a competitive edge should not ignore environmental sustainability.

While developing an economy and industry based on environmental principles can be slower and initially more expensive than the traditional and unsustainable method of industrial development, in the long run a government who enforces environmental sustainability will establish a financially sustainable economy, a healthier and more stable social structure, and a more innovative and competitive economy. (外教Anna, 475 words)

26. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Working at home by using telephone and computer is better than working in company's office. 【科技】

Thanks to modern technology, new inventions like SOHO and teleconference have come into being. Thus some urban commuters advocate working at home instead of in an office. I agree for the following three reasons.

Firstly, telecommuting brings more satisfaction. Since working at home means no commuting to workplace, employees no longer have to tolerate long hours of traffic congestion, which usually gives rise to conflicts. It is especially true in big cities. Punctuality makes white collars have to spare sleeping hours for commute. Sleep-deprived and weary of the long trip, one can barely concentrate on work. However, working at home has no such trouble at all. Moreover, without the burden of overtime work, one gets to spend more quality time with family. Therefore, working at home helps to improve the sense of work satisfaction.

Secondly, telecommuting guarantees more efficiency. Take teleconference for instance. With web-cam and microphone, holding a meeting at home is as effective as in a conference room.

Thanks to the modern technology, every facial expression or tone of speech can be delivered just like conventional meetings. Besides, everybody has to be at present for a conventional conference where some may get late for bad weather or postponed flight. Teleconference, by contrast, entails nothing but a laptop, in any place at any time.

Thirdly, telecommuting generates more creativity. It is because one has more flexible time when working at home. Those who have a clearer head at night would no longer have to play by the 8-hour working rules. With their own time preference, all they have to do is to meet the deadline on time. Take my sister for example. She works for an advertising company that runs the telecommuting policy. According to her, a brilliant idea popped into her head one night when she was taking a shower at home. Rushing to her study, she captured the idea in words and finally closed that case at 2 am of the next day. It seems to me working at home sets imagination free from time and space.

All in all, compared with conventional way of working, telecommuting keeps employees more satisfied, efficient and creative. (367w)

27. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Society has created too many rules for young people. 【社会】

Young people today are bound by a myriad of social and legal conventions, and it seems to me that these rules are excessive and often ineffective. Young people are governed by too many rules.

First are social conventions. In my country, young people are expected to follow a fairly standardized and linear path on the road to adulthood. "Responsibility" is the operative word. Schooling follows a certain road: K-12 education to prepare you for college, college to prepare you for work, work to prepare you for a respectable career and a brief period of independence before settling down as an adult. Deviating from this is generally frowned upon. It sounds terribly irresponsible to drop out of college and go backpacking through India, for example, and for many young people, it probably is. Then again, this is exactly what Steve Jobs did, and nobody can argue with those results. The problem here is that, while we mean well in enforcing these rules, they're highly inflexible and box the creativity of youth at a critical stage in their development. Social conventions, which were originally intended to anchor young people, instead end up restricting their paths of development.

Second are legal conventions. The laws governing the behavior of young people aren't really commensurate with the physical and emotional realities of youth. For example, in my country, you must be 18 in order to buy cigarettes and 21 to buy alcohol, but for some reason you only have to be 17 to go to war. This means that those too young to be trusted with the responsibility of vices like smoking and drinking might still be old enough to experience the trauma of military combat. Vices like smoking and drinking are irresponsible uses of time, because they tend to derail you from the life trajectory that society prescribes. Serving in the military, however, is not, because soldiering is the epitome of a standardized, linear, and responsible life. These laws only add up to an unclear message to youth about how they must be responsible but that we don't trust them to be responsible. Such contradictory ideas are not beneficial to youth and their role in society.

Now, admittedly, young people do need guidelines when growing up. It's an oftentimes scary and confusing process. Without the right type of guidance, it can be very easy for young

people to go down the wrong path. But sometimes the right type of guidance is no guidance, and sometimes taking the wrong path can teach you how to find the one you're meant for. The problem with the rules confronting young people today is they're too many and too inflexible. They don't encourage young people to learn, to adapt, or to find their own way. And they don't trust young people. All they do is stunt the growth of a generation of youths, who then go on to foist the same lousy system on the next generation. To me, this isn't a system that begets "responsibility."

So yes, I think society has created too many rules for young people. The only way things will improve is if we give them a little more freedom and trust in finding their own way, while still being there to provide guidance should they want it. When they finally do acquire a sense of responsibility, it'll be because they grasped the concept themselves. (Richard, 561 words)

28. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? When you choose a university, would you prefer a school with high employment rate or another with famous professors?
【学校】

Nowadays tertiary education is taking on a crucial importance for young people. Some pragmatics go for universities with high employment figures while other may settle for those with famous lectures and professors. As for me, my favor goes to the former view.

Firstly, it is a good career that makes the higher education count. If a college manages to send most the graduates to suitable job positions, its staff have already done an excellent job, no matter they are famous or not. Most young people go for college in hopes of a successful career, instead of famous personality shows. Since college fund already imposes heavy financial burden to promising young people from less privileged households, chances are good that they could never pay off their college debt if they can hardly gain any competitive edge after they graduate. Therefore, the sole role a college plays is to equip the individuals with sound expertise and engaging characters so that they can fully tap their potential in the future job market.

Secondly, the alumni/alumnae provide more potential job opportunities. Via the help of former graduates, college students can easily have access to an intern or interview opportunity. This can hardly be true if not for the school's high employment tradition. Take my sister for example. She used to attend New Oriental College, a local school for language lovers. The graduates go to all trades of life, mostly respectable ones with decent salaries, like ambassadors or simultaneous interpreter. My sister interned in one of the World's Top 500 enterprises when she was still a sophomore. It was a great opportunity provided by a former student of her department. Later she became an officer employee. So it seems clear to me that it is because of the good choice in university that opens up more life opportunities for students.

Admittedly, celebrities, to some extent, make a school more appealing. It is widely believed that famous professor tend to be more knowledgeable and authoritative in the field. As a result, students are supposed to learn more from such mentors. However, it is not always the case. Famous teachers frequently get quite a few invitations for seminars or speeches. It is not hard to imagine a well-known economic professor swamped with speech preparation and thesis writing can hardly make time for real connection with a large crowd of wall-street-dreamers. Students would probably end up feeling ignored. Universities with satisfactory employment, on the other hand, come with a lot more merits.

To sum up, universities with famous professor may sound appealing but when it comes to future benefits, a pragmatic choice is more reasonable. (441w)

29. During an economic crisis, governments usually reduce spending on certain public services. Which area do you think the governments should reduce spending on first:

1. Education

2. Health care

3. Unemployment benefits

Please include specific examples and details in your explanation 【政府】

During periods of economic strain, funding for public services becomes a contentious area of discussion. Usually, areas like education, health care, and unemployment benefits are the first to get cut. This may be because governments think these areas can survive short-term funding deficits, whereas funding for things like the military are more integral and less capable of tolerating such sacrifice. The problem, however, is that cutting funding for education, health care, and unemployment benefits will create more systemic, long-term problems that may be even more difficult to recover from. If I had to choose one of the three to cut, however, unemployment benefits would probably be the one to go.

Why not cut education? Education is important for a number of reasons—it is not only crucial for proper intellectual development, but it is also necessary for appropriate emotional and cultural development as well. The main reason not to cut education, however, would be for purely economic reasons. Firstly, lack of education is highly correlated with crime, and fighting crime is a huge drain on a government's resources. Secondly, having an educated populace keeps a nation competitive in terms of its different industries. The most economically healthy countries are often also the most educated ones. For these reasons, keeping citizens educated would save money in the long run because you would have fewer people in prisons and more people innovating and bringing growth to the national economy.

Similarly, cutting health care would ultimately hurt the economy, because you would have workers not only getting sick more often, but also taking longer to recover from their illnesses. This means that a large portion of your economy would be out of commission every year due to lack of adequate medical attention. Not only that, but people would also be under more stress because they lack the security and comfort of knowing they could get proper treatment if sick. Their anxiety about lack of health care would lead them to become less innovative and less productive, much like anxiety over lack of food would. Health care is a fundamental human need in modern society, much like nourishment and clothing, and any deficiency in this area will keep people from achieving their full productive potential.

So what makes unemployment benefits dispensable? First of all, having unemployment benefits makes unemployment more attractive, which naturally leads to higher rates of unemployment. If people can get by without working, why would they choose to work? For instance, if unemployment benefits were \$100,000 a year, would anyone still want to work? Based on this, we can see that, at least past a certain figure, higher unemployment benefits equals higher unemployment. Second of all, unemployment benefits basically amounts to the government paying people to be unproductive. This sends the wrong message. Instead, the government could be using this money to teach new skills to the unemployed, or giving them health care to maintain their capacity to work. Ultimately the issue is not black or white, but unemployment benefits seem to be the least helpful area to fund during an

economic crisis because it is the least directed form of spending in terms of promoting economic recovery. (Richard 527)

30. Students must take a class in which they learn a practical skill. School administrators are trying to decide whether to hold a class in cooking, managing personal finances or auto repair. Which do you think the school should require students to take? Why? 【学校】

Practical skills are important for students to learn before they go out into the world. Students should be taught how to cook so that they can become more self-sufficient, learn about nutrition, and explore culture.

The first reason to learn cooking is that most students will need this skill later in life. Most of them will not be able to afford to eat out at restaurants every night or hire a cook or housekeeper to make meals. Schools have a responsibility make sure that students are prepared for life and so giving students a chance to learn about the tools and equipment is important. For instance, it will be really important to know how to use a knife and avoid cutting your fingers when you are making the filling for dumplings at holiday time.

The second reason to learn cooking at school is you become familiar with ingredients and are able to make healthy choices about what to eat. Learning how to cook in school will enable students to live healthier lives. If you don't learn how to cook in school, you might not know that certain foods are very high in salt and fat. Showing them how to make a healthy snack of carrots and peanut butter with raisins might get the students to avoid processed foods that come pre-packaged. They will see how easy it is.

Finally, it is a lot of fun to learn about cooking food from different cultures and the school will have a popular offering if they teach people how to make some of the foods from different parts of the world that are so popular at restaurants. You cannot go to a truly American restaurant without seeing a hamburger on the menu or to a Thai restaurant without seeing Pad Thai. A cooking class will enable to people to learn how to make these foods at home so that someday when these students have their own children they can make their family happy by plopping down a plate of fried chicken and black-eyed peas.

Teaching cooking will be a popular class that helps keep students healthy and prepares them for the rest of their lives while learning about the different culture and ingredients from around the world. (Alex 374)