

AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY EXAMINATION BOARD

HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL CERTIFICATE

CLASS XII

MODEL EXAMINATION PAPER 2020

English Compulsory Paper I

Listening Passage I

Virtual Communities

Thanks to computers and internet, we are witnessing the emergence of a new type of group – virtual groups or communities. Both adults and children are turning on their computers and electronic gadgets, logging onto the Web, and visiting special-interest websites, often with chat rooms. If you are an amateur photographer, you can chat online with other amateur photographers. This online communication helps like-minded people to talk to one another about their shared interests.

Whereas 50 years ago, the definition of a community stressed the notion of geographic closeness and face-to-face relationships, today's communities are much more broadly defined as 'sets of social relations among people'. In this spirit, there is a wider access to what is commonly known as 'internet communities' or 'virtual communities'.

These communities provide their members access to extensive amounts of information covering a wide range of topics and issues. When visiting such communities, it does not matter what you look like or appear as. On the internet, people are free to express their thoughts, to agree and disagree on topics, form online learning groups with strangers they have never met, and to escape from those they normally interact with by spending time online.

Communicating over the internet permits people to explore the boundaries of their personalities and to shift from one persona to another.

Some researchers have come to the conclusion that the internet, for many people has become indispensable, and that it is often the small things that the internet is used for, on a daily basis, that makes it an integral part of people's lives.

Source: Adapted from '*Consumer Behaviour*' by Leon G. Schiffman and Leslie Lazar Kanuk

Listening Passage II

Mayan Indians

The Mayan Indians lived in Mexico for thousands of years before the Spanish arrived in the 1500s. The Maya were an intelligent, culturally rich people whose achievements were many. They had farms, beautiful palaces, and cities with many buildings. The Mayan people knew a lot about nature and the world around them. This knowledge helped them to live a better life than most people of that time, because they could use it to make their lives more comfortable and rewarding. Knowledge about tools and farming, for instance, made their work easier and more productive.

In ancient Mexico, there were many small clearings in the forest. Each clearing was a village with fields of corn, beans, and other crops around it. To clear the land for farms, the Maya cut down trees with stone axes. They planted seeds by digging holes in the ground with pointed sticks. A farmer was able to grow crops that produced food for several people. But not every Maya had to be a farmer. Some were cloth makers, builders, or priests.

The Maya believed in many gods, including rain gods, sun gods, and corn gods. The people built large temples to honour the Mayan gods. Skillful workers built cities around these temples. It was difficult for them to construct these cities because they had no horses to carry the heavy stones they used to build with. Workers had to carry all of the building materials themselves. Today, many of these ancient Mayan cities and temples are still standing.

Although the cities that the Maya built were beautiful, and the people worked hard to build them, very few of the people lived in them. Usually, only the priests lived in the cities.

The other people lived in small villages in the forests. Their houses were much simpler than the elaborate structures in the cities. They lived in small huts with no windows. The walls were made of poles covered with dried mud, and the roof was made of grass or leaves. Most Maya lived a simple life close to nature. Measuring time was important to the Maya, so they developed a system for measuring it accurately. Farmers needed to know when to plant and harvest their crops. Mayan priests made a system to keep track of time.

The Mayan priests studied the Sun, Moon, stars, and planets. They made a calendar from what they learned. The year was divided into 18 months of 20 days each with five days left over. The Mayan calendar was far more accurate than the European calendars of the time.

Around the year 800, the Maya left their villages and beautiful cities, never to return. No one knows why this happened. They may have died from an infectious disease. They may have left because the soil could no longer grow crops. Archaeologists are still trying to find the lost secrets of the Maya. They are still one of our greatest mysteries.

Source: Adapted from '*Mayan Indians*' published on www.pearsonlongman.com