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## 2012

**Examinations Exert a Negative Influence on Education**

We might marvel at the progress made in every field of study, but the methods of testing a person's knowledge and ability remain as primitive as they ever were. It is really extraordinary that after all these years, educators and education policymakers have still failed to devise anything more efficient and reliable than examinations to ensure students learn and can apply the material they are taught. For all the pious claims that examinations test what you know, it is common knowledge that they more often do the exact opposite. They may be a good means of testing one’s memory, or the knack of using short-term memory under extreme pressure, but they can tell you nothing about a person's true ability and aptitudes.

As a cause of anxiety, examinations are second to none, specifically because so much depends on them in many education systems. They are a mark of success or failure in our society. One’s entire future may be decided in one fateful day with one fateful examination. The moment a child begins school, he enters a world of harsh competition where success and failure are clearly defined and measured. Can we wonder at the increasing number of drop-outs, and young people who are written off as utter failures before they have even begun a career? Can we be surprised at the suicide rate among young students?

A good education should, among other things, train you how to think, and how to think for yourself. The examination system does anything but that. Required material is rigidly laid down by a syllabus, so the student is encouraged to memorize it and reproduce it without critically digesting it. Examinations do not motivate a student to read widely, but to restrict his readings; they do not enable him to seek more and more knowledge, but induce cramming of a narrow set of material. The most successful students, and even the most successful job candidates, are not always the ones with the highest test scores; they are, rather, the best trained in being able to think critically and work under pressure.

## 2011

**Should private car owners be taxed for pollution?**

It was not until recently that the government was able to exact measures to cut carbon dioxide emissions, in which controlling the number of cars and advocating smaller vehicles have played an important role. Imposing a “pollution tax” on private cars, without doubt will have certain effect in pollution control, but only through a more refined and focused scheme can the policy have the power to realize the goal of significantly improving pollution issues.

The first thing to consider is the volume of vehicles that belong to the government itself. If the government is going to call for citizens to use public transportation rather than personal vehicles, the “pollution tax” imposed on state-owned vehicles (which are almost all for the personal use of officials) should be more severe than that on private vehicles. Only as the government creates an image of reducing pollution by constraining its volume of vehicles to the necessary extent will the public begin to reduce their use of vehicles, and also focus on environmental protection.

There is a further consideration: the tax should not only be levied against vehicles of certain sizes or engine types, simply because not everyone drives the same distances. In other words, the “pollution tax” would be enhanced through other taxes, like an “oil tax.” The introduction of a stronger combined tax portfolio could make tax payments more reasonable to the taxpayer when their individual interests are safeguarded.

It is certain that a “pollution tax” could contribute to environmental protection efforts; however, the tax would not have a strong enough effect unless a more comprehensive scheme of policies is adopted.

## 2010

**Should College Students Hire Cleaners**

It was recently reported that some college students hired a house cleaner to provide cleaning services for their dormitory room. These students attribute this behavior to limited time to do such cleaning themselves. They claim that it helps them to save time and stay more focused on their studies. In my opinion, such a chain of reasoning is seriously flawed, and they are just making excuses for their laziness. College students should not hire house cleaners to clean their dormitory rooms.

First, it is not necessary for college students to hire a cleaner. As boarding school students living in tiny dorms, we don’t have much cleaning to do to begin with. All that is required is a basic tidying of the room, or possibly some light sweeping, which we all have learned to do from childhood. Undoubtedly, we can manage these tasks ourselves. In addition, cleaning such a small dorm room would not take much time. Conversely, it may help us to momentarily divert our attention away from studies and reduce some of our academic pressure. Hence, we don’t need to hire a cleaner to keep our dorms clean.

A more important reason why university students should not hire a cleaner is that university education should incorporate both academic learning and opportunities for character-building. While attending a university we should try our best to be independent and self-reliant. Otherwise, we cannot shoulder the great responsibility we are expected to handle when we step into society after graduation. If we are still relying on cleaners for dorm sanitation, how can we seriously expect to earn a living in a future career? Consequently, the most basic thing we should do now is to take care of ourselves and prepare for those future careers instead of evading responsibility by hiring help.

In summary, college students should learn to stand on their own two feet. Hiring a cleaner is definitely not a wise choice.

## 2009年

**Will Tourism Bring Harm to the Environment?**

In recent years, tourism has developed rapidly in China. Many people believe that tourism produces positive effects on a country’s economic growth and that we should try our best to promote more tourism for this reason. But what these people fail to see is that tourism has potential to negatively impact our environment. I am firmly convinced that this will be the case, due to several factors: one is the process of exploiting a new scenic spot, which requires the building of many artificial facilities in order to attract tourists. These facilities usually have certain unfavorable effects on the environment. This process usually harms the ecological balance of the area. In some less developed areas, many trees are being cut down to build hotels and facilities for tourists to see and explore the beauty of the mountains. This type of deforestation often results in landslides and mudflows. Another way in which the promotion of tourism has damaged the environment is caused by the tourists themselves. Some tourists ignorantly leave garbage and waste in the environment, and some others even kill local wildlife, all of which badly damages the balance of the natural environment. It is wrong to sacrifice the environment in the name of tourism.

## 2008年

**The Benefits of Service and Volunteering**

Service and volunteer work have recently become popular and even fashionable., with volunteers ranging from college students to white collar workers. It is reported that China now has 4.5 million registered volunteers having provided more than 4.5 billion hours of volunteer work. Why do so many people like to do volunteer work? Are there benefits to doing this type of service?

The answer is absolutely yes. First of all, we can gain more experience through volunteering. Whatever service we do, whether it be as a volunteer teacher for a rural school or an assistant in a retirement home, we can understand and live different lifestyles and broaden our horizons.

Second, we can feel the sense of being needed through volunteering. Many people feel frustrated with the travails of life and even feel empty because of the repeated cycle of work and rest. We may gradually become numb and lose the sense of being needed. By joining a volunteer group and offering service to people in need, we may feel happy and fulfilled again.

Third, we can develop good qualities in ourselves through volunteering. Volunteer work can be teamwork, which requires the ability to cooperate. We can come to know people with different personalities and different backgrounds through working together on service projects. From our co-volunteers we can learn many good qualities that can help us be better people.

In conclusion, volunteering can be of great benefit in that we can gain more experience, acquire a sense of being needed and develop more good personal qualities.

## 2007年

### 范文1 Is It Wise to Make Friends Online?

Recently, the public has given a lot of attention to the debate about whether or not it is wise to make friends online. After taking all the favorable and unfavorable aspects into account, I am of the opinion that people can benefit from making friends online. This perspective, I believe, is shared by the majority of the public, a fact that can be explained by the following reasons.: first, communication is regarded as a basic and essential element in our society. Unfortunately, many people around us appear to be apathetic and have no idea how to become acquainted with a stranger. They may be too shy or nervous, or may even be afraid of being rejected by others. But we must remember that no man is an island unto himself, but that every man is a part of a continent, a part of the main. As a consequence, regardless whether you like it or not, we have to be part of the main. The internet, as a mass medium of indirect communication, provides us with a chance to reach out to others. Through the internet, those people who are scared to make friends can talk with others more naturally and confidently online.

Second, it is well acknowledged that we can learn a lot from our e-pals. If our friends online are foreigners, we can practice English with him or her, and can have a glimpse of another country’s culture, traditions, and even the customs and geography.  From what I have mentioned above, we can come to the conclusion that making friends online can do us some good. And whether we think it to be a good thing or not, online communication is having a great impact on our daily lives.

### 范文2 Is it wise to make friends on the Internet?

With the massive development of Internet over the past decades, never has communication been so easy. Online communication tools, such as MSN and QQ, make contact between people totally convenient. However, is it wise to make acquaintances with cyber friends throughout the globe when real identities are hidden? My answer is no.

Admittedly, making friends online can bring us a great amount of joy and unimagined stimulation. Nevertheless, as we can only communicate with people though words or images, some people with ulterior motives may use the technology to take advantage of the naïve or ignorant. Just as the joke says, “a twenty-one year-old pretty girl may turn out to be an eighty year-old ugly drunk.”

In addition, many people become addicted to these sometimes fictitious relationships, and lose the ability to surviving in a real-life environment. Online communication can never take the place of face-to-face conversation or in-person expressions. What is more, whom do you turn to when an emergency arises? Someone thousands of miles away that you even do not know, or your next door neighbors who smile at you every morning?

In conclusion, when we try to make friends online it is necessary to be sensible and to take precautions to ensure our safety, especially meeting online friends in the real world. Only in this way can we enjoy the exciting experiences and extremely convenient interactions the internet can bring to us.

## 2006年专四真题作文

### 范文1 My Idea for Saving Money

A recent survey, carried out by a Beijing-based information company, shows that two-thirds of today’s Chinese college students favor the idea of saving money for later use, whereas many others deem it better to use tomorrow’s money today. Personally, I side with the former.

First, saving money can prevent anxiety in the case of accidents, disease or other mishaps. As we all know, when one faces tragedies like life-threatening disease or incapacitation, one also requires money to sustain through the hardship.

Second, saving money can give one a sense of fulfillment. Since most people work hard every day, they are often quite happy and satisfied with the “achievement” of having accumulated a large deposit in the bank.

Third, saving money allows one to have opportunities to serve and help other people in need. With money available at a critical moment, one can offer badly needed help to those in temporary financial distress. When those who are suffering from flood, famine, a car accident, or similar circumstances cannot sustain themselves, taking a loan from a bank is often too costly. Thus, timely help from a wise and sensible saver will be rewarded with gratitude. A dependable friendship will eventually be fostered, which can be more important than any amount of money.

In sum, saving money does have many advantages. Indeed, it is an important aspect of living a virtuous Chinese life. Therefore, we should all start saving money today!

### 范文2 Using Tomorrow’s Money for Today’s Comfort

Recently an information company in Beijing compiled the results of a survey about student life. The survey included more than 700 students, and the results showed that sixty-seven percent of students think that saving money is a good habit, while the rest believed that using tomorrow’s money for today is better. Personally, I agree with the latter point of view.

Most people may have heard the story about the old Chinese lady and the old American lady. The former spent all her life painstakingly saving enough money to buy a new apartment, and only lived in it for a very short time before she died, while the latter first borrowed money from the bank to buy a new apartment in her youth and lived in it comfortably, spending the rest of her life paying off the loan. In the story, the results are the same: they both bought new apartments, but their life experiences were radically different, the former hardly enjoying the comfort after a life of hard work, while the latter enjoyed living there for quite a long time because she “used tomorrow’s money today.” By comparison, we can clearly see that the latter’s choice of lifestyle was much better than the former’s. If this is so, then why don’t we use tomorrow’s money for today’s comfort?

To conclude, I think using tomorrow’s money today is much better than always saving money.

## 2005年专四真题作文

**MY IDEA FOR A UNIVERSITY ARTS FESTIVAL**

With only four months to go before our university’s arts festival starts, my fellow students are getting increasingly enthusiastic in brainstorming new and unique ideas for the event. In my opinion, typical activities such as performances, forums and lectures on the arts should also be taken into consideration.

The festival itself is an image-creating undertaking. Students should be attracted to participate in the festival in their first impressions of the activities, and so the opening ceremony is of vital importance. Fascinating performances, including pop music, ballet, and live musical performances, ought to be included in this part of the program. If possible, I would invite an orchestra to add life and excitement to the ceremony. But he festival should not end there; performances alone are too superficial. To help students gain a deeper appreciation of the arts, forums and lectures should be held. Forums can be held through BBS, owing to the wide accessibility to the Internet, whereas professors and experts can be invited to give lectures concerning their respective specialties in the arts, and the role those arts play in their daily lives. However, prior to all the above, professional organization, detailed planning, and effective marketing and advertising are needed to ensure success.

A university arts festival, in brief, must include both rich content and careful preparation. Only then can it be successful and allow everyone to enjoy themselves.

## 2004年专四作文真题

**Letter Writing Will Not Be Killed**

Nowadays, young people choose to call each other on the phone rather write letters. Still, I maintain that letter writing will never be killed off by phones, even though we have progressed fully into the Information Age.

Firstly, letters can express your subtle feelings in ways that are difficult when engaging in fast conversation on the phone. With the increase pace of life in modern society, many have found there to be a lack of traditional communication. Because of the lack of communication, sometimes it’s too hard to express your deep feelings, even with people you know, trust, and love. Your throat literally seems to be blocked! In these situations, letters are a good choice. Without any embarrassment, you can just write down your deep feelings and emotions and love on a piece of paper. When you drop the letter into the mailbox, you will feel that what you have sent is not just a letter, but also your deepest emotions, all communicated clearly.

Secondly, letters can be kept as records of memory, while phone conversations cannot. Just imagine how you would feel to open an old box of letters and read them years after they were sent and received; a lot of beautiful and indelible memories will be brought back to you. What an irreplaceable feeling that would be! I believe this feeling is something that you can definitely never experience through simple phone calls.

All in all, letter writing will survive and may even thrive in the Information Age. Phones can never kill the practice, and neither can anything else.