**Assessment Task for Reading**

**Topic: What’s Our Next Direction in Life?**

This assessment task focuses on developing senior secondary students’ reading skills.

This set of materials contains the following:

* **The reading text**
* **A set of questions**
* **Suggested answers**
* **Annotated text**

**Reading Text**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 5  10  15  20  25  30  35  40  45  50  55  60  65  70  75 | | **What’s Our Next Direction in Life?**  [1] It is a matter of fact that the future is full of uncertainties. We are overwhelmed by the exciting adventures ahead of us. However, the mere thought of planning for our future at different times of our lives, from pursuing higher education, finding employment to maintaining interpersonal relationships and taking on marital and family roles, could just be intimidating. We are constantly bothered by the anxiety of not knowing about our next direction. It is worthwhile to think about what we wish to achieve at different stages of our lives, but this is a hard question to answer.  [2] As we advance through different levels of the education system, it appears that everything has been well-planned. We move on to the next level of the education upon the end of an academic year. We are “spoon-fed” with knowledge and always told exactly what we are expected to do and learn. We are accustomed to following instructions and walking the path laid out in front of us. In the face of adversity and problems, there are always people, such as teachers and parents, to offer help and smooth out the obstacles. However, things don’t happen this way as we progress to the next stage and enter the workforce.  [3] Many university graduates find themselves feeling insecure or frustrated. Job seekers, especially those who have left the schooling system early, need to face a lot of challenges in pursuing their ideal career. Penny Ma, a recent graduate holding a bachelor’s degree in commerce from the Island University, said, “I’m so happy that I finally graduated from university, but I really don’t know what I’m going to do next.” Those who are studying for a career with better prospects may think more optimistically. There exists a small community of incredibly daring fresh graduates, such as John Li, who has just completed a higher diploma in fashion design and would like to start a business with his friends. “It would be fascinating to have our own brand of clothing and fashionable products,” the fresh graduate expressed enthusiastically.  [4] People may end up doing different jobs across a variety of sectors, such as retailing, transport, journalism, accounting, clerical work, and performing arts, to name a few. No matter which field we are in, it is important to know what we want to gain from our jobs – be it high salary, job satisfaction, professional status, promotion prospects, opportunities for travelling and working overseas. We have to be aware that in addition to having the right personality, relevant education background, professional qualifications, work experience, as well as knowledge and skills are needed if we desire to take up certain jobs or positions.  [5] Victoria Mak, the career advisor at Peninsula College, has some advice for students who have difficulty coming up with their future plans or feel anxious about making career choices. “Start by exploring your personal interests and get some relevant experience, say through volunteering, in the fields you are interested in. You never know where it will lead you, but if you’re committed to spending your time doing what interests you, that’s a life well lived,” said Ms Mak. David Lynn, a career coach in a leading recruitment agency, suggests that students should, since a year before graduation, set aside a little time every month to explore relevant websites, visit career shows and job fairs, or talk to professionals of their personal network about their jobs to keep up with the current job market.  [6] For graduates or school leavers who wish to set up their own businesses, some successful entrepreneurs have shared some valuable tips. Brian Chen, founder of Excellence Co. reminds beginners of the importance of lifelong learning – “Work hard towards your goal, even just a small step at a time. Never be complacent and keep learning throughout your life. In my 50s, I’m still refreshing myself every day to keep abreast of the times.” Jason Chu, the CEO of GroupBuy, believes that it is important for young people to examine if they have the essential qualities and personality traits to manage a company of their own before starting a business. “In addition to being innovative and sensitive to the market needs, an entrepreneur should be highly motivated, adaptive and resilient,” he explained. He advises young people to develop their business idea more fully and do a reality check before investing money, resources and time. “Haste makes waste – calculate the cost and risk, talk to experienced people in the field about your business plan and shadow similar businesses to test the waters first,” the veteran added.  [7] One positive note that young school leavers should always bear in mind is that no career choice is final. There is no such thing as a dream or ideal job, and if there really is, it comes through a process of trial and error. Research has shown that graduates usually have four to five jobs before they really find the right profession and work their way up. Therefore, there is no need to worry about making a wrong choice that you have to live with forever. A young person’s first choice will rarely be their last. Many people even switch their tracks and develop a second career later on, with the connections they have established, as well as the transferrable skills and experiences they have acquired from their previous jobs. Graduates should, therefore, be more open about the first job and allow themselves more time to explore different career options.  [8] Needless to say, life is an ongoing learning journey with many unpredictable challenges. Yet, there are also endless possibilities. After acquiring fundamental knowledge and skills through formal education, we have to make use of what we have learnt to seek employment and opportunities for success in our chosen fields of endeavour. Whichever path we take, it is essential to keep learning on the job to equip ourselves for career advancement. Lifelong learning is perhaps the only key to success in the world of changes and uncertainties. Despite a lot of uneasy feelings, it’s time to summon up our courage to embrace the unknown and eagerly await the wonderful adventures in the future. |
|  |  | | |

**END OF READING TEXT**

**Questions**

**Read the article titled “What’s Our Next Direction in Life?” and answer questions 1-18. Blacken the circle when appropriate.**

1. According to Paragraph 1, what are the things that make thinking about future plans intimidating? List any three of them. (3 marks)

* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the “hard question” in line 7?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1. Identify the main idea of Paragraphs 2 to 7. Put the letters in the brackets provided. (5 marks)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Paragraph 2 | ( ) | 1. advice for young job seekers |
| Paragraph 3 | ( ) | 1. life before young people leave the schooling system |
| Paragraph 4 | ( ) | 1. key things young people need to know about their career choices |
| Paragraph 5 | ( ) | 1. advice for young people who want to start a business |
| Paragraph 6 | ( ) | 1. life after young people leave the schooling system |

1. According to the writer, is the student life or the job life easier for young people? Support your answer with two reasons from the text. (3 marks)

The writer believes that the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ life is easier for young people for the following reasons:

* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Suggest a reason why many university graduates find themselves feeling “insecure or frustrated” (Line 16)?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Complete the following note with the information from Paragraph 4. Use TWO words for each blank. (6 marks)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What you need to find out about your future job** | |
| ***Reasons for choosing the job, e.g.:***  **☺** high salary  **☺** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **☺** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  ☺ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  ☺ opportunities for travelling and working overseas | ***Job requirements, e.g.:***  🗹 the right personality  🗹 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  🗹 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  🗹 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  🗹 knowledge and skills |

1. Apart from the ways mentioned in Lines 43-44, suggest one possible way for students to get information about the current job market?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Explain the meaning of the idiom “haste makes waste” in Line 57?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Identify two ways to do “a reality check” (Lines 56-57) in Paragraph 6. (2 marks)

* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Who does “the veteran” refer to in Line 59?

“The veteran” refers to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1. Does the writer think that switching jobs is a waste of time? Support your answer with a reason.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Complete the following summary based on information from Paragraphs 5 and 6. Fill in ONE word for each blank. The word may or may not appear in the reading text. (6 marks)

|  |
| --- |
| For students who are about to graduate and look for a job, they can start from their area of (a) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and try to get some relevant experience by serving as (b) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in their interested fields. It is also worth (c) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ aside some time every month in the final year of study to find out more about the current job market.  For graduates who would like to set up their own businesses, they have to make sure they have the personality traits to manage a company. Hard work, innovation, sensitivity to the market needs, (d) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, adaptiveness and (e) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are all essential qualities for an (f) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. It is also important to plan well and calculate the risk before investing money, resources and time. |

1. Based on the text, match the following people with the adjectives that best describe them. Write the letters in the appropriate boxes. (5 marks)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  |  |  |  | ADJECTIVES | | | (i) | Penny Ma |  |  | A. | hardworking | | (ii) | John Li |  |  | B. | supportive | | (iii) | Victoria Mak |  |  | C. | confused | | (iv) | Brian Chen |  |  | D. | surprised | | (v) | Jason Chu |  |  | E. | cautious | |  |  |  |  | F. | excited | |  |  |  |  | G | annoyed | |

1. The idiomatic expression “trial and error” in Line 62 means:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A. conducting a tryout or experiment to test the quality  B. learning from mistakes  C. making a wrong judgement  D. bringing a case to a court | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | A | B | C | D | | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | |

1. Find words with similar meanings from the specified paragraphs. Use ONE word only for each answer. (8 marks)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Meaning** | **Word in the text** | |
| 1. frightening |  | (Paragraphs 1-2) |
| 1. difficulty |  | (Paragraphs 1-2) |
| 1. positively |  | (Paragraphs 3-4) |
| 1. eagerly and passionately |  | (Paragraphs 3-4) |
| 1. flexible and adjusting quickly |  | (Paragraphs 5-6) |
| 1. experienced person |  | (Paragraphs 5-6) |
| 1. moveable |  | (Paragraphs 7-8) |
| 1. basic |  | (Paragraphs 7-8) |

1. Which of the following best describes the tone of the writer in Paragraph 8?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A. skeptical  B. ironic  C. bitter  D. encouraging | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | A | B | C | D | | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | |

1. From the information from the text, decide if the following statements are True (T), False (F) or Not Given (NG). (5 marks)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| a) | Students are advised to study a subject related to their career in university. |  |
| b) | Formal education is the only key to success in life. |  |
| c) | Most people develop a second career after mid-age. |  |
| d) | Young people should stick to one job and avoid switching jobs. |  |
| e) | The views of six people are presented in the article. |  |

1. Where would this article appear most likely?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A. a company website  B. a market research report  C. a recruitment magazine  D. an academic journal | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | A | B | C | D | | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | |

**END OF QUESTIONS**

**Suggested Answers to the Reading Task**

**Read the article titled “What’s Our Next Direction in Life?” and answer questions 1-18. Blacken the circle when appropriate.**

1. According to Paragraph 1, what are the things that make thinking about future plans intimidating? List any three of them. (3 marks)

* Pursuing higher education
* Finding employment
* Maintaining interpersonal relationship
* Taking on marital and family roles (Any 3)

1. What is the “hard question” in line 7?

What we wish to achieve at different stages of our lives.

1. Identify the main idea of Paragraphs 2 to 7. Put the letters in the brackets provided. (5 marks)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Paragraph 2 | ( b ) | 1. advice for young job seekers |
| Paragraph 3 | ( e ) | 1. life before young people leave the schooling system |
| Paragraph 4 | ( c ) | 1. key things young people need to know about their career choices |
| Paragraph 5 | ( a ) | 1. advice for young people who want to start a business |
| Paragraph 6 | ( d ) | 1. life after young people leave the schooling system |

1. According to the writer, is the student life or the job life easier for young people? Support your answer with two reasons from the text. (3 marks)

The writer believes that the student life is easier for young people for the following reasons:

* In school days, students move on to the next level of education upon the end of an academic year.
* Life is well planned and students just follow instructions and walk the path laid out in front of them.
* In the face of adversity and problems, there are always people, such as teachers and parents, to smooth out the obstables. (Any 2)

1. Suggest a reason why many university graduates find themselves feeling “insecure or frustrated” (Line 16)?

University graduates feel insecure and frustrated because they are not sure about which career to pursue after graduation. (Any reasonable answers)

1. Complete the following note with the information from Paragraph 4. Use TWO words for each blank. (6 marks)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What you need to find out about your future job** | |
| ***Reasons for choosing the job, e.g.:***  **☺** high salary  **☺** job satisfaction  **☺** professional status  ☺ promotion prospects  ☺ opportunities for travelling and working overseas | ***Job requirements, e.g.:***  🗹 the right personality  🗹 education background  🗹 professional qualifications  🗹 work experience  🗹 knowledge and skills |

1. Apart from the ways mentioned in Lines 43-44, suggest one possible way for students to get information about the current job market?

Going to employment agencies / reading recuitment magazines or job ads on newspapers (Any reasonable answers)

1. Explain the meaning of the idiom “haste makes waste” in Line 57?

It means that doing something quickly without careful planning will result in a waste of time and efforts. (Any reasonable answers)

1. Identify two ways to do “a reality check” (Lines 56-57) in Paragraph 6. (2 marks)

* talking to experienced people in the field about your business plan
* shadowing similar businesses

1. Who does “the veteran” refer to in Line 59?

“The veteran” refers to Jason Chu (the CEO of GroupBuy).

1. Does the writer think that switching jobs is a waste of time? Support your answer with a reason.

No. Young people can establish useful connections / develop skills and experiences which can be transferred from different jobs.

1. Complete the following summary based on information from Paragraphs 5 and 6. Fill in ONE word for each blank. The word may or may not appear in the reading text. (6 marks)

|  |
| --- |
| For students who are about to graduate and look for a job. They can start from their area of (a) interest(s) and try to get some relevant experience by serving as (b) volunteers in their interested fields. It is also worth (c) setting aside some time every month in the final year of study to find out more about the current job market.  For graduates who would like to set up their own businesses, they have to make sure they have the personality traits to manage a company. Hard work, innovation, sensitivity to the market needs, (d) motivation/resilience, adaptiveness and (e) resilience/motivation are all essential qualities for an (f) entrepreneur. It is also important to plan well and calculate the risk before investing money, resources and time. |

1. Based on the text, match the following people with the adjectives that best describe them. Write the letters in the appropriate boxes. (5 marks)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  |  |  |  | ADJECTIVES | | | (i) | Penny Ma | C |  | A. | hardworking | | (ii) | John Li | F |  | B. | supportive | | (iii) | Victoria Mak | B |  | C. | confused | | (iv) | Brian Chen | A |  | D. | surprised | | (v) | Jason Chu | E |  | E. | cautious | |  |  |  |  | F. | excited | |  |  |  |  | G | annoyed | |

1. The idiomatic expression “trial and error” in Line 62 means:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A. conducting a tryout or experiment to test the quality  B. learning from mistakes  C. making a wrong judgement  D. bringing a case to a court | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | A | B | C | D | | ⭘ | ⚫ | ⭘ | ⭘ | |

1. Find words with similar meanings from the specified paragraphs. Use ONE word only for each answer. (8 marks)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Meaning** | **Word in the text** | |
| 1. frightening | intimidating | (Paragraphs 1-2) |
| 1. difficulty | adversity | (Paragraphs 1-2) |
| 1. positively | optimistically | (Paragraphs 3-4) |
| 1. eagerly and passionately | enthusiastically | (Paragraphs 3-4) |
| 1. flexible and adjusting quickly | adaptive | (Paragraphs 5-6) |
| 1. experienced person | veteran | (Paragraphs 5-6) |
| 1. moveable | transferrable | (Paragraphs 7-8) |
| 1. basic | fundamental | (Paragraphs 7-8) |

1. Which of the following best describes the tone of the writer in Paragraph 8?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A. skeptical  B. ironic  C. bitter  D. encouraging | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | A | B | C | D | | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⚫ | |

1. From the information from the text, decide if the following statements are True (T), False (F) or Not Given (NG). (5 marks)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| a) | Students are advised to study a subject related to their career in university. | NG |
| b) | Formal education is the only key to success in life. | F |
| c) | Most people develop a second career after mid-age. | NG |
| d) | Young people should stick to one job and avoid switching jobs. | F |
| e) | The views of six people are presented in the article. | T |

1. Where would this article appear most likely?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A. a company website  B. a market research report  C. a recruitment magazine  D. an academic journal | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | A | B | C | D | | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⚫ | ⭘ | |

**END OF SUGGESTED ANSWERS**

**Annotated Text**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 5  10  15  20  25  30  35  40  45  50  55  60  65  70  75 | | **What’s Our Next Direction in Life?**  [1] It is a matter of fact that the future is full of uncertainties. We are overwhelmed by the exciting adventures ahead of us. However, the mere thought of planning for our future at different times of our lives, from pursuing higher education, finding employment to maintaining interpersonal relationships and taking on marital and family roles, could just be intimidating. We are constantly bothered by the anxiety of not knowing about our next direction. It is worthwhile to think about what we wish to achieve at different stages of our lives, but this is a hard question to answer.  [2] As we advance through different levels of the education system, it appears that everything has been well-planned. We move on to the next level of the education upon the end of an academic year. We are “spoon-fed” with knowledge and always told exactly what we are expected to do and learn. We are accustomed to following instructions and walking the path laid out in front of us. In the face of adversity and problems, there are always people, such as teachers and parents, to offer help and smooth out the obstacles. However, things don’t happen this way as we progress to the next stage and enter the workforce.  [3] Many university graduates find themselves feeling insecure or frustrated. Job seekers, especially those who have left the schooling system early, need to face a lot of challenges in pursuing their ideal career. Penny Ma, a recent graduate holding a bachelor’s degree in commerce from the Island University, said, “I’m so happy that I finally graduated from university, but I really don’t know what I’m going to do next.” Those who are studying for a career with better prospects may think more optimistically. There exists a small community of incredibly daring fresh graduates, such as John Li, who has just completed a higher diploma in fashion design and would like to start a business with his friends. “It would be fascinating to have our own brand of clothing and fashionable products,” the fresh graduate expressed enthusiastically.  [4] People may end up doing different jobs across a variety of sectors, such as retailing, transport, journalism, accounting, clerical work, and performing arts, to name a few. No matter which field we are in, it is important to know what we want to gain from our jobs – be it high salary, job satisfaction, professional status, promotion prospects, opportunities for travelling and working overseas. We have to be aware that in addition to having the right personality, relevant education background, professional qualifications, work experience, as well as knowledge and skills are needed if we desire to take up certain jobs or positions.  [5] Victoria Mak, the career advisor at Peninsula College, has some advice for students who have difficulty coming up with their future plans or feel anxious about making career choices. “Start by exploring your personal interests and get some relevant experience, say through volunteering, in the fields you are interested in. You never know where it will lead you, but if you’re committed to spending your time doing what interests you, that’s a life well lived,” said Ms Mak. David Lynn, a career coach in a leading recruitment agency, suggests that students should, since a year before graduation, set aside a little time every month to explore relevant websites, visit career shows and job fairs, or talk to professionals of their personal network about their jobs to keep up with the current job market.  [6] For graduates or school leavers who wish to set up their own businesses, some successful entrepreneurs have shared some valuable tips. Brian Chen, founder of Excellence Co. reminds beginners of the importance of lifelong learning – “Work hard towards your goal, even just a small step at a time. Never be complacent and keep learning throughout your life. In my 50s, I’m still refreshing myself every day to keep abreast of the times.” Jason Chu, the CEO of GroupBuy, believes that it is important for young people to examine if they have the essential qualities and personality traits to manage a company of their own before starting a business. “In addition to being innovative and sensitive to the market needs, an entrepreneur should be highly motivated, adaptive and resilient,” he explained. He advises young people to develop their business idea more fully and do a reality check before investing money, resources and time. “Haste makes waste – calculate the cost and risk, talk to experienced people in the field about your business plan and shadow similar businesses to test the waters first,” the veteran added.  [7] One positive note that young school leavers should always bear in mind is that no career choice is final. There is no such thing as a dream or ideal job, and if there really is, it comes through a process of trial and error. Research has shown that graduates usually have four to five jobs before they really find the right profession and work their way up. Therefore, there is no need to worry about making a wrong choice that you have to live with forever. A young person’s first choice will rarely be their last. Many people even switch their tracks and develop a second career later on, with the connections they have established, as well as the transferrable skills and experiences they have acquired from their previous jobs. Graduates should, therefore, be more open about the first job and allow themselves more time to explore different career options.  [8] Needless to say, life is an ongoing learning journey with many unpredictable challenges. Yet, there are also endless possibilities. After acquiring fundamental knowledge and skills through formal education, we have to make use of what we have learnt to seek employment and opportunities for success in our chosen fields of endeavour. Whichever path we take, it is essential to keep learning on the job to equip ourselves for career advancement. Lifelong learning is perhaps the only key to success in the world of changes and uncertainties. Despite a lot of uneasy feelings, it’s time to summon up our courage to embrace the unknown and eagerly await the wonderful adventures in the future. | | Q1  Q15(a)  Q2  Q4  Q15(b)  Q5  Q17(e)  Q13(i)  Q15(c)  Q17(e)  Q13(ii)  Q15(d)  Q6  Q17(e)  Q12(a)  Q12(b)  Q13(iii)  Q17(e)  Q12(c)  Q7  Q17(e)  Q13(iv)  Q10, Q17(e)  Q15(e)  Q12(d)(e)(f)  Q13(v), Q8  Q9, Q15(f)  Q10  Q14  Q17(d)  Q11  Q15(g)  Q16  Q15(h)  Q17(b)  Q16 | |
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**END OF ANNOTATED TEXT**