**Assessment Task for Speaking**

**Topic: Hong Kong Careers**

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

This set of materials consists of Question Paper and Suggested Answers.

**Speaking Task: Hong Kong Careers**

**Part A Group Discussion**

The following quotes have appeared in a magazine.

**What’s the best field for a young person to start a career? Your views!**

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| **Alexis Heung:** Hong Kong is famous for shopping and I want a career selling things. I plan to work in a big store for a few years to learn all about the business, then I’ll open my own shop and, I hope, in a few years have five or six shops around Hong Kong. |

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| **Joshua Lee:** Hong Kong people love eating out and visitors must. And as well as Chinese food there’s Japanese, French, Italian, Thai, Indian, Vietnamese and many more. I think if you have trained in the catering industry, particularly if you can cook well, you will never lack work, and if you work hard and show talent and imagination, you can become very successful. |

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| **Chloe Leung:** We get about 40 million tourists a year and that’s still growing. Tourists want hotels, tour guides, coaches, special shows and lots of information. There are so many jobs! I am going to start hotel training as soon as I can. |

Your group are members of the Careers Club and are talking about which sector of the economy it is best to choose a career from. Your discussion is based on the quotations above.

You may want to talk about:

* points in favour of each of the three sectors
* possible problems with each of the three sectors
* other possible career fields
* anything else you think is important

**Part B Individual Response**

1. Which of the three fields would you most like your own career to be in? Why?
2. Which of the three fields would you least like your own career to be in? Why?
3. What sort of qualities do you need to be a good sales assistant?
4. What sort of personality is needed for a career in the tourism industry?
5. Which of the three fields do you think would be the most stressful to work in?
6. What factors are important to you in choosing a career?
7. Some careers mean spending a lot of time away from home. Would you be willing to do that?
8. What are the advantages and disadvantages to Hong Kong of having so many visitors?

**END OF QUESTION PAPER**

**Suggested Ideas for Group Interaction and Individual Response**

**Part A Group Interaction**

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|  | **Points in favour** | **Points against** |
| Retail/selling | * Many opportunities
* Can sell something you are very interested in
* Meet lots of people
* Get store discounts
 | * On your feet all day
* Customers can be unpleasant, dishonest, etc.
* Salary depends on commission
* Very competitive field
* Work at weekends and on holidays
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| Food and beverage/eating | * Pretty secure- people always need food
* Huge range of food outlets in Hong Kong
* Good chefs get good pay
* Can enjoy plenty of good food
 | * Many low paid and tiring jobs in the restaurant business
* Very busy and stressful at peak meal times
* Cannot make mistakes
* Very hot in kitchens
 |
| Tourism  | * Growth industry
* Can get good tips
* Meet lots of people
* Variety of jobs and promotion opportunities
 | * Being nice to and handling tourists can be very demanding and takes a lot of patience
* The business goes up and down in line with the economy
 |
| Other fields | * Financial services, education, design, computers/technology, health, transport, beauty
 |
| Anything else  | * Training opportunities
* Future trends in Hong Kong’s economy
* Experience of friends and relatives
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**Part B Individual Responses**

1. Which of the three fields would you most like your own career to be in? Why?

*Actually, none of them is my first choice, but I agree with Chloe that tourism is a very promising field, which is going to go on growing as more and more mainlanders become prosperous and want to see new places. Within tourism, hotel careers are probably the best as there are plenty of opportunities for promotion. There are many pleasant sides to hotel work. Your workplace is attractive and you meet a lot of people, many of whom will be interesting. There are lots of different departments and jobs so you can move around the hotel and try various types of work. If you work for a large hotel chain, you can spend time in other cities and countries. I think the pay is quite good, and your meals are of a high quality. There is also something glamorous about being in a good hotel.*

1. Which of the three fields would you least like your own career to be in? Why?

*I wouldn’t like to work in the field of shopping. I think Alexis has an over-optimistic picture of the work. Let’s begin with sales assistants in shops. They spend most of the day standing up. There are periods when nothing happens and they are bored, and there are times when they are rushing from customer to customer. They have to be pleasant all the time even though many customers are rude and difficult to please. They have to make sure there is no shoplifting going on- and if they don’t make good sales they won’t be paid much as commissions are a big part of their salary. And they don’t finish work until late. Then there is Alexis’ plan to open his own shop. Hong Kong already has a lot of shops and it is really difficult to find a new product or service that people want. Rents are high and competition is strong. In other words, it’s easier for a new shop to fail than to become a chain. I’d like a safer career.*

1. What sort of qualities do you need to be a good sales assistant?

*Let me see- well, you need a good memory- good sales assistants know a lot about what they are selling so they can answer questions and show customers alternatives if they don’t seem pleased with what they see at first. It’s also good if they can remember their customers- it helps create a relationship. Sales assistants need to have a positive attitude. It’s no use being depressed when customers don’t buy anything. They need to persevere- perhaps even be stubborn in trying to make a sale. They need good speaking skills to make goods sound attractive. Their personality needs to be attractive- I think a successful salesperson has to know how to be charming, perhaps in different ways to different people. In other words, sales people have to have a good understanding of psychology and know how to make different types of customers relaxed and in a buying mood. And finally, I suppose you need to be hard-working if you want to be successful, but that’s true of every job.*

1. What sort of personality is needed for a career in the tourism industry?

*Most jobs in tourism are jobs involving other people so if you are going to be successful in the field you must be an outgoing and sociable person who isn’t at all shy, but likes meeting new faces, joking and dealing with all sorts of people and nationalities. I think you also need to be calm as there will be lots of panics and small things going wrong all the time as people are late, get lost, forget their money and so on. A good tourism worker must keep on smiling and quickly help solve all the problems so that everything can continue smoothly. I think you would need to be flexible as well as calm. Tourists are paying to enjoy themselves so you cannot give them too many rules, but must allow changes in the routine. Some of the tourists will be annoying so self-control is also necessary. Quite demanding really!*

1. Which of the three fields do you think would be the most stressful to work in?

*Well, I think they can all be stressful. All three are service industries and that means you have to deal with a lot of paying customers who will complain if anything goes wrong- and that means you will experience stress in those jobs. A sales assistant must be very stressed at busy times with lots of customers pushing and wanting to be served quickly. And in some shops there’ll be a lot of pressure to make more sales. In the tourism industry I think you’ll meet a lot of rude and unreasonable people and it must be very stressful to keep them in order and get them to places on time. But I think restaurants must be the worst of all. Everyone comes to eat at the same time, orders must be served quickly, and nothing must go wrong. Every day the kitchens must be terribly hot and stressful during lunch and dinner. I’d hate to be a cook!*

1. What factors are important to you in choosing a career?

*I can think of five or six, but I am not saying them in any special order. I’d like to follow a career that I enjoy and also feel useful. It’d be crazy to be a vet if you don’t like animals, or a hotel receptionist if you are unsociable. Interest and suitability are big factors. Then there is the reward. High pay will give me a better life, and health benefits, housing allowances and health schemes are all very useful. A job with good prospects is better than one without. It’s nice to know you can get promoted as you get older and more experienced. I also value training opportunities. I guess they are part of good prospects- if you raise your skill level you can do a better job. Then there’s the question of travel. I’d like some opportunities to visit other places, but I don’t want to live out of Hong Kong. I hope I am not asking too much!*

1. Some careers mean spending a lot of time away from home. Would you be willing to do that?

*I guess part of the answer to that is where would I be sent to live? My uncle has to spend a lot of time in Shenyang and he doesn’t like it at all- the pollution, the climate and the social life, so I wouldn’t want to go somewhere like that, but I think I’d be happy to spend a couple of years in Hawaii. I can see arguments on both sides. Living in a different place must really broaden your horizons, make you more independent, teach you new things, improve your language skills and in general make you more mature. Perhaps that’s a good thing when you are young. But it must be horrible to leave behind your friends and family. I’d miss Hong Kong terribly- the food, the sights around my home, the harbour, in fact the whole lifestyle. It’d be strange not to hear Cantonese every day and to lose touch with the latest local music. Really my answer is that I’m not sure.*

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages to Hong Kong of having so many visitors?

*Visitors bring in money. Tourists, especially mainland ones, come here to shop. As Chloe says tourists also need a lot of services. They create jobs at the airport, and need a lot of drivers to move them around. They stay in hotels. They shop, they eat and they visit places like Disneyland. All of this is good for our economy and keeps unemployment low. Hong Kong no longer has any manufacturing but we have plenty of service jobs. That’s the good side. The bad side I think is mainly overcrowding. Our city is already one of the most crowded places on earth- the pavements are often so packed with people that you can hardly move along, we are packed into MTR train carriages like sardines, and rush hour traffic jams are horrible. In such a situation, bringing in another forty million people a year is not very helpful.*

**END OF SUGGESTED ANSWERS**