**Assessment Task for Speaking**

**Topic: School Trip out of Hong Kong**

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

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

**Speaking Task: School Trips out of Hong Kong**

**Part A Group Discussion**

Below are two letters which appeared in a newspaper:

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| **What a good idea!**  I am delighted to learn from yesterday’s article (School without Walls) that schools are now organising far more school trips out of Hong Kong. I don’t remember any in my school days. There are many places it is educational to visit, but I think trips around the rest of China are especially useful so young people can learn more about their country, understand the different systems, learn more about Chinese traditional culture and improve their Putonghua.  This is a very positive development. | **What a waste!**  The trend for having school trips inside and outside Hong Kong mentioned in an article yesterday (School without Walls) seems all too typical of modern schools. Education is becoming similar to playing. Students should learn in classrooms listening to their teachers. Let them start travelling when they are older and earn their own money. When schools organise trips it unfairly puts pressure on parents to find the money to pay for them, and I very much doubt if the students come back any wiser for their trip. |

Your group has chosen the topic of school trips for a presentation you are going to give in class. Discuss the two letters and think of some more ideas for the presentation. You may want to talk about:

* the advantages to students of trips outside Hong Kong
* the best places to visit
* the disadvantages of such trips
* anything else you think is important.

**Part B Individual Response**

* 1. What sort of trips does your school organise?
  2. If you went on a school trip out of Hong Kong, what would you hope to gain from it?
  3. Should school trips be mainly for pleasure or for educational purposes?
  4. Would you prefer to travel with a group of schoolmates or with your family?
  5. Is it a good idea for Hong Kong schools to have exchange programmes with schools in other parts of China?
  6. Would Hong Kong be a good destination for students on trips from other countries?
  7. Do you enjoy visiting famous historical buildings and museums? Which do you think are the ones most worth visiting in Hong Kong, or the rest of China or the rest of the world?
  8. Can school trips outside Hong Kong improve students’ language skills?

**END OF QUESTION PAPER**

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

**Part A Group Interaction**

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| Advantages | * Can learn about China and its way of life * Can improve language skills * Can broaden horizons * Can see famous historical places * Can see the cultures of other countries * Can learn to be independent * Can improve student-teacher relations * Can join community projects and help others * Can learn things like cookery |
| Places to visit | * Beijing (Great Wall, palace, Tiananmen Square, museums) * Hangzhou and Suzhou (lake, gardens) * South Korea/Seoul (palace, museums, folk village, mountains) * Bangkok (palace, temples, dancing) * Japan (castles, hot springs, temples, theme parks, Mt Fuji) * Rainforest areas |
| Disadvantages | * Cost * Time spent away from studying * Dangers of travelling (coach accidents, etc) * Falling ill away from home because of unhygienic food and conditions |
| Anything else | * Schools can help students raise money for going on useful trips * Trips can be organised to visit partner schools in the rest of China * Students can talk in school assemblies about their trips |

**Part B Individual Responses**

1. What sort of trips does your school organise?

*I can think of four types, but there may be more. First, clubs and societies arrange trips. I’m in the Environmental Group and we go to visit places like country parks to understand conservation work and problems. I know the Geography Club has field trips, the Social Services Group goes to homes for the elderly and orphanages, and the Music Club attend concerts. Next, are trips organised by the Careers Section - they take us to exhibitions and workplaces. Third are class picnics - they focus more on fun in the open air. Last year my class went to Silvermine Bay for a barbecue with lots of games. There are trips to the mainland too. I haven’t been on one but the school has connections with a school in Foshan and we have trips there a couple of times a year and sometimes some of the representatives of the school come here.*

1. If you went on a school trip out of Hong Kong, what would you hope to gain from it?

*I haven’t travelled much so I think I would gain just from seeing another place and experiencing another way of life. I’ve been to Guangdong and that’s not so different, but I’d like to see the deserts in the north or the mountains and lakes of the west of China. Or go to somewhere like Thailand with Buddhist temples, hot food and different music and customs, even the way of saying hello. I also think I could practise my languages and so perhaps improve. If I was in distant Chinese provinces I would have to use my Putonghua, or in Thailand I would need to speak English. I think I would gain confidence too and feel more grown up after going away on my own without my family, though, of course, I‘d have friends and teachers with me.*

1. Should school trips be mainly for pleasure or for educational purposes?

*I think there should be trips for pleasure, educational trips, trips with mixed pleasure and education, and also trips to do good. I know there’s an English proverb - all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy - and I agree so sometimes students need to have a trip for fun. What’s nicer than a class barbecue or playing in Ocean Park with your schoolmates? But it is true, schools are for education so field trips to study plants or life on the seashore, or even to listen to lectures are good. And learning can be interesting - a trip to see the Great Wall and learn about Chinese history is also fun, and visiting the Space Museum is educational and pleasant. Then there are trips for helping others. These can be in Hong Kong or other parts of China. I know students who went to a place in Guangxi to help build a new school and I have been on a beach cleaning outing - not much fun, but I felt I had been useful.*

1. Would you prefer to travel with a group of schoolmates or with your family?

*Well, to be honest, I would prefer to be with a group of schoolmates. Family holidays are good and I know my family is more important than my school friends, many of who I won’t know in a few years although my family will be around all my life. But Mum likes us all to stick together on holiday so we have to go shopping with her, and then sit on the beach for Dad and visit markets for sister, and so on. With my schoolmates we have lots to talk about - Mum and Dad don’t know much about basketball and computer games, and I am sure on a trip we’d have great fun, joking on the bus, walking round new places and having a singsong a night. I think most teens are like me - they love their families but have more fun with their friends.*

1. Is it a good idea for Hong Kong schools to have exchange programmes with schools in other parts of China?

*Well, you have to be a bit careful. I have heard of partnerships that haven’t worked very well. My friend’s school had a partner school in China that expected rather a lot of help with things like equipment, and they got a bit tired of it, but I think that is rare. My school doesn’t have any exchange programme like that but I would certainly like to have some mainland friends, chat on the Internet and sometimes meet in person. It’s true, as people say, that most people here think of themselves as Hong Kongers first, and I think more contact with other parts of China would be good in helping us feel a real part of the mother country. It is also good for our Putonghua - and I think it is interesting for the other school to find out more about Hong Kong and how our education is different from theirs. Communication is always good for people so, yes, I think exchange programmes and special relationships with schools in other places are good things.*

1. Would Hong Kong be a good destination for students on trips from other countries?

*Well, in some ways not - we certainly don’t have the great palaces, castles and historical buildings of mainland China, Japan or Thailand. And our countryside, although it is beautiful, is nothing like the Tibetan mountains, volcanoes of the Philippines, or rainforests of Malaysia. We aren’t poor so we don’t need visitors to come and help paint our schools or visit our villages. Despite that, Hong Kong is a wonderful place to visit - the view of the harbour is one of the great sights of the world - all those skyscrapers so close together, and you cannot beat tour shopping. Students coming here would love the computer stores and malls. They’d also enjoy being in food heaven, but teachers don’t usually plan trips for shopping and eating so I think the young people will have to come here on their own as soon as they have the money.*

1. Do you enjoy visiting famous historical buildings and museums? Which do you think are the ones most worth visiting in Hong Kong, or the rest of China or the rest of the world?

*Yes, I do* - *I mean it isn’t one of my top hobbies, but sometimes it’s interesting. I have two recommendations for Hong Kong. One is the Hong Kong Heritage Museum in Shatin. I live close by and have been there a few times. They change the exhibitions often. I remember seeing a good one on fashion and one on Roman Tam. Then there’s a museum not far from Shau Kei Wan, by the Lei Yue Mun channel. I’m sorry but I can’t tell you its English name but it’s about defending Hong Kong and you can see big guns. The good thing though is the sense of history you can feel there. In China, of course, you can go to the tomb of the Qin Emperor in Xian to see all the clay soldiers guarding the place, and Beijing has the famous Palace Museum where you can experience the life of the emperors. I have been to Shanghai. There’s a fantastic museum there about the sea. It looks like a junk and inside there’s a great Ming Dynasty boat you can explore. I think most people would find the place interesting. And if I have the chance to travel abroad, I would love to visit the pyramids in Egypt. I find the architecture simply marvellous, particularly when it was done so many years ago. People say those are the tombs of the Egyptian kings, and I wonder if I can go inside them to explore and look at the things used by kings and people in the past.*

1. Can school trips outside Hong Kong improve students’ language skills?

*I don’t think so. Let’s think of a trip. You go to Japan. How many Japanese people are you going to meet? And how many of the group will know any Japanese? So sometimes there’ll be a Japanese tour guide and he’ll probably speak English to us. We may understand but his accent will be unfamiliar to us and may not help us speak better English. We’ll just get some listening practice. Of course, most of the time we’ll be chatting to each other in Cantonese so a trip to Japan wouldn’t do much for language skills. A trip round China would be a bit better - we’d probably talk to waiters and shop assistants and try to read the signs, but we would probably find the accents very hard to understand and wouldn’t gain a lot. I think you can only improve language skills if you plan activities for that purpose. You need to spend quite a long time with speakers of the language you are learning to gain much.*

**END OF SUGGESTED ANSWERS**