**Assessment Task for Speaking**

**Topic: School Excursions**

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 Excursions**

**Part A Group Discussion**

The following is a list of some possible places for day trips for school students:

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| **Lamma Island**. A half-hour ferry ride will take you to Yung Shue Wan. After looking round the charming village and Tin Hau Temple, you can walk to the Wind Turbine, visit a beach or hike across to Sok Kwu Wan for seafood. It’s the ideal place for barbecues, bicycling and photography. |
| **The High Court** at 38, Queensway, Admiralty is where serious cases are heard. Most trials are open to the public. Members of the public should enter the courtrooms quietly, bow to the judge and quietly listen to the trial. |
| **Hong Kong Wetland Park** is located in northern Tin Shui Wai. The 61-hectare site consists of a Visitor Centre, Wetland Reserve and Wetland Interactive World with exhibition galleries, a souvenir shop, a resource centre and swamp adventure play area. This is the perfect place to learn about the wildlife of a wetland area. |
| **The Po Lin Monastery and Big Buddha, Lantau.** The temple, first founded in 1924, consists of many beautiful buildings in the style of ancient China. There are wonderful exhibitions of ancient Chinese Buddhist objects and traditional landscaped gardens. The Big Buddha which was finished in 1989 at 26 m high is the largest outside Buddha statue in the world. |
| **Ocean Park**, an amazing amusement park with 19 rides, is also the home of wonderful sea animals and fish - and even has giant pandas! |

You and your group are on your school’s Student Association Committee. You are talking about recommendations to the school for the annual day trip/school picnic. You may want to talk about:

* the points in favour of each suggestion
* the points against each suggestion
* which level of students each good suggestion is suitable for
* anything else you think important.

**Part B Individual Response**

* 1. What purpose do you think school trips, outings and picnics have?
  2. What is the last school trip you went on? Was it worth going on?
  3. What was the best school trip you went on? What was so good about it?
  4. What was the worst school trip you went on? Why was it so bad?
  5. Did the school trips which you have been on take you to places you have never visited before?
  6. What places would you recommend to schools for outings and picnics?
  7. Should classes decide where they want to go for their school trip or picnic, or should the school plan it for them?
  8. Should school trips and outings only be for younger students?

**END OF QUESTION PAPER**

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

**Part A Group Interaction**

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| Points in favour | * Lamma - exercise, fresh air, fun, variety of attractions (beaches, environmentally interesting wind turbines, Chinese culture) * The High Court - highly educational (especially civic education), every citizen should know more about the legal system, may find a very interesting case, not many students have been there * Hong Kong Wetland Park - educational, encourages environmental awareness, plenty to do * Po Lin Monastery - interesting journey, magnificent views, culturally significant, fresh air * Ocean Park - combines fun (rides and shows) with many opportunities to learn about marine life, pandas, etc. |
| Points against | * Lamma - most students have been there before, only suitable in good weather, can be crowded * The High Court - a passive experience, need to sit very still and not talk, many cases move very slowly and are hard to understand * Hong Kong Wetland Park - many students have been there before, gets very crowded * Po Lin Monastery - many students have been there before, not much to do after you have looked round for a time, needs good weather * Ocean Park - expensive, not so good for a visit for a large group, most students have been there before with their families |
| Suitability (depending on which destinations the group prefer) | * Lamma - plenty of walking, maybe middle range (S3 and S4) * The High Court - need to be quiet and serious, senior range (S5 and S6) * Hong Kong Wetland Park - highly organised, intended for schools, can suit junior range (S1 and S2) * Po Lin Monastery - need to have some artistic appreciation, senior range (S5 and S6) * Ocean Park - can suit all ages, but as it is quite expensive maybe middle/senior range (S3, S4, S5 and S6) |
| Anything else | * Accessibility (depends on where the school is) * Time of year * Safety considerations * Recent news (e.g. if one of the places had been in the news recently for any mechanical problems, renovation, etc.) |

**Part B Individual Responses**

1. What purpose do you think school trips, outings and picnics have?

*I can think of many reasons for them. First, they are good for class spirit and give students a break from the classroom. Second, outings give students and teachers a chance to relax and communicate together. Third, teachers can take students to places they have not been before and this adds to their knowledge of Hong Kong, and fourth they can help educate students about Chinese culture, Hong Kong’s history, the environment and the way Hong Kong’s government and economy work. So there are many good reasons for school trips and picnics.*

1. What is the last school trip you went on? Was it worth going?

*We went to Macau last year. I really enjoyed it. We all met at the ferry and travelled in a jetfoil over to Macau. Once we were there we did a lot of things. We had a coach and it took us around. I don’t remember all the names of places, but we saw an old temple, and visited a Qing house as well as somewhere Dr Sun Yat Sen stayed. And I mustn’t forget the famous ruins of St Paul’s Church in the centre. We went over to one of the other islands for a great lunch, and the final stop was the motor racing museum. I liked that a lot. I don’t think every school trip is worth going on, but that one did teach me a lot I didn’t know before and was great fun!*

1. What was the best school trip you went on? What was so good about it?

*We were only a small group. Mr Fung, our geography teacher, organised a trip for some members of the Geography Society. We travelled up to Ngong Ping to the big Buddha. That was nice - I’ve done it before, but then we started a special walk. We went through tea gardens and then through amazing woodlands. It was a perfect day. I didn’t know Hong Kong could look so beautiful. Mr Fung pointed out so many interesting things. We had a picnic looking towards Shek Pik Reservoir, and then climbed Keung Shan. The view was amazing - distant islands and all that greenery. Then the path led us down past a Chinese garden into Tai O. Normally I am a city person, but this trip showed me another side of life. It was magic.*

1. What was the worst school trip you went on? Why was it so bad?

*That was one to Plover Cove. I guess it can be a great place, but I have never been back after that terrible picnic a few years ago. First, the coaches were late and that meant we got caught in the rush hour and took ages to get to where we were going. We got off the coaches and they drove off so we had to stay until they came back in the afternoon. There were four classes of us, and when we got to the place we were supposed to be having our barbecue it was being repaired or something. They were pile driving - the noise was really bad and there was only one toilet so the queue to use it was very long. We were not enjoying ourselves at all and then it started to rain. We were so happy when the coaches finally came for us and we could escape.*

1. Did the school trips which you have been on take you to places you have never visited before?

*Usually not – I guess it’s a problem for Hong Kong schools. There aren’t that many good places to visit. Some families don’t seem to go out together much, but my parents like trips at the weekend and I think I have been to most places worth visiting. If a new museum opens, my parents want to go there at once and see what it’s like. So if there have been trips to places I haven’t been to before, the places probably aren’t worth seeing, like when we went to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. It’s just rows of computers. Another time we went to see the Old Wanchai Post Office Environmental Centre - we could hardly fit in it. Another time we went to Stanley - a nice place, but actually I live there. I wish we had some trips into the mainland as I haven’t seen much of that.*

1. What places would you recommend to schools for outings and picnics?

*I think outings should be special in some way. I mean they can be organised by clubs with a clear purpose - the History Club might go to look at places where pirates once lived, or the Biology Group go to photograph insects - something like that. I think guided tours are a good idea too - if a hotel will allow students to look around and see how things work, that’s educational. Outings to special exhibitions are good too - and I think they should take students to more shows. Teenagers may not go to see plays or listen to concerts on their own, but might enjoy it if school takes them. Going somewhere everyone has been before is not a good outing. But that doesn’t matter so much for picnics. If the plan is just to have some fun and social activities, an outlying island is fine.*

1. Should classes decide where they want to go for their school trip or picnic, or should the school plan it for them?

*I am not sure it has to be one or the other. I think teachers should talk to their students and find out where they would like to go and if some ideas are unsuitable, explain why. For example, if the class wanted to go to somewhere like Festival Walk, the teacher could point out the students often go to shopping centres anyway so they don’t need to do it in school time, and that shopping is neither an educational activity nor a healthy one like going for a hike. Then the teacher and class can reach a decision together. Or perhaps the school could make a short list of places to go and let classes vote among them. That would make sure all the ideas were sensible ones.*

1. Should school trips and outings only be for younger students?

*Well, I can see an argument for that. Older students find it easier to go to places on their own or with a few friends, but the parents of younger ones are more careful about where they can go. Juniors are also easier to please. They won’t get bored in a park, but run round, ask questions and listen to the teachers. If you take older students, you have got to offer them something more interesting or they will get bored and restless. On the other hand, I don’t think school should only be work. When people look back on their happy schooldays, they remember class barbecues and events like that so it would be a pity to cancel them. And if simple trips are not a good idea for senior students, I think schools can find more adventurous places they would like to go, like Macau maybe.*

**END OF SUGGESTED ANSWERS**