**Assessment Task for Speaking**

**Topic: Small Businesses**

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

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

**Speaking Task: Small Businesses**

**Situation:**

A youth organisation called “Youth Power” is organising a competition, inviting proposals from young people on starting a small business. The winning team can run a small shop in their office building free of charge during the coming summer holiday. You and your classmates are interested in entering the competition. You have found a useful website on different kinds of small businesses that young people can choose from to start their own business.

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| **Start Your Own Business**This is a website for young first-time shop owners. Come here to see all the latest ideas.* **Call Me –** a treasure house of interesting mobile phones and all the extras you can imagine
* **Just Jewellery** – necklaces, bracelets, ear-rings and other accessories, all designed and made by the shop owner
* **Cute Gifts** – you never know what you’ll find here but there are a thousand different and inexpensive ideas for presents for friends – all of them are cute!
* **Eat Me** – a huge range of snacks from places around the region – South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, etc.
* **Fancy Feet** – all the latest strange fashions in shoes, boots, sandals and socks
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**Part A: Group Interaction**

With reference to the information provided on the website, discuss the following:

* reasons for and against running each business
* how each kind of business can attract the right sort of customers
* what other business is suitable for young first-time shop owners
* anything else you think is important

**Part B: Individual Response**

Your team has been shortlisted for an interview. Answer the question that the interviewer asks you.

1. What do you think are the differences between working for someone else and setting up your own business?
2. Besides the business you have proposed, what sort of business would you like to set up?
3. What qualities are needed for a person to be successful in business?
4. What factors (such as location) are important in making a small business successful?
5. How can a small business get and keep customers?

**END OF QUESTION PAPER**

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

**Part A Group Discussion**

* **Reasons for and against running each business**

Main factors to consider include the *popularity of the product*, the *start-up costs* and *value of the stock*, the *space needed for display*, the *profitability of the product*, *competition* and any *special requirements associated with a particular item*.

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| **Call Me****For** - Most people own at least one mobile phone and change their phones frequently. People love to make their phone more attractive and personal with covers, cases and decoration, and they buy headphones, speakers, styluses and other items. Many of the items are fairly costly, allowing for a decent profit.**Against** - The popularity of mobile phones and similar devices means there are a great many shops offering such goods; competition will be severe. Start-up costs will be high as the stock will be worth a lot. Quite a lot of display space will be needed. | **Cute Gifts****For** - Such shops are popular especially among teens. People are always in need of gift ideas. A good selection should attract plenty of customers. **Against** - Inexpensive items have to be sold in large numbers to be profitable. Predicting what will sell well is difficult and some items will fail. New ideas and products are needed all the time as customers are continually looking for something unexpected and different. |
| **Just Jewellery****For** - As the owner is designing and making the jewellery, the start-up costs need not be high. A lot of jewellery can be displayed in a small shop. Jewellery is a popular product for people’s own use and for gifts.**Against** - This is also a competitive market and a lot will depend on whether the owner can produce items which appeal to consumers. The shop will probably need to target the lower end of the market so profit per item may not be much. | **Eat Me****For** - Nearly everyone likes eating snacks and Hong Kong people are known for their liking for products from the countries mentioned. **Against** - A lot of floor space will be needed. Profit per item is low. |
| **Fancy Feet****For** - Good profit per sale. The business can attract single professional women with high incomes. Hong Kong consumers are keen on fashion, including footwear.**Against** - The shop needs to be reasonably large. The stock is expensive and fashions change quickly. Competition is severe. |

* **How each kind of business can attract the right sort of customers**

**Demographics of customers:**

Gender – male and female

Age -- youngsters, middle-aged, the elderly

Socio-economic status -- grassroots, middle-class, the well-off

Employment -- housewives, retired, students, business executives, office staff

**Promotional techniques for different types of customers:**

advertising in magazines and social networking sites, leaflets given out in the streets or outside schools, loyalty cards, email and text messages about the arrival of new products, special offers

* **What other business is suitable for young first-time shop owners**

manga, football fan items, cupcakes, art necessities, headwear, health products, fitness products

* **Anything else you think is important**

Personality traits and attributes favourable to starting a new business (hardworking, optimistic, in-touch with fashion, hospitable, determined, imaginative, sociable), preparation needed before opening the shop

**Part B Individual Response**

1. What do you think are the differences between working for someone else and setting up your own business?

*If you work for someone else, you don’t have to have great ideas and won’t lose money if things go wrong. But I don’t want a dull job. Running your own business is more exciting. Every day you must face challenges and take decisions. And setting up your own business gives you freedom. I don’t want to be told what to do all my life. I am young and must do as my parents and teachers say, but one day when I am older I want to be free from any boss. I think the best way to do that will be to open my own business.*

1. Besides the business you have proposed, what sort of business would you like to set up?

*I love animals so maybe I could become a vet and open my own my clinic and look after people’s cats and dogs. It’s a pity there are no farms here so I could treat other types of animal. If I can’t be a vet, maybe I could own a pet shop. I think it must be very interesting looking after young animals and sometimes offering unusual pets. Miniature dogs are so cute. But there are a lot of pet shops and there can be many problems with diseases. If I had enough money, I’d like to open a place where people could leave their animals when they go on holiday, a sort of animal hotel, but you need a lot of space. Perhaps the most practical idea is an animal beauty shop- I could shampoo animals and give them interesting haircuts! At least then you don’t have to worry all the time about the animals’ health.*

1. What qualities are needed for a person to be successful in business?

*I suppose that really does depend on the business. An accountant can be very quiet. But as long as he never makes mistakes and gives all his customers good advice, he can be very successful. Someone selling something needs to be confident and charming. They’ve got to know how to talk well and persuade people to do things. Being clever and having amazing ideas and inventing things, like Steve Jobs and Bill Gates did, is another way to achieve success. You definitely cannot be lazy. I think in most cases you have to be intelligent and have ideas; you have to be determined to succeed and able to recover from problems; and you need to be hardworking, really hardworking, willing to work very late and give up your weekends to make sure things are done properly and on time. It probably helps too to be adaptable. I heard a businessman talking on television and he said when things went wrong he saw it as an opportunity to change things and do better. That seems a good attitude to have.*

1. What factors (such as location) are important in making a small business successful?

*Well, location is important for many businesses. A lot of shopping isn’t planned so you need to get people to walk by and see things in the window. Restaurants also need to be in convenient places with lots of offices and homes around or you won’t get any customers. But location should be getting less important now as people are buying on the Internet. A good website can be very important for many businesses. It doesn’t matter where you are if you can do what your customers want or deliver things to them quickly. It must be a big problem though to make people aware of your website. Effective advertising is very important. If your product or service is good, but people don’t know about it, you won’t do well. I think you also need luck- in other words, if for some reason people start talking about your business, you can become fashionable and do well. If what you do is good, even when you aren’t so ‘hot’, you’ll have enough business to succeed. Well, that’s what I think!*

1. How can a small business get and keep customers?

*First, the product or service must be good and reliable. Too many businesses are good when they open but then the food goes down, or the stock gets stale or the staff gets rude. Everything must be kept at a high standard. Second, there need to be promotions and special offers. There need to be sales, discounts for regular customers, loyalty cards or cards that get stamped every time you buy something until you have earned a free gift. People like lucky draws too. Third, the shop owner needs to build personal relationships with customers. If a shop owner remembers you and what you like and garret you when you go in and show you things you will like, you will like the shop, enjoy going there and visit often. Fourth, shops need to give customers information – it’s so easy now to send out messages on Facebook or other social media sites, or to text people telling them of new goods, latest arrivals or special offers. It makes you feel the shop is a friend and then you’ll keep on buying. So those are my four steps to success!*

**END OF SUGGESTED ANSWERS**