

IGCSE Cambridge Topical Past Papers

# ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE

0500 P2  
2020 - 2025

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1 - (0500/22\_Summer\_2020\_Q1) - Directed Writing - Magazine Article - P3

Read **both** texts, and then answer **Question 1** on the question paper.

### Text A

*The post below is from an online education forum in which a Headteacher argues for study exchange visits to different countries by teenagers.*

Many people in my country believe that study exchange visits by students to other countries have limited educational value and offer little more than brief holidays subsidised by parents and their often cash-strapped schools. Some say that older students need every minute in their own schools to give them a chance of success in higher education and a competitive workplace in the future.

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In my school, however, we've recently instigated an ambitious programme of exchange visits where students in the second term of their course can spend a few weeks living and studying in a different country, while keeping up with some of their home school's work online. It's proving incredibly popular. Students apply to spend four weeks studying in a partner school overseas. They have to show enough maturity and sense of responsibility to represent their school and their country, as well as benefit from the experience personally.

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If we choose carefully, our students return from their exchange visits enriched by exposure to new cultures and different educational methods and principles. One of our brightest 14-year-olds recently returned from a four-week visit to study in a school overseas where the resources available reflected the country's struggling economy. She learned that the teacher, not the shiny gadgetry, is the key to effective learning. Other students have returned with aspirations to work in the countries they visited, fuelling their ambition and drive to succeed.

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There is more to educating our students than stuffing their heads with facts and knowledge. The opportunities provided by study exchange visits – to develop young people's personalities, resilience and sense of adventure – cannot be replicated in the classroom. We've had young people return from studying in other countries with renewed motivation and enthusiasm, more tolerant and open-minded about the wider world. Now, that's what I call education!

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**Text B**

*This post was written by another Headteacher in response to the Headteacher in Text A.*

It's said that travel broadens the mind and maybe it does. I don't believe, however, that a school should compromise on its primary role which is to equip students with the skills and knowledge to do well for themselves, their families and their communities in later life.

A lot of learning happens in four weeks, and the huge time and effort involved in vetting host families, planning and preparing for a lengthy exchange visit is very costly in teacher time. It's also a very rare 14-year-old, in my experience, who can leave their family, school and country for four weeks and cope well. Adolescence, especially these days, can be a traumatic enough time without such dubious 'experiences', and the school will be left to pick up the pieces. 5

Having taught in schools in different countries in the past, I know that educational practices and principles vary widely across the globe. Students returning from four weeks studying abroad may have some superficial views about the relative value of other ways of learning but their real education happens in their own schools. How are 14-year-olds meant to judge what they see elsewhere? A snapshot of a less challenging school environment could limit students' expectations of themselves while a visit to a school with small classes, plush surroundings and all manner of electronics may well induce resentment in young minds. For some, that resentment may eventually drive them away from their own communities where their education can do most good for others. 10 15

As for overseas students coming here to my school on an exchange visit, I would struggle to persuade teachers to adapt lessons for someone whose progress, especially in examinations, is not their responsibility. I wonder how the parents of students in my school would view the teacher time expended on students who are temporary visitors. We have no way to measure what tangible benefits our students would gain from a study exchange visit, but we might be measuring the disadvantages in poorer grades. We already have close links with several foreign schools with whom our students correspond regularly, developing their language skills and broadening their horizons. 20 25

Read Text A and Text B in the insert and then answer **Section A, Question 1** on this question paper.

### Section A: Directed Writing

#### Question 1

Imagine you are the parent of a student who attends a school that is considering a study exchange programme.

**Write the speech** you give at a meeting for parents and teachers about whether it is a good idea for the school to run a study exchange programme.

In your speech you should:

- evaluate the ideas and opinions given in both texts
- give your own views, based on what you have read, about whether your child would benefit from a study exchange visit.

Base your speech on what you have read in **both** texts, but be careful to use your own words. Address both of the bullet points.

Write about 250 to 350 words.

**Up to 15 marks are available for the content of your answer, and up to 25 marks for the quality of your writing.**

2 - (0500/23\_Summer\_2020\_Q1) - Directed Writing - Magazine Article - P3

Read **both** texts, and then answer **Question 1** on the question paper.

**Text A: The surprising benefits of extreme sports**

*The article below outlines some of the benefits of participating in extreme sports.*

Jumping off cliffs, scaling vertical rock faces or nailing BMX aerial manoeuvres may not be high on many people's list of fitness pursuits to try, but the benefits of taking part in such high-risk activities can go well beyond bragging rights and burning calories.

Research into the effects of extreme sports has tended to focus on their negative aspects. However, aside from the obvious benefits of physical exercise, there are some surprising psychological benefits to taking your exercise regime to the extreme. 5

An Australian study found that participating in extreme sports and risky physical challenges can give you a mental boost. Interviews with 15 extreme sports athletes found that facing and overcoming intense fear can lead to transformational changes in confidence and sense of self. Fears can grow from a lack of faith in ourselves, and so conquering them can prove to ourselves that we're capable, the study concludes. 10

This turns the stereotype of the young, thrill-seeking, adrenaline junkie on its head. It highlights how any sort of activity that scares you – resigning from a job, facing important exams or just competing in a fun run – can promote psychological benefits that can spill into other areas of your life. One can train to become a more resilient person through exposure to stressful experiences, including participating in extreme sports. 15

After her record-breaking wingsuit flight across the Grand Canyon, 48-year-old cliff jumper Heather Swan spoke of how such risky encounters helped her develop tools to face everyday fears. She says such thrilling encounters have taught her to separate real fears from irrational fears. 'I know how to manage the fear and separate what I know I can do from just being afraid.' 20

A 2009 study found that involvement in such risky activities had the potential to make people more humble. Researchers found that brushes with death, intense fear and the realisation that nature is far more powerful than us gave participants a profound sense of courage and humility.

**Text B**

*The article below discusses some of the dangers of participating in extreme sports.*

For many young people, there's nothing quite like the exercise and camaraderie you get from being part of a team. Whether it's baseball, basketball, soccer, softball or volleyball, there is fun to be had.

Some athletes take things to the next level, though. Rather than playing traditional sports as part of a team, they engage in lone sports that provide a satisfying rush of adrenaline. These activities – skateboarding, white-water kayaking, ice climbing, heli-skiing, BMX biking, bull riding, cliff diving – are inherently dangerous in some way, but that rush of adrenaline makes participants feel more alive than they've ever been. There are many terrifying ways in which extreme sports athletes can test themselves, and for some it becomes an addictive challenge to attempt ever more risky, dangerous feats. 5  
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Watching extreme sports is fascinating, and their popularity has soared in recent years owing to frequent exposure on internet sites and social media. Extreme sports athletes have become so popular that they are offered lucrative sponsorships from companies that want to associate their brands with these cutting-edge thrill seekers. Some sponsorships allow extreme sports athletes to compete in these sports professionally, rather than as merely a hobby. 15

The best extreme sports athletes can have long and profitable careers, as long as they are true masters of their sport. Unfortunately, even the smallest mistakes can have catastrophic effects. Between 2000 and 2011, experts estimate that over four million injuries were caused by extreme sports. In the most extreme sports, minor errors can lead to serious injuries and even death and can also involve danger to those who have to rescue athletes from caves, cliff edges, canyons or freezing lakes. 20

Young people who are most likely to engage in extreme sports often lack the judgement of older adults. The lure of internet fame leads many to copy feats that they're woefully unprepared for.

Read Text A and Text B in the insert and then answer **Section A, Question 1** on this question paper.

**Section A: Directed Writing****Question 1**

**Write a speech** to give to an audience of young people about what they need to consider when taking part in an extreme sport.

In your speech you should:

- evaluate the benefits and risks outlined in both texts
- give your own views, based on what you have read, about whether participating in an extreme sport is worthwhile.

Base your speech on what you have read in **both** texts, but be careful to use your own words. Address both of the bullet points.

Write about 250 to 350 words.

**Up to 15 marks are available for the content of your answer, and up to 25 marks for the quality of your writing.**

3 - (0500/21\_Winter\_2020\_Q1) - Directed Writing - Magazine Article - P3

### Text A: eSports in the Olympic games?

*eSports is the short name for electronic sports, where players play video games against each other with fans watching them. This article discusses whether eSports should be included in the Olympic Games.*

eSports currently enjoys enormous attention and funding. Last year, the global audience for eSports grew by millions with global revenue for the eSports industry huge and still rising. In many countries, audiences pack stadiums and concert venues to watch teams compete against each other in a range of video game tournaments. People from around the world also watch from the comfort of their homes thanks to entire channels dedicated to streaming live footage of people playing video games. 5

Fans argue that eSports athletes are athletes in the real sense of the term – citing shooting, archery and dressage as examples of Olympic sports where the skills and talents of individuals are recognised. It takes dexterity, intelligence, reflexes and coolness under pressure to succeed in gaming. eSports athletes are legitimate competitors who happen to wield a joystick. How's that so different from a pole vault? 10

Experts on sports law are cautious: 'Many sports want to get Olympic recognition. It's a public demonstration to the world, and a surge of interest often follows. Although eSports is growing, that still doesn't necessarily make it widely accepted.'

eSports is young, its players and audiences are young. The dismissal of eSports, its sponsors argue, is just another example of older people scoffing at what occupies young people as 'fads' or unimportant activities. eSports is an opportunity for young people to take an existing passion, competitive gaming, and make something more of it, even earning a living from it – after all, this is often given as a reason to celebrate and support sports in general. 15

eSports, it is claimed, is the real deal. But arguments around popularity and difficulty only go so far. Becoming a prima ballerina is so difficult it's virtually impossible: as a sporting endeavour it is far harder than qualifying for the Olympics in any sport. Should dancing to *Swan Lake* be an Olympic sport? No. This activity knows to stay in its own lane. 20

There's a logistical problem too, one that threatens eSports as an Olympic event far more than narrow-minded traditionalists like myself. The different games played in various eSports competitions have definitive lifespans and age quickly. Games are frequently replaced by sequels and upgraded versions. It is an impressive effort to call playing video games 'eSports' and hope that saying it enough will convince people it is actually a sport. But, no. Moving a joystick simply has no athleticism, physicality or exertion – things that make something a sport. Competitive eating sounds good too, but no one is suggesting that features in the Olympics. 25 30

**Text B: Resistance is futile: eSports is massive ... and growing**

*This text discusses the popularity of eSports.*

Imagine a stadium full of screaming fans. Zoom in on the contestants, sweating from the intensity of the competition. This is not football, basketball or boxing. It's eSports, and the 'athletes' are headset-wearing, energy-drink-guzzling video-gamers. Couldn't happen? Think again.

More than 20 years after the first video game tournaments, top eSports tournaments now draw audiences that rival the biggest traditional sporting events; popular midweek live streams routinely attract more than 100 000 online viewers. Massive global brands have weighed in as sponsors. Gaming is what every traditional sports league is desperate to become: young, global, digital and increasingly diverse. eSports is here. It is real. It is growing – and we have the numbers to prove it. 5

So how big is this gaming thing? Let us start with this: according to market research so many millions of people watched or played eSports that if the eSports nation were actually a real nation, it would be the fifth largest in the world. eSports has long been biggest in Asia. Now North America and Europe also claim tens of millions of eSports fans, with numbers growing by 21 per cent a year. 10

The most popular video-streaming site boasts 55 million users and is arguably the most important contributor to eSports' recent growth. It offers streams of games and tournaments, and access to gaming's stars. It's also where the next generation of would-be gamers post their own streams. 15

Apparently someone's watching.

Although the gamer stereotype is young, single, male and living in some sort of basement, the reality is that more than half of eSports fans are employed full time, 44 per cent are parents and 38 per cent are women. eSports fans do tend to be young. Just 28 per cent are over 35, a selling point to advertisers looking to reach the next generation of consumers. 20

People watch this thing? Well, in a word, yes. Today, eSports' biggest tournaments rival practically any sporting event.

Imagine you are a student at a school which is considering introducing eSports as part of the sports curriculum.

**Write the speech** you give to your school community, giving your views.

In your speech you should:

- evaluate the views and attitudes about eSports given in both texts
- give your own views, based on what you have read, about whether eSports should be offered in schools.

Base your speech on what you have read in **both** texts, but be careful to use your own words. Address both of the bullet points.

Write about 250 to 350 words.

**Up to 15 marks are available for the content of your answer, and up to 25 marks for the quality of your writing.**

4 - (0500/22\_Winter\_2020\_Q1) - Directed Writing - Magazine Article - P3

### Text A: Who are the real experts?

*This passage explores the idea of expertise.*

Last week, I needed to book lunch in a city that I didn't know well, and began searching for a suitable restaurant. Years ago, I'd have done that by turning to a restaurant guide or travel book. In the world I grew up in, it was normal to seek advice from the 'experts'. Nowadays, it wouldn't occur to me to do that. Instead, I typed what I needed into my phone, scrolled through long lists of online restaurant recommendations from people who said they'd eaten in them – and picked one. Risky, yes: estimates suggest 20 per cent of comments posted on review websites are fake, but there were enough voices for me to feel able to trust the wisdom of the cyber crowds. Lunch was nothing special. 5

This is a trivial example of a bigger change underway. Citizens of the cyber world no longer have faith in anything that real experts say. People have had enough of experts. We increasingly rely on crowd-sourced advice rather than properly qualified experts to choose our restaurants, holidays and health care. We take advice from our peer group, our online 'friends' – people like us, and people we like. In some senses, this is good news, but the problem of this new world is that people can fall prey to social fads or groupthink. If I only listen to opinions from 'a person like me', I'm less likely to accept new facts or arguments from anyone else. 10 15

We're also far too interested in what celebrities have to say. This is more serious. Celebrities are too often given a platform to air their views. Celebrities are better-looking and more entertaining than real experts with their solemn speeches and statistics, but just because someone's good at acting or sport, should we trust their opinions on child-rearing, diet or global warming?

Of course, celebrities say they're just getting 'the message' out to the public. Actually, they're helping to devalue real expertise and reduce intelligent public discussion. We're racing headlong towards some dumbed-down future. Let's face it, if you're listening to celebrities on global affairs, you're not really asking the hard questions, are you? 20

**Text B: Trust me, I'm an expert**

*This passage explores the relationship between trust and expertise.*

Why do people trust some experts but reject others? Why do people seek medical experts for medical issues, but distrust economic experts for economic issues? What makes us decide to place trust in, and listen to, an expert when we need to solve a problem that's beyond our understanding?

Luckily, there's scientific research on the issue – if you trust that sort of thing.

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Studies argue that to gain our trust an expert needs three characteristics: expertise, integrity and benevolence. In other words, knowing stuff isn't enough. For us to rate someone as a trustworthy expert they need to seem honest and good-hearted.

This can be problematic in a world where the idea persists that experts are remote geniuses full of their own importance, or ambitious entrepreneurs blinding us with science. But where does this idea come from? From my own experience with experts, and being one myself, I think that one reason we seem so untrustworthy and self-centred is because of how we speak.

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To many people expertise is a foreign language. When experts talk, they often use complicated words and acronyms. Experts seem to want non-experts to rise to their level of sophistication, rather than approaching non-experts with appropriate language.

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As an expert on memory, I'm sometimes guilty of this. I really like uncommon words, despite knowing they can scare people away. Even in my new book, *The Memory Illusion*, where I waffle on about the importance of explaining things in plain English, on the very first page I use the word 'parsimony'.

In my university lectures and books I consider using precise, elegant words part of the educational experience. However, using words and phrases that most people don't understand in everyday conversation and the media is just showing off. Experts should stop blaming the public for not listening to them and give themselves a stern talking to.

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Experts need to demonstrate that they're good, honest people with the public's best interest at heart. That's easier for some; it's simple to see how medical experts help others, but much harder with climate scientists who we may only be able to properly thank when our cities aren't underwater in 50 years' time.

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But maybe there's hope yet. A recent online poll found that 'in times like these', people trust academics and experts considerably more than their boss, family, or friends.

**Write a magazine article** for young people about who they should listen to when faced with decisions in their own lives.

In your article you should:

- evaluate the attitudes and opinions about experts in each of the texts
- give your own views, based on what you have read, about getting the best advice.

Base your article on what you have read in **both** texts, but be careful to use your own words. Address both of the bullet points.

Begin your article with a suitable headline.

Write about 250 to 350 words.

**Up to 15 marks are available for the content of your answer, and up to 25 marks for the quality of your writing.**

# ANSWERS

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1 - (0500/22\_Summer\_2020\_Q1) - Directed Writing - Magazine Article - P3

2 - (0500/23\_Summer\_2020\_Q1) - Directed Writing - Magazine Article - P3

3 - (0500/21\_Winter\_2020\_Q1) - Directed Writing - Magazine Article - P3

	<p><b>Imagine you are a student at a school which is considering introducing eSports as part of the sports curriculum.</b></p> <p><b><u>Write the speech</u> you give to your school community, giving your views.</b></p> <p><b>In your speech you should:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• evaluate the views and attitudes about eSports given in both texts</li><li>• give your own views, based on what you have read, about whether eSports should be offered in schools.</li></ul> <p><b>Base your speech on what you have read in <u>both</u> texts, but be careful to use your own words. Address both of the bullet points.</b></p> <p><b>Write about 250 to 350 words.</b></p> <p><b><u>Up to 15 marks are available for the content of your answer, and up to 25 marks for the quality of your writing.</u></b></p>	<b>40</b>
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Notes on task:

**Responses *might* use the following ideas:**

**Text A**

- level of interest / increasing audience
- global /cultural influence
- broad demographic though predominantly young
- skill / talent of competitors
- (suggested) inclusion in Olympics / has similar attributes to 'real' sports
- eSports as a career / financial gain
- lifespan of games / ever-changing nature
- dismissive attitude of 'traditionalists'

**Text B**

- passion of audience
- powerful force: on a level with traditional sporting events / nations
- live and interactive: access to stars / can post own streams
- finance: attractive to advertisers / global brands
- diversity of audience
- aspirational

**Possible evaluation of ideas:**

**Text A**

- whether it is appropriate for schools to reflect / encourage / offer alternatives to participation of a trend / fashion
- sedentary / digital nature of 'sports' – not in line with schools' responsibility to students' health
- should be aware of and preparing for career opportunities it presents / responsibility to prepare for real life skills in a modern world: there are real and often lucrative careers in this field - schools should be fostering this opportunity
- how schools would meet cost of equipment / staying up to date with changing games: students could become expert in one type only to find it obsolete – how could parity be established?
- skills and expertise of teachers – relatively few likely to be equipped to train students for eSports
- the global reach of eSports promotes multi-cultural communication and cooperation – important values for schools to inculcate.
- a very popular sport not dependent on the weather – useful for schools
- chess is recognized by the IOC why not eSports.
- generational prejudice against eSports is unfounded / ill-informed
- school-based qualifications in eSports could be dismissed by traditionalist employers / college admission staff

**Text B**

- responsibility to educate to question influence of media / global brands, not facilitate it; the sponsors for eSports are often manufacturers of unhealthy products such as energy drinks and fast food
- safer / more civilised combat sport than e.g. boxing
- might engage disaffected students / quality of opportunity – more relevant, modern, interactive, open to all
- non-sporty students will be given chance to excel: this is sport for the mind - their passions are legitimate
- the eSports industry can provide opportunities including employment for people with disabilities
- missed opportunities to broaden awareness of those not involved if we ignore it in school – career, social, global
- opportunity for promotion of schools on the world stage / healthy competition between establishments - eSports skills prepare students for a remote-working world
- the huge popularity of eSports drives technological innovation and contributes large amounts to the economy – surely beneficial to young people
- inclusion in the curriculum would increase already disproportionate dependence on technology

4 - (0500/22\_Winter\_2020\_Q1) - Directed Writing - Magazine Article - P3

<p><b>Write a magazine article</b> for young people about who they should listen to when faced with decisions in their own lives.</p> <p><b>In your article you should:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• evaluate the attitudes and opinions about experts in each of the texts</li><li>• give your own views, based on what you have read, about getting the best advice.</li></ul> <p>Base your article on what you have read in <b>both</b> texts, but be careful to use your own words. Address both of the bullet points.</p> <p>Begin your article with a suitable headline.</p> <p>Write about 250 to 350 words.</p> <p><b><u>Up to 15 marks are available for the content of your answer, and up to 25 marks for the quality of your writing.</u></b></p> <p>Notes on task:</p> <p>Responses <i>might</i> use the following ideas:</p> <p><b>Text A</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• old fashioned / no longer normal to seek advice from experts</li><li>• reliability of online reviews</li><li>• groupthink</li><li>• celebrity influence</li><li>• devaluation of expertise / dumbing down of debate</li></ul> <p><b>Text B</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• range of situations where expert advice is appropriate</li><li>• rating experts</li><li>• experts use of language</li><li>• dangers of not listening to experts (climate change)</li><li>• in difficult / challenging times more likely to listen to experts</li></ul>	40
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	<p><b>Possible evaluation of ideas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• books outdated; current expert advice now more freely available</li><li>• need to distinguish between small and more important decisions</li><li>• there's nothing wrong with having a range of opinions</li><li>• technology can't replicate the experience of human experience of experts</li><li>• experts need to tell the truth to maintain their reputation – so more trustworthy</li><li>• judge who is advising 'in our best interests', whoever they are</li><li>• need to examine the motives of anyone giving advice – celebrities need fans, companies need good reviews</li><li>• important life choices are personal, not really up to anyone else, whoever they are</li><li>• friends / family can see things from your point of view therefore better than experts</li><li>• not all celebrities are vacuous and some experts are self-serving / showing off</li><li>• experience over knowledge</li><li>• internet is free / expert advice may be expensive</li></ul>	<b>40</b>
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5 - (0500/23\_Winter\_2020\_Q1) - Directed Writing - Magazine Article - P3

<p><b><u>Write a speech</u> for school leavers about attitudes to work.</b></p> <p><b>In your speech you should:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• evaluate the views and opinions about work given in both texts</li><li>• give your own views, based on what you have read, about what you consider to be a good attitude to work throughout a person's working life .</li></ul> <p><b>Base your speech on what you have read in <u>both</u> texts, but be careful to use your own words. Address both of the bullet points.</b></p> <p><b>Write about 250 to 350 words.</b></p> <p><b><u>Up to 15 marks are available for the content of your answer, and up to 25 marks for the quality of your writing.</u></b></p> <p>Notes on task:</p> <p><b>Responses <i>might</i> use the following ideas:</b></p> <p><b>Text A</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• overworking leads to stress and burnout</li><li>• effect on personal / social life of overworking</li><li>• managing expectations</li><li>• productivity / efficiency</li><li>• generational differences in approach</li><li>• effects of technology</li></ul> <p><b>Text B</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• people should work into their 70s / 80s not retire</li><li>• health benefits / people living longer</li><li>• possibility of retraining</li><li>• money worries, social isolation and stress linked to retirement</li><li>• work often defines who we are</li><li>• hobbies / voluntary work</li></ul>	<b>40</b>
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**Possible evaluation of ideas (not an exhaustive list):**

- being stretched at work teaches skills (such as time management)
- if you do not work hard, society might judge you negatively
- older people don't need to work, they can fill their time with other activities
- the changes in lifestyle when you retire is too drastic
- it is very important to strike a balance between work and home
- it is normal to have ambition and drive especially when young
- the skills that older people have are valuable and worth keeping
- if you work less frantically when younger, this will allow people to carry on working when old
- expecting people to work unpaid is unfair / wrong
- hard work when young ensures a decent income when old, so no money worries
- there is no point in being rich if you don't have your health
- older workers are a good example to, and can train younger workers
- as you go through life you find out what you should really spend your time on