

I. Reading Comprehension. (20%)

Imagine you're a high school chemistry teacher. One of your students is a shy, brilliant girl who routinely does "A" work. Another constantly chats on her cell phone during lab time. She plays varsity soccer, chairs the homecoming committee, and earns unspectacular grades.

Which student troubles you more?

Shockingly, a majority of teachers say they're more worried about the star pupil than the "C" student. And their sentiments mirror those of most parents. A recent survey by the research group Public Agenda found that 70 percent of parents said they'd be upset if their child received excellent grades but had a limited extracurricular life. Only 16 percent wanted their children to get "mostly A's."

Similarly, 53 percent of America's public school teachers worried about "A" students with two or three friends, while only 29 percent worried about "C" students who were popular.

Why? According to the survey, a majority of the population agrees that "People who are highly educated often turn out to be book smart but lack the common sense and understanding of regular folks." Unsurprisingly, this perception filters down to students. Research by Public Agenda also reveals that "most teens view the academic side of school as little more than 'going through the motions.'" Explained one Alabama boy, "My parents don't care if I make a C."

In many communities, after-school activities are more sacrosanct than academics. High school football victories garner more newspaper ink than math decathlons. School plays confer greater status on their participants than spelling bees. In perhaps the most bizarre example, in 1991 a mother in Channelview, Texas, hired a man to murder the mother of her daughter's rival for a spot on the cheerleading squad. The National Honor Society has never generated such feverish (albeit insane) competition!

Historically, Americans have embraced a degree of anti-intellectualism as a badge of our populist spirit. But as our economy becomes increasingly reliant on technology, scientific research, and a highly skilled work force, this attitude undermines our best interests.

Proof came earlier this year, in the form of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). A comparison of academic performance in 21 countries, TIMSS showed that U.S. 12th graders ranked at or near the bottom in math and science.

TIMSS underscores the need for more rigorous curricula, higher academic standards, and better teacher training. But policy changes alone will not improve students' performance. Our basic values need an overhaul. As long as teachers, parents, and students remain suspicious of intellectual excellence, we will function as a tripod for mediocrity—supporting a system that celebrates "averageness" over achievement.

What changes are in order?

(背面仍有題目,請繼續作答)

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TIMSS offers some important clues. The test revealed that American students spend less time doing homework and more time at after-school jobs than do their international peers. Indeed, says researcher Gerald Bracey, "The American vision of teenagerdom includes dating, malls, cars, jobs, and extracurricular activities." In the name of being "well rounded," many students are being spread too thin. We need to set new priorities, with academics enshrined as the centerpiece.

It's ironic that many teenagers are unenthusiastic about learning at a time in their lives when they're generally passionate about everything else. If we're going to cultivate world-class students, we adults may need some remedial lessons ourselves. Says Kay Armstrong, a public school librarian, "If children go into video arcades, it means they can operate a computer. If they can recite rap songs, they can quote Shakespeare. The problem is that we as educators have not learned what motivates this generation."

Poet William Butler Yeats once wrote, "Education is not filling up a pail but lighting a fire." Together, we must kindle the sparks fearlessly—and encourage the flames to burn as high and as bright as they can.

1. According to the article, the nation has now a growing need in
 - A) populist spirit and common sense.
 - B) a highly skilled work force
 - C) more challenging math and science curricula
 - D) anti-intellectualism

2. Which of the following statements is correct based on the reading?
 - A) Extracurricular activities often attract larger media coverage compared to academic work.
 - B) Unlike most parents, the majority of educators worry more about top students
 - C) Most parents cooperate with teachers to encourage extracurricular activities.
 - D) Star students are often book smart yet lack the common sense and understanding of regular folks.

3. What does the expression "going through the motions" mean, in "Research by Public Agenda also reveals that "most teens view the academic side of school as little more than 'going through the motions.'" (paragraph 5)?
 - A) School life tends to be dull because of insufficient stimulations and excitements.
 - B) Most teens move frequently and rapidly due to extracurricular activities or part-time jobs.
 - C) Several motions must be passed before students accomplish their course work.
 - D) In terms of academic work, only the appearance of learning, not the actual learning, is taking place.

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4. What would be the best title for this article?

- A) "Designing a More Rigorous Curriculum for Today's College Education"
- B) "Strategy to Promote National Compatibility: Encouragement or Pressure?"
- C) "Fear of Heights: Teachers, Parents, and Students Are Wary of Achievement"
- D) "The Decline of Intellectualism and Economic Depression in American Society"

II. Sum up the main idea of the above article *in no more than two complete sentences, in your own words*. Repeating verbatim will not be accepted. (10%)

III. *Translate the underlined sentences* in the following passages into English.

Please note that the translation must fit the original passage grammatically. The English translation in each passage should be *in one single sentence only*. Start your translation with the alphabet corresponding to the passage in question. (40%)

Passage A

A person born in the twentieth century has witnessed a lot of transformations take place in almost all areas of human life. For instance, traditionally, engineering used to have a lot to do with organizing factory production lines or finding the best placements for machinery. 但現今隨著電腦科技的進步，工業工程不但深入幾乎各行各業，也大大影響我們日常生活的每一層面。 Engineers no longer simply build things like robots or bridges; they build systems to make things work more efficiently as well. Many people are excited by the challenges that these changes offer, believing that living in the present time has certain advantages such as a higher standard of living made possible by recent discoveries and inventions.

Passage B.

Growing up in a single-parent family burdened by poverty, Emily had a somewhat different experience in her education. After classes every day, she dashed to the nearby market to help her mother, who had a stand selling local cuisines there to visitors, many of whom were foreign tourists. After she finally returned home with her mother, she reviewed what she had learned at school that day and prepared for the next day's lesson before she went to bed. Often, she even stayed up late to practice the vocabularies and expressions she had picked up from her mother's foreign customers. Not surprisingly, she was usually one of the top students at school. 此外，除了優異的學業表現外，她流利的外語能力以及寬廣的國際觀，終於在上學期為她贏得三年全額補助的海外留學獎學金。

(背面仍有題目,請繼續作答)

Passage C

Imagine getting no blame and no credit for the child you raise. It won't be your fault if the kid becomes a serial killer. But you won't get to brag if she wins a Nobel Prize. That's the idea behind a controversial book arriving in stores that says parents can quit worrying about shaping a child's personality. Judith Rich Harris, the author of *The Nurture Assumption*, says after conception all the careful parenting in the world—the bedtime hugs and storybooks, the timeouts and groundings—don't make a bit of difference in the kind of people children become. 身為大學心理學教授，同時也是幾部兒童成長暢銷書作者，Harris 又說，根據有關領養的兒童以及分開扶養的雙胞胎所作的研究，環境對性格的影響遠甚於父母親的指導。

Passage D

Although good doctors can memorize lists of symptoms connected with different diseases, patients don't present themselves to doctors with neatly written lists of symptoms. And they don't have piles of money for endless experiments and tests, either. Doctors need to know how to take important symptoms seriously and disregard unimportant ones. This skill requires real thinking, not just memorization and repetition of facts. But good doctoring requires even more. 獨立思考與正確判斷、高明的解決問題的技能、良好的人際關係、豐富的實務經驗，這些能力都是目前醫學教育改革的目標與社會不斷變遷的需求之重心。 Many proposals have been made to try to redesign school curriculum for the medical profession.

IV. English Essay Writing. (30%)

“The busy schedules that most adults face from day to day have created a rising health problem in the modern world. Stress affects almost everyone, from the highly pressured executive to the busy homemaker or student. It can cause a variety of physical disorders, ranging from headaches to stomach ulcers and even alcoholism. Stress, like a common cold, is a problem that can't be cured; however, it can be controlled.” Write a short essay responding to the above-mentioned idea. Include a clear thesis statement logically supported by specific examples in your essay.