Part I: Reading Comprehension: 50%

Hakka Women

Hakka Women are characterized by their strong personalities of sharing most heavy __1__ in the family. While during the migration, the men had to prepare all the time to __2__ any military intrusion, women had to take care of the home and family including minding the fields. Hakka women never bound their feet even under the greatest social __3__ during the Qing dynasty. Such custom is not __4__ with their role in the family. While the man of the house often had to look for new route for the migration, or engaged in numerous battles, the elderly Hakka women in the house were __5__ with the authority of decision making for the whole family. So developed their independence, liberalness and __6__ in sharing the decision in the family. Without such support, the venturesome Hakka men would not be __7__ during the massive migration, hundreds of years ago or now. (from Asiawind.com)

1. A. label    B. labial    C. labor   D. liberty
2. A. default   B. define   C. defect   D. defend
3. A. precious  B. pressure  C. pretence  D. presumption
4. A. compatible   B. competitive  C. compulsive  D. comparative
5. A. filled     B. left    C. overwhelmed  D. satisfied
6. A. quality    B. equality   C. equipment   D. quotation
7. A. succeed   B. success  C. successful  D. succession

The Future of Plastic

Currently, most plastics are made from crude oil. But there’s a new generation of plastics made from starches such as rice, corn, and soy. They are biodegradable and recyclable, and their production is generally better for the environment and your health than that of conventional plastic. The science of converting starch into plastic is not new, but improvement in technology and the rising cost of oil are giving the biotech industry new motivation. Called bio-based, these plastics account for three percent of the $280 billion plastics market. It’s expected to grow to 20 percent by 2010. There are concerns about the fertilizers and pesticides used in the production of rice, corn, and soy, but on the whole, bio-based plastics are still a more earth-friendly option than their petroleum-based counterparts.

Mark the following statement as True (T) or False (F) according to the above article.

8. Conventionally, plastics are made of starch.
9. Bio-based plastic accounts for 20 percent of the plastics market.
10. Rising cost of oil pushes biotech industry to renew their interest in bio-based plastics.
11. The science of converting starches to plastics is brand new and is still under development.
12. The production of bio-plastics is more environmentally friendly and is better to our health.
13. There is a worry that the growing of rice, corn and soy may involve the use of fertilizers and pesticides.

Beauty May Have Its Price

New findings suggest that women who are physically attractive may find the cards stacked against them when applying for jobs in which appearance plays little or no role. These findings contradict an oft-seen trend in research known as the beauty bias, in which attractive men and women appear to enjoy advantages in society that their less attractive peers lack.

Kenneth Podratz of Rice University in Houston, Texas, discovered that, when asked to rate people's suitability for different jobs based solely on their photographs, students reported that attractive women were less suitable than unattractive women for jobs in which appearance is unimportant. Such jobs included photo lab assistant and switchboard operators.
In contrast, Podratz discovered that attractive men still held an advantage over unattractive men in terms of their suitability for the same types of jobs. And when faced with jobs considerably more masculine - such as prison guard and car salesperson - female participants indicated they believed that unattractive women were more or equally suited for the task than their beautiful peers, but male students did not share that opinion. Again, handsome male applicants beat out the less attractive competition. (New York, Jan 14, Reuters)

14. What do the new findings tell us?
   A. There indeed is a beauty bias in job application.
   B. Beauty bias is true only for women in job application.
   C. Beauty bias is true only for men in job application.
   D. Beauty bias doesn’t exist at all in job application.

15. What is the meaning of “solely” in “based solely on their photographs?”
   A. barely
   B. generally
   C. mainly
   D. scarcely

16. Which statement is true?
   A. Switchboard operator is a job which requires appearance.
   B. Kenneth Podratz discovered that for photo lab assistant, attractive women are considered to be more suitable.
   C. Kenneth Podratz discovered that for jobs in which appearance plays no or less role, attractive men still have an advantage over unattractive men.
   D. Handsome men are considered to be less suitable for such occupation as switchboard operators.

17. What is the meaning of “find the cards stacked against them”?
   A. Find that they are in a disadvantageous situation
   B. Find that they need to arrange the cards dishonestly
   C. Find that they have a good chance to win
   D. Find that they have to work hard

18. Which statement is true?
   A. For jobs that are more masculine, female and male students have the same idea about who is more suitable.
   B. Female students think that attractive women are more suitable for jobs that are more masculine.
   C. Male students think that attractive women are less suitable for jobs that are more masculine.
   D. Male students think that handsome men are more suitable for jobs that are more masculine.

Rights of lefties

For many years, the use of left hand was considered evil. In fact, the Latin word for “left” is “sinister.” Because of this prejudice against the left, left-handed people were forced to switch hands. This change caused many problems for lefties in school, which resulted in frustration, bad behavior, and high drop-out rates. Maybe that is why lefties were stereotyped as unintelligent. But this could not be further from the truth.

To understand intelligence, we need to understand the brain. Researchers studying the brain have found differences in the left side and right side of the brain. Researchers believe that people who use more of the left side of their brain tend to be more intelligent. They also tend to use language better and solve problems faster. However, one study also showed that left-brain people tend to have worse memories.
So which side of the brain do lefties use? Actually, both. Right-handed people use the left side of the brain more, whereas left-handed people use both sides of the brain almost equally. The part connecting the two halves of the brain is usually larger in the left-handed people. Therefore, information can pass more efficiently from one side of the brain to the other. The left hemisphere of the brain controls speech, language, writing, logic, mathematics, and science. The right hemisphere controls music, art, creativity, perception, and emotion. Since lefties use both sides, they are often both creative and scientific.

Approximately ten percent of the world is left-handed, and the ratio of left-handed males to left-handed females is 2 to 1. Thankfully, parents and teachers no longer treat left-handedness as a problem to be cured. It may actually contribute to a child’s excellence! By allowing lefties to learn and develop in their own way, they will excel in school. *(From Reading Challenge 2, Compass Publishing)*

19. Lefties were forced to change because _____.
   A. many lefties are found to be evil
   B. lefties have caused many problems
   C. there is a prejudice against the left
   D. most lefties are not intelligent

20. Which is not among the problems caused by switching hands?
   A. bad feelings
   B. bad behavior
   C. quitting school
   D. lack of creativity

21. What is the meaning of “stereotype” in “stereotyped as unintelligent”?
   A. have a fixed image
   B. have a bad feeling
   C. have a good impression
   D. have a prejudice

22. Which statement is NOT true?
   A. Left-brain people tend to be quick in solving problems.
   B. Left-brain people tend to use language better.
   C. Left-brain people tend to be creative.
   D. Left-brain people tend to have worse memories.

23. Which statement is NOT true?
   A. Right-handed people use the left brain more.
   B. Left-handed people should be allowed to develop in their own way.
   C. Left-handed people use both sides of brain equally.
   D. The part connecting left and right brain is larger in right-handed people.

24. Which is not controlled by the right hemisphere?
   A. art  B. logic  C. music  D. perception

25. Among three hundred people, how many of them will possibly be left-handed?
   A. thirty  B. twenty  C. ten  D. fifteen
Part II: summary writing: read the articles and write a Chinese summary 50%

1. What are the impacts of globalization on local culture? Write a Chinese summary based on the following paragraphs. (20%)

The globalization of the production and distribution of goods and services is a welcome development for many people in that it offers them access to products that they would not otherwise have. However, some are concerned that the changes brought about by globalization threaten the viability of locally made products and the people who produce them. For example, the new availability of foreign foods in a market - often at cheaper prices - can displace local farmers who have traditionally earned a living by working their small plots of family-owned land and selling their goods locally.

Globalization, of course, does more than simply increase the availability of foreign-made consumer products and disrupt traditional producers. It is also increasing international trade in cultural products and services, such as movies, music, and publications. The expansion of trade in cultural products is increasing the exposure of all societies to foreign cultures. And the exposure to foreign cultural goods frequently brings about changes in local cultures, values and traditions. Although there is no consensus on the consequences of globalization on national cultures, many people believe that a people's exposure to foreign culture can undermine their own cultural identity. (from Globalization 101.org)

2. What's the relationship between political correctness and education? Write a Chinese summary based on the following paragraphs. (15%)

The media has recently taken notice of a trend in education that has actually been around for some time. This trend has been obvious to anyone well-acquainted with the goings-on in our citadels of higher learning or even on selected high school campuses. The term Political Correctness, or politically correct speech, covers most of the issues involved. Multiculturalism is often given as the driving ethic that prompts one to be politically correct.

At the foundation of this movement is the belief that all education is political. No where in the curriculum can one find a hiding place from race, class, or gender issues. Added to this assumption is the law of moral and ethical relativism: All systems of thought, all cultures, are equal in value. To assume otherwise is politically incorrect by definition. (by Don Closson, from Probe Ministries)

3. What are the characteristics of the form and meaning of idioms? Write a Chinese summary based on the following paragraphs. (15%)

Idiom is defined as an expression that does not mean what it literally says. Hence, its meaning is often quite different from the word-for-word translation.

The meaning idioms convey is non-compositional. It implies that you cannot understand the meaning of the whole phrase putting the meanings of each word together. If you look at the individual words, it may not even make sense grammatically. Idiom has the meaning only as a unit.

Professor Koonin defined idiom "as a stable combination of words with a fully or partially figurative meaning." This definition emphasizes two inherent and very important features of the idiomatic expressions.

Idioms have lexical and grammatical stability. It implies that they are fixed in their form, hence any substitutions and rearranging in their structure can lead to complete loss of their primary meaning. (by Linda Correl, from ESL Teacher Board)