

## Speaking Practice Questions and Answers

### Introduction

**1. Hello. Could you show me your identification card please?**

Hello. Sure, here it is.

**2. Could you tell me your full name please?**

My full name is X. I am also called by my nick name Y.

**3. What shall I call you?**

You could call me X.

**4. How are you?**

I am well thank you, and yourself?

**5. How old are you?**

I am 22 years old. In other words, I was born in 1980. On the eighth of March 1980, to be exact.

**6a. Does your name have any special meaning?**

Yes, my name does have some special meaning. My family name means peace, and my first name means strong one. My nick name was given to me by one of my high school teachers, and it does not have any special meaning really.

**6b. Does your name have any special meaning?**

I presume you are referring to my Muslim name. Yes, the English equivalent of my family name would be something like peace, and in the case of my first name it would be strong one. My nick name was randomly chosen by one of my high school teachers, and it really doesn't have any special meaning.

**7a. Is your name important to you?**

No. I don't think it can do anything for me. I believe a person has to work out his own life. I am planning to do this as well as I can.

**7b. Is your name important to you?**

Not really. I am part of the new generation who do not attach too much significance to our names. Names were important to the older generation as they of the opinion that it will determine your destiny to some extent. However, I

personally believe that I myself will determine my destiny irrespective of what my name is. I will do this by acquiring good qualifications and by working hard.

## **Hometown**

### **8. How long have you lived in your hometown?**

I come from xxx. My parents have been living here for the past thirty years or so. I grew up here and I attended a well-known school called School number 163. We live in a respectable area with many shops, restaurants, and a variety of other businesses. The people in our building are generally friendly and quite, which makes it a pleasure to live there.

### **9a. Where do you live?**

I live with my parents here in xxx at the moment. To be more exact, we live in an apartment building in one of the northern suburbs of the city. I have my own room and enjoy the privacy that it brings, but I am looking forward to the day that I can have my own apartment. Allow me to explain: they are good parents, and I love them very much, but I would like to be more independent soon.

### **9b. Where do you live?**

Well, that is not so easy to answer. Please allow me to explain. During the week I live in a dormitory at the university, but over weekends I live with my parents in a village about one hour by car from xxx. So I really do not know which of the two to call my home at the moment.

### **10. Can you tell me something about your hometown?**

Yes, certainly. XXX is in the northeast part of my country. It has about three million inhabitants. It has many heavy industries such as automobile, and machine tool manufacturers. In addition, it is rich in history. For example, the xxx invaded the city and committed many atrocities (that is to say many crimes) during the occupation. This is still remembered by many of the elderly folks to this day. Another example that I could mention is the Imperial Palace that belonged to the last dynasty.

### **11. What are the main places of interest in your hometown? Why?**

Sure. Firstly, I could mention the Great River, which you will find around the city. To the northeast of the city there is the famous Mountains and the zoological park and botanical gardens. In summer it is a popular place to visit and see tigers, bears, wolves, other animals and even pandas in their natural environment. In winter we often go skiing there. Secondly, I would like to mention the Park. It consists of a large park, with many gardens and a lake. In addition it also is the site of an emperors tomb from the Dynasty. Lastly, there are many other sites that are worthwhile visiting. For example, Government (City Hall) Square with the Great Theater alongside it, Java Square, and the spectacular TV Tower, which is the highest architectural attraction in my country.

**12. What places in your hometown do you like best?**

There are many places that I like. If I had to choose one place, I would like to tell you about Government Square. Firstly, it is the largest square . What I mean is that it is a large open space where one can see the sky clearly, and feel free. Secondly, it houses an important government building. I guess you could call it the City Hall.

**13a. What are the main crops in your region?**

In our region many crops are grown. For example one would find all kinds of vegetables in the fields of this region. In addition, many farmers have orchards. Here they grow many kinds of fruit like apples, pears, and peaches.

**13b. What are the main crops in your region?**

In our region many crops are grown. For example one would find all kinds of vegetables in the fields of this region. In addition, many farmers have orchards. Here they grow many kinds of fruit like apples, pears, and peaches. Lastly, it is important to note that it is not known for its agriculture. It is better known as an industrial city. For example, here are many heavy industries manufacturing anything from aircraft and automobiles to machine tools.

**14a. What is the difference between your hometown and other cities (such as Hong Kong)?**

The main difference between my hometown and Hong Kong is the climate. For example, there they have a tropical climate. That is to say that it is very hot and humid. Here in my hometown we have cold winters and hot summers. Secondly, My hometown is an industrial city, whereas Hong Kong is more a financial center. That is to say, here we have many factory workers, or to be more exact, family-orientated workers who are not very wealthy, and in Hong Kong there are many tycoons, millionaires, and wealthy people.

**14b. What is the difference between your hometown and Hong Kong?**

The main difference between my hometown and Hong Kong is the climate. For example, there they have a tropical climate. That is to say that it is very hot and humid. Here in my hometown we have cold winters and hot summers. Although cities like Toronto, New York, are larger than my hometown , they all are bustling with industrial and cultural activities. Maybe Hong Kong is an exception, as it is better known as one of the most important financial capitals of the world.

**15. Can you tell me something about the character of the people in your hometown?**

Well, they aren't any different from the inhabitants in any other large city. For example, here we also have many wholesome families as well as our share of criminal elements in the society. In addition, I believe that my hometown has not been westernized to the same extent as a city like HongKong. For example, the people have not become materialistic to the same extent as the inhabitants of

Hong Kong. In other words, in my hometown you would still find many good old-fashioned (traditional) people who have strong principles and values about many aspects of life.

### **Present Situation (student)**

#### **16a. Are you a student or do you have a job?**

I am a student at the moment. I am studying English on a full-time basis at a Language School here. We have classes in the mornings, afternoons, and evenings. Wednesday afternoons we are off, and are allowed to go swimming at a nearby hotel. We have a number of foreign teachers who assist us in the correct pronunciation and grammar of the language.

#### **16b. Are you a student or do you have a job?**

I have a job. I am working in a workshop of a large manufacturing plant at the moment. I graduated from high school two years ago, and went to work immediately. I am an assistant to one of the automotive electricians in the workshop. I have to assist my artisan in getting his jobs done. For instance, I have the responsibility to see that the tools are in good order, and that the workshop is always kept clean and tidy.

#### **17. What do you like most about your studies?**

Well, I guess the speaking part. Please allow me to explain. Language is all about communication. So when I am able to communicate with someone in English, I feel that I have achieved something. I particularly like our free talk sessions with the foreign teachers. It gives me the opportunity to question them about their countries and cultures.

#### **18. What is your major?**

As I have been studying on a full-time basis at an English Language School, we have only one subject, namely English for Academic Purposes called EAP. We do reading and writing, practical speaking, and listening by means of cassettes. English is the language of the future, especially in the business world. What I mean to say is that when I am able to communicate well in English I will not only be able to go and study abroad and improve my qualifications, but also have mastered a very necessary tool for my future career.

#### **19. Which is the best university in your country?**

That's an interesting question. Allow me to explain my personal view by shortly mentioning the following points: I believe that the xxx University is the best University in the country. For example, it has the highest percentage of students passing their courses of all the universities in my country.

#### **20. Describe your study habits?**

I have well established study habits. For example, I always start promptly at eight in the evenings. I study for two hours, have a ten-minute break, and the study for

another two hours. I follow this habit from Mondays to Fridays, but over the weekends I put in more hours. For example, I study in the mornings and afternoons, and then take the evenings off to relax with my family or friends.

**21. Do you think your present subjects are relevant?**

Yes. Allow me to explain myself by shortly mentioning the following points: Firstly, we often use case studies in class. What I mean is that the professor gives us examples from real life to examine and report on. Secondly, our lecturers and some advisors from the relevant industries have set up our study material. What I mean to say is that the people who we are going to work for one day have had the opportunity to tell the university what they think we should be taught.

**22. What kind of job would you prefer after graduation?**

I would like to become a medical doctor. Please allow me to explain. Firstly, I would like to render a service in the community to which I will eventually belong. For example, I would like to assist the elderly that do not have the financial means to afford private hospitals.

**23. What are your job prospects?**

I am planning to become a Hotel Manager. Please allow me to explain. Firstly, I believe that the hotel industry will be growing greatly in future. For example, people are becoming more affluent, and spend more and more of their money on holidays. In addition, I believe that after graduating I will be able to find a good job anywhere in the world. What I mean to say is that all hotels and resorts have the same objectives irrespective of where they are situated. Their aim is to ensure that their guests have a good time and return again.

**Present Situation (employee)**

**24a. Do you have a degree? If so, when and where did you graduate?**

Yes. I have a Bachelors Degree in Electrical Engineering. I graduated in 2001 from xxx University . It is the largest university in my country and has about twenty thousand students.

**24b. Do you have a degree? If so, when and where did you graduate?**

No. I have a Diploma in Nursing. I graduated in 2001 from the Medical Training College . It is a well-known College giving excellent training to future nurses and other medical staff. For example, ambulance drivers, hospital staff, and so on are all trained there.

**25. What impressed you most when you were at university / college?**

I was most impressed by the knowledge and skills of my lecturers. For example, they had experience in the working environment, and could tell us exactly what we would come across there. Secondly, I was impressed by the facilities. For example, we had a large library, well-equipped laboratories, and sporting

facilities at our disposal.

**26. Do you still remember your school days?**

Of course! Those were some of the best times in my life. Allow me to explain myself by shortly mentioning the following points: Firstly they were carefree days. What I mean to say is that I had no or very few worries. My parents provided in my day-to-day needs, and all I had to do was get good grades. Secondly, I had many friends in school. For instance, some of my best friends today were people that I met in school.

**27. Describe your job in detail.**

I am an Engineer. Allow me to explain myself by shortly mentioning the following points: Firstly, I work for a large construction company. To be more precise, we specialize in the building of railway bridges. Secondly, I would like to mention that I am in the designing department. We have to look at the site for a new bridge, and then decide what type of bridge will be suitable. Lastly, we have to make recommendations to the railway company of all the alternatives, and give them some idea of the costs.

**28. Is your job important to you?**

That's a broad question. Allow me to explain by shortly mentioning the following points: Firstly, my job is important to me because by doing it I can serve my community and my country. For example, when my company builds a new road, many people benefit from our work. Secondly, I personally get a lot of job satisfaction. What I mean to say is that after we have completed a road, I am proud to drive on the road with my family and explain to them what was involved during the building of the road.

**29. If you could, would you change jobs?**

Although I am very happy in my present job, I believe one should always be ambitious. That is to say one should never be complacent, but should be on the lookout for opportunities to advance in your career. Furthermore, I would not hesitate for one moment if I could obtain a promotion by changing jobs. I realize that one should show some loyalty to your present employer, but there has to be a balance between looking after one's own interests and those of your present employer.

**30. Are there possible changes that could affect your job in any way?**

I don't think so. The company that I am working for is large and strong. In addition, I have a good relationship with my colleagues and my boss. Lastly, the only possible change that would affect me is if I should receive a promotion. That would be a positive development, so I am worried at all.

## **Family (general)**

### **31. Could you tell me something about your family?**

Certainly. We are a normal Indian family. It consists of my father, my mother, and me. I am the only child, so I don't have any brothers or sisters. My grandparents passed away when I was still very young, so I did not have the privilege of knowing them. My father was one of four children, and my mother has a brother, so I have a number of uncles and aunts, and many cousins.

### **32. What do you think of the One-Child Policy in China?**

That's a tough question. Allow me to explain my personal views by shortly mentioning the following points: Firstly, I think we have to have the policy in China. Our population had been growing to rapidly and something drastic had to be done. Secondly, I believe the policy will give China a chance to move ahead in the world. What I mean to say is that as soon as the population growth has stabilized, China will be able to make progress in the fight against unemployment.

### **33. Why do people in your country traditionally want to have a son?**

That's an interesting question. Allow me to explain my personal views by shortly mentioning the following points: Firstly, I believe that fathers all over the world want someone to carry their name into the future. For example, in many western countries it is customary for a boy to receive his grandfather's name. A second reason that I could mention is that parents worry about what will happen to them after they had retired. They feel that when they have a son he would be able to provide for them in future.

### **34. Who does most of the shopping in your family?**

As far as this topic is concerned, I could say that my mother does most of the shopping, but my father and I will do some shopping from time to time. My parents allow me to buy my own clothes. Lastly, I would like to mention that my mother does not like my father's smoking habit and therefore refuses to buy cigarettes, so that my father has to do that kind of shopping himself.

### **35. Who does most of the cooking in your family?**

My mother does most of the cooking, but my father and I will do some cooking from time to time. For example, sometimes my mother will be out the whole day doing voluntary work in our community, and then my father and I will do the cooking for her. The second aspect I could tell you about regarding this topic is that we often eat out. For example, often on a Friday night none of us feel like cooking, and then we visit one of the local restaurants, and have our favorite dish.

### **36. How does your family feel about you going abroad?**

They are very happy about me going abroad. I believe my parents will be very proud if I were to achieve a degree at a university abroad. In addition, they

themselves never had the opportunity to study. I am their only child, and they would do anything in their power to allow me to have the opportunity.

### **Family (married person)**

#### **37. Are you married? And if so, when did you get married?**

Yes, I am married. I got married about three years ago. I have a good husband / wife, and we are very happy together. To put it in another way you could say that we are best friends. For example, we do not keep any secrets from one another. We had known each other for many years before we got married, so we did not have to adjust too much. For example, I knew that he snores loudly when he turns onto his back when sleeping.

#### **38. Do you have any children?**

No, I don't have any children yet. We are planning to start with a family as soon as we have our own apartment. Until then my husband / wife and I are working as hard as possible to improve our positions in the companies that we are employed by. We would both like to have a son and a daughter, but because of the one-child policy that will not be possible.

#### **39. What is your child's name? Does it have any meaning?**

My child's name is David Lee. His nickname is superman, as we believe that he is going to become a strong man one day.

#### **40. What does your wife do?**

My wife is a housewife at the moment. We are looking for a job for her, but it is not easy, as she does not have any qualifications or experience. They are opening up a new supermarket in our area soon, and we are hoping that she will be able to find a job there. She has placed her name on a waiting list, and we will be hearing from the employment officer soon.

#### **41. What does your husband do?**

My husband is a civil servant. He works for the Department of Health at a hospital near our home. He is responsible for keeping the patient records in the men's wards. He loves his work, and is receiving a good salary, so we don't have any serious worries. As a matter of fact we both agree that we have a lot to be thankful for.

#### **42. Did you have a honeymoon? And if so, where did you go?**

Yes, we did have a honeymoon. We went to Cuba for a week, and stayed in a small hotel next to the beach. I will never forget the time we spent there. For example, it was very romantic, as we could sit on the beach in the evenings and watch the moon rising over the sea.

#### **43. Did you and your spouse have to ask permission from your parents before you could get married?**



No, not really. They knew we were going to get married. We only had to confirm the date with them to ensure that it would suit them and our families. In earlier times it was customary for the young man to get the permission from his girlfriend's parents before they could get married.

**44. Is living together without getting married acceptable in your country?**

It depends to what extent the couple would adhere to earlier customs. What I mean to say is that these days it is becoming more and more acceptable. For example, young people feel that they first want to get know each other even better by living together. When they are absolutely sure that they are able to adapt to each others lifestyles, they would then most probably decide to get married.

**45. Do you think couples should live with their parent or on their own?**

There are several reasons as for why I think couples should life on their own. Allow me to explain by mentioning some of them briefly. Firstly, I believe couples should become independent as soon as possible. For example, they should learn how to cope with the money at their disposal. Secondly, I believe they should be alone as soon as possible. For example, should they have an argument, they have to solve the problem by themselves.

**46. What responsibilities should a couple take?**

There are several responsibilities that couples should take. Allow me to explain by mentioning some of them briefly. In the first place, I believe they should be responsible for their own finances. For example, young couples usually do not have a lot of money, and find it difficult to make ends meet. Secondly, I believe that later they have to look after their children. For example, they have to feed and clothe them, and ensure that they get a good education.

**Family (children)**

**47. Are there any traditions around the birth of a baby in your region?**

Yes, there are quite a few. Firstly, after the baby is born, the father will give his wife some flowers, and take photographs of the baby and her. When the baby arrives at home, the parents will make prints of its hands and feet. This, together with a paintbrush made by using some of the babies' hair, will be kept as memorabilia.

**48. What kind of parent do you intend to be?**

That's an interesting question. Allow me to explain my personal views by shortly mentioning the following points: First of all, I would love my child unconditionally.

What I mean is that I realize my child is not perfect, but I will still love him/her even if s/he has made a mistake. Secondly, I would like to be known as a strict but fair parent. For example, I will not allow my child too many freedoms, but I will also try to understand his/her needs.

**49. What hopes or fears do you have concerning your children?**

That's an interesting question. Allow me to explain myself/my personal views by shortly mentioning the following points: Firstly, I fear that my children will have a very hard life. For example, I wonder if they will have work to do. Secondly, I hope that they will be happy. For example, that they will find a good spouse, have children, and live together in peace and love.

**50. What type of culture do you want your child to grow up in?**

That's a broad question. Allow me to explain myself/my personal views by shortly mentioning the following points: Firstly, I would like my child to grow up in a culture of love. What I mean to say is that I hope the circumstances in our home will full of love and understanding. Secondly, I hope my child will grow up in a culture where the finer things in life are important. For example, things like music, art, and studying should be part of his life from the beginning.

**51. Are you going to bring your children up differently from the way you were brought up? Why?**

No, not really. I believe my parents raised me well, and gave me a good education. If I could do the same for my child I would be happy. Maybe I would be a bit more modern. For example, I believe my parents were unreasonably strict at times. I would try and keep a balance between discipline and freedom.

**Family (woman)**

 **52. Is there any sex discrimination in your country?**

One of the aspects I could tell you about regarding this topic is that there is some discrimination against woman in my country. For example, woman who are doing exactly the same job as men, are getting smaller salaries. Secondly, women are not considered for certain high level positions, like for example, in government. In addition, in many communities women are still regarded as inferior to men. This is particularly the case in the rural communities. Lastly, parents prefer to have a boy as opposed to a girl. This is an unhealthy situation, as it will disturb the balance between the number of men and women in my country in the years to come.

**53a. What are the causes of sex discrimination?**

One of the main reasons regarding this topic that I would like to highlight is the fact that men often determine the wages in the companies. Secondly, women are not seen as able to do certain jobs as well as men. For instance, construction

work has always been seen as a man's job. Lastly, many men still believe that a woman should stay at home, raise the kids, and be of service to her husband.

**53b. What are the causes of sex discrimination?**

That's an interesting question. Allow me to explain myself by shortly mentioning the following points: Firstly, I believe that discrimination against woman have deep roots in societies all over the world. In other words, it is not a present day phenomenon. Throughout history women have not enjoyed the same status as men. It is only recently that woman have been filling the same positions in the work place. Lastly, I believe that it will take much more time to eradicate this practice. For example, as more and more women become the sole breadwinners in families, they will have to be compensated as such irrespective of their sex.

**54. Should housewives be paid a salary by the government? Why?**

Yes, I believe housewives should be paid a salary by the government. Firstly, to be a housewife is a job just as any other, and one should be paid for what she is doing. Secondly, more housewives are better. For example, housewives can spend more time with their babies, and so lay the foundation of healthy relationships.

**Preferences (spare time)**

**55a. What do you usually do in your spare time?**

As a matter of fact, I have very little spare time these days. My studies are so important to me that I have given up all my other activities. For example, I used to love playing tennis, but these days I simply do not have the time. In addition, I used to swim often, as I believe it kept me fit without the danger of being injured.

**55b. What are your spare time interests?**

Well, these days, I surf on the Internet in my spare time. I have just bought my first computer, and love to look for exciting web sites that I have not known before. It is of course very time consuming, so I dont rally have time for anything else. I have to mention that it is an educational activity. For example, by means of web cams (video images from cameras set up at certain places) I am able to watch what wild animals are doing in many parts of the world. I particularly like to watch the polar bears playing with their cubs.

**56. Do you often watch TV? What is your favorite program?**

Yes, I often watch TV. My favorite program is called Discovery. As to why it is my favorite, I would like to mention the following. Firstly, it is not science fiction but a documentary on real life events and happenings. For example, it had a program on the latest eclipse of the sun that occurred at the end of the year. Secondly, it often has items about nature. For example, last week it explained how some birds have adapted to survive in a desert.

**57. Do you think watching TV is a waste of time?**

No, I do not think watching TV is a waste of time. Firstly, one can learn a lot from watching TV, and secondly, it is a good way to relax. For example, the soap operas help me to relax, while the documentaries are informative. Lastly, I believe that TV has become the best source of information these days. For example, it is a fast and convenient way to find out about the latest news from all over the world.

**Preferences (friends)**

**58. What does friendship mean to you?**

One of the aspects I could tell you about regarding this topic is that friendship is very important to me. For example, I believe that friendship should be the basis for many of our relationships. Husbands and wives, for example, should be friends. In addition, I need friends to help me when I am in trouble. I know this sound selfish, but I feel that it is one of the reasons why I have friends, and they would not mind me saying so. On the other hand, my friends know that I will always be available should any one of them get into some trouble.

**59. Do you have a lot of friends?**

Yes, I have a lot of friends. Some of them are only casual friends like my friends at work, but I also have some best friends. For example, I have some friends who I have known for many years. I will do anything to help them when they need me, and I know they would do the same for me.

**60. Do you prefer to be alone or to be with friends?**

I prefer to be alone. Please allow me to explain. I like reading, which takes a lot of my time. Reading to me is a way of studying, so I have to do it alone. I often have to check the meaning of unfamiliar words in my dictionary, which is a slow process taking a lot of time.

**60a. Do you prefer to be alone or to be with friends?**

I prefer to be with my friends. Please allow me to explain. At work I spend most of my time alone in my office. So after work I like the company of other people. I often invite some of my friends over, and we listen to our favorite music, or just chat the whole evening.

**60b. Do you prefer to be alone or to be with friends?**

Sometimes I prefer to be alone. For example, after a hard day at work I just want to relax without anybody disturbing me. Those are the times that I might meditate on the meaning of life for example, or just savour some fond memories. On the other hand, sometimes I want to be with my friends. For example, over weekends, I like to go out with them and enjoy their stimulating company.

**61a. What do you usually do with your friends?**

Firstly, we often visit the nearest net bar for a number of reasons. For example, to play computer games or to surf on the net. Sometimes we chat to young people abroad. We often spend hours there at a time. Secondly, we like to play basketball. For example, we would challenge another group to play against us.

**61b. What do you usually do with your friends?**

We usually go to the movies. My friends and I like cartoons very much, so we will look in the newspaper where a new cartoon is being showed and go and watch it. In addition, we like to watch a good action movie from time to time. We find the spectacular crashes and explosions very exiting. These movies are from Hong Kong or Hollywood, and have famous actors like Arnold Schwarzenegger and Tom Cruise playing in them.

**Preferences (weekends and outings)**

**62a. What do you usually do on weekdays and on weekends?**

On weekdays I go to school. On weekends I like to go out with my friends. For example, we will go and visit new shopping malls in the city. Then we would browse around all the shops. Sometimes we will sit in a restaurant and have something to drink while we watch the crowds of people go by.

**62b. What do you usually do on weekdays and on weekends?**

On weekdays I go to school. On weekends I like to stay at home. I can easily spend a weekend watching TV and just relaxing. For example, I like the soap operas like Meteor Garden and so on. I know the different characters well by now, some whom I love, and some whom I hate. I realize that some of the plots are silly and overdramatic, but it is good relaxing entertainment, as one does not have to think very hard to follow the stories.

**OUTINGS**

**63a. What do you usually do when you go out?**

I usually go to the nearest net bar with some of my friends. We spend many hours playing games or surfing the net. In addition, net bars are a great place for social gatherings. There we meet other youngsters and just hang around talking, and generally having a good time.

**63b. What do you usually do when you go out?**

I usually go shopping with my mother. The reason for this is simple. US ladies usually need a lot of clothes to make us look beautiful, so we love to go shopping. Often we don't actually buy anything, but just browse around looking at all the clothes and comparing prices and quality.

**63c. What do you usually do when you go out?**

One of the aspects I could tell you about regarding this topic is that I usually go to watch a football game with some of my friends. We go to one of the local stadiums where our favorite team will be playing. I love the excitement and suspense. It seems that I often lose my identity in such a large crowd, and go crazy about the smallest of things.

**Preferences (reading)**

**64a. Do you like reading?**

No I don't like reading. I do not have the patience. For example, I have never been able to read a book from start to finish. Maybe the books I have tried were not interesting enough.

**64b. Do you like reading?**

Yes. I like reading very much. Please allow me to explain. Firstly, I believe that all of us should read a lot. For example, when you read you acquire new knowledge, which in turn will broaden your views on important matters. In addition I also like reading Crazy English. The topics are interesting and short, and the translations ensure that I don't waste time looking up unfamiliar words.

**65a. What kinds of books do you like best?**

I like cartoons. Please allow me to explain. Firstly, I believe cartoons are a special form of art. For example, the Japanese cartoons that are common in China, have excellent illustrations.

**65b. What kinds of books do you like best?**

I like novels. Please allow me to explain. Firstly, I like to read a storyline that is full of intrigue and suspense. For example, many love stories have characters who are involved in all sorts of conflicts amongst them. The most common one known all over the world since ancient times is the so-called love triangle.

**66a. Describe a book that you have read recently.**

I have read a book about the life of Michael Jordan. I am sorry, but I have forgotten the name of the book. I also like to read Japanese cartoons.

**66b. Describe a book that you have read recently.**

I have recently read a book about the history of South Africa. It is called The Covenant, and was written by a famous American author called James Mitchener. It describes the history from the very first days, up to the present. It covers all aspects of the country, but focuses on the people of the country. For example, he looks at the political situation over the past fifty years, which was based on racial discrimination and had become known to the world as apartheid.

**67a. Do you often read the newspapers?**

No, I never read a newspaper. I watch TV if I want to know what is happening in China and the world. Newspapers take too much time to read. For example, the news on TV is short and to the point, and that's all I want to know.

**67b. Do you often read the newspapers?**

No. Allow me to explain the reasons by shortly mentioning the following points: Firstly, I use the Internet these days if I want to know what's happening in the region and the world. For example, websites like CNN contain all the latest news on world events. Secondly, I like to read about stories in depth, and this I cannot find in newspapers. For example, I often would like to know the history behind a story. On the Internet I can do some research right away, and so gain a broader perspective on the subject at hand.

**Preferences (hobbies)**

**68. Do you have a hobby?**

Yes. My hobby is stamp collecting. I have been collecting stamps for the past two years now. That is to say, for two years I have chosen stamp collecting to be my only hobby. I regularly spend time working on my collection. I guess I spend about two hours every week on my hobby. This is mainly over weekends, as I do not have time during the week.

**69a. Why have you chosen this hobby?**

That's an interesting question. Allow me to explain myself/my personal views by shortly mentioning the following points: First of all, it's a very interesting hobby. For example, the stamps from other countries often say something about that country and its people.

**69b. Why have you chosen this hobby?**

First of all, when you collect stamps, you are able to learn more about the world, and you will not be bored easily. What I mean to say is that you can get stamps from every country in the world, and the stamps often say something about that country and its people. Secondly, you are able to meet new friends through your hobby. For instance, you have a common interest with someone else, and you can discuss your collections together for many hours. Lastly, the hobby will teach you some self-discipline and how to be very systematic. That is to say, you have to tend to your collection regularly, and you have to sort the stamps according to internationally recognized systems.

**70. What are good hobbies? And what are bad hobbies?**

In my opinion, good hobbies are those ones that give you the opportunity to develop a new skill. For example, collecting stamps teaches you to be systematic. Bad hobbies on the other hand may result in you acquiring bad habits. For example, TV and computer games will result in you neglecting your studies.

## **Preferences (colors)**

### **71a. What color do you like? Why?**

I like red. Please allow me to explain. In my country, red is associated with life and good luck. For example, a bride will wear something red on her wedding day, in the hope that it will bring her and her bridegroom some luck in future.

### **71b. What color do you like? Why?**

If I had to describe my favorite color, I would choose yellow. Many artists are known to use yellow in their paintings. For example, Vincent van Gogh is famous for the yellow sunflowers in some of his paintings. Many countries have yellow in their national flags. For example, South Africa has a broad yellow band in their newly designed flag. This symbolizes the energy and warmth to be found in the nation.

### **71c. What color do you like most? Why?**

Yellow is my favorite color. First of all, to me, yellow symbolizes the sun. What I mean to say is that it reminds me of energy and warmth. Secondly, yellow is a bright color as apposed to dull colors like brown and gray. For instance, brown and gray usually make me feel depressed. Lastly, I would like to mention that yellow is a practical color. That is to say, you can wear yellow with almost any color, and it does not get dirty too easily.

### **72. Do colors have some symbolic meaning in your country?**

Yes, colors certainly have a lot of meaning in my country. Please allow me to explain. Firstly, it is significant that the national flag of my country has a red background. Red is symbolic, for example, of a vibrant life, which we believe are one of the dominant characteristics of the country and its people. It also signifies good luck, so a bride would wear some red on her wedding day. In addition, I think that yellow has a specific meaning to our people. For example, we believe that it symbolizes the energy radiated by the sun, which in turn is the primary source of life. In addition, however, it also signifies the obscene, as apposed to blue in the most of the western cultures. For example, here a blue movie would be called a yellow movie. Lastly, I think that white has a special meaning to us. To be more specific, in times of sadness and mourning, we use white to express our feelings, as apposed to black in most of the western cultures.

## **Preferences (shopping and movies)**

### **73a. Do you like / enjoy shopping?**

Yes, I love shopping. Please allow me to explain. Firstly, I usually buy clothes for myself. I like to go to the shops and see what they have to offer. I browse around and compare the prices before a buy something. Secondly, I do the shopping of all our household needs. I love to find out about any new products on the market and how they can possibly make my life easier.



**73b. Do you like / enjoy shopping?**

No, I hate shopping. Please allow me to explain. Firstly, shopping is the most basic activity in a capitalistic society. What I mean to say is that somebody has a product which they would like you to buy from them whether you really need it or not. They lure you into their shops and malls by advertising their goods on TV and in the newspapers. They only tell you about the positive aspects of their product, but would never mention the disadvantages. This you have to find out for yourself, usually after you have bought the product.

**74a. Do you often go to the cinema?**

Yes, I go to the cinema as often as possible. I usually go with some friends to watch the latest action movies or comedies. We have a great time, like for example when our favorite star is playing a lead role in the movie.

**74b. Do you often go to the cinema?**

Yes, I go to the cinema as often as possible. I believe that films are a wonderful form of art. Please allow me to explain. Firstly, in films there are a wide range of genres ranging from comedy and drama, to horror and science fiction. For example, recently I have seen the drama Titanic, which has been described as the most expensive film ever made. The extent to which the producers attended to the details of the original ship was astounding. Another example would be the thriller with my favorite actor Anthony Hopkins in the lead role called Silence of the lambs. It had me on the edge of my seat for most of the time.

**75. Do you often go to the theater?**

No. I have never been to the theater. Firstly, it is too expensive for me. I prefer to go to the cinema. Secondly, I believe that the theater is boring. What I mean to say is that the actors are on the same stage the whole time. I cannot see how that can be as exciting as a good movie.

**76. What kinds of movies do you like best?**

I like comedies. First of all, comedies are great fun. What I mean to say is that I have a good laugh while watching. Secondly, comedies seldom contain violent scenes. For instance, you would not easily find murders, shooting, fighting, and so on in a comedy. Lastly, comedies often contain excellent acting by famous stars. For example, Robbie Williams in Mrs. Doubtfire is considered one of the most extraordinary performances ever by an actor.

**77. Who is your favorite movie star? Describe him / her.**

My favorite movie star is Jackie Cheng. He is handsome, and very funny. He always has a smile on his face, and never seems to be worried about the situations that he finds himself in. The U.S. President Clinton went to watch one of his movies with him.

## MUSIC

### **78. Do you think music is important?**

Yes, I like music very much. That is to say, I cannot imagine what my life would be like without music. Firstly, I believe music plays an important part in people's lives. For example, we can use it to sooth our minds after a hard day at work, or it can provide us with the rhythm to dance to.

### **79. What kind of music do you enjoy most?**

I like pop music very much. Allow me to explain. First of all, pop music is lively, and suits me at my age. What I mean to say is that us youngsters like to listen to music that fits in with the way we feel Secondly, usually has a good rhythm. For instance, it is suitable for us to dance on. Lastly, pop music is simple to understand. That is to say, I like it because it is not difficult to understand, and it helps me to relax after I have been studying hard for some time.

### **80. How long do you listen to music everyday?**

Oh, let me think a bit. I guess I listen to music for about half an hour every day. I would, for example, listen when I get home from school, or in the evenings before I go to bed. On weekends, however, I listen to music much more. For example, I would invite my best friend over to my place, and we would listen to our favorite CDs for a few hours at a time.

## TRAVELING

### **81. Do you like traveling?**

Yes, I like traveling. Firstly, I believe that traveling is always educational. What I mean to say is that the people that you meet along the way are usually interesting. Secondly, I wish I were able to travel more. For example, I have not traveled to a foreign country yet.

### **82. How do you usually travel?**

I like to travel by train. Allow me to explain. Firstly, when I travel by train I am able to see more of my country. In addition, the trains in my country are convenient and comfortable. For example, I can travel to any city, and I am able to sleep on the train. Lastly, traveling on a train is a social event as well. For example, one can chat to the other passengers about where they are going, and why they are traveling.

### **83. Where have you traveled lately?**

I traveled to xxx last month. My parents and I traveled there by train. We went to see my grandmother who has been ill lately. I enjoyed the trip as I have not been to xxx before. We did not have the opportunity to sleep on the train, as it takes

only six hours to get there.

**84. What kind of places do you like to visit?**

I like to visit places where there is a lot of entertainment. For example, I don't like it when we go and visit my grandparents in the country. They live on a farm and don't even have a computer for me to play on. I like to visit the cities where there are movies to watch and nightclubs to visit.