



THE BEST WORKS OF FALL 2018 WRITING COURSE A

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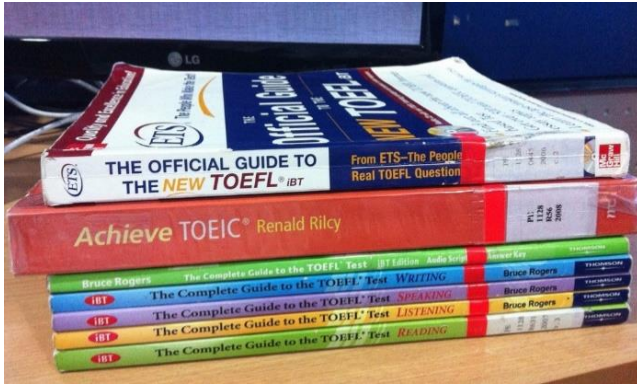
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Section 1: Opinion Essays

Topic: Four-Skills English Tests

Writing prompt: Japanese universities should get rid of entrance exams and adopt four-skills English tests from private companies like Eiken or TOEFL. To what extent do you agree or disagree?



Essay #1: *The Case Against Four-Skills English Tests*

I don't think universities should get rid of their original entrance exams and have the same skill tests from private companies. I always think universities should have creativity, diversity, and originality in their education. It's unnatural that all universities aim for the same goal. Different universities should and will have different values and different exams. Universities should encourage their students to acquire various ways of thinking, different ways of life and original capabilities for the development of society.

The world is now becoming more globalized and narrower in aspects of economy, information and communication. In such a world, we need to acquire basic skills of English, as it is now the most common language in the world. Therefore, I don't think it's bad for universities to adopt four-skills English tests to assess their applicants' basic skills for English. But I don't think skill tests like Eiken or TOEFL can always accurately measure a student's command of English or what someone can actually do by using English. They only measure one aspect of this ability. English is only a tool. The most important thing for young people is to learn about other cultures and ways of developing their own ideas for their future through English, as well as always have an attitude to learn something new. If universities give up making their original exams, high school students will study only for skills tests. They will know about words, grammar and general topics in that kind of skills test very well, but this kind of knowledge is shallow.

Each university has to have its own vision, perspective or belief about what kind of people it wants to develop and send into society. Moreover, through their original entrance exams, universities can also show its applicants what they should do to prepare for an education at that university and what kind of abilities they need in order to succeed.

Topic: Grades in School

Writing prompt: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Grades encourage students to learn.

NAME Tigert, Ann		AGE 16		GRADE 11		YEAR 1949			
SUBJECT	Period			Term	Period			Term	Yrly. Av.
	1st	2nd	3rd	Exam	1st	2nd	3rd	Exam	
Homemaking II	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A-
Typ. I	A+	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A+
P. Geom.	A	A-	A-	A	B+	A	B-	B+	B+
Eng. III	A	A-	A-	A	A-	A	A	A	A-
Conduct	A	B+	A-	A	B+	B+	B+	B+	
Days Absent	-	2	4		2	-	-		
Times Tardy	-	-	-		-	-	-		



Essay #2: *The Case Against Grades in School*

I work as a teacher in an advanced level high school. Here, most students care about their grades because they want to enter a good university. However, this aspect puts too much pressure on students. This is why, in my opinion, I do not think grades encourage students to learn.

First, grading puts pressure on students, such as pressure from their fellow peers as well as their parents. Sometimes, this may cause psychological problems. Students might tend to view themselves negatively when they see their grades. For example, once, I saw a student cry over her score on the midterm exam though she was in the middle of the ranking. This idea that they have to get good grades creates a strong pressure on students, and we often have two to three students in each class who say they cannot stand this. Moreover, many students suffer from pressure put on them by their parents to get good grades. If schools stop focusing on grades, students will be able to study for themselves, not for others. They will be able focus on achieving their own goals instead of comparing themselves with their classmates.

Do grades motivate students to study in the classroom? Some students may care only about grades; therefore, they may focus on getting good scores on exams to get better grades. As a result, some of them do not concentrate on daily lessons in school, and they work on assignments outside of school (such as homework from cram school). From the perspective of education, it would be more beneficial and important for students to feel the joy of learning some new knowledge and points of view, rather than on just learning facts to pass an entrance exam.

If grades are the main focus, students will be put under too much pressure. Moreover, they may only focus on getting good grades to pass exams, not knowing the joy of learning. Therefore, I think grades do not encourage students to learn. It is important for students to study for themselves and achieve their goals without pressure.

Essay #3: *The Case for Grades in School*

Schools are just a scaled-down version of society. Students learn not only academic subjects in school, they also learn about the customs, culture, and social rules of society. From this point of view, grading is necessary and I really believe that grades encourage students to learn.

Firstly, for the students to be evaluated is the start of having an objective perspective. When students are young, doing their best is one of the aspects to be graded. But as they grow up, just doing their best is sometimes given no recognition. Especially for professionals, the result is much more important than its process. Students should know about this, as well as the necessity to satisfy their evaluator's demand, before graduating and going out into the real world. Furthermore, when students think they will be graded, their work will be more polished and they can study harder with a clear goal. Grades promote competition, and this can be a source for students' motivation. Although it is said that in competition there are winners and losers, students should not have to feel miserable. As long as we are living in the modern world, we cannot avoid being evaluated. The world we live in is full of competition. We evaluate restaurants, movies and even doctors! This tendency to evaluate is one of the factors to make our lives better and better. That is because we are motivated by being recognized. That is just the way things are, and I believe students are also motivated in the same way.

As described above, grades make students gradually adopt an adult's way of thinking and help prepare them for real world. Evaluation undoubtedly has much more positive aspects than negative ones such as presenting us with a more objective perspective, providing clear goals and encouraging competition to live in life's competitive jungle.

Section 2: Compare & Contrast Essays

Directions: Choose a topic and write your opinion. Your paragraph should be at least 250 words. Please **bold and underline** the signal words for comparison or contrast.

Essay #4: Two Girl Characters: Little My and Dokin-Chan

There are many attractive female characters throughout different time periods. Most girls might have their favorite characters, such as Disney princesses. Many female characters are described as good women who are beautiful and warm-hearted. However, other girls may be attracted to characters who are totally different from those typical female characters. Take for instance the characters of Little My and *Dokin-chan*. Though the two characters were created by artists who were from different countries and different eras, they share similarities which make them endearing to fans. Little My is a character from the book *Moomin* drawn by Tove Jansson, a Finnish artist and writer. Little My is a girl who wears a red dress and puts her hair in a bun. She was so small that she could even sleep in a milk bottle. *Dokin-chan* is from the famous Japanese picture book and animation “*Anpanman*,” which was drawn by Yanase Takashi in 1975. She has an antenna, big green eyes, a white face, and a vermilion body. Takashi says that she was based on Scarlet O’Hara of *Gone With the Wind*. She and *Baikinman*, a boy character who works with her, were described as enemies of the hero, *Anpanman*.

One similarity Little My and Dokin-chan both share is that **both** characters were loved by many adult women even though they were created for children. Jansson wrote her first book of Moomin in 1945. Since its publication, many children have enjoyed the world of Moomin with its famous characters such as Snufkin. In Japan, even UNIQLO used only designs of Little My, not Moomin, and produced various clothes for adults in 2018. The animation of *Anpanman* has been broadcasted for more than 30 years and *Dokin-chan* is one of the most popular characters. Not only girls, but also many women love her even though she was a kind of an enemy. The popular message app, LINE, released LINE stickers which feature her. These are her pictures with polite words for adults to use when sending text messages.

Another similarity is their personality. Little My is **as** honest, selfish and sassy **as** *Dokin-chan*. Little My says unpleasant things to her family and friends, and sometimes even plays a trick on them. However, her misbehavior is forgiven because she is little. She never intends to harm anyone but just wants to behave as she likes. **Similar to** Little My, *Dokin-chan* also lives honestly and this quality attracts people. *Dokin-chan* always wants the things which belong to others, and she often makes *Baikin-man* steal others’ things. Her behavior is like a queen and she once even changed the design of *Baikinman Castle* into her face.

The final similarity is that they are girls in love with a boy character. In an episode of the Moomin animation, Little My asks Snufkin to date her. She approaches Snufkin while he is playing the harmonica on a guardrail of a bridge. She suddenly says, “You and I should start dating.” At that moment, Snufkin was so surprised that he fell into the river. She continues, “I’m going to start dating you, I’ve decided!” **Similarly**, *Dokin-chan* loves *Shokupanman*, one of the hero characters. **Unlike** Little My, *Dokin-chan* has no courage to confess her love, so she approaches him wearing a disguise. She is always honest and gets jealous when she finds another girl talking with

him, yet in front of him, she often becomes shy.

In summary, **both** characters have been loved by many women of all ages, though they are not your typical and ideal female characters. This may be because these female fans can sympathize with them, relate to them, or are attracted to their personality and behavior which expresses their own feelings deep down.



Essay #5: Tofu vs. Tempeh: Which is the Healthier Soy Food?

Soy is popular and widely consumed because it is a good source of protein and used as an ingredient in many processed foods. In this essay, we will look at two different products. One is tofu from Japan, which is made by coagulating soymilk and pressing the curds into blocks. The other is tempeh, which is a traditional soy product originating from Indonesia. Tofu is probably the most popular soy product, but tempeh shouldn't be overlooked. It's healthier in general because it contains more protein and fiber than tofu. Tempeh is a great meat substitute for things like burgers because it can hold its shape when cooked. In fact, tempeh is less processed than tofu but what is interesting is that they both can be very useful to develop new healthy food products.

Both products are high in plant-based protein and a good source of many nutrients and phytochemicals, chemical compounds produced by plants generally to help them thrive or thwart competitors, predators, or pathogens. **One similarity** is that they are great alternatives to meat, with ample protein. **Both** are options for meatless dieters and are rich in flavor and taste. **They are also** highly nutritious and are available in soft or hard, or both varieties, from silken, to soft, to firm, to sprouted and everything in between. **Another similarity** is that they are both pressed soybean curd, **although** tempeh is actually fermented soybeans that are made into a dry cake form and is much firmer than tofu. Tempeh is available as burger patties, in which the tempeh is mixed with spices and shaped into round shapes. **The final similarity** is that they are high-fiber foods. **Both** help lower cholesterol because soy foods are from plants that do not contain cholesterol as do animal-based foods. Tofu doesn't contain a large amount of fiber, but contains several important minerals, **while** tempeh contains more protein, and more fiber than tofu, and is also high in vitamin B2, as well as the minerals copper, magnesium, and manganese.

In summary, **both** are popular alternatives to meat and very rich in nutrients, and are low in fat and cholesterol, **yet** they differ quite drastically in terms of nutrients. If you're looking for a health boost, tempeh is definitely the better option.

Section 3: Summary & Opinion Essays

Directions: Read one of the news articles from the assignment. Paraphrase the news article you have read and then give your opinion on the article.



Essay #6: Tokyo wants people to go to work earlier to ease train crush

(<http://tinyurl.com/y5b2ol2w>)

A July 17th, 2018 article written by Kurumi Mori, on Bloomberg titled “Tokyo Wants People to Go to Work Earlier to Ease Train Crush” reported that Yuriko Koike, the governor of Tokyo, has launched a campaign called “Jisa Biz” to ease jam-packed trains on weekday mornings looking ahead to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics. However, despite more than 700 companies such as Pfizer Inc. and Microsoft Corp. encouraging flexible work time and some metro lines increasing the number of trains during rush hour, the campaign doesn’t seem to work well.

The rush hour problem is one of the biggest long-pending tasks to solve in Japan. Commuters have been packed onto crowded trains for more than 50 years. It is easy to say that commuting in crowded trains is a “duty” of living in a big city. But the situation is much worse than just saying “duty.” Sometimes heavily crowded trains can be the cause of a tragic accident. The Amagasaki derailment that happened in Amagasaki, Hyogo prefecture in 2005, which killed 106 people is still fresh in our memory. This incident resulted in tragedy because too many passengers were packed onto one train. Although it was not in the Tokyo area, Governor Koike and people in the metropolitan area should not think it is someone else’s problem.

One of the causes of overcrowded trains is reckless urban planning. Since the 2000s, a lot of high-rise apartments have been built in the suburbs of Tokyo and a great number of people who wish for reasonably-priced housing have moved there. Due to this flow of people, some new congestion has occurred in particular areas which were not crowded before. For example, the Nambu line which connects the northern part of Tokyo (from Tachikawa station) to the southern part of Tokyo (to Kawasaki station) is extremely crowded because of the development in Musashikosugi, where 11 high-rise condominiums have been built since 2003.

To solve this problem, companies in Tokyo should adopt a remote-work system. Thanks to the great development of IT technology, some occupations do not require employees to commute to work. People can work at home. Opponents say that workers should separate their job time from private time and space. However, there

are many more advantages than disadvantages to the remote-work system. For example, remote-work enables us to work flexibly. People can even work while taking care of their kids. Also, since workers don't have to commute to work anymore, they can use that time they save to do more work, thus increasing their productivity. In fact, according to the website *Remote Work Labo*, 44 companies in Tokyo such as Japan IBM and Fujitsu have already launched the remote-work system. But not all of them permit their employees to work at home every day. Some of the companies assign their workers to commute once or twice a week. But if more companies go along with this system, even allowing their employees to take one or two days a week to do remote work, the rush hour problem will be eased.

In summary, we Japanese have been worried about jam-packed trains for more than half a century. One of the causes which have made the rush hour worse is thoughtless urban planning. But, we should take this opportunity of hosting the Olympics and Paralympics to recreate our ways of working. Adopting a remote-work system is a good start to solving the rush hour problem. As more companies launch their own remote-work system, fewer employees will have to ride the train during rush-hour traffic. Even if it is one or two days a week of remote-work, it will greatly ease the train crush.



Essay #7: *Nearly two-thirds oppose law authorizing casinos in Japan: poll*

(<http://tinyurl.com/y9pel3pz>)

According to a survey conducted by Kyodo News in July 2018, nearly two-thirds of those polled were against the recently passed bill to allow the opening of casino resorts in Japan. It shows the Japanese people's deep concerns about gambling. First, the increase of the number of people who are gambling addicts and related crimes has not been solved. Second, the discussion in the Diet is not enough to erase the doubts that people have against the government's decision. Finally, Prime Minister Abe was eager to pass this bill to boost the economy despite resistance from opposition parties.

Although casino complexes may trigger economic growth and inbound investments, Japanese people's worries and concerns about gambling far surpass the positive effects. The poll indicated that 64.8 percent of respondents were against authorizing casinos in Japan, but the bill was still passed anyway. Supporters for establishing integrated resorts in Japan say that the economic effects will be tremendous. The government insists that they would attract more foreign tourists and create a lot of jobs, because the integrated resorts will consist of amusement parks, hotels, theaters, shopping malls, public bathhouses, and restaurants. With the need for infrastructure such as transportation, Japan's economy will be boosted even after Tokyo 2020.

However, even the world's largest casino city, Las Vegas, is in the red, and other countries' casinos are going bankrupt one after another. In addition, opponents of the bill are worried because Japan already has a huge gambling industry which consists of pachinko, slot machines, in addition to six public gambling venues, such as horseraces, boat races, and other entertainment. Japan's gambling industry is far larger than the world's casino industries combined. Pachinko sales per year in Japan is worth about 21 trillion yen, while popular gambling cities like Las Vegas and Macao only make 1 trillion and 3 trillion yen, respectively.

Furthermore, the government does nothing to improve the situation by taking countermeasures against gambling-related social problems, such as addiction, crime, and money laundering. The number of people affected by gambling addiction are estimated to be 5.36 million, about five times as many as those in the United States and other countries. These figures remain unchanged, which indicates that the government does nothing to improve the situation. Casinos may become a haven for money-laundering as Japan has failed to monitor this crime properly and swiftly.

The bill to authorize casinos in Japan is too premature and insufficient to open casinos in Japan.



Essay #8: *Iceland is to stop using palm oil in their own-brand products*

(<http://tinyurl.com/ybcfyzph>)

How many products do we use which contain palm oil in a day? How about in food? What is palm oil anyway? Palm oil is an oil which is extracted from the fruit and seeds of the oil palms which are mainly grown on enormous plantations in Indonesia and Malaysia. It is said that more than half of all items in supermarkets — from butter and chocolate to instant noodles — contain palm oil. According to WWF Japan, people consume about 4 to 5 liters of palm oil in a day in Japan. Since it has some merits, many companies keep using palm oil in their products. Palm oil is cheap, easy to use for cooking and high in nutrients. However, its production has big problems, such as deforestation. Many people do not know about palm oil though we eat or use it almost every day. Although it might be difficult to live without palm oil, companies should take action due to some serious problems with palm oil.

One company has a progressive approach in the UK. An April 10th, 2018 article written by BBC News titled, “Iceland is to stop using palm oil in own-brand products,” reported that the major UK supermarket, Iceland, decided to ban their own brand products which contain palm oil. According to Iceland, palm oil is used in more than half of its products. Iceland said the growing demand for the oil was devastating tropical rainforests across Southeast Asia. Iceland managing director Richard Walker said that until they have genuinely sustainable palm oil that contains zero deforestation, they are saying no to palm oil. Although it would increase costs, they believe it’s the right thing to do. Palm oil is controversial in many points, such as deforestation, air pollution, the decline of the orangutan population and so on. A survey of more than 5,000 UK consumers found about a third were not sure what palm oil is. However, once they learned about its effects on the environment, 85% said it should not be used in food products.

There are three reasons why companies use a lot of palm oil. The first reason is cost. When palm oil is produced, it needs a smaller plantation unlike other vegetable oils. Labor costs are lower in Indonesia and Malaysia, so companies can produce palm oil there for a cheap price. Second, palm oil has a range of useful properties in the cooking process. It improves the texture of foods, and chocolate and ice cream do not melt easily because its melting point is higher than other oil. Third, it is said that palm oil contains fewer unsaturated fatty acids compared with other oil.

However, there are negative aspects to using palm oil as well. One example is in regard to the orangutan.

Today's palm oil production is the largest cause of deforestation in Indonesia and other equatorial countries. According to the Scientific American, in Indonesia, the endangered orangutan population in the rainforest has dwindled by as much as 50 percent in recent years. The Independent has also reported that not only has forest destruction robbed orangutans of up to 90 percent of their homes, they are sometimes actively killed by those involved in the industry. Greenpeace, an environmental conservation group, identified a British chocolate company which destroyed 70,000 hectares of habitat for these orangutan since 2016. Not only animals, people may also be affected by this. Deforestation is a big factor in global warming. Once forests are cut, tons of CO₂ cannot be absorbed anymore. Moreover, palm plantations cannot keep water by absorbing rainfall, so it causes flood and soil depletion.

Some companies import oil which has an RSPO (Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil) license in Japan, but there are only a few people who know about this license. On the other hand, in the EU, companies put labels on products which contain palm oil. Not all companies can follow Iceland, and it might be difficult for them to make such an attempt. However, companies should take the responsibility to tell consumers which product contains palm oil or restrict their import. If companies take action like Iceland, it would be a good opportunity for people to learn about the problems related to palm oil in order to choose more sustainable products.

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