

English II Exam Época Normal

2 June 2015

Time allowed: 2 hours (18h-20h)

A. Writing (13.5 points)

Consider the cartoon, and write a text (300-400 words) in answer to the prompt.



We speak American

What is the point of the cartoon and why is it relevant for recruitment today?

Your text will be marked on relevance and breadth of content, discourse management and genre, appropriacy and range of vocabulary and structures, and grammatical accuracy.

B. Reading (4.55 points)

Read the text on page 2 and answer the questions that follow.

British minister in cultural gaffe after giving Taipei mayor 'taboo' watch

The Guardian, 27 January 2015

1. A British minister was left red-faced after giving the mayor of Taipei the gift of a watch – a taboo act in Chinese culture – only for him to joke he would “sell it to a scrap dealer”.

- Ko Wen-je, a high-flying surgeon and mayor of Taiwan’s capital, made the remark after he was handed the pocket timepiece by British transport minister Lady Kramer, who was visiting Taiwan on a trade exchange. When asked by a local reporter to comment on the gift, Ko said he might give the watch to someone else or “sell it to a scrap metal dealer for some money, because it would be useless to me.” Giving someone a clock or watch as a present is traditionally taboo in Chinese culture due to the similar pronunciation of “giving a clock” and “attending an old person’s funeral”.
- 5.
 - 10.

Ko, who is a popular figure but known for his off-the-cuff remarks, drew a barrel of criticism from across Taiwan’s political spectrum for his perceived rudeness.

15. In response, his British guest tried to play down the embarrassment. “I’m sorry. We learn something new each day. I had no idea a gift like this could be seen as anything other than positive. In the UK a watch is precious – because nothing is more important than time,” she said in a statement. She also highlighted the significance of the watch, which she termed as a “very unique item” from the House of Lords.
- 20.

- Rosalia Wu, a city councillor from the major opposition Democratic Progressive party, later lambasted Ko on her Facebook page, saying: “City diplomacy is critical to Taiwan, as the mayor of the capital; he should have taken greater responsibility.” Ko presented Kramer with a miniature model of Taipei 101, once the world’s tallest skyscraper and an iconic feature of the city’s skyline.
- 25.

- An independent candidate, Ko, 55, was elected as the mayor of the capital in the island’s local elections in November, thrashing Sean Lien, son of former vice-president Lien Chan. Ko sparked multiple controversies while campaigning for the post, including describing a female candidate from the Beijing-friendly Kuomintang (KMT) party as “young and pretty and just fit to sit behind a (department store) counter”. Although he was labelled as “loose cannon” by some critics, he has been tolerated by supporters despite a string of such gaffes. A recent survey showed his approval rating one month into office stood at a comfortable 70%, as staunch supporters hail him for pledging to battle corruption and streamline bureaucracy.
- 30.
 - 35.

- Lady Kramer received a reprieve later, when the Taipei Representative Office in the UK, on behalf of the government of Taiwan, said: “[We] would like to clarify that Lady Kramer’s act of presenting the Taipei City Mayor with a watch does not constitute a ‘cultural gaffe’; as such we feel that the Minister need not be embarrassed.”
- 40.

Name: Number:

B. Reading Comprehension (Cont.) (0.35 each)Choose **one** answer to each question and write the letter clearly in the box.

1. The main purpose of the article is
 - a. to comment on the British Minister's behaviour.
 - b. to report a recent event.
 - c. to promote intercultural awareness.
 - d. to explain differences in British and Chinese traditions.
2. Why did the British minister feel embarrassed?
 - a. She was offended by Mr Ko's reaction.
 - b. She realised she had made a cultural faux pas.
 - c. She was annoyed at what happened.
 - d. None of the alternatives is correct.
3. Why is giving someone a watch in China considered a breach of etiquette?
 - a. Because the Chinese do not value time like the British.
 - b. Because 'giving a clock' and 'attending an old person's funeral' are homophones.
 - c. Because the words 'giving a clock' sound like something that Chinese do not talk about.
 - d. None of the alternatives is correct.
4. What reaction have other Taiwanese politicians had to the incident?
 - a. They thought that the British minister behaved badly.
 - b. They thought that Mr Ko's response was witty.
 - c. They thought that Mr Ko behaved badly.
 - d. None of the alternatives is correct.
5. Which statement is true?
 - a. The article implies that both the British minister and the mayor of Taipei lack intercultural awareness.
 - b. The article claims that the Taiwanese government is more aware of the need for intercultural tolerance than the British government.
 - c. The article argues that the Taiwanese government is less willing to acknowledge intercultural differences than the British government.
 - d. The article suggests that the British government retains a colonial attitude toward their relations with Taiwan.
6. What is Mr Ko's reputation?
 - a. He often says inappropriate things.
 - b. He has streamlined bureaucracy and battled corruption.
 - c. He is less popular with his supporters.
 - d. He is a better doctor than politician.
7. What is the register of the text?
 - a. Objective.
 - b. Subjective.
 - c. Abstract.
 - d. Formal.
8. Which statement best summarises the article?
 - a. Politicians should research the cultural norms of the country of the people with whom they are going to interact.
 - b. A British minister and the mayor of Taiwan have both proved that they have little intercultural awareness.
 - c. The gift of a watch from a British minister to the mayor of Taiwan has prompted an international incident.
 - d. A British minister's gift of a watch to the mayor of Taiwan and his reaction that he might sell it to a scrap dealer reflect a lack of intercultural awareness on both sides.

Reference, Substitution and Ellipsis

What do the following expressions, which are highlighted in the text, refer to? I.e. what is their specific meaning in this particular text? (0.35 points each)

9. a taboo act (line 2)

10. him (line 2)

11. the remark (line 5)

12. his perceived rudeness (line 14-15)

13. such gaffes (line 33)

C. Vocabulary (1.95 points)

The following sentences were taken from English language newspapers. Complete each space with a suitable word or expression. The first letter(s) and a paraphrase of the meaning are given. You will need to put verbs in the right tense. You might need to add a preposition. (0.39 points each)

1. The IPPR think tank argues that bus **d**..... has failed because outsider London bus passenger journeys have fallen and fares are rising faster than inflation. (the process of removing or reducing state regulations)

.....

2. The New Zealand government **f**..... 25 criminal **c**..... over health and safety violations at the Peak River mine, where an explosion killed 29 miners last year. (has formally accused [someone] of criminally breaking the law)

.....

3. Gordon Brown: Liberty, tolerance and fair play – these are the **c**..... **v**..... of Britishness. (guiding principles that dictate behaviour and action)

.....

4. After being made redundant by the cruise ship company, I arrived back in my home city of Bristol with a £5,000 **g**..... **h**..... and no idea about what I wanted to do. (sum of money paid to a person on losing his or her job through firing, restructuring, or even scheduled retirement)

.....

5. International student **r**..... is complex, costly and competitive. (the process of finding and hiring the best-qualified candidate)

.....

Answers

A. Writing (13.5 points)

A good answer will describe and interpret the cartoon, then discuss its relevance to global recruitment. Possible content includes:

- The man on the left represents global employers. The people seated on the right represent candidates. The relative size of the figures symbolises the importance and power of the roles.
- The cartoon shows a recruiter interviewing American candidates for possible overseas postings with global employers. He is looking for someone who can speak a foreign language, but none of the candidates even know what a foreign language is.
- The cartoonist implies that young Americans are ill equipped to work in the global labour market because they lack an international perspective; they only speak ‘American’. Furthermore, the candidates also seem to lack intercultural sensitivity.
- Companies and therefore recruitment today are global; workers can expect not to work in their home country. For this reason intercultural awareness is essential for employees who will be working globally.
- Speaking a foreign language can give an applicant a competitive advantage.
- Americans should no longer expect that other cultures will conform to American cultural patterns, ways of working.
- Knowledge of a foreign language can promote intercultural awareness.
- Lack of intercultural awareness can lead to problems in the workplace. This can jeopardize the success of a company or a project.
- Examples from the multicultural team projects that we looked at in class.

The text will be clearly structured and free of major errors, showing logical information flow, command of complex structures and a wide range of vocabulary and structures appropriate to the purposes of the text.

B. Comprehension (0.35 points each)

1. B; 2. B; 3. C; 4. C; 5. A; 6. A; 7. A; 8. D.

9.	a taboo act (line 2)	Giving someone a watch or clock
10.	him (line 2))	The mayor of Taipei
11.	the remark (line 5)	That he [Mr Ko] would sell the watch to a scrap dealer
12.	his perceived rudeness (line 14-15)	Having responded to the British minister with the remark that he would sell the watch to a scrap dealer because he had no use for it
13.	such gaffes (line 33)	Mr Ko’s saying that he might sell the watch to a scrap dealer and describing a political candidate as young and pretty and just fit to sit behind a department store counter.

A. Vocabulary

1. **deregulation**
2. **has filed 25 criminal charges**
3. **core values**
4. **golden handshake**
5. **recruitment**