

## Eiken P1 Speaking Exercise 2017-3

### 1. **Is climate change the biggest threat facing humankind?**

I believe climate change caused mainly by global warming is now the biggest threat to humankind. Let me explain by giving three reasons. First, because of climate change, the polar icecaps and the world's glaciers are rapidly melting. This is raising the level of the oceans and many of the world's coastlines will be immersed. The melting is also causing a loss of much of the world's freshwater, which is already in short supply. The second reason is that global warming is causing an increase in heatwaves, droughts, storms, floods, and other disasters that have killed thousands of people around the world as well as threaten the food supply through loss of crops and crops in fish populations. The third reason, as I have read, is that once global warming reaches a certain stage, there is no turning back. This is a complex geological issue called the tipping point. For example, global warming has melted the permafrost in the soil of huge areas of the world. This has, in turn, released huge amounts of methane gases into the atmosphere, which increases the speed of global warming and creates a dangerous, unstoppable cycle. Because global warming may cause humans to become extinct, world governments must take it more seriously and reverse this threat immediately.

### 2. **Is single-sex education a good thing in a modern society?**

In this age of gender equality, single-sex education may seem old-fashioned, but there are many good points to that even modern societies. I have three reasons why I believe this. First, student can concentrate on their school life without the distractions of the opposite gender. They are free from gender stereotyping that forces them to behave in certain ways. They can establish their personal identity without thinking about how they should behave in light of gender differences. Second, education can be specially designed for students of the same sex. Experienced teachers know how to create or choose education approaches that better suit boys or girls. They accommodate the best learning styles accordingly. The third reason, which is related to the first is that freedom from gender stereotyping often means students can perform better. Girls don't feel pressure from having to compete with boys in subjects in which boys often excel, and vice versa. In all-female schools, girls may score better on math and science tests than boys do. And boys in all-male schools are more likely to participate in classes often considered girls' subjects, such as home economics and classical music. While I don't believe all children should attend single-sex schools, I do feel they are essential options and play an important role in society today.

### 3. **Does the mass media shape public opinion or reflect it?**

The mass media has long shaped public opinion. However, I believe that the media today has become too powerful in shaping public opinion. Let me explain. First, the media has intruded into much of our lives. We spend more time on our smartphones and computers than ever before. We are flooded by new information and opinions which shape our thinking and values. Second, the media compete for our attention with other media sources, so it often resorts to sensational stories or extreme opinions to catch our interest. People tend to turn sources that reinforce their values, but the media often pushes these beliefs to extremes. As a result, in terms of politics, the public has moved even more toward the left or the right, with fewer people in the middle who can see the merits and problems of both sides. Third, the media has had a huge effect on the minds of young people. Young people are easily influenced by what they see on television and the Internet and sometimes mimic what they see, including even violent or immoral behavior. For these reasons, I believe that the mass media now shapes public opinion too much and harms our social harmony.

#### 4. **Can people have strong moral values without religion?**

I strongly believe that people can develop clear moral values without religion. I'll present three arguments to support my belief. Firstly, we can see here in Japan today that religious people or institutions have less influence than in the past, but most people still have strong moral values. On the contrary, there are many religious people around the world, including even priests who have acted immorally, as we can now see in the scandals involving the Catholic Church. Being religious and being moral are two different things. Secondly, morality instils can be viewed in different ways. Certain religions may teach that certain behaviors are moral, such as restricting women to their homes and preventing them from gaining positions of power. Such beliefs are no longer considered moral or even acceptable in advanced secular societies. Finally, moral values today can be based on our justice system. It teaches us the consequences of immoral and illegal acts. By observing the legal system, we behave in a morally right way without any influence from religion. For these three reasons, I believe that people no longer need to be religious to have strong moral values.

#### 5. **Agree or disagree: Japanese companies would benefit from having more women in leadership roles**

Japan has one of the lowest percentages of female corporate leaders in the world. However, I feel that Japanese companies would benefit from having more female leaders. I'd like to offer three ways that female leadership could help Japanese companies. First, due to the rapid aging of the society, we simply don't have enough good candidates for leadership positions. It doesn't make sense to ignore women when we need to have a larger pool of qualified people to choose from. Companies need to recognize that they may have already been employing capable females who could become great leaders. Second, women are ideal for leading other women. As women potentially make up half the Japanese workforce, companies need more opportunities for leadership positions. Female leaders understand women's work-related issues, and can be role models and mentors. Overall, that would increase motivation and productivity. Third, women in leadership positions can introduce fresh thinking in corporations. Many women have original ideas due to their unique experience. Their ideas may lead to better products and services. The fresh perspective and the diversity of thinking that women can offer will lead us to a brighter future.