

Eiken P1 Speaking Exercise 2018-2

1. **Is society taking the issue of fake news seriously enough?**

I do not believe that society is taking the issue of fake news seriously enough. Let me explain. First, fake news spreads rapidly these days thanks to the Internet and mass media. False stories, rumors, and conspiracy theories reach huge audiences fast, sometimes faster than real news. Since people are often too busy to check the accuracy of such stories, they often believe them. Online platforms need to be more responsible about posting stories that are nothing more than lies and rumors. Second, politics in some countries has gotten nastier these days, and some politicians use fake news to attack their opposition. These public servants have been irresponsible about their use of fake news. Moreover, some politicians label any news critical to them “fake news”, which further confuses the public and spreads false ideas. Third, some countries use fake news as a way to attack and harm other countries. They post false articles online to create anger and confusion, which sometimes may even affect the outcome of elections in democratic countries. Since it’s difficult to check the source of these news articles, these countries often get away with creating false news. For these reasons, I believe societies need to take the issue of fake news more seriously.

2. **Can humanity overcome its violent tendencies?**

I believe that humans can overcome their violent tendencies and create more peaceful societies. Let me provide three reasons for my belief. First, we only need to look at history to show that past societies were much more violent. This means we’ve already made great progress in controlling our violent tendencies. Wars within Japan were common in earlier centuries. The medieval ages of Europe were extremely violent. Second, globalization has helped humans become more peaceful. The United Nations is just one of many global organizations that work to solve disputes and maintain peace. The spread of trade agreements has brought about economic growth and opportunity, increasing the desire for peace. In order to maintain this order we’ve created, we need to continue building relationships internationally. Finally, education opportunities are increasing around the world. Through education, people learn to strengthen their self-control, their empathy, and their reasoning. For example, there are programs designed for older generation to share their experiences with the younger generation about topics such as World War II. For the reasons I’ve stated, I believe that humans are learning to overcome their violent tendencies.

3. **Does there need to be stricter government regulation of the Internet?**

Though I’m basically against government censorship and support free expression, I do feel stricter regulation of the Internet is necessary. Let me explain my reasoning. First, some people think that government regulation takes away our privacy, but in reality, our privacy is threatened without certain kinds of regulations. Companies and other have free access to so much personal information about us, including facts that we’d choose to remain private. There should be strict regulations about how our private information is shared and with whom it’s shared. Second, children should be protected against viewing certain sites, including adult-oriented sites. Such protections are already in place for TV and other media in the US, and the Internet need to include these protections as well. Finally, the Internet has become a powerful tool for criminal activity. It has been used for credit-card and bank fraud, financial scams, and spreading terrorism and racism. Predators have found greater access to children and other defenseless people. The number of crimes has skyrocketed due to the easy access provided by the Internet. The government needs to find ways to reduce the number of these crimes through regulation and enforcement. For these reasons, I believe stricter government regulations of the Internet is important for society’s protection.

4. Agree or disagree: The poorest in society benefit the least from economic development

There is a common myth that economic development fails to benefit the poorest in society, but I believe the opposite is true. Economic development benefits all people, and especially the poor, in the long run. Let me explain the reasons. Firstly, when a country's GDP is growing, it means business make more money and hire more workers. This causes unemployment to drop. With more people working and making money, domestic spending increases creating even more work opportunities. Secondly, as an economy develops, tax revenue increases, so there is more money for things such as highways, educational institutions, and medical facilities. In this way, poorer people can gain better access to the benefits of good infrastructure. Finally, we can see that extreme poverty has been greatly reduced around the world in the last 50 years. For example, the economic development of China and other Asian nations has increased the standards of living for all their citizens. With enough development, these countries are doing their best to help farmers and the rural poor, who are often the last to benefit from economic development. For these reasons, I believe economic development is actually the best way for the poor to escape from poverty.

5. Can history education be free from bias?

I do not believe history education can ever be free from bias. Let me explain. First, it's not possible for any history book or teacher to cover all of history, which means only certain persons and events can be covered. Moreover, much of history is lost, forgotten, or simply ignored. The important points of history covered in books or the classroom are selected according to the writer's or teacher's worldview. Second, there is a quotation that expresses another common bias, which is: "History is written by the victors." The winner so fwards and the major world powers have the greatest influence on how such thing as war are recorded. Yet, even the losers of wars may create their own version of the events. Textbook accounts of a war are different according to the country, often showing their own nation in a more positive light. Finally, individuals naturally view past events differently. Let's consider the case of witnesses to a crime. Even if a lot of people witness the same crime, they can only see and hear what happened from their perspectives. When you take something as complex as world events and leaders, accounts will normally be different according to the person telling the story. For these reasons, I feel that historians should disclose the natural limitations and biases of their historical accounts.