

Eiken P1 Speaking Exercise 2010-3

1. Should contemporary politics be taught in schools?

Contemporary politics should be taught in schools. There are three reasons why I believe this. First, the success of a democracy depends on citizens who are educated. Students will one day become voters and they need to understand the issues that confront their nation so that they can make knowledgeable choices. Second, it is important students study things that are relevant to their lives. They should understand that the political decisions being made today affect their current and future lives. Teaching these topics in school could have a positive impact on classrooms as well. Instead of using magazines or attend political meetings open to the public, making their class more dynamic and interactive. They could also debate political topics in class in order to think through issues more deeply and learn to present their arguments clearly and logically. Finally, interest in politics is dropping in Japan, which is not a healthy thing. Teachers should do their best to motivate students to become interested in current political issues. Students must learn that their voices and their votes will be important, and they must be prepared to play their role in society.

2. Should Japan make more efforts to achieve gender equality?

I think Japan needs to make more efforts to achieve true gender equality, especially in the job marketplace. There are three reasons why I believe this to be true. First, many women no longer choose to become homemakers after reaching adulthood. They pursue academic study and careers, instead. Therefore, it is important that they are offered the same opportunities as men, and receive the same salaries for equal work. Second, changing demographics in Japan make the female workforce more important than ever before. Since there are so many aging Japanese, we need an increasing number of young workers to financially support them. Without their help, it will become increasingly difficult to pay for social security and medical care. It's important that women fill the shortages of professional and management positions, as well. Finally, women have become more motivated than in former eras. More women are attaining undergraduate and graduate degrees in universities. Many have studied abroad and attained important skills. It would be a waste to society if their skills are not fully utilized. In conclusion, gender equality is important to both women and society as a whole.

3. Is military strength the most important element of national security?

I do not believe military strength is the most important element of national security, because there are other equally important elements. National security has to be viewed from a wider perspective; it is not simply the ability to fight wars. The first part of national security is the ability of a government to provide for its own people, especially during times of international turmoil. This requires that the government be able to feed its people and provide power, either through domestic production or saving resources for national emergencies. The second part of national security is to maintain positive relationships with

other nations through negotiations and alliances. Effective international relationships and support of such international bodies as the United Nations can help reduce the chances of war. The third part of national security is the maintenance of a nation's military and police. A strong military acts as a deterrent against attack. When there is no other choice, it is a fighting force that protects a nation. Police play an increasingly important role in force that protects a nation. Police play an increasingly important role in national security, for they protect a nation from foreign terrorist attacks. Of course, military strength plays an important role in national security. However, saying that it is the most important element would be to downplay the roles of other equally important elements.

4. Is agriculture becoming too industrialized?

I do not believe that agriculture is becoming too industrialized. There are several important advantages to industrialization, which enables large-scale farming. First, as world population continues to increase, there are many more people to feed. Industrialized farms can more efficiently meet the needs of the growing population. Second, this efficiency brings down the cost of food, allowing poorer people to obtain the food they need to survive. In many countries, people spend a much smaller percentage of their income on food than earlier generations did, and this is a good thing. Third, industrialized farming has decreased the number of farmers. This may seem like a bad thing in some ways, but it means that more people are available to do other kinds of work. This is especially important in Japan, where there is a labor shortage. Industrialized farming is beneficial to a nation as a whole. It can better meet a nation's food needs and it often produces excess food which can be exported abroad, bringing in greater wealth. While there is still a place for smaller farms, industrialized farms have become vital in our modern world. Without them, many people and even many nations would suffer.

5. Agree or disagree: Advertising has a negative influence on society.

While advertising has a positive influence on society in some ways, it certainly has a negative influence as well. I'd like to focus on the negative influence. Firstly, the aim of advertising is to get a person to spend and consume more, which has the effect of making people more materialistic. People never seem to be satisfied these days with what they have. Advertising makes us feel that our happiness depends on buying the newest and trendiest things. As a result, our garbage dumps are filled with items that are still useful, the air is being polluted and our global climate is changing. Secondly, children are particularly vulnerable to advertising. They feel they need to have the toy is somehow tied into the show, or trading cards of favorite characters or a model of a loved superhero. Parents often feel forced to buy more for their children, which begins the child's lifetime cycle of nonstop consumption. Thirdly, advertising floods our world with noisy sales messages, including flyers and brochures in our mailboxes, ads on television, billboards on our highways, and spam in our email boxes. Many people feel they are drowning in a sea of advertising. For these reasons, advertising plays a negative role in society.