

**Eiken Grade 1 2014-3A**

No. 1 Agree or disagree: Classic literature still has a place in the modern classroom

*In this digital age, a time of increasing speed and impatience, many people feel classical literature is no longer relevant in the modern classroom. This makes me feel sad, because I believe it plays a very important role in society. I will give four reasons why I believe this. First, the issues that classical literature raises are timeless—matters such as love, friendship, honesty, duty, faith and freedom. These issues are important for young people to study in terms of shaping their values and ethics. Second, reading classics needs more thought and time than short texts, emails and social messages that students spend so much of their time on. So it can foster thinking ability and perseverance, which are skills so many students now lack. Third, classical literature gives students a chance to understand historical times and foreign cultures through the experience of a character. It does help students gain a broad view of society. Fourth, classical literature also introduces them to different styles of language with a different flow, words, and structure. This can be important for their own language development. For these reasons, I believe that classical literature is as important in the modern classroom as it was in the past.*

No. 2 Is globalization reducing cultural diversity?

*I feel that globalization is reducing cultural diversity, making the world more homogeneous. I will now explain why I feel this way. Thanks to new communication tools and the modern media, globalization has spread around the world rapidly. Consequently, everyone across the globe can see and get exposed to the same Internet and Web sites and therefore, the same information. Under these circumstances and assimilate new ones, which are, in many cases, the dominant ones such as Western cultures. And then others follow suit. This is actually what is happening now, and showing no sign of slowing down. You can see it when you travel abroad. In most countries, you will find a lot of local people eat McDonald's and drink Coca Cola. In shopping malls, you will listen to songs by Michael Jackson or Beyoncé as background music. You can even watch the latest Hollywood movies in many countries. It can be said that, to this level, local cultures have been replaced by Western cultures. In other words, cultural diversity is being lost, as globalization has spread. While globalization offers certain benefits, it is the main cause of the loss of diversity in the world today.*

No. 3      Should the sale of tobacco products be made illegal?

*I think banning tobacco sales would be a mistake for several reasons. First, making tobacco illegal would actually increase crime. In the case of alcohol, crime increased during Prohibition, a period when alcohol was criminalized in the U.S. After it was legalized again, crime rates fell. I believe that a similar pattern would follow if tobacco were to be made illegal. Second, governments often make a profit from the sales of tobacco products. You may think that this is strange or contradictory, but the tax revenue can be used for such things as educating people about the harmful effects of tobacco. Education is actually the main key to reducing tobacco consumption. Third, the government has already passed strict laws about the use of tobacco products, including age restrictions and controls about where cigarettes can be smoked. This lowers the possibility that non-smokers are exposed to secondhand smoke. Lastly, it should not be the government's role to place more and more unnecessary restrictions on its citizens. People should have the right to decide how they want to lead their lives, even though some of their decisions may not be good ones. For these reasons, I believe tobacco products should not be made illegal.*

No. 4      Is modern society too dependent on computers?

*I do not believe that society as a whole is too dependent on computers. However, I do believe that many individuals are overly dependent. Let me explain the difference. Computers have been good for societies everywhere. They have increased efficiency and wealth and brought many jobs. They make access to information much easier and are very useful for educational purposes. Computers are now put into cars and many other products to make them more user-friendly and cost-effective. On top of that, by reducing energy use, they even contribute to the environment. However, it is also clear that many individuals have become too dependent on their computers and smartphones. Some people prefer communicating by computers rather than in person. More and more young people prefer to be on their computers at home, playing games or doing other activities on the Internet, rather than go out and socialize or interact with family members. This has had a bad effect on the development of social skills and has increased feelings of loneliness. So, while computers have been good for society as a whole, we have to learn to use them in the best way and not individually become too dependent on them.*

No. 5      Should celebrities stay out of politics?

*Celebrities should not be made to feel they should stay out of politics. There are several reasons why I believe this. Firstly, there should be no restrictions on what kind of backgrounds politicians should have. It is up to the voters to decide who is qualified and who is not. Secondly, celebrity politicians can increase interest in politics. Take the TV personality who became the governor of Miyazaki, for instance. Many people were interested to see what he would do as the governor and followed him closely.; He often made national news. He also increased tourism to Miyazaki, so he was good for the community's economic health as well. Thirdly, celebrities are often excellent communicators. Politicians need to reach out to citizens, so communication skills are important. Ronald Reagan, an actor, became a successful politician and finally President of the United States. He is known as "the Great Communicator." Finally, and perhaps most importantly, celebrities and other non-professional politicians bring a new way of looking at things and a sense of freshness when they run for office. They are often frank and can relate more easily to common people. And since celebrities are well known, they are well suited for winning elections. That's why I feel that celebrities actually can play an important role for politics.*