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DUNMAN HIGH SCHOOL
Mid-Year Examination 2021
YEAR 4 DHP

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

PAPER 1

Essay

29 April 2021
1 hour 10 minutes

Additional Materials: Writing Paper & Planning Template

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your name, class and register number in the spaces provided and on all the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black ink on both sides of the writing paper.
Do not use staples, correction fluid or correction tape.

Answer **ONE** question.

The **first 10 minutes** of the duration should only be used for essay planning.
You will write your essay within the remaining 1 hour.

The planning template must be submitted together with your essay.

You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.

This document consists of 2 printed pages

[Turn over

[30 marks]

Essay

You are advised to write between 500 and 600 words on one of the following topics.

At the head of your composition, write the number of the topic you have chosen.

1. It is better to follow than to lead. Do you agree?
2. 'Look before you leap.' Is this always good advice?
3. To be successful in Singapore, one has to be well-educated. Do you agree?
4. How has the past shaped the way we live today?

Section A: Narrative Text [15 Marks]

The text below describes a story about a 12-year-old boy who lives with his mother, a popiah seller. Read the text carefully and answer Questions 1 - 8 in the Question Booklet.

- 1 A few days before my mother's birthday, her thirty-sixth, I planned a surprise. From my daily pocket money and the change the stall owners gave me, I saved ten dollars, which I hoped was enough to buy a small cake and a gift. A few months earlier, I had discovered her date of birth from her identification card, which she kept in a plastic case in her wardrobe. This was unexpected though. I stared at the picture, trying to find my mother behind the smiling young girl. She looks very different in the photograph on the card, with long, dark hair tucked behind her ears and a bright, lively spark in her eyes. My mother does not like me going through her things so I had to take great care to put everything back in place. 5
- 2 Once, she caught me rummaging through the drawer of her dresser, where she keeps jewellery, letters and wedding photographs, and caned me. She told me it was wrong to look through other people's belongings and that she did not raise me to be a thief. When I asked her who the man in the photograph was, she brought the cane down on my thighs again, crying hard even as she left long streaks all over my legs. 10 15
- 3 On her birthday, I headed to the neighbourhood bakery, where I realised I could afford only a slice and not a whole cake. I deliberated for some time before choosing her favourite flavour: pandan. I also bought a photo frame with a border of plastic flowers and inserted a photograph of us taken during my birthday trip to Sentosa the year before. In it, she had her arm across my tanned shoulders and was holding a hand above her eyes, shielding them from the sun. I put the cake in the fridge and hid the frame under her pillow. 20
- 4 Then I went to the kopitiam and waited for my mother to finish work. It was dinner time and the place was packed with customers eating while watching the news on a television hanging on the wall. The sticky smell of deep frying and cigarette smoke permeated the air, suffusing the kopitiam with an oppressive warmth. Drink orders flew through the air as servers moved like clockwork from table to table, clearing cups and relaying requests. From a table of beer drinkers, they broke into boisterous laughter, inciting one another with 'Bottoms up!' A short queue had formed in front of Uncle Ben's stall, where he was busy chopping up glistening roasted ducks. My mother saw me and pushed out two orders of popiah, indicating with a nod where to take the plates. Immediately, I served the food and dropped the payment into a large tin can in which my mother kept her money. Without having to ask, I doubled up, serving the popiah and washing plates and chopsticks. It was a flurry of activities as I responded to the constant stream of orders. I had to double up. For the next hour or so I forgot why I was there in the first place. 25 30 35
- 5 When the dinner crowd started to dwindle, and the ingredients ran out, my mother called it a day. I offered to help with the dishes but she shoved a two dollar note in my hand and told me to buy what I wanted. I put the money in my pocket and walked to the edge of the field. The sky was clotted with bruised clouds and speckled with stars. I turned and looked back into the brightness of the kopitiam. My mother was busy behind her stall, cleaning and putting away the cooking utensils, limping as she did so. I liked to observe my mother when she is unconscious of her movements, the rhythms of her body in motion. When she looked around for me, I could feel my body moving in response, taking a step 40 45

forward, towards her. When she was finally done, and the lights above the stall were switched off, I returned to the kopitiam and we walked home together.

- 6 We sauntered through the neighbourhood in the cool breeze, cutting through the outdoor carpark. Near our block of flats, the smelly man came up to us again, barefoot and swearing under his breath. He held out his dirt-streaked hand and stopped us in our tracks. He looked frightened, frightening. My mother dug around in her pocket and dropped a few coins into his hand. The man trundled on, his hand still extended, and resumed his tirade. My mother stared at his retreating shape and sighed. 50 55
- 7 "Do you know what today is?" I asked, hoping to change the mood.
- 8 "Today? It's a Thursday, right?" she said, turning to look at me. Then she continued walking, her limp more pronounced, heavier than usual.
- 9 "Guess, guess. It's a special day, don't you remember?"
- 10 "All I know is it's been a long, tiring day and I can't wait to have a shower and relax. Then we can have our dinner." 60
- 11 When we arrived home, I dragged her to the refrigerator. She found the cake and with a finger, she scraped the whipped cream off the top and tasted it. "It's delicious," she remarked, holding her smile. "Now you can have the rest," she said, passing the slice to me. 65
- 12 Then I took her to her bedroom and told her to search for the second surprise. She laughed, lifted my head, kissed it and went to find her present. She tore off the wrapping, studied the photograph in the frame and put it on her bedside table. Her features dissolved into a softness I had not seen in a long time.
- 13 "Happy birthday, mum," I said. She hugged me and announced that we were going out for a big dinner to celebrate. 70

Section B: Non-Narrative Text [35 Marks]

The article below is about Asian-American parenting. Read the text carefully and answer Questions 9 -16 in the Question Booklet.

- 1 Why do so many Asian-American kids do so well in school? Researchers are zeroing in on one important reason: the unique style of Asian-American parenting. A visit to the University of California's most selective campuses shows how very well Asian-American kids do academically: While Asian Americans constituted 14 percent of the state population, they made up about 40 percent of the freshman class at UCLA and 37 percent of the entering class at University of California, Berkeley. 5
- 2 But it is not just in California, and it is not just in college. The 2000 Census found that 44 percent of Asian Americans had a bachelor's degree, compared with 26 percent of the white population. Their outsize presence in higher education has made their success legend. In 2017, standardised tests administered to U.S. elementary and secondary students, showed that Asian-American students have overtaken white students' scores in reading at the high school senior level, eighth-grade level, and fourth-grade level. 10
- 3 Over the past two decades, a spate of studies has examined the cultural beliefs that shape Asian-American parenting and their effect on kids' learning. One study, for example, found that Asian-American 11th-graders studied six hours more per week than their white peers. Another found that in 2007, more than two-thirds of Asian-American high school students did homework five or more days a week, while only about 40 percent of white and Hispanic kids, and less than a third of African-American students, did so. According to other research, Asian-American kids devote less personal time to chores, part-time jobs and dating than other kids. 15 20
- 4 Behind these differences lie Confucian beliefs. The 5th-century B.C.E. philosopher taught that people should strive their whole lifetime to perfect themselves. Confucian ideas influence most East Asian cultures, particularly Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. In these cultures, this goal of self-improvement still holds sway: while a majority of white college students defined knowledge as facts, information, skill, and understanding of the world, 79 percent of the Chinese college students defined it as "a way to self-perfection" and "spiritual enrichment." 25 30
- 5 Transmitted down through the generations, such veneration of diligence helps account for the widespread Asian belief that when striving for academic success, effort counts more than innate ability. American students of most ethnicities tend to believe the reverse, often arguing that gifted people are so smart they do not have to work as hard as others do. Americans also often think that they are born smart or not — with a fixed intelligence — while Asians more often believe that studying makes a person more intelligent. 35
- 6 Heavily influenced by the Confucian beliefs, both the Chinese and Japanese cultures also embrace the idea that children are like seedlings, and need parental shaping and trimming as they grow. Parents have the common conviction that early habits will dominate. That is why a majority of Asian-American parents teach their pre-schoolers basic reading, writing and math, hoping also to imbue them 40

- with perseverance, concentration and focus. In contrast, only a minority of whites taught their pre-schoolers those basic skills. 45
- 7 Confucius also placed importance on how people should fulfil the responsibilities based on their hierarchical roles. This belief influences Asian parents to view that educating their children well is their top responsibility. Children in turn succeed in school as a way to honour their family.
 - 8 Chinese parents carry out their parental responsibility by relying on the notion of guan — which literally means "to control" — but also denotes "to care for". Due to this belief, Chinese parents focus on managing various aspects of their children's lives. At the same time, they look after their children's welfare. By doing so, Chinese parents hope that it will translate to their children getting a good education. After all, Asian efficacy in parenting is judged by how well their children do in school. 50
55
 - 9 Such cultural beliefs and responsibilities lend Asian-American parents' involvement in their children's education a particular style. In a study that compared the practices of immigrant Chinese and white parents of first-, second- and third-graders from four Los Angeles school districts, Chinese parents spent more time on creating an educational environment for their children. They gave their kids a place to study, as well as extra homework, books and computer programmes, and took them to music lessons and Saturday language and culture school while white parents tended to emphasise hands-on supervision — checking up on homework, attending school meetings and watching their kids in extracurricular activities. 60
65
 - 10 By high school, many Asian-American parents expect that their children will know how to organise themselves and study on their own. Practically, this means that Asian-American children are trusted to organise their own schedules, are responsible for keeping up with their school work while juggling extra-curricular activities, and are still expected to excel academically. They are expected to exercise a measure of maturity in preparation for the real world challenges of higher education and work. 70
 - 11 Asian-American parents also gave their high school kids far more indirect support at home than did their white counterparts. They focus more on college planning and preparation, like sending their children to attend courses that prepare them for college admissions, and save more money for college. Such indirect support is also demonstrated in the way Asian-American parents endeavour to make the home a conducive place for learning, and through consistent acts of love and care such as preparing nutritious soups and tonic drinks that invigorate the body. 75
80
 - 12 Even low-income Asian-American families provide a great deal of indirect, out-of-school support, as found by a study of ninth-graders whose Chinese immigrant parents worked as cooks, custodians, shelf stockers and nursing home aides. While few of these parents checked their children's homework or attended school meetings, they networked with co-workers and other parents, and relied on an older sibling or another relative for tutoring and academic advice. The parents also talked up role models, which gave their kids a sense of confidence rather than creating jealousy or competitiveness. Furthermore, these low-income parents expected relatives to join in exercising guan. "Be good in school," one high-achieving boy said his grandmother and uncles often urged him. "Don't do anything stupid, do all your homework." 85
90

Section A [15 marks]

Refer to the text on pages 2 - 3 of the Insert for Questions 1 - 8.

You are recommended to answer the questions in the order set.

Mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar may be penalised in any part of the paper.

NOTE: When a question asks you to answer in your own words, YOU MUST NOT COPY THE WORDS IN THE PASSAGE IN THE ANSWER.

- 1 "My mother does not like me going through her things." (lines 8-9).

What does this detail suggest about the mother's personality? [1m]

..... [1]

- 2 In paragraph 2, explain **fully** why the narrator's mother cried.

.....

 [2]

- 3 In paragraph 4, which two words have the same meaning as pervade?

..... [1]

- 4 In paragraph 4, the narrator describes his observations at the kopitiam.

Explain how the language used in this paragraph emphasises the bustling atmosphere at the kopitiam. Support your ideas with **two** details from the paragraph.

.....

 [2]

- 5 What is unusual and effective about the expression "the sky was clotted with bruised clouds" (line 41)?

It is unusual because
..... [1]

It is effective because
..... [1]

- 6 Why is the man described as "frightened, frightening" (line 52)?

.....
.....
.....
..... [2]

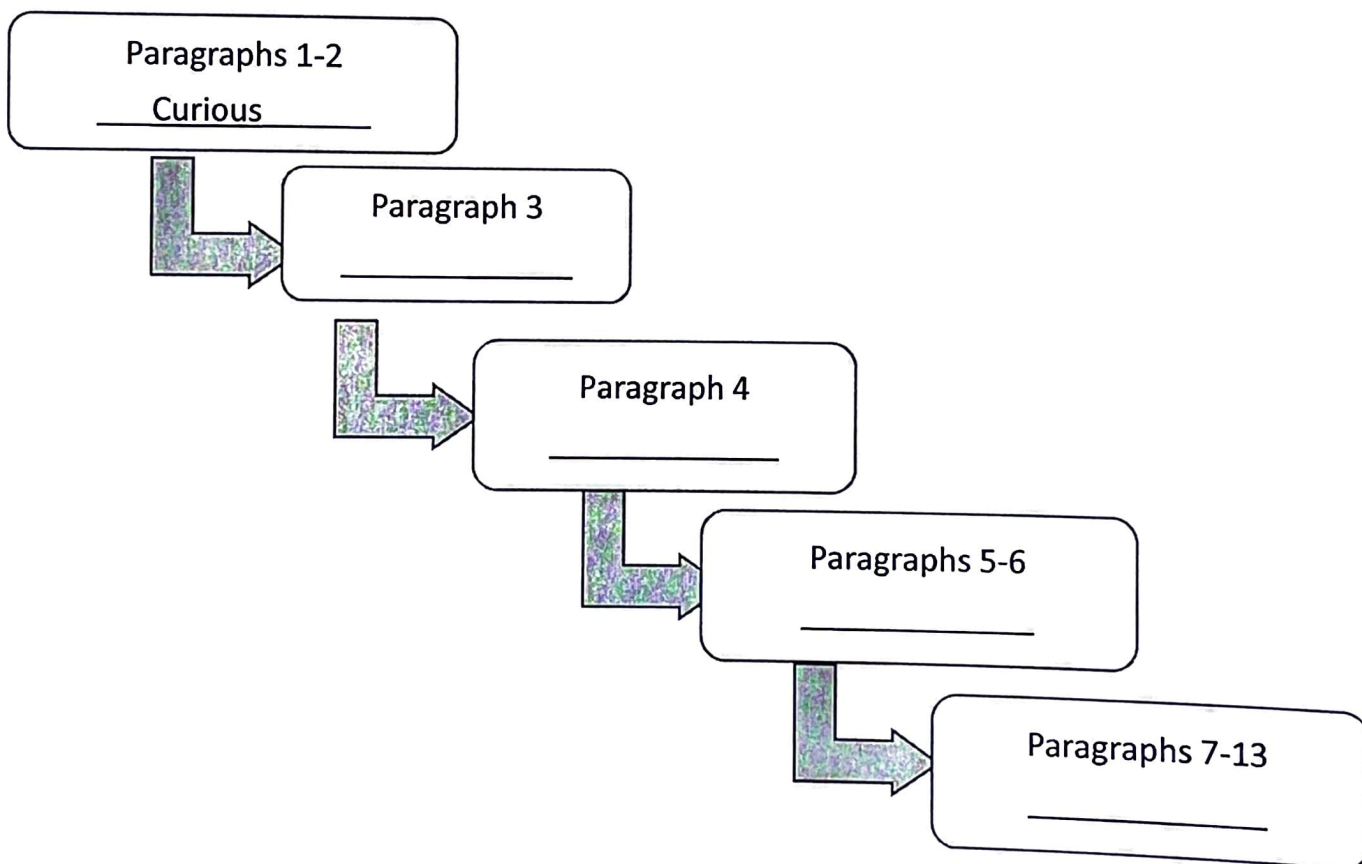
- 7 From paragraph 12, why do you think the mother softened when she received the photograph?

.....
..... [1]

- 8 The structure of the text reflects the narrator's characteristics as shown from his life with his mother. Complete the flow chart by choosing one phrase to summarise his main characteristic presented in each part of the text. There are some extra words you do not need to use.

Narrator's characteristics

Dutiful	Observant	Concerned
Calm	Sensitive	Cautious
	Loving	



Section B [35 marks]

Refer to the non-narrative text on pages 4 - 5 of the Insert for Questions 9 - 16.

- 9 In your own words, state the reason why "so many Asian-American kids do so well in school" (line 1) according to researchers.

.....

.....

..... [2]

- 10 Explain fully how paragraph 1 demonstrates that Asian-American kids do very well academically?

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

- 11 Which word in paragraph 2 has the same meaning as 'famed'?

..... [1]

- 12 State two ways in which Asian-American parenting affects the way Asian-American kids spend their time as shown in paragraph 3.

.....

.....

..... [2]

- 13 According to paragraph 4, what did Confucius teach people to do? Answer in your own words.

.....

.....

..... [2]

- 14 What does "it" (line 30) refer to?

..... [1]

15

USE THE MATERIAL FROM PARAGRAPHS 5 – 8.

Your summary must be in continuous writing (not in note form). It must not be longer than **80 words** (not counting the words given to help you begin).

The impact of Confucian beliefs on Asian cultures is evident in.....

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

No of Words: _____

Content:	/8
Language:	/7
Total:	/15

Ex

You should provide a balanced response.

[illegible]