

15. Would you prefer to have an expensive and ostentatious wedding with lots of guests or a simple and quiet one ?

My wedding day is the most important day of my life. I would prefer it to be spent with close friends and family rather than a room full of strangers. I want to be surrounded by the few people who know me and my spouse intimately. I want to have (feel) all the love and support that only this group can give me.

On the other hand, there are some who like to have huge, extravagant parties to celebrate their wedding day. I feel this is a waste of money. I'm not getting married to impress anyone but to enter a very solemn commitment to another person. The actual wedding is a marriage of families with close friends as witnesses. I feel that an expensive and ostentatious wedding will diminish the importance of that special day. It would seem more impersonal than a small wedding.

In summary, I feel that having a small, quiet, but intimate wedding brings all participants closer together. Bonds are made and love and joy are shared. It's not necessary for me to show off, trying to impress a large crowd and as a result, I'll begin my new life with my spouse in debt. As the proverb says, "Enough is as good as feast"

(adj) impersonal = not showing or involving human feelings = không biểu lộ hoặc thấm đượm tình người.

Enough is as good as feast = thích chí hơn phú quý (vui vẻ hơn là phô trương sự giàu có)

TOPICS FOR WRITTEN A & B & C LEVEL EXAMS (Các đề thi viết các chứng chỉ quốc gia A&B&C)

1. Language Learning

To really understand a culture, you must speak the language. It is not only the foundation of communication, but also the basis of social hierarchy, protocol and humor. You can learn much of how people relate to each other, by knowing the way(s) in which they speak to one another. By understanding the language, you can understand behavior. Through knowing the language, you can comprehend the national sense of humor. The first thing to do, when acquiring a new language, is to listen to it. Let the sounds flow over you, even if you don't understand any of the words. Before I studied a language, I listened to others talking, watched local T.V. shows and listened to music presented in that language. When I began my lessons, I already had a sense of what the language sounded like, and it was not so completely foreign to me.

It is very important to use the language as often as you can. «Use it or lose it», as the experts say. Even saying the simplest phrases over and over helps you to absorb new phrases you will learn in the future. The learning process should be in a spiral direction, always beginning from a solid base of vocabulary and grammar that you have already accomplished.

Learning a language shows initiative, diligence and intelligence.

Apart from that, learning a new language can be fun. You meet new friends and together you tackle what first seems insurmountable, and yet, little by little you begin to understand, speak, learn and communicate. It can give you a real sense of accomplishment

To tackle = gắng sức làm
cố gắng khắc phục

There is a trend, all over the world, to learn English. It seems that English has become the international language of business. Most leading countries in the world speak English, or have English as a recognized second language. You can open up many doors, if you master this language.

In closing, learning a new language will always be helpful. I can well imagine an employer saying, "Well, we'd like to hire this person because he speaks three languages instead of just one !"

(Conj) yet = tuy vậy, nhưng

2. Habits

Everyone has habits; some good and some bad. When people are nervous, they display some of the strangest habits. I have several male friends who will sit and move their knees rapidly up and down, when they are in a stressful situation. On the other hand, I've witnessed many female friends play with their hair. Some people chew their fingernails, while others will constantly play with an object in their hand such as an eraser, pen, etc. These habits can be very distracting to the listener, yet the speaker rarely is aware of what he or she is doing.

How do you begin your day ? Do you do the same thing every morning ? Morning habits are different for each person, but generally most would agree that if you have a good morning routine, you will begin your day on a positive note. In my case, it is very important to have a lot of time in the morning. I like to take a shower, listen to the news or read the paper and leisurely plan my day, while having coffee and a light breakfast. When I have to rush in the morning, my whole day seems to be out of order

Successful students are the ones who have developed good study habits. They will set aside a period of time every day to review

their notes, practice a lesson and finish their homework. The successful worker is one who is punctual, organizes time properly, in order to be most productive. He always stays at work until he meets his daily goals.

Having positive habits in our work, study and social life can prompt us to be productive, pleasant and successful individuals.

(N) note = sign, hint = dấu hiệu, sự ám chỉ

(adj) positive = tích cực, xây dựng.

3. Hobbies:

Hobbies are those things that we can indulge ourselves in and not feel guilty about wasting time. Hobbies can help us to relax. They also further stimulate our creative and intellectual growth. Hobbies can be a solitary venture or ones that involve others. My father has combined the two types. He grows flowers at home. He is also an active member in our community's horticultural society. He enjoys learning about new strains of plants, how to grow them and under what circumstances it's best for them to thrive. The horticultural society gives him an opportunity to share his hobby with others with a common interest. A month or two before Spring arrives, our house is full of seedlings. Every shelf, every extra space is used for beginning of new flowers, which will be transplanted when the winters frost no longer is a threat. My father waters and monitors his little newly-born flowers. As we have a large garden, my father's hobby is a monumental task. He has a lot of work ahead of him in the early Spring when he begins to transplant all the new flowering (flowery) plants.

Hobbies are an enjoyable activity that helps make us well-rounded humans.

(N) horticulture: công việc làm vườn; (adj) horticultural: thuộc công việc làm vườn

(N) flower: hoa, bông, cây có hoa

(Compound Noun) flowering plant: cây nở hoa; flowery plant: cây có nhiều hoa

To monitor: quan sát thường xuyên (theo dõi thường xuyên)

(Compound adj) well-rounded: toàn diện.

4. Vacation

To many, this is the best eight-letter word in the English language. A vacation is always something to look forward to and provides us with a much needed rest from the hard work of our daily lives. It is a breather, a respite, a chance to recuperate and a very necessary part of our life. Many people like to spend their holidays away from home, to have a chance to really relax, ignore the daily task and just enjoy life. A new location can also be stimulating in that you can meet new people, try different foods, and see different scenery. There are others who like to spend their vacation at home, near their family and friends. Perhaps it is a chance for them to catch up on all the gossip, spend time with loved ones, or just catch up on reading.

I have a friend who is a doctor. His favorite way to spend a well-earned vacation is to travel to the countryside and assist at village clinics. He will work 12-14 hour shifts, sharing his expertise with the local medical teams. He is a very dedicated professional, who derives great pleasure from helping others, learning about other cultures and actively challenging himself in his chosen field.

On the other hand, I have a friend who works in the hospitality industry and he talks to and meets people every day. His idea of a

good vacation is to unplug his phone, stock up on a few good recent videos and become a hermit. He will spend his vacation eating all his favorite junk food and watching movies.

My idea of a perfect vacation is to combine the two. I like to have time to myself in order to do all those little chores that pile up over time. I also like to spend time with friends, doing activities that I can never find the time to enjoy during a regular work week.

Whether your vacation is an active or inactive one, it still is defined as the same. A vacation is a time to do whatever you like and we each choose many different ways to spend our vacations, depending on our tastes, likes and interests.

(N) breather: respite: lúc nghỉ ngơi

(Compound adj Adv + PP) well-earned: rewarding, worth while
= hữu ích, xứng đáng.

5. Sports

The idea of sport has been around since the early Greeks, and probably even earlier. The Olympics began as a venue for socializing with neighboring villages and displaying physical endurance and strength of the most athletic citizens. As the Olympics grew, many countries joined in. Generally, a country becomes well-known because of its athletes. For example, Asians are known for their prowess in table tennis, while North Americans are known for their skill in baseball. Competition is a healthy activity whether it is against your own individual limits, another individual or a group.

Many people engage in some type of physical activity. Some prefer contact sports, such as rugby, soccer and hockey, while others prefer non-contact sport such as swimming, badminton and tennis.

Whatever your preference, participating in sports prolongs life, builds strength and endurance and helps ease stress.

(N) Venue: nơi hội họp

To be around: to be available: có sẵn, hiện hữu

(N) Prowess: outstanding skill: sự khéo léo, tài giỏi xuất sắc, tuyệt hảo

6. Famous people

Famous people come from all walks of life; from politicians to movie stars, from athletes to gods. Some people are born into fame, such as the British Royal Family. Some people become famous for all the wrong reasons, like Hitler. A person can be famous in his or her own circle of friends or neighborhood, because of a special skill. My next door neighbor, in my hometown, makes the best spring rolls I have ever tasted. Although she is not a millionaire, nor a celebrity all over the country, she is distinguished in our village.

I can't imagine being a famous person. I think it would bring a certain amount of hardship and public responsibility into your life. Everyone would know where you are going, what you are saying and doing, and how you are living. Privacy would be a very difficult thing to attain and it would be very hard to enjoy the simple things in life, like going fishing with your friends. I never want to become too famous because if I were famous, I couldn't maintain my privacy any more.

7. Friendship

Perhaps one of the most important things in life is to have good, lasting friendships. Friends make life interesting and so much fun. They make us laugh; they make us think. They provide opportunities to do things that we cannot do alone. They help us to

find new interests. They give us support and help when we need. They provide us with the companionship to make us happy.

“The only way to get a friend is to be one”, said Ralph Waldo Emerson. We must improve our fundamental selves if we are to have good friends. In order to do so, we have to understand our limitations, expand our intelligence, pursue interests and be at peace with ourselves. Only when we love ourselves, can we then begin to love others. We can give our friends support when necessary, encourage them, and make them feel important. We can do this because we have a strong sense of self. Doing things out of love and respect for a friend make us worthy of the trust and support they return to us. Then they will, in turn, feel they have some responsibility, respect and trust toward us.

In conclusion, friendships are important and they grow from common interests, from doing things together, for one another and from sharing thoughts, feelings and confidences.

(prep) out of: do, vì bởi

to be to + Inf = có ý định hoặc mục đích làm gì

8. Love

có nhiệm vụ phải làm gì

There are so many things in this world to love ! From delicious, rich chocolate to good music; from a beautiful sunset to a new wardrobe. Generally, though, when we talk of love we refer to that love between humans. There are various forms of this type of love, too. The love of a mother to her children is very different from the love between two sweethearts. Sometimes love can be one-sided, such as a fan to their idol. Sometimes a person can really love another, yet reciprocation may not occur. This can be very frustrating.

As we grow older, I believe our concept of love changes and matures. There is a big difference between the “puppy love” of a young school aged child and the adult, intellectual love of a grown up.

school-aged child = đức bé ở tuổi học trò

People talk of "love at first sight". Yet, I think the term would be more true if it was "attraction at first sight". I believe true love takes time to develop and happens over a lengthy period of time, getting to really know and understand each other. Sometimes we see a person in a room and an attraction begins. Is it a chemical reaction in our body ? So say some scientists. Is it the other person's appearance, stance, way of speaking and body language compelling them to us ? So say the psychologists.

Whatever the reasons, there is always the chance that love may follow and the only way to really find out love is to be the first to say "hello".

(N) Stance: *dáng đứng, dáng dấp*; to mature: *chín mùi, thành thục, chín chắn*.

10. Spare time

"It is impossible to enjoy doing nothing if one does not have a lot to do". Jerome K. Jerome makes a good argument ! If we have too much spare time, we become bored easily and are boring people. If we can take a moment for ourselves in our busy schedules and truly enjoy it, we can continue back into our routine feeling refreshed and rejuvenated.

Many people fill their days with so many activities that they have no free time. This makes for a hectic and unfulfilling life. A person will feel he / she is on a treadmill and begin to "burn-out". These are the people who complain there is never enough time in the day. They keep going around and around in circles.

On the other hand, a positive and productive person knows the value of taking a few moments throughout the day to relax, go for a short walk, or sit in the park for a few moments. In our school there are fifteen-minute breaks between

love at first sight = tình yêu bộc phát ngay lúc mới gặp nhau lần đầu

classes and it gives everyone a chance to prepare for their next lesson, have a cup of tea or just chat with colleagues. It is important for us all to make spare time for ourselves, whether it is a one-hour nap in the middle of the day or a half-hour talking with your family during meal times. We all need spare time for a chance to rest, reflect and invigorate ourselves.

To invigorate: to refresh: bồi bổ cho có thêm nghị lực và sức khỏe.

To be on a treadmill: làm công việc mệt nhọc và buồn tẻ.

To burn out: kiệt sức.

hectic life = cuộc sống quá bận rộn và gò bó

unfulfilling life = cuộc sống không trọn vẹn

11. Superstitions

What do you do when a black cat crosses your path ? In some cultures, this action is simply ignored, while in others a person will spin around 3 times to remove any bad luck that may develop.

Some people are more superstitious than others, but even the hardened non-believer has some kind of superstition (they just won't tell you about it). Many of us are afraid to talk about a future event, such as a new job or opportunity, because we fear that talking about it will lessen the chance of the occasion to occur.

There are many interesting superstitions from around the world. In Japan, if you see a hearse go by, you must cover your thumbs so that someone close to you will not die. In Vietnam, seeing a funeral brings good luck. In Christian countries, people will make the sign of the cross and pray for the soul of the departed.

It is difficult to trace the origins of many superstitions, yet we will continue to believe in them. In North America, if you spill salt, you must take some and throw it over your left shoulder. When I see people doing this, I ask them why. Usually, they don't remember