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**HKEAA delivers the first HKDSE LS Practice Paper**  
**Modern Education LS Tutor comments:**  
**“Questions are set at an appropriate level”**

(Hong Kong, 6 January 2012) Liberal Studies (LS) became one of the compulsory subjects under the new secondary education syllabus, and it has been a controversial topic that has received an enormous amount of attention. The objective of LS education is to nurture students’ international vision and to enhance students’ critical thinking. As a compulsory subject in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE), LS has become one of the most important subjects in future Hong Kong education. Today, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) delivered the first HKDSE LS Practice Paper since the announcement of the HKDSE. **Dr. Costa Chan, LS tutor of Modern Education**, who has years of experience in teaching LS, expressed her view, “As the first HKDSE LS practice paper, the level of difficulty is appropriate and its difficulty level is similar to past LS exam papers in the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination.”

The exam is divided into two parts – Paper I and Paper II, with altogether 6 questions. Paper I is categorized as “comprehensive”, which accounts for 50% of the total. Examinees must answer all three questions in 2 hours. Questions in this part may relate to some social issues, such as “Post-80s” and “Maximum working hours”. Paper II falls into the “elaborative” category, which accounts for 30% of the total. Examinees ought to choose one question from the three questions given, and answer the chosen question within 1 hour and 15 minutes. Questions in this part are more in-depth, which test students’ ability in critical thinking via different examples, such as “How etiquettes in male-female relationships reflect Gender Stereotypes in society”, “Racism towards minority groups and Racial Harmony”, etc.

Below is **Dr. Costa’s analysis** based on the first HKDSE LS practice paper:

	Question	Familiarity	Difficulty	COSTA’S TIPS & Analysis
Paper I	Q1: About “Food safety”	High	Moderate	<u>Analysis:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students would be familiar with the “food safety” topic related to rice (as a popular social issue this month) if they have studied the 2008 practice paper which had a question on food safety connected to pesticides-infected vegetables.</li> <li>Students who have studied “the negative</li> </ul>

				<p>impacts on Hong Kong people from their usage of electricity” from the HKAEE question in 2010 will find it easier to answer how pesticides affect people’s living quality.</p>
				<p><u>TIPS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student must get themselves familiar with all topics of discussion in the sample papers. There are approximately 15 major categories altogether.</li> <li>• From this question we see the trend of testing on basic concepts, so students should at least get themselves familiar with concepts such as “Living quality”, “Self-actualization”, “Globalization”, etc.</li> </ul>
	<p>Q2: About “the protest of Hong Kong’s Post-80s”</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Relatively easier</p>	<p><u>Analysis:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since January 2010 (almost throughout the entire learning period for the first batch of HKDSE students), “Protest of the Post-80s” has been a controversial topic, which makes it a popular question for the LS exam.</li> <li>• Cross-topic question, testing students’ ability in applying the characteristics of adolescence’s growing stages in facing the challenges of the current political situation</li> <li>• Also pay attention to the recent hot topic concerning the discussion on legislation of relative issues.</li> </ul> <p><u>TIPS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bear in mind to answer this question in a cross-topic perspective, e.g. “Protest of the Post-80s” involves topics like “Self-actualization” and “Hong Kong Today”, etc.</li> <li>• Some topics of discussion are rather familiar to students for them to get “basic marks”, so students should at least get themselves familiar with the top 10 controversial news from 2009 to 2011 (including international, cross-strait and local news)</li> <li>• Prepare for points of arguments for big news, such as the construction of environmental-friendly/repulsive facilities and etc. Get hold of the conflicts</li> </ul>

				between the parties withholding opposite opinions.
	Q3: About "ideal job" & "maximum working hours"	High	Relatively harder	• N/A
Paper II:	Q1: About "gender stereotypes and cultural preferences"	High	Moderate	• N/A
	Q2: About the "Twelfth Five-Year Plan (12-5) Plan and conflicts arisen from the planning"	Low	Relatively harder	<p><u>Analysis:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many students find topics on modern China unfamiliar and resist the topic. However, students are advised to pay attention to the latest development of modern China, i.e. the "12-5 Plan". Even though this question appears rather unfamiliar to students, it is within expectation that it is included in the practice paper.</li> <li>• This question also involves "conflicts", which many students would just list out the opposite opinions and only a few will be able to discuss the contradictions/conflicts in different views.</li> </ul>
				<p><u>TIPS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since "12-5" is related to the latest development of China, it can be applied to many questions related to modern China. Therefore, DO NOT think that it won't reappear in the actual exam in April.</li> <li>• If the "12-5" revision content seems to be too much for some students, they could focus on the three levels in "sustainability" (e.g. economy, environment, society).</li> </ul>
	Q3: About "Racism and racial harmony"	High	Relatively easier	• N/A

Overall, Dr. Costa believes that the difficulty of this practice paper is moderate, and the questions are set as easy in the beginning then gradually becomes more difficult and complicated, which was within expectation, and would be regarded as appropriate for the level of Secondary 6 students. Some questions are very similar to the sample paper in 2010, which are relatively easier, so students should feel rather familiar when they come across the practice paper. One of the questions in the practice

paper is about the “Twelfth Five-Year Plan” in modern China, which is a topic Dr. Costa often reminds her students to pay attention to. However, since some day schools have already completed the modern China course a year ago, many students never encountered this topic and would rather choose to answer other questions.

In Dr. Costa’s opinion, she believes that whilst dealing with Paper 2, students should choose topics that are more familiar to them and those that are more popular, and give an in-depth analysis with the answering techniques they’ve learnt in class; it would be rather hard for them to compete with other examinees if their answers are superficial. Nonetheless, if students are confident about their knowledge on less popular topics, and with the appropriate application of key concepts in a well-structured essay, choosing less popular topics would give them an opportunity to present themselves and acquire higher marks. Lastly, Dr. Costa would like to remind students that LS in HKDSE will test and see if students’ answers are in line with social news that is most current. Therefore, when students prepare for the exam, they should pay more attention to the latest current news.

### **About Modern Education Group Limited**

Modern Education is a provider of tutoring services in Hong Kong. The Group offers a wide range of education programmes and services consisting of secondary tutoring services, secondary day school education, English language training and test preparation courses, and other programmes and services.

### **About Dr. Costa Chan**

Dr. Costa Chan is the only Liberal Studies (LS) tutor in Hong Kong to be awarded a doctoral degree in Education for studying into “HKDSE Liberal Studies Examination”. Dr. Costa has enormous experience in teaching LS and she is a renowned icon in LS education. The number of students in Dr. Costa’s HKDSE LS summer courses and conventional courses have been the top in Hong Kong for three consecutive years, and her courses are widely recognized. The distinguished results of Dr. Costa’s students have been a solid proof to her teaching quality. Last year, 77.8% of Dr. Costa’s students acquired “As” in LS in the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination.

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