

PART A Group Interaction

Should AI-generated homework be allowed?

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT have dramatically reshaped educational practices worldwide. Students today frequently use AI applications to complete a variety of tasks, including essays, research assignments, mathematical equations, and even language translations. Proponents of AI in education argue that such tools significantly enhance learning efficiency, personalize educational experiences, and provide instant feedback that traditional methods cannot always achieve. They suggest that AI helps students grasp complex concepts more quickly, freeing up valuable time for other essential skills development and extracurricular activities. Moreover, AI can provide tailored support, addressing the unique learning needs of each student and helping bridge gaps in understanding at an individual level.

Nevertheless, critics voice substantial concerns regarding AI-generated homework. They highlight that reliance on AI could undermine students' academic integrity and discourage genuine engagement with the material. Critics worry that AI reliance stunts the development of critical thinking, analytical skills, and creativity, ultimately compromising the educational process's core objective of fostering independent thought and problem-solving capabilities. Schools worldwide are split, with some banning AI-generated content outright, while others strive to adopt a more balanced, cautious approach that integrates AI responsibly into the curriculum.

Your group is discussing AI-generated homework. You may want to talk about:

- benefits of allowing AI-generated homework
- problems caused by relying on AI for homework
- ways schools can ensure academic integrity
- anything else you think is important

PART B Individual Response

PART A Group Interaction

Is a four-day school week suitable for Hong Kong?

The idea of implementing a four-day school week is gaining popularity around the globe, attracting attention from educators, parents, and policymakers. Supporters argue that reducing the number of school days per week can lead to notable benefits, including increased student productivity, enhanced mental health, and decreased stress levels. Countries such as the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and several regions in the United States have experimented successfully with shorter weeks, reporting improved academic outcomes, happier students, and better work-life balance for families. Proponents believe an extra day off each week allows students to engage in meaningful activities outside traditional education, such as community service, family time, or hobbies.

On the other hand, critics express significant reservations about adopting this practice in Hong Kong, citing the city's intensely competitive educational culture. They fear reduced instructional days might negatively impact academic performance and examination results. Additionally, opponents worry about practical concerns, such as childcare challenges for working parents, disruptions to extracurricular programs, and potential inequities where only some schools or students benefit. To succeed in Hong Kong, significant adjustments to curriculum, instructional methods, and community support systems would be necessary.

Your group will discuss the idea of a four-day school week. You may want to talk about:

- advantages of a shorter school week
- potential negative effects on students and parents
- adjustments schools must make to accommodate this schedule
- anything else you think is important

PART B Individual Response

PART A Group Interaction

Should fast fashion brands be banned in Hong Kong?

Fast fashion refers to the mass production of affordable clothing that responds quickly to changing fashion trends. Brands such as Zara, H&M, and Uniqlo dominate this market by regularly updating their collections, thus driving consumer demand and frequent purchases. While popular among consumers, especially younger demographics, fast fashion has increasingly drawn criticism due to its considerable negative environmental impact. Production methods typically result in high carbon emissions, extensive water pollution, and massive textile waste. Ethical concerns, including poor labor practices and exploitation of factory workers, further intensify criticism.

Supporters of banning fast fashion argue that such measures are necessary to address urgent environmental and social issues. They suggest a ban would encourage consumers to adopt sustainable buying habits, decrease environmental degradation, and prompt businesses to adopt more ethical practices. However, opponents highlight potential economic consequences, such as job losses, decreased retail revenue, and reduced consumer choices, especially affecting lower-income individuals. Instead of a complete ban, critics recommend alternative solutions, such as stronger regulations, consumer education, and incentives for sustainable fashion brands.

Your group will discuss whether Hong Kong should ban fast fashion brands. You may want to talk about:

- environmental benefits of banning fast fashion
- economic and consumer impacts of a ban
- alternative solutions besides an outright ban
- anything else you think is important

PART B Individual Response

PART A Group Interaction

Should Hong Kong adopt a complete ban on plastic?

Plastic pollution has become an urgent global issue. In response, countries worldwide are taking bold steps to eliminate plastic waste entirely. Rwanda, for example, banned plastic bags as early as 2008, drastically improving its environment. Meanwhile, the European Union plans to ban single-use plastics by 2025, aiming to significantly reduce environmental harm.

In Hong Kong, plastic waste continues to escalate, affecting marine life, polluting beaches, and harming public health. With millions of disposable plastic products discarded daily, landfills overflow, and marine ecosystems suffer severely. Advocates of a complete ban on plastic believe that such drastic measures are necessary for meaningful change. They argue that previous efforts, like charging for plastic bags, are insufficient and slow.

However, critics caution against a total ban. They highlight possible economic disruptions, inconveniences to consumers, and challenges in finding suitable alternatives for essential plastic products. They suggest a phased approach, improved recycling systems, or incentivizing biodegradable materials instead of imposing an outright ban. The debate continues: should Hong Kong become the next city to implement a comprehensive plastic ban, or are there better alternatives?

Your group will discuss the idea of banning plastic in Hong Kong. You may want to talk about:

- environmental benefits of a plastic ban
- potential problems and challenges
- practical alternatives to plastic
- anything else you think is important

PART B Individual Response

PART A Group Interaction

Should E-sports be recognized as a legitimate sport in Hong Kong schools?

E-sports, competitive video gaming involving teams or individual players, has rapidly gained popularity worldwide. Major tournaments attract millions of viewers, and many players earn significant incomes from sponsorships and competitions. E-sports requires strategic thinking, teamwork, fast reflexes, and intense concentration—skills that advocates argue are similar to traditional sports. Recognizing E-sports as a legitimate sport in schools could provide opportunities for students less inclined toward physical sports, promoting inclusivity and diversity in school activities.

However, critics challenge the legitimacy of E-sports as a sport, pointing to the lack of physical exertion involved. They worry about negative health effects from prolonged screen time, including vision problems, poor posture, and reduced physical activity. Furthermore, some educators are concerned that increased emphasis on video gaming could distract students from academic responsibilities.

Your group will discuss whether Hong Kong schools should recognize E-sports as legitimate sports. You may want to talk about:

- benefits of officially recognizing E-sports
- health concerns related to E-sports
- differences between E-sports and traditional sports
- anything else you think is important

PART B Individual Response

PART A Group Interaction

Should influencer marketing targeting teenagers be regulated?

Influencer marketing has exploded in popularity, particularly among young people who often look to social media stars for fashion advice, product recommendations, and lifestyle inspiration. While influencers provide relatable and authentic content, concerns have arisen about the ethical implications of influencer marketing aimed specifically at teenagers. Critics argue that teenagers are particularly vulnerable to manipulative marketing practices, lacking the experience to critically evaluate advertising disguised as personal endorsements. They worry about impacts such as increased materialism, financial irresponsibility, and negative self-esteem stemming from unrealistic standards portrayed online.

Supporters of influencer marketing, however, claim that influencers provide a genuine, peer-like connection that traditional advertising methods cannot. They believe teenagers can learn valuable information from influencers, making informed decisions based on real-life reviews and recommendations. Rather than imposing strict regulations, supporters suggest education and awareness campaigns to help teenagers navigate influencer content responsibly.

Your group will discuss whether influencer marketing targeting teenagers should be regulated. You may want to talk about:

- ethical concerns about influencer marketing
- positive aspects of influencers' content
- potential regulations or guidelines for influencer marketing
- anything else you think is important

PART B Individual Response

PART A Group Interaction

Hong Kong schools embrace AI in the classroom despite concerns

At the 2023 SCMP Principals' Forum, over 200 principals and educators discussed the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in education. While hesitant at first, many school heads acknowledged that AI could reshape teaching and learning in Hong Kong, making classrooms more efficient and preparing students for future careers.

One of the promising applications discussed was AI-powered tools for marking student assignments, particularly writing tasks. These tools can provide instant feedback, save teachers time, and focus on improving students' grammar, structure, and style. However, some educators worry that over-reliance on AI for grading might lead to a decline in students' critical thinking and creativity.

Another concern raised was academic dishonesty. Schools worry that students might misuse AI tools, such as ChatGPT, to complete assignments without genuine effort. Principals stressed the importance of teaching students how to use AI ethically and responsibly. Shirla Sum, principal of Victoria Shanghai Academy, said, "We need to guide students to become ethical global citizens in both real and virtual worlds."

Your school's technology club is hosting a discussion on the use of AI in education. You have been asked to share ideas for the discussion. You may want to talk about:

- whether AI tools, such as AI marking systems, should be used in classrooms
- how can schools stop students from misusing AI tools like ChatGPT
- what problems might schools face when using AI in classrooms
- anything else you think is important

PART B Individual Response

PART A Group Interaction

The ‘Lying Flat’ trend among Hong Kong’s Youth

The “‘lying flat’” movement has gained traction among young people in Hong Kong. Originating in mainland China, this lifestyle philosophy encourages individuals to resist societal pressures and live a minimalist life. Many young people have adopted this mindset as a way to cope with the high stress and intense competition in education, careers, and housing markets.

Supporters of the movement argue that it is a form of self-care and protest against the unrealistic expectations placed on young people. Advocates believe that by choosing not to overwork or chase material success, individuals can focus on their own happiness and well-being.

However, critics of “‘lying flat’” are concerned that it promotes laziness and a lack of ambition. They argue that the movement might lead to a decline in productivity and hinder personal development. Employers and educators worry that this attitude could negatively impact Hong Kong’s competitiveness and economic growth.

As the “‘lying flat’” mindset continues to spread, it raises important questions about how young people can balance their personal well-being with societal expectations.

Your school’s social issues club is hosting a discussion on the “‘lying flat’” trend and its impact on youth in Hong Kong. You have been asked to share ideas for the discussion. You may want to talk about:

- why do some young people in Hong Kong choose to adopt the “‘lying flat’” lifestyle
- how does the “‘lying flat’” trend affect personal development and society
- whether young people should resist or embrace the “‘lying flat’” mindset
- anything else you think is important

PART B Individual Response