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ENG LANG
PAPER 1A
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HONG KONG CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION MOCK EXAMINATION 2008

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPER 1A

Reading Passages

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INSTRUCTIONS

1. Write all your answers in the Question-Answer Book.
2. DO NOT take away this booklet. It will be collected separately at the end of the examination.
3. DO NOT write any answers in this booklet because they will not be marked.

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Part 1 –Reviews on Xbox 360 games

Read the following article and then answer questions 1-12.

A. BLAZING ANGELS You can take to the skies and reenact some of the greatest air battles of World War II in Blazing Angels. The game features squadron-based combat, which lets you use the individual characteristics of your wingmen to complete the 18-mission single-player campaign. Blazing Angels uses the graphical power of the Xbox 360 to accurately model battle sites--such as England, Morocco, and Pearl Harbor--and the 38 aircraft included in the game. Up to 16 players can battle via Xbox Live in both competitive and cooperative game modes.

B. BURNOUT REVENGE is a racing game in which your desire for destruction is as important as your ability to reach the finish line. The sequel to Burnout 3 adds some new features such as detailed car damage, crash combos, and a meter that rewards vengeance on the road. Game modes run the range from pure racing to pure destruction on a handful of real-world locations, including Detroit and Rome. Burnout Revenge also supports online play for challenging other players.

C. FULL AUTO Racing and combat combine in the arcade-style racing game Full Auto. You can choose from 20 cars and 10 different weapons, which can be used to outrun and outgun your opponents. The "un-wreck" meter allows you to rewind a limited amount of time to undo your mistakes. The game includes pursuit, arena, tag and rampage modes, as well as a 60-event campaign mode and a host of mini-games. You can also play online, challenging other gamers via Xbox Live.

D. THE ELDER SCROLLS Demons are ravaging the world of Tamriel, and it is up to you so save it in The Elder Scrolls. You can try to restore the rightful ruler to the throne in this next-generation, first-person RPG. Choose from a variety of races and classes to create your own individual character. The Elder Scrolls features over 1,000 non-player characters that eat, sleep, and complete their own objectives. You can explore an open-ended environment completing quests and eventually ridding the world of the marauding demons.

E. AMPED The Amped snowboarding lets you take to the slopes again with Amped. This game features a redesigned control scheme, many new tricks and challenges, and the ability to play as a skier. Play through story mode to both increase your skills and earn the respect of your fellow riders in an attempt to clear your name of a false accusation. Amped also includes innovative animated cut scenes, as well as challenges involving snowmobiles and sleds to complement the traditional snowboarding gameplay. Amped is also Xbox Live-aware, letting you to post your scores and stats to an online profile.

F. RUMBLE ROSES The female wrestling series Rumble Roses returns for another round with Rumble Roses. Rumble Roses features a range of visual and gameplay enhancements, including new game modes and new wrestlers. You can create your own wrestler and upgrade their abilities by taking down their opponents. The game offers Xbox Live integration, featuring leader boards, shared photos, and matches with up to four players.

G. BATTLEFIELD 2 brings the intensity of Battlefield 1942: World War II into the modern era with the latest vehicles and weapons systems available. In this first-person shooter, you'll choose to fight for one of three military superpowers: the United States, China, or the newly formed Middle East Coalition. Armed with advanced weaponry, you can take control of any of the game's vehicles to engage in major conflicts with up to 24 players online. Battlefield 2 features expansive environments--from city streets to remote jungles--all around the world.

Part 2 – Vice, Virtue, Video Games

Read the following article and then answer questions 14-27.

Vice, Virtue, Video Games

1 The gaming industry is now a growing multi-billion dollar industry. The level to which the industry has grown since its conception is unimaginable. The credit for the industry booming could be very well handed over to our children. Computer and video games have been very popular among children and teenagers aged between seven and sixteen.

2 The strategies used to build the games, the graphics, the quality of sound, the interactivity all make them quite **irresistible** among the younger generation. Gaming industries now have a new strategy to market **their** games? Medical and educational benefits are the two areas that they are now putting money on. We cannot just ignore it as a cheap marketing strategy because they do have researchers and doctors to back them up.

3 Researchers have found that frequent game players score better at vision tests as compared to non players. It has also been found that playing these games could improve children's logical thinking ability and problem solving skills. Games such as SimCity and Age of Mythology, where gamers have to build houses, cities and develop war strategies, help them to develop their logical skills and also help in decision making. Educational games can also help improve kids' communication and problem solving abilities. American teachers have also found improvement in their students? Children who play these games score better in mathematics, spelling and reading tests than those who do not. The government is pondering and researching ways to integrate such games into the academic curriculum.

4 True, these games do prove to be beneficial to an extent; at the same time, its ill effects cannot be ignored. Doctors have found a possible threat to these frequent gamers, affecting their health. Common complaints found among children obsessed with games are eye strains, wrist, neck and back pains, photosensitive epilepsy, headaches, hallucinations, nerve and muscle damages etc. Speculation is going on about whether playing games can cause **obesity** in the long run.

5 Specialists have confirmed that children not only are easily susceptible to long terms problems like bad posture and RSI (repetitive strain injury) from spending too much time on computer games, (21) . This stands true not only for children playing games but also for those who spend long hours on the computer. Dr Diana Macgregor of the Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital has highlighted the case of an 11-year-old boy who suffered from tendonitis known as 'Nintendonitis' following long periods on his Nintendo Game Boy. RSI is not as simple as it sounds. Its treatment is generally a long difficult process. In fact, (22) . Is this really something that parents would like their children to go through?

6 Spending many hours in front of the monitor and not going out enough could also cause social problems thus resulting in them becoming shy and **introvert**. Apart from that, the games played these days happen to be a lot more violent and brutal; therefore, (23) .

7 A controversial new research has proved that excessive playing of games can actually stunt the growth of a human brain. Brain-mapping expert Professor Kawashima and his team at Tohoku University in Japan measured the level of brain activity in teenagers playing a Nintendo game and compared it with those who played other arithmetic games. It was concluded that the Nintendo game stimulated activity only in the parts of the brain associated with vision and movement, (24) . The frontal lobe of the brain is associated with learning, memory and emotion and continues to develop till the age of 20. Hence it is a matter of concern. Though the games do provide certain benefits, the question is how much and whether it is really worthwhile.

8 Parents need to keep track of how much time their children spend in front of the screen playing games and also as to what type of games they play. Every aspect has its advantages and disadvantages; so is the law of nature. What we can do is try to maintain a balance and get the best of what it has to offer, be it nature or technology.

Part 3 – Living with the Computer

Read the following article and then answer questions 28-50.

Living with the Computer

Subtitle I

- 1 Everyday we come across media splashing about risks and hazards related to computer users. Be it the newspaper or television or the Internet, all talk about security hassles, computer hackers, stalkers and even spammers. So we get the best firewalls, security systems, anti spam software, etc to protect ourselves. But are you really safe?
- 5 Lots of computer users especially those who spend hours in front of the computer tend to overlook the minute details which could lead to long term problems. People on a computer based nine to five job are most susceptible to these risks. If you suffer from frequent headaches, back aches, wrist pains etc., you could be right on the path leading to RSI.

Subtitle II

- Health problems caused by spending long hours in front of the computers are not exactly noticeable and hence are ignored. The most common problems associated with excessive computer use are headaches, eye strain, back pains, wrist pains, muscle fatigue, etc. Keyboard operators can suffer from fatigue or soreness or cramp in hands, arms, shoulders or back which can lead to chronic disorders of muscles and tendons. On a more serious note we have disorders such as repetitive stress injury, which include tendonitis and carpal tunnel syndrome.
- 10
- 15 Repetitive stress injury is a kind of musculoskeletal disorder of the muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, and joints. Tendonitis is inflammation of a tendon due to some repeated motion or stress on that tendon. Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) is inflammation of the nerve that connects the forearm to the palm of the wrist.

- Although there is no substantial medical evidence to prove that the radiation emitted from computer monitors causes any risk such as facial dermatitis, epilepsy, miscarriages or any other birth defect, computers users still need to be careful.
- 20

Subtitle III

- Then how do we work risk free? It's quite simple. Easy simple precautions can save a lot of trouble. Firstly make sure that the workplace is designed ergonomically, which basically means that you need to incorporate comfort, efficiency, and safety into the design of items in the workplace.
- 25

The monitor should be placed at eye level approximately an arm's length away from the eyes. Pay attention to the lighting in the room and avoid any possible glares on your screen. Correctly adjust the brightness, contrast, positioning, height, and width of images on your screen.

For keyboards operators try and use keyboards with built-in wrist rests. Adjust your keyboard to
30 get a good keying position. Try to keep your wrists straight when keying.

Intensive use of a mouse or trackball may lead to aches and pains in the fingers, hands, wrists or arms. Position the mouse within easy reach, so it can be used with the wrist straight. Support your forearm on the desk. A document holder may help you avoid unnecessary awkward neck and eye movements.

35 Due to general work load and tight dead lines computer users tend to continue working in an awkward position, it is very important to pay attention to your sitting posture. Avoid sitting in the same position for long periods. Place the keyboard, mouse and other items so that you are comfortable. Leave enough leg space to move freely.

Staring too much at the monitor can cause Computer Vision Syndrome. Users might find it
40 difficult to properly focus on an object when they suddenly look away from the computer. Hence whenever possible try to arrange your focus on and away from the screen. This will not only help to prevent fatigue but it is essential to vary and mental demands.

It is quite essential to take breaks. Once in every 60 minutes take a break to stand up, walk around and stretch. You can set up an alarm in your Outlook or Scheduler application in case you
45 tend to get too involved in your work and lose track of time. If office users aren't allowed to take breaks then you can try and do some other paper work such as photo copying, filing, etc.

These are very simple precautions which need to be taken to avoid unnecessary discomfort. Unfortunately no software available in the market can help you with this. This is just something that you must not evade and have to do, to be free from any possible health risk.

END OF READING PASSAGES