

科目：英文測驗

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中英組

I. Précis (60%)

Instructions:

For each of the following two articles: (1) Write a short title for each. (2) Summarize each article in no more than 300 words. Use your own words to express the main idea and relevant details, and keep the general writing style of the original. Avoid using the same language and sentence structure. Do not list points; your summary should read like a coherent short article.

Article 1:

The Mount Pleasant neighborhood on Cleveland's southeast side is like many urban areas afflicted by the foreclosure crisis: It's struggling, but it has strong community groups, and it's close to the upscale suburb Shaker Heights. Mount Pleasant, as a whole, can recover.

Then there are streets like East 144th Street.

East 144th, in the middle of Mount Pleasant, is about half a mile long. It is a stretch of mostly vacant, boarded-up properties, some damaged by fire, interspersed with remaining residents who are trapped. There are no buyers for houses on this street. Not now. One "For Sale" sign offers a boarded-up home for \$99. City Council member Zachary Reed tells me that 10 years ago, there wasn't a single vacant structure on East 144th.

The foreclosure crisis changed that. Almost every empty home on East 144th has been vandalized, with everything of value stripped from them. Internet-savvy thieves scour the eviction rolls on sheriff and court Web sites, poised to steal a property's valuable items, often within hours of it being vacated. These houses are extensively damaged. And they make it nearly impossible to rehabilitate a Mount Pleasant home. "This street is killing a neighborhood we can save," Reed told me.

Thousands of vacant, abandoned, functionally obsolete and vandalized properties are choking the life out of foreclosure-wracked places such as Mount Pleasant. The answer isn't to scrape together money to try to fix these homes. The solution is to tear them down. Only a thoughtful and large-scale demolition program can save what's left. Only the elimination of worthless housing can allow cities to reposition their neighborhoods for rebirth.

Government leaders are beginning to understand that. This past week, federal and state officials announced a \$25 billion settlement with five banks over fraudulent foreclosure practices. Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine said he would set aside \$75 million of the state's portion of the settlement for demolition in distressed communities. Because there is a direct link between bad mortgages and abandoned properties, it is fitting that a portion of that money be used to stabilize neighborhoods for those who are left.

More than 100,000 homes in Ohio are abandoned and face demolition, according to the attorney general. Officials in Michigan told me they estimate that at least 75,000 homes in their state could be torn down. But is not just a Rust Belt problem. Former Chicago building commissioner Rich Monocchio puts the number of vacant properties in that city at 18,000, with at least a third needing immediate demolition. Michael Braverman, the deputy commissioner of building in Baltimore, puts the number awaiting demolition there at 10,000 units.

The task in Baltimore — and in other cities with rowhouses, such as Washington — can be prohibitively expensive. Rowhouse units cannot be demolished until the side walls are given additional support, so it can cost roughly \$60,000, more than six times the cost of tearing down free-standing homes in Cleveland or Detroit.

Local governments are responsible for removing or maintaining these properties. And they are overwhelmed by the size of the crisis. The increased pressures caused by mass vacancy — more building-inspector and fire department visits, policing half-empty neighborhoods, keeping lawns mowed and properties secure — are more than local governments are equipped to handle.

In many cases, local leaders understand that demolition is part of the answer, but they don't have the resources to pursue it. The federal government's Neighborhood Stabilization Program, intended to help communities with high foreclosure and abandonment rates, provides some limited funding for demolition. But its focus is on rehabilitation.

Part of the problem is that by the time a city or town is facing an abandonment crisis that calls for demolition, it doesn't have the resources to deal with it. People often abandon homes when property values collapse, if they are underwater on their mortgages and see no advantage to sticking it out. In turn, the more abandoned properties in an area, the lower property values sink.

For many Americans, the notion of demolishing homes is shocking, especially in an era when so many people lack housing. Federal policy also is seemingly at odds with strategic demolition and is stuck in a bygone era of growth and strength in the housing market. Federal programs such as the Neighborhood Stabilization Program and the Obama administration's proposed Project Rebuild don't allow federal housing funds to be used mainly for demolition.

In cities with a strong real estate market, the argument that houses should be fixed up and mothballed until the market recovers may be persuasive. But in weak-market cities such as Cleveland and Detroit, or in the high-vacancy areas of Chicago or Baltimore, demolition is the best and most sensible solution.

Demolition can stabilize communities by removing blight and increasing property values. In Flint, Mich., the Genesee County Land Bank strategically concentrated \$3.5 million of demolition on the city's north side. Michigan State University researchers found that, within five years of these demolitions, the aggregate property valuation in the area had increased by more than \$112 million.

Cities devastated by foreclosure and abandonment face a long recovery. But urban land cleared by demolition is beginning to offer communities some hope. Often the land is simply

absorbed by the adjoining homeowner, sometimes for a nominal fee, for side-yard expansions, immediately adding to the viability — and value — of that enlarged property.

Sometimes, newly cleared land can be a place for community gardens or urban farming projects. That's what's happening in Cleveland's Kinsman neighborhood, where the Cleveland Foundation is sponsoring a multimillion-dollar greenhouse project that will employ roughly 40 people. Michigan puts cleared land into special tax districts to spur redevelopment.

Reed, the Cleveland council member, showed me how cleared land at the end of East 144th has spurred new investment in Mount Pleasant. A business owner is remodeling a storefront for a beauty salon — because it will now have off-street parking. On the other corner, a fraternal lodge has purchased a closed mosque and is moving its headquarters there while turning the surrounding cleared properties into a neighborhood park.

All it took to build things up again was to knock a few things down.

(Source: *The Washington Post*)

Article 2:

In the United States, only 21 states require students to attend high school until they graduate or turn 18. The proposal President Obama announced on Tuesday night in his State of the Union address — to make such attendance compulsory in every state — is a step in the right direction, but it would not go far enough to reduce a dropout rate that imposes a heavy cost on the entire economy, not just on those who fail to obtain a diploma.

In 1970, the United States had the world's highest rate of high school and college graduation. Today, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the United States has slipped to No. 21 in high school completion and No. 15 in college completion, as other countries surpassed us in the quality of their primary and secondary education.

Only 7 of 10 ninth graders today will get high school diplomas. A decade after the No Child Left Behind law mandated efforts to reduce the racial gap, about 80 percent of white and Asian students graduate from high school, compared with only 55 percent of blacks and Hispanics.

Like President Obama, many reformers focus their dropout prevention efforts on high schoolers; replacing large high schools with smaller learning communities where poor students can get individualized instruction from dedicated teachers has been shown to be effective. Rigorous evidence gathered over decades suggests that some of the most promising approaches need to start even earlier: preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds, who are fed and taught in small groups, followed up with home visits by teachers and with group meetings of parents; reducing class size in the early grades; and increasing teacher salaries from kindergarten through 12th grade.

These programs sound expensive — some Americans probably think that preventing 1.3 million students from dropping out of high school each year can't be done — but in fact the costs of inaction are far greater.

High school completion is, of course, the most significant requirement for entering college. While our economic competitors are rapidly increasing graduation rates at both levels, we continue to fall behind. Educated workers are the basis of economic growth — they are especially critical as sources of innovation and productivity given the pace and nature of technological progress.

If we could reduce the current number of dropouts by just half, we would yield almost 700,000 new graduates a year, and it would more than pay for itself. Studies show that the typical high school graduate will obtain higher employment and earnings — an astonishing 50 percent to 100 percent increase in lifetime income — and will be less likely to draw on public money for health care and welfare and less likely to be involved in the criminal justice system. Further, because of the increased income, the typical graduate will contribute more in tax revenues over his lifetime than if he'd dropped out.

When the costs of investment to produce a new graduate are taken into account, there is a return of \$1.45 to \$3.55 for every dollar of investment, depending upon the educational intervention strategy. Under this estimate, each new graduate confers a net benefit to taxpayers of about \$127,000 over the graduate's lifetime. This is a benefit to the public of nearly \$90 billion for each year of success in reducing the number of high school dropouts by 700,000 — or something close to \$1 trillion after 11 years. That's real money — and a reason both liberals and conservatives should rally behind dropout prevention as an element of economic recovery, leaving aside the ethical dimensions of educating our young people.

Some might argue that these estimates are too large, that the relationships among the time-tested interventions, high school graduation rates and adult outcomes have not been proved yet on a large scale. Those are important considerations, but the evidence cannot be denied: increased education does, indeed, improve skill levels and help individuals to lead healthier and more productive lives. And despite the high unemployment rate today, we have every reason to believe that many of these new graduates would find work — our history is filled with sustained periods of economic growth when increasing numbers of young people obtained more schooling and received large economic benefits as a result.

Of course, there are other strategies for improving educational attainment — researchers learn more every day about which are effective and which are not. But even with what we know, a failure to substantially reduce the numbers of high school dropouts is demonstrably penny-wise and pound-foolish.

Proven educational strategies to increase high school completion, like high-quality preschool, provide returns to the taxpayer that are as much as three and a half times their cost. Investing our public dollars wisely to reduce the number of high school dropouts must be a central part of any strategy to raise long-run economic growth, reduce inequality and return fiscal health to our federal, state and local governments.

(Source: *The New York Times*)

II. Cloze Test (40%)

Instructions: Supply the missing word or string of words. Make sure that they make sense, are grammatically correct, relevant, and conform to proper collocation. There are twenty items.

excerpt from Margaret Thatcher's Remarks on the Passing of Ronald Reagan

(Source: <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/margaretthatcherreaganeulogy.htm>)

We have lost a great President, a great American, and (1), and I have lost a dear friend.

In his lifetime, Ronald Reagan was such a cheerful and invigorating presence that it was easy to forget what daunting historic tasks he set himself. He sought to mend America's wounded spirit, to restore the strength of the free world, and to (2) the slaves of communism. These were (3), yet they were pursued with almost a lightness of spirit, for Ronald Reagan also embodied another great cause, what Arnold Bennett once called "the great cause of cheering us all up". His policies had a freshness and optimism that won converts from every class and every nation, and ultimately, from the very heart of the "evil empire."

Yet his humor often had a purpose beyond humor. In the terrible hours after the attempt on his life, his easy jokes gave reassurance to an anxious world. They were evidence that in the aftermath of terror and in the midst of hysteria one great heart at least remained sane and jocular. They were truly grace under pressure. And perhaps they signified grace of a deeper kind. Ronnie himself certainly believed that he had been (4) for a purpose. As he told a priest after his recovery, "Whatever (5) I've got left now belongs to the big fella upstairs." And surely, it is hard to deny that Ronald Reagan's life was providential when we look at what he achieved in the eight years that followed.

Others prophesied the decline of the West. He inspired (6) and its allies with renewed faith in their mission of freedom.

Others (7). He transformed a stagnant economy into an engine of opportunity.

Others hoped, at best, for an uneasy cohabitation with the Soviet Union. He won the Cold War, (8), but also by inviting enemies out of their fortress and turning them into friends.

I cannot imagine how any diplomat or any dramatist could improve on his words to Mikhail Gorbachev at the Geneva summit. "Let me tell you why it is we distrust you." Those words are candid and tough, and they cannot have been easy to hear. But they are also a clear invitation to a new beginning and a new (9) that would be rooted in trust.

We live today in (10) that Ronald Reagan began to reshape with those words. It is a very different world, with different challenges and new dangers. All in all, however, it is one of greater freedom and prosperity, one more hopeful than the world he inherited on becoming President.

As (11), I worked closely with Ronald Reagan for eight of the most important years of all our lives. We talked regularly, both before and after his presidency, and I've had time and cause to reflect on what made him a great President.

Ronald Reagan knew his own mind. He had firm principles and, I believe, right ones. He expounded them clearly. He acted upon them decisively. When the world threw problems at the White House, he was not baffled or disorientated or overwhelmed. He knew almost instinctively what to do.

When his aides were preparing option papers for his decision, they were able to cut out entire rafts of proposals that they knew the old man would never wear. When (12) came under Soviet or domestic pressure, they could look confidently to Washington for firm leadership, and when his enemies tested American resolve, they soon discovered that his resolve was (13) and unyielding.

Yet his ideas, so clear, were never simplistic. He saw the many sides of truth. Yes, he warned that the Soviet Union had an insatiable drive for military power and territorial (14), but he also sensed that it was being eaten away by systemic failures impossible to reform. Yes, he did not shrink (15) Moscow's evil empire, but he realized that a man of good will might nonetheless emerge from within its dark corridors.

So the President resisted Soviet expansion and pressed down on Soviet weakness at every point until the day came when communism began to (16) beneath the combined weight of those pressures and its own failures. And when a man of good will did emerge from the ruins, President Reagan stepped forward to shake his hand and to offer sincere cooperation.

Nothing was more typical of Ronald Reagan than that large-hearted magnanimity, and (17) was more American.

Therein lies perhaps the final explanation of his achievements. Ronald Reagan carried (18) with him in his great endeavors because there was perfect sympathy between them. He and they loved America and what it stands for: freedom and opportunity for ordinary people.

As an actor in Hollywood's golden age, (19) make the American dream live for millions all over the globe. His own life was a fulfillment of that dream. He never succumbed to the embarrassment some people feel about an honest expression of love of country. He was able to say "God bless America" with equal fervor in public and in private. And so he was able to call confidently upon his (20) to make sacrifices for America and to make sacrifices for those who look to America for hope and rescue. (END)

※ 注意：1. 考生須在「彌封答案卷」上作答。

2. 本試題紙空白部份可當稿紙使用。

3. 考生於作答時可否使用計算機、法典、字典或其他資料或工具，以簡章之規定為準。