

2009 年攻读浙江财经学院硕士学位研究生入学考试试题

科目代码: 681

科目名称: 综合英语

答案请写答题纸上

Part I READING COMPREHENSION (50 MIN; 50 Points)

In this section there are five reading passages followed by a total of 20 multiple-choice questions. Read the passages and finish the multiple choices. Write your answer on the answer sheet.

Text A

Volcanic fire and glacial ice are natural enemies. Eruptions at glaciated volcanoes typically destroy ice fields, as they did in 1980 when 70 of Mount Saint Helens ice cover was demolished. During long dormant intervals, glaciers gain the upper hand cutting deeply into volcanic cones and eventually reducing them to rubble. Only rarely do these competing forces of heat and cold operate in perfect balance to create a phenomenon such as the steam caves at Mount Rainier National Park.

Located inside Rainier's two ice-filled summit craters, these caves form a labyrinth of tunnels and vaulted chambers about one and one half miles in total length. Their creation depends on an unusual combination of factors that nature almost never brings together in one place. The cave-making recipe calls for a steady emission of volcanic gas and heat, a heavy annual snowfall at an elevation high enough to keep it from melting during the summer, and a bowl-shaped crater to hold the snow.

Snow accumulating yearly in Rainier's summit craters is compacted and compressed into a dense form of ice called firm, a substance midway between ordinary ice and the denser crystalline ice that makes up glaciers. Heat rising from numerous openings (called fumaroles) along the inner crater walls melts out chambers between the rocky walls and the overlying ice pack. Circulating currents of warm air then melt additional openings in the firm ice, eventually connecting the individual chambers and, in the larger of Rainier's the crater's, forming a continuous passageway the extends two-thirds of the Way around the crater's interior.

To maintain the cave system, the elements of fire under ice must remain in equilibrium, enough snow must fill the crater each year to replace that melted from below. If too much volcanic heat is discharged, the crater's ice pack will melt away entirely and the caves will vanish along with the snows of yesteryear. If too little heat is produced, the ice, replenished annually by winter snowstorms,

will expand, pushing against the enclosing crater walls and smothering the present caverns in solid firm ice.

1. With what topic is the passage mainly concerned?
 - A. The importance of snowfall for Mount Rainier.
 - B. The steam caves of Mount Rainier's.
 - C. How ice covers are destroyed.
 - D. The eruption of Mount Saint Helens in 1980.
2. According to the passage, long periods of volcanic inactivity can lead to a volcanic cone's _____.
 - A. strong eruption
 - B. sudden growth
 - C. destruction
 - D. unpredictability
3. The second paragraph mentions all of the following as necessary elements in the creation of steam caves EXCEPT _____.
 - A. a glacier
 - B. a crater
 - C. heat
 - D. snow
4. According to the passage, heat from Mount Rainier's summit craters rises from _____.
 - A. crystalline ice
 - B. firms
 - C. chambers
 - D. fumaroles
5. In the last line, "smothering" means _____.
 - A. eliminate
 - B. enlarged
 - C. prevented
 - D. hollowed

Text B

When it comes to health, the poor are doubly cursed. Not only are they more prone to deadly infectious diseases than the rich, but they have far less access to the means of improvement. Twenty years ago, Paul Farmer, an American doctor and anthropologist, set out to do something about this. Amid the political turmoil and poverty of rural Haiti, he created a community based health care system called Zanmi Lasante, or Partners in Health. It not only delivers appropriate, affordable medical treatment to thousands of poor people, but goes beyond the clinic to address the social causes making them sick and keeping them from getting better.

As Dr. Farmer argues, improving the health of the poor is not just a medical challenge, but a question of human rights. Tackling the inequality, racism, sexism and other forms of "structural violence" which oppress the poor is as critical as extending the drugs. Or as his Haiti patients put it, medicine without food is like washing one's hands and drying them in the dirt.

Unfortunately, Dr. Farmer's powerful message is often weakened by his book's academic tone. It does, however, scream out in passages describing the human face of "structural violence". It is these personal stories that make Dr. Farmer's anger at such "stupid deaths" so compelling.

The good doctor's motives and methods are better described in *Mountains Beyond Mountains*. This biography by Tracy Kidder traces Dr. Farmer from his unconventional upbringing and unusual education, shuttling between the shacks of central Haiti and the halls of Harvard Medical School, to his later work around the world. Though well written, Mr. Kidder's book also makes for uncomfortable reading. The author is clearly close to his subject, having traveled with Dr. Farmer from the green poverty of Haiti to the tubercular whiteness of Russia. Too close, perhaps. The biographer seems to be seeking his subject's approval, rather than the other way round. Mr. Kidder writes, rather disturbingly, about his fear of disappointing Dr. Farmer, his own pain at wounding him with a critical remark and his relief at the doctor's forgiveness.

When Mr. Kidder's health falls, this dependence becomes all the more intense. But rather than compromise the book's equity, this intimacy serves to highlight Dr. Farmer's admirable, yet ultimately irritating, character. As Mr. Kidder observes, "Farmer wasn't put on earth to make anyone feel comfortable, except those lucky enough to be his patients or those unlucky enough to need him."

6. What makes the "Partners in Health" system unique compared with traditional hospitals?
 - A. It makes attempts to help the poor on a social level.
 - B. It is aimed at treating poor people for free.
 - C. It is designed to help the poor rise from poverty.
 - D. It offers community help to those who are poor.
7. What can be inferred from the last sentence of the second paragraph?
 - A. Hands should not be dried in the dirt after washing.
 - B. Medicine is also needed for cleaning hands.
 - C. Medicine is not a long term cure to their poor health.
 - D. Food can cure their disease better than any medicine.
8. The disadvantage of Dr. Farmer's book seems to be that.
 - A. the plots in the book are not attractive enough
 - B. the way he tells the stories is not compelling enough
 - C. the anger he expresses at "stupid deaths" is too strong
 - D. the tone is not strong enough to arouse people's attention
9. Mr. Kidder's book also makes for uncomfortable reading because .
 - A. Mr. Kidder himself has never been involved in Dr. Farmer's life
 - B. Mr. Kidder is afraid of making true comments on Dr. Farmer
 - C. Mr. Kidder's emotions prevent him from independent writing
 - D. Mr. Kidder is always waiting for Dr. Farmer's forgiveness
10. It can be inferred from the last paragraph that .

- A. Dr. Farmer only helped those who are lucky enough
- B. Dr. Farmer may have severely criticized the society
- C. Dr. Farmer was not actually making his patients comfortable
- D. Dr. Farmer's job is not to make people comfortable

Text C

A green and yellow parrot, which hung in a cage outside the door, kept repeating over and over:

“Allez vous-en! Allez vous-en! Sapristi! That’s all right!” He could speak a little Spanish, and also a language which nobody understood, unless it was the mocking-bird that hung on the other side of the door, whistling his fluty notes out upon the breeze with maddening persistence.

Mr. Pontellier, unable to read his newspaper with any degree of comfort, arose with an expression and an exclamation of disgust. He walked down the gallery and across the narrow “bridges” which connected the Lebrun cottages one with the other. He had been seated before the door of the main house. The parrot and the mockingbird were the property of Madame Lebrun, and they had the right to make all the noise they wished. Mr. Pontellier had the privilege of quitting their society when they ceased to be entertaining.

He stopped before the door of his own cottage, which was the fourth one from the main building and next to the last. Seating himself in a wicker rocker which was there, he once more applied himself to the task of reading the newspaper. The day was Sunday; the paper was a day old. The Sunday papers had not yet reached Grand Isle. He was already acquainted with the market reports, and he glanced restlessly over the editorials and bits of news which he had not had time to read before quitting New Orleans the day before.

Mr. Pontellier wore eye-glasses. He was a man of forty, of medium height and rather slender build; he stooped a little. His hair was brown and straight, parted on one side. His beard was neatly and closely trimmed.

Once in a while he withdrew his glance from the newspaper and looked about him. There was more noise than ever over at the house. The main building was called “the house,” to distinguish it from the cottages. The chattering and whistling birds were still at it. Two young girls, the Farival twins, were playing a duet from “Zampa” upon the piano. Madame Lebrun was bustling in and out, giving orders in a high key to a yard-boy whenever she got inside the house and directions in an equally high voice to a dining-room servant whenever she got outside. She was a fresh, pretty woman, clad always in white with elbow sleeves. Her starched skirts crinkled as she came and went. Farther down, before one of the cottages, a lady in black was walking demurely up and down, telling her beads. A good many persons of the pension had gone over to the *Cheniere*

Caminada in Beaufort's lugger to hear mass. Some young people were out under the water-oaks playing croquet. Mr. Pontellier's two children were there—sturdy little fellows of four and five. A quadroon nurse followed them about with a faraway, meditative air.

Mr. Pontellier finally lit a cigar and began to smoke, letting the paper drag idly from his hand. He fixed his gaze upon a white sunshade that was advancing at snail's pace from the beach. He could see it plainly between the gaunt trunks of the water-oaks and across the stretch of yellow chamomile. The gulf looked far away, melting hazily into the blue of the horizon. The sunshade continued to approach slowly. Beneath its pink-lined shelter were his wife, Mrs. Pontellier, and young Robert Lebrun. When they reached the cottage, the two seated themselves with some appearance of fatigue upon the upper step of the porch, facing each other, each leaning against a supporting post.

"What folly! To bathe at such an hour in such heat!" exclaimed Mr. Pontellier. He himself had taken a plunge at daylight. That was why the morning seemed long to him.

"You are burnt beyond recognition," he added, looking at his wife as one looks at a valuable piece of personal property which has suffered some damage. She held up her hands, strong, shapely hands, and surveyed them critically, drawing up her lawn sleeves above the wrists. Looking at them reminded her of her rings, which she had given to her husband before leaving for the beach. She silently reached out to him, and he, understanding, took the rings from his vest pocket and dropped them into her open palm. She slipped them upon her fingers; then clasping her knees, she looked across at Robert and began to laugh. The rings sparkled upon her fingers. He sent back an answering smile.

"What is it?" asked Pontellier, looking lazily and amused from one to the other. It was some utter nonsense; some adventure out there in the water, and they both tried to relate it at once. It did not seem half so amusing when told. They realized this, and so did Mr. Pontellier. He yawned and stretched himself. Then he got up, saying he had half a mind to go over to Klein's hotel and play a game of billiards.

"Come go along, Lebrun," he proposed to Robert. But Robert admitted quite frankly that he preferred to stay where he was and talk to Mrs. Pontellier.

"Well, send him about his business when he bores you, Edna," instructed her husband as he prepared to leave.

"Here, take the umbrella," she exclaimed, holding it out to him. He accepted the sunshade, and lifting it over his head descended the steps and walked away.

"Coming back to dinner?" his wife called after him. He halted a moment and shrugged his shoulders. He felt in his vest pocket; there was a ten-dollar bill there. He did not know; perhaps he would return for the early dinner and perhaps he would not. It all depended upon the company which he found over at

Klein's and the size of "the game." He did not say this, but she understood it, and laughed, nodding good-by to him.

Both children wanted to follow their father when they saw him starting out. He kissed them and promised to bring them back bonbons and peanuts.

11. Which of the following adjectives best describe Mr. Pontellier?

- A. Energetic B. Robust C. Good-humored D. Inactive

12. In Mr. Pontellier's mind's eye, his wife is _____.

- A. an independent person
B. an object of considerable value
C. an understanding woman
D. an unreliable woman

13. The image that the story evokes in reader's mind in its very beginning is _____.

- A. sea image B. animal image
C. bird image D. umbrella image

14. From the story we know that Mrs. Pontellier is a/an _____ wife.

- A. understanding B. depressed
C. critical D. listless

15. Mr. Pontellier enjoys _____.

- A. having dinner with his wife B. gambling
C. playing with his children D. swimming

Text D

In developing a model of cognition, we must recognize that perception of the external world does not always remain independent of motivation. While progress toward maturity is positively correlated with differentiation between motivation and cognition, tension will, even in the mature adult, militate towards a narrowing of the range of perception.

Cognition can be seen as the first step in the sequence events leading from the external stimulus to the behavior of the individual. The child develops from belief that all things are an extension of its own body to the recognition that objects exist independent of his perception. He begins to demonstrate awareness of people and things which are removed from his sensory apparatus and initiates goal-directed behaviors. He may, however, refuse to recognize the existence of barriers to the attainment of his goal, despite the fact that his cognition of these objects has been previously demonstrated.

In the primitive beings, goal-directed behavior can be very simple motivated. The presence of an attractive object will cause an infant to reach for it; its

removal will result in the cessation of that action. Studies have shown no evidence of the infant's frustration; rather, it appears that the infant ceases to desire the object when he cannot see it. Further indications are that the infant's attention to the attractive object increase as a result of its not being in his grasp. In fact, if he holds a toy and another is presented, he is likely to drop the first in order to clutch the second. Often, once he has the one desired in his hands, he loses attention and turns to something else.

In adult life, mere cognition can be similarly motivational, although the visible presence of the opportunity is not required as the instigator of response. The mature adult modifies his reaction by obtaining information, interpreting it, and examining consequences. He formulates a hypothesis and attempts to test it. He searches out implicit relationships, examines all factors, and differentiates among them. Just as the trained artist can separate the value of color, composition, and technique, while taking in and evaluating the whole work, so, too, the mature person brings his cognitive learning strengths to bear in appraising a situation.

Understanding that cognition is separate from action, his reaction is only minimally guided from conditioning, and take into consideration anticipatable events.

The impact of the socialization process, particularly that of parental and social group ideology, may reduce cognitively directed behavior. The tension thus produced, as for instance the stress of fear, anger, or extreme emotion, will often be the overriding influence.

The evolutionary process of development from body schema through cognitive learning is similarly manifested in the process of language acquisition. Auditing develop first, reading and writing much later on. Not only is this evident in the development of the individual being from infancy on, but also in the development of language for humankind.

Every normal infant has the physiological equipment necessary to produce sound, but the child must first master their use for sucking, biting, and chewing before he can control his equipment for use in producing the sounds of language. The babble and chatter of the infant are precursors to intelligible vocal communication.

From the earlier times, it is clear that language and human thought have been intimately connected. Sending or receiving messages, from primitive warnings of danger to explaining creative or reflective thinking, this aspect of cognitive development is also firmly linked to the needs and aspirations of society.

16. How does the child develop his perception?

A. Strong motivations give rise to perception.

B. He holds the conviction that thing around him parts of extended body and later on gives it up.

- C. Parents and teachers play a key role in his development of cognition.
 - D. He believes that objects around him independent of his perception.
17. What stimulates adults' motivational cognition?
- A. Predictable presence of opportunities.
 - B. Visible signs of opportunities.
 - C. Instigators.
 - D. Approachable information.
18. What is the influence of socialization process?
- A. It may produce tension.
 - B. It may produce extreme emotion.
 - C. It may reduce one's cognitively guided behaviors.
 - D. A, B, and C.
19. What links cognitive development to the needs of society?
- A. Practical purpose.
 - B. Natural human cognitive development.
 - C. Language.
 - D. Sending or receiving messages.

Text E

The first two stages in the development of civilized man were probably the invention of primitive weapons and the discovery of fire, although no body knows exactly when he acquired the use of the latter

The origin of language is also obscure. No doubt it began very gradually. Animals have a few cries that serve as signals, but even the highest apes have not been found able to pronounce words, even with the most intensive professional instruction. The superior brain of man is apparently a necessity for the mastering of speech. When man became sufficiently intelligent, we must suppose that he gradually increased the number of cries for different purposes. It was a great day when he discovered that speech could be used for narrative. There are those who think in this respect picture language preceded oral language. A man could draw a picture on the wall of his cave to show in which direction he had gone, or what prey he hoped to catch. Probably picture language and oral language developed side by side. I am inclined to think that language has been the most important single factor in the development of man.

Two important stages came not so long before the dawn of written history. The first was the domestication of animals; the second was agriculture. Agriculture was a step in human progress to which subsequently there was nothing comparable until our own machine age. Agriculture made possible an immense increase in the number of the human species in the regions where it

could be successfully practiced. These were, at first, only those in which nature fertilized the soil after each harvest. Agriculture met with violent resistance from the pastoral nomads, but the agricultural way of life prevailed in the end because of the physical comforts it provided.

4 Another fundamental technical advance was writing, which, like spoken language, developed out of pictures, but as soon as it had reached a certain stage, it was possible to keep records and transmit information to people who were not present when the information was given.

These inventions and discoveries—fire, speech, weapons, domestic animals, agriculture, and writing—made the existence of civilized communities possible. From about 3000 B. C. until the beginning of the Industrial Revolution less than two hundred years ago there was no technical advance comparable to these. During this long period man had time to become accustomed to his technique, and to develop the beliefs and political organizations appropriate to it. There was, of course, an immense extension in the area of civilized life. At first it had been confined to the Nile, the Euphrates, the Tigris and the Indus, but at the end of the period in question it covered much the greater part of the inhabitable globe. I do not mean to suggest that there was no technical progress during this long time; there was progress—there were even two inventions of very great importance, namely gunpowder and the mariner's compass—but neither of these can be compared in their power to such things as speech and writing and agriculture.

20. The author does not state clearly but implies that in the development of man_____.

- A. human speech developed along with other human faculties
- B. picture language and written language developed side by side
- C. oral language preceded the use of fire
- D. the ape might be taught to master speech

21. According to the passage picture language was found most useful when_____.

- A. people didn't want to use speech in communication
- B. oral language was not fully developed
- C. people went hunting or traveling somewhere
- D. people were inhabiting in caves

22. It is the author's view that in human civilization agriculture_____.

- A. is the most important step man has ever made
- B. is only less important than the domestication of animals
- C. had long been practiced as stated in written history
- D. can be ranked in importance with the invention of machines

23. In the 3rd paragraph, "... in the regions where it could be practiced...", here, "it" refers to _____

- A. increase
- B. number
- C. agriculture
- D. species

24. The pastoral nomads would not have yielded to the agricultural way of life ____
- A. if it had not been for the benefits brought about by agriculture
 - B. unless agriculture could provide them with sufficient domesticated animals
 - C. if agriculture had taken up too large a number of their pastures
 - D. if they had not found setbacks in their pastoral way of life
25. Written language in its initial stage was found more advantageous in that ____
- A. it could communicate more accurately than the oral language
 - B. it had developed from picture language
 - C. information could be recorded and transmitted
 - D. it was easier to learn than picture language

Part II GENERAL KNOWLEDGE (10 MIN; 20 Points)

There are ten multiple-choice questions in this section. Choose the best answer to each question. Mark your answers on your answer sheet.

1. Which of the following statements is NOT true about the Prime Minister in Britain?
 - A. He is appointed by the Queen
 - B. He is Minister for the Civil Service
 - C. He sits in the House of Commons
 - D. He is elected every four years
2. European settlement of Australia began in the late part of _____ when a British penal colony was established on the east coast of the continent.
 - A. the 16th century
 - B. the 17th century
 - C. the 18th century
 - D. the 19th century
3. With the _____, Latin words were added into the vocabulary of the language spoken in Britain.
 - A. invasion of the Romans
 - B. Christianization of Britain
 - C. Scandinavian invasion
 - D. Norman Conquest
4. In the late 16th century, _____ ruled England.
 - A. Henry V B. Elizabeth I C. Queen Mary D. Elizabeth II
5. Which of the following books is not written by Mark Twain, whose real name is Samuel Langhorne Clemens?
 - A. The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

- B. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
C. Life on the Mississippi
D. Leaves of grass
6. In Paradise Lost, the real hero created by Milton is _____.
A. God B. Adam C. Eve D. Satan
7. The seats in the Senate are allocated to different states _____.
A. according to their population
B. according to their size
C. according to their tax paid to federal government
D. equally
8. _____ was considered to be the greatest dramatist in the 18th century.
A. Henry Fielding
B. Laurence Sterne
C. Oliver Goldsmith
D. Richard B. Sheridan
9. Mr. Darcy is a character in _____.
A. Tess of the D'Urbervilles
B. Pride and Prejudice
C. Happy Prince
D. The Mill on the Floss
10. This line "If Winter comes, can spring be far behind?" is quoted from _____.
A. Don Juan B. Kubla Khan
C. To Autumn D. Ode to the West Wind

PART III PROOFREADING & ERROR CORRECTION

(20 MIN; 20Points)

The passage contains TEN errors. Each indicated line contains a ONE error. In each case, only ONE word is involved. You should proofread the passage, correct them and write your answer on the answer sheet in the following way:

EXAMPLE

When art museum wants a new exhibit, it museum ...

never buys things in finished form and hangs in...

them on the wall. When a natural history museum wants an exhibition, it must often build it. it ...

1. When an art

2. ...it never buys things

3. ...wants an exhibit,

Let children learn to judge their work. A child learning to talk does not learn by being corrected all the time. If correcting too much, he will stop talking.

He notices a thousand times a day the language he uses and the language like other people. In the same

way, when children learn to do all the other things they learn to do without being taught—to walk, run, climb, whistle, ride a bike—to compare those performances

with those of more skilled people, and immediately make the needed changes. But in school we never give a child

a chance to find his own mistakes for himself, let alone correct him. We do it for him. We act as if we thought

that he would never notice a mistake unless it is

pointed out to him, or correct it unless he was made.

Soon he becomes dependent on the teacher. Let him

do it himself. Let him work out, with the help of other

children if he wants it, what this word says, that answer

is to that problem, whether this is a good way

of saying or doing this or not.

If it is a matter of right answer, as it may be in mathematics or science, give him the answer book.

Let him correcting his own papers. Why should we teachers

waste time on such routine work? Our job should be to

help the child when he tell us that he can't find the way

to get the right answer. Let us end this nonsense of

grades, exams, marks. Let us throw them all out, and let

the children learn what all educated persons must some

day learn, how to measure their own understanding, how

to know what they know or do not know.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

PART IV CLOZE (20 MIN; 20 Points)

The passage contains TWENTY blanks. Read the whole passage and fill in the missing word for each blank. Then write your answers on the Answer Sheet.

Saving is, was, and always will be no fun. “Saving money,” explains Jason Zweig, author of *Your Money and Your Brain*, “doesn’t feel good.” Think about ____1____ this way: Choosing to save almost always ____2____ opting for delayed gratification instead of ____3____ gratification. “You can buy a pair of shoes today,” says Zweig, “or have a nice retirement 20 years ____4____ now.” You can go out to dinner now or put the money into an emergency fund in ____5____ the car’s transmission goes ____6____—someday. You’re going to buy the shoes or head to the restaurant because the ____7____ of getting something good today is much greater ____8____ the pleasure of getting something good years in the future—even if the reward in the future is bigger.

If it’s not shoes that make you go mushy inside, it may be technology, or rare books. ____9____ that’s not only an intensity you feel, it’s an intensity neuroeconomists can see. In recent years, this relatively new breed of experts in economics and neuroscience have started using MRIs to view the brain as it is making money choices. When something we want to buy comes into ____10____, they see the pleasure center firing up as we get a feel-good dopamine rush. Similarly, getting a few dollars today is thrilling—more thrilling, in fact, than getting ____11____ slightly larger profit ____12____. And if you have to wait a few weeks or months for that gain, it will ____13____ to be much bigger in order to arouse the same interest in your ____14____. Things way ____15____ in the future—like retirement—don’t jostle the pleasure center much at all.

Let’s ____16____ you’re 31 and you want to retire in 25 years. The key is to make the goal as ____17____ as you can, says Zweig. Pick your birthday circa 2033 as the day for your retirement goal. Then ask yourself, What do I want to do when I retire? Do I want a villa in Tuscany, a boat slip in Fort Myers, a condo in Waikiki, or a paid-off mortgage where I am right now? Of course, it’s different for everyone. But you’ve made retirement ____18____: You have the date. You have the goal. Then you give it a ____19____. It becomes “The Condo in Waikiki Fund.” You put a little Hawaiian music on your desktop, or cartoons of pineapples—whatever ____20____ you of your goal. Put your account statements in a manila folder and decorate it with Hawaiian beach scenes.

PART V WRITING (70 MIN; 40 Points)

Section A: To summarize an essay, you should not include your own thoughts on the matter, but describe the essay as objectively as possible, whether you agree with it or not. Try to use pertinent quotations by the author, working them in gracefully where appropriate. Also, any important or conspicuous words, phrases, or terms should be put in quotation marks.

Write a 150-word summary based on the following passage.

Since I turned 18 more than 10 years ago, I have voted in every presidential election. And when I moved from New York to Hong Kong at the end of August, I just assumed that I would have no problem continuing to do so. As I mailed off my absentee ballot request form in early September. I figured the absentee voting process was going to be neat and easy. Then I waited. And waited. And waited.

As mid-October approached with no absentee ballot, or a response of any kind, I became slightly paranoid, so I called the Manhattan Borough Board of Elections. The woman on the other end of the line—who was juggling multiple calls—informed me that while I was a registered voter, they had not yet received my absentee application—and that I should fax another one and mail it as well, just to make sure. I did as told, making it a nightly ritual for a week to call before bedtime to see if they had received my fax. I never got through.

Finally, with less than two weeks to go until the election, somebody answered. She explained to me that they were inundated with absentee applications, that people have been calling repeatedly and—get this—that the fax machine was broken. She told me to fax my application again, but to a different number. I went through the same motions for the third time, this time including a Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB), a back-up ballot (which doesn't include candidates for the state level) used by people like me who aren't able to get their absentee ballots in time. I have never felt so angry, helpless and frustrated with the American voting system, and I had certainly never feared that my vote wouldn't end up counting—until now.

“From our standpoint the issue is funding,” explains Valerie Vazquez-Rivera, director of communications for the New York City Board of Elections. “If we were properly funded we would have more staff members to work with the increase in voter registration as well as absentee ballots.”

As it turns out, I am far from the only American expat feeling frustration. In the 2004 presidential election nearly half of the approximately 6 million American voters living abroad never received their ballots, or received them too late to vote. To make matters more confusing, each state has a different set of requirements for voting overseas.

De Kai, a Hong Kong-based musician who is registered to vote in California, was still waiting for his absentee ballot to arrive in the mail on Oct. 27. “It’s really sort of unfathomable that we’re still plotting through this medieval paper-based way of voting that is such a nightmare,” says Kai. For swing state voters, this waiting game is more agonizing. “I ordered my absentee ballot from Colorado, a swing state, months ago, and never received it,” says Kristen Allen, a reporter for The Local, an online daily news website in Berlin, Germany.

Some states—like Wisconsin, North Carolina and Virginia—require another U.S. citizen to sign the ballot as a witness. That was a challenge for Catherine Thompson-Coffe, who lives on a farm in Vendoges, a remote area of France, where there are no other Americans. She called the U.S. Embassy, who sent her a FWAB. “I think it should be easier to vote,” says Thompson-Coffe. A debate stirred in Virginia a few days ago when the Fairfax County registrar was not going to count dozens of military ballots that came from overseas because they were missing the address of the witness—which the FWAB doesn’t provide space for. Luckily, state Attorney General Bob McDonnell ruled that the state should count the votes even if they don’t include the witness’ address.

Different problems have cropped up in other states. Los Angeles County, for instance, sent some sample ballots overseas early, before the real ballots were even printed. Mixed in the packet voters received was a line in red print that read, “Some early mailings may not receive Official Ballot Card. If this applies to you, mark choices on Official Sample Ballot pages.” Yet Sandy Mansson of Stockholm, Sweden, simply threw her sample ballot away. “It was very strange, it was just not what you normally do,” says Mansson. Paul Drugan, spokesman for the Los Angeles County Board of Elections, defends the practice. “Our first priority is overseas and military voters, so we send them out first. For this election that was before actual ballots were printed,” he says. “Our instructions were clear.”

Other countries make it much easier for their citizens to vote from afar. In Sweden, Spain and Ireland, citizens can simply show up at their country’s embassy or consulate on election day and vote. “A Swede abroad just goes to their consulate and gets their ballot, it’s very simple and there isn’t very much red tape to it,” says Mansson, who also holds a Swedish passport. Why doesn’t the United States do this? “The federal government provides that states administer the elections, and the states have the procedures and legislation in place to carry out election processes,” explains Polli Brunelli, director of the Federal Voting Assistance Program. “Our embassies and consulates are federal facilities, and that’s where we provide information material and assistance to absentee voters.”

In a 2006 report by the United States Government Accountability Office, the GAO listed three main challenges that remained in providing assistance to

overseas voters and military: (1) simplifying and standardizing the time-consuming and multi-step absentee voting process, which includes different requirements and time frames for each state; (2) developing and implementing a secure electronic registration and voting system; and (3) proactively reaching all overseas citizens.

The challenges still exist. While reporting this story, I came across people on every continent but Antarctica who were frustrated. Voter outreach simply doesn't make it to everybody. Some people I spoke with were so confused by the process that they ended up not voting. An electronic voting system is in development, but Brunelli says that it may take "several years" before it can be used. The Federal Voting Overseas Program redesigned their website to ease the process and the Overseas Vote Foundation's website walks voters through the application process. But that's not enough to clear up the confusion.

Brunelli insists that things are moving forward: "Annually we send a legislative initiative package to the states and ask them to pass legislation, and many of the states have enacted that legislation, like ballot transit time of 45 days of more, electronic transmission of ballot materials," she says. "We're seeing more and more uniformity and consistency over the years."

Marks will be awarded for content, organization, grammar and appropriateness. Failure to follow the above instructions may result in a loss of marks.

Write your summary on ANSWER SHEET THREE.

Section B:

Some people think that power equals success while others think it's money that equals success. Do you agree that only people who earn a lot of money are successful? You are to write an essay of about 300 words on the topic given below.

DOES MONEY EQUAL SUCCESS?

In the first part of your writing you should present your thesis statement, and in the second part you should support the thesis statement with appropriate details. In the last part you should bring what you have written to a natural conclusion or a summary.

Marks will be awarded for content, organization, grammar and appropriateness. Failure to follow the above instructions may result in a loss of marks.

Write your composition on ANSWER SHEET THREE.