

Corrigé du concours commun CPGE EPITA/IPSA/ESME

QCM Réponses

1. C
2. B
3. A
4. C
5. A
6. A
7. D
8. B
9. B
10. D
11. D
12. C
13. D
14. A
15. D
16. D
17. D
18. A
19. B
20. B

Task 1 - 292 words (a bit too long)

In the article, In Praise of Mediocrity, the author Tim Wu begins with a reference to survival. In the past, man had to fight to survive. The development of civilization brought time for leisure for many people, who used this time for pleasurable activities called hobbies. The pursuit of excellence in hobbies has, however, disrupted this pleasure. Instead of giving people a break from work, hobbies are work now.

Trying to reach the highest level of a pursuit is fine, according to Wu, as long as it does not take away the joy of learning. In other words, the wrong attitude of the hobbyist could actually defeat the purpose of the hobby.

People are free to pursue happiness however they want. This can come with the right hobby on the condition people take time away from work to do their hobby. The author recommends this, even saying that the pursuit of excellence, if exaggerated, could become a threat to freedom itself.

In the second document, the author Adam Grant, a psychologist, thinks that students are wrong when they set university objectives too high. They try to get “straight As”, which means they get the highest grade possible in all their classes: A.

To illustrate, the author refers to a 1960s study that shows that the most creative architects had grades lower than their “less original peers”. The better grades tended to reflect conformity whereas the students with lower grades showed more curiosity and imagination. To prove his point, he cites examples of famous people like JK Rowling and Martin Luther King, who had low grade point averages in school.

Grant thinks students should be more adventurous in choosing classes and that employers should say clearly they value skills over straight As.

Task 2 - 302 words

NB. Comme indiqué dans les trois énoncés de cette partie, cette rédaction est totalement subjective.

I truly believe that one must be passionate about one’s work to feel good about it and so to be happy in life. I have had the good fortune to do different jobs in my life and I know that if I don’t have a fulfilling job, I will not be happy. Does that mean that work is important?

It does not mean that I am obsessed with a profession—I am not. I was always an average student but studies and work are not the same. I tend to be more serious at work than I was at studies because I find it more important and also perhaps because I like what I am doing. The level of my grades did not influence my studies or my career at all because the jobs I have done relied more on skills than on academic results—thankfully!

“You gain experience coping with failures and setbacks, which builds resilience,” writes Dr. Grant. I cannot agree more with him. I truly believe that failures make people what they are and can lead them to success. One cannot appreciate success if one has not experienced failure. Moreover, I am also absolutely sure that a person’s true nature can be seen only when they are confronted with failure.

I will conclude by explaining how I distinguish work from passion and hobby. Passion is a strong feeling of liking something; work is a duty one must do; a hobby is an activity one does for simple pleasure. Some people are lucky and manage to combine all three. Some have no passion and that is fine. It is important, however, to have a life outside of work. Hobbies or passion are important in one’s life in order to be completely fulfilled and happy. It is a question of balancing both.