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In response to the growing popularity of IELTS the Taipei Times, in conjunction with the British Council, brings our readers an IELTS preparation page which will run every Saturday on p14 of the Taipei Times. Each week will focus on a different area of the test. IELTS, the International English Language Testing System, is an upper-intermediate test of English communication. It can be used for university entry and emigration around the English-speaking world and beyond. It measures your ability to communicate across the four language skills — reading, writing, listening and speaking — through authentic challenging tasks. With over 700,000 people taking IELTS annually, it is one of the fastest growing English tests in the world, trusted and accepted by over 4,000 organisations and faculties worldwide, and is a great alternative to TOEFL.

IELTS Speaking/Reading

Talking about your likes and dislikes: Fashion

In Part 1 of the speaking test, you will often be asked about your personal tastes. This could include areas such as food, entertainment, books and so on. Remember to try and use a broad range of vocabulary to describe your preferences in detail.

Look at the following question and the three students' answers. Two are good, and one is weak.

Question: Tell me about the kinds of clothes you prefer.

▶ **Dave**

"I'm not really interested in fashion at all. I just wear whatever clothes I have lying around. I hardly spend any money trying to look good, so I guess you could say I like casual clothing. Sportswear, jeans — stuff like that. I never buy designer clothes."

▶ **Sarah**

"T-shirt! It is not formal. You can wear it anytime. It is not too warm or too cold, so you can wear it most of the year. You can buy it in many shops or at a market. And jeans! They are comfortable and you can wear them every day."

▶ **Jerry**

"I think it's really important to look your best, so I spend a lot of money on what I wear. I really like European designers — Pringle, Gucci, Prada ... that kind of thing. Dressing well lets people around you know how fashionable and stylish you are."



Dave and Jerry both answered well. Although they have very different opinions, they both clearly explained the style they like, gave reasons for their opinion and gave some examples. Sarah only mentioned two types of garments rather than a style, so her answer displayed a very limited range of language.

Reading Tasks

▶ **Choosing a heading**

Spend about one minute skimming through the article to get the main idea. When you have an idea of the general topic, try question 1.

▶ **Short answer questions**

Look at the question, and then scan the article for the key information.

▶ **Matching people to opinions**

Locate the people's names in the text. Then read what they say and check it against the quotes / opinions given

▶ **Globe-trotting:** The Rolling Stones' last globe-trotting tour took them to 23 countries in five continents.

Key Vocab.

▶ **Flamboyant:** Dancers in Rio's Carnival wear really flamboyant costumes.

▶ **Cult:** People disagree as to whether Scientology is a normal religion or a strange cult.

▶ **Emerging market:** Taiwan is an important emerging market for red wine.

▶ **Flagship store:** A lot of retailers have their Taiwan flagship stores in Taipei 101.

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- We offer free, professional and impartial support for studying in the UK.
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READING: FASHION

Luxury brand Chanel's choice of a Hong Kong carpark roof to launch a globe-trotting art exhibition raised some eyebrows, but the location reflected Asia's growing importance to the fashion world.

Chanel's flamboyant pony-tailed designer Karl Lagerfeld described the venue, beside the city's famous Victoria Harbour, as stunning. "Hong Kong is most beautiful at night," he said at the March 12 launch of the Mobile Art Museum, a moveable structure by architect Zaha Hadid that exhibits work by 20 artists based on Chanel's quilted handbags.

Vincent Shaw, Chanel's president for Asia Pacific, said Hong Kong was carefully chosen as the best place to launch the exhibition before it tours other fashion capitals around the world, including London and New York. "Asia has a huge population and an incredible liquidity. We believe that there's huge opportunity and Asia is going to be very successful," Shaw said.

Asian consumers account for more than 50 percent of the annual 80 billion dollar sector, more than the US and Europe combined, according to Radha Chadha co-author of the book *The Cult of the Luxury Brand*.

"The reason why Asians buy so many luxury brands is that in Asia you are what you wear. A luxury brand is a symbol that defines who you are and your social status," Chadha said. "People judge each other by what brand of

handbag they are carrying."

With Asia being the world's biggest market for western luxury goods, international brands are shifting focus from Paris, New York and London to the fast-growing emerging markets in the region. Major designer brands, including Christian Dior and Gucci, spent more than 60 million dollars on advertising in Hong Kong last year, 23 percent more than in 2006, according to a study by market researcher Nielsen.

On March 14 Hong Kong saw Louis Vuitton step up the battle for a bigger slice of the Asian market with the re-opening of its massive store after a year of renovation — more than double the size of its old shop. The store, across the harbour from Chanel's mobile art gallery, is Louis Vuitton's second-largest after its flagship building on the Champs Elysees in Paris.

Jean-Baptiste Debains, Louis Vuitton's president for Asia Pacific, said the company has recorded double-digit annual growth in Hong Kong. "The Hong Kong market is quite mature but is still growing. We have strong potential with the local customers because of the growth of wealth and the economy as a whole," he said.

Chadha predicts that Hong Kong's neighbour — mainland China, one of Louis Vuitton's fastest-growing markets — will overtake Japan as Asia's biggest luxury market in seven years, with India set to storm ahead too.

In China, Louis Vuitton already has 18

stores located in Beijing, Shanghai and in other smaller cities, with six more expected to open this year. "There are a lot of cities in China where we can have stores, maybe not today, maybe in three years," Debains said.

But it is not all about China. Vietnam has also become a focus for the company, with chief executive Yves Carcelle quoted in the *Financial Times* as saying revenues there grew more than 300 percent last year.

Louis Vuitton will also open stores this year in Indonesia, South Korea and Taiwan. Coach, the US maker of handbags and accessories, said it aims to grow its Chinese operation by more than 60 percent over the next few years and will open a global flagship store in Hong Kong this summer. The combination of mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan have the potential to become the third major market for Coach, following North America and Japan, it said.

Chadha warned the economic slowdown in the US, with fears the world's largest economy is slipping into recession, was likely to hit luxury goods consumption. But Louis Vuitton's Debains said growth in Asia looked unstoppable. "I feel there's a stronger dynamism and energy in Asia. Maybe that is because we have the economic growth that creates the kind of spirit that pushes people to go forward," he said. (AFP)

Reading Tasks

▶ 1. What is the best title for the article?

- A. Asian designers at the forefront of fashion
- B. Designer brands battle for a slice of booming Asian market
- C. Hong Kong to become global fashion capital

Choose NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS OR A NUMBER from the passage for each answer.

- ▶ 2. What was the venue for the launch of Chanel's Art Exhibition in Hong Kong?
- ▶ 3. How many people's work was displayed at the exhibition?
- ▶ 4. Globally, how much is the high fashion sector worth per year?
- ▶ 5. By what percentage did spending on advertising in Hong Kong by major designer brands increase from 2006 to 2007?
- ▶ 6. How long had Hong Kong's Louis Vuitton store been closed before it reopened?

Match each opinion with the correct person.

People

- 7. Vincent Shaw _____
- 8. Radha Chadha _____
- 9. Jean-Baptiste Debains _____
- 10. Yves Carcelle _____

Quotes/opinions

- A. Lots of Chinese cities will be ready for stores in a few years time.
- B. Revenue in another Asian market tripled last year.
- C. Asia will be successful due to the large number of people and money.
- D. In Asia, people judge you by what you wear.

Answers (Answers in brackets are also acceptable)

- 1. B - it is not about Asian designers (A) and it doesn't only focus on Hong Kong (B)
- 2. A carpark roof
- 3. 20 (twenty)
- 4. \$80 billion (eighty billion dollars)
- 5. 23% (twenty three percent)
- 6. a year (12 months / one year, etc.)
- 7. C Asia has a huge population and an incredible liquidity
- 8. D ... in Asia you are what you wear
- 9. A ... There are a lot of cities in China where we can have stores ... maybe in three years.
- 10. B ... saying revenues there grew more than 300 percent last year.



PHOTO: CATHERINE THOMAS, TAIPEI TIMES

