

Modern inventions have speeded up people's lives amazingly. Motor-cars cover a hundred miles in little more than an hour, aircraft cross the world inside a day, while computers operate at lightning speed. Indeed, this love of speed seems never-ending. Every year motor-cars are produced which go even faster and each new computer boasts of saving precious seconds in handling tasks. Then there is the speed with which we access information wherever we are. Pocket computers and mobile phones enable us to log on to news or contact our friends in seconds, even from some mountain top.

2 All this saves time, but at a price. When we lose or gain half a day in speeding across the world in an aeroplane, our bodies tell us so. We get the uncomfortable feeling known as jet-lag; our bodies feel that they have been left behind in another time zone. Again, spending too long at computers results in painful wrists and fingers. Mobile phones also have their dangers, according to some scientists; too much use may transmit harmful radiation into our brains, a consequence we do not like to contemplate.

3 Our behaviour, also, has felt the impact of modern technology. People seem to be in a rush, and increasingly impatient. Automatic doors on lifts never open quickly enough for us and we tap our feet impatiently if our computers take an extra few seconds to access information on the Internet. Even some of our clothes reflect this impatience, for we need to acquire the right 'look' as quickly as possible. Who wants to wear denim jeans as stiff as tin when you can buy them pre-washed, pre-faded and maybe pre-patched at the knees?

4 The obsession with saving time results in many people trying to imitate computers in an effort to handle several tasks simultaneously – multi-tasking, as it is called. They talk to somebody on the telephone, listen to somebody else nearby, and look at a computer screen, all at the same time. Frequently, the efficiency of their work suffers. Speed of thinking, too, is often confused with intelligence itself. The student who takes pains to weigh up a question before answering will not be considered as smart as those who snap their fingers and glibly claim they know the answer.

Passage B

- 1 As an athletics coach, I constantly look for promising athletes and Zang Shu had caught my attention. He was powerfully built, but could be ruthless, determined to win by any means, foul or fair. He obviously needed a lesson and so I explained to two of my athletes, Chris and Lee Chang, what I wanted. Initially they protested but then they saw things from my angle. 5
- 2 Next day, Zang accompanied them on a trial run. Chris and Lee soon took the lead, with Zang just behind them. As Zang tried to overtake, Lee instantly slowed down, letting Zang move up behind Chris. Then Lee came up alongside Zang so that he was now boxed in between Chris and Lee. Desperately Zang tried to fight his way through, shoving Lee to one side, then barging into Chris. The demon within him had taken over; speed and victory were all that mattered. But Chris would not be shouldered out of the way. A flying elbow from him caught Zang in the stomach and that effectively ended the race for Zang. 15

- 3 Afterwards I told Zang he had not impressed me. 'But coach!' he pleaded, 'Chris fouled me! He -' 'He *ubat*?' I demanded fiercely. 'Oh,' Zang said, 'oh.' His eyes widened and he hung his head. 20
The young man was no fool. I was pretty sure the lesson had been learned.
- 4 Our first athletics match was approaching and I had already lost a good runner through injury. I decided to take a gamble on Zang. 'Can you help me out?' I began, but got no further. Zang jumped 25
with excitement. 'Do you mean I'm in the team?' 'Yes,' I replied, 'but let's hope we've learned a lesson,' and left him looking quietly at me.
- 5 On the day of the match I picked Zang to run in the 4 x 400 30
metre relay race, as last runner. Our first runner made a splendid start, handing over his baton half a metre or so ahead of his competitors. The next two laps followed much the same pattern, though our third runner could not quite hold on to the lead. It would be all down to Zang; victory here would clinch the match for us. 35
- 6 Zang took off after the leading runner with a fury that made me hold my breath. Surely he couldn't sustain such frenzied energy. Had his destructive demon taken over? Victory, at any cost: was this the thought driving him on? He caught up with the leading 40
runner as they left the second bend of the track, and they raced shoulder to shoulder down the stretch ahead. They came to the last bend, but both were going too fast to take it safely, and Zang was on the outside. Why didn't the idiot slow down?
- 7 Then I saw something no-one else would have noticed. For a split 45
second Zang's head jerked back slightly, as though a thought had suddenly thrust itself into his brain. At the same moment he swung wide, shunning his opponent as if he had the plague. Zang's momentum carried him into the iron railings at the side of the track. He had just about stumbled into his stride again when the crowd came to its feet with a great groan. Zang's opponent had 50
leaned into the bend too heavily, lost his footing and tumbled to the ground. Fate had delivered victory to Zang, but only I knew what he must have been feeling: the victory was over himself, not just his opponent.

From Passage A:

From paragraph 1:

1. (a) The author makes new computers seem proud of what they can do. Write down the **one** word in the paragraph which makes them seem proud. [1]

- (b) Technology enables us to log on to news 'even from some mountain top'. What is the author emphasising in the phrase 'even from some mountain top'? [1]

From paragraph 2:

2. Explain in your own words what the author means when he writes 'a consequence we do not like to contemplate'. [2]

From paragraph 4:

3. The 'obsession with saving time' appears to the author to be self-defeating for many people. Why is this? [1]

4. What criticism is the author making of students who 'snap their fingers and glibly claim they know the answer'? [1]

from paragraph 6:

5. Cultivating the land or tending crops might be considered an attractive way of life. Explain fully in your own words what the attraction could be. [2]

From paragraph 8:

6. 'saving minutes off journeys by road'. What does this suggest about the time saved by a motor-car? [1]

From passage B:

From paragraph 1:

7. What at first made the athletics coach think Zang Shu was a promising athlete? [1]

From paragraph 2:

8. Explain briefly how the coach taught Zang a lesson. [1]

From paragraph 3:

9. Zang 'bung his head'. Explain fully what you think made him do this. [2]

From paragraph 6:

10. (a) The coach was afraid that Zang was once again in the grip of his 'destructive demon'. Select and write down two separate words which create this picture of Zang as he started running. [2]

- (b) Why did Zang's speed seem particularly foolish in the last stages of the race? [2]

From paragraph 7:

11. Zang's head 'jerked back'. What is suggested by this description of Zang's head movement? [1]

12. Explain fully why Zang's victory over himself was especially creditable. [2]

From Passage A and Passage B:

13. For each of the following words, give one word or phrase (of not more than seven words) which has the same meaning that the word has in the passage.

From Passage A:

1. impact (line 19)
2. primitive (line 50)
3. banished (line 61)

From Passage B:

4. angle (line 6)
5. effectively (line 16)