



CONCOURS ARTS ET MÉTIERS ParisTech - ESTP - POLYTECH

Épreuve de Langue Vivante MP - PC - PSI

Durée 3 h

Si, au cours de l'épreuve, un candidat repère ce qui lui semble être une erreur d'énoncé, d'une part il le signale au chef de salle, d'autre part il le signale sur sa copie et poursuit sa composition en indiquant les raisons des initiatives qu'il est amené à prendre.

Pour cette épreuve, l'usage des machines (calculatrices, traductrices,...) et de dictionnaires est interdit.

Les différents sujets sous forme d'un fascicule sont présentés de la manière suivante :

Pages 2 à 4	Allemand
Pages 5 à 7	Anglais
Pages 8 à 11	Arabe
Pages 12 à 14	Espagnol
Pages 15 à 17	Italien
Pages 18 à 20	Portugais

Vous rédigerez dans la langue choisie et en 400 mots une synthèse des documents proposés. Vous indiquerez avec précision à la fin de votre synthèse le nombre de mots qu'elle comporte. Un écart de 10% en plus ou en moins sera accepté. Votre synthèse comportera un titre comptabilisé dans le nombre de mots.

Le candidat a obligation de traiter le sujet dans la langue qu'il a choisie au moment de son inscription au concours.

Les candidats qui ne composeraient pas dans la langue choisie au moment de leur inscription se verront attribuer la note zéro.

Tournez la page S.V.P.

Il est interdit aux candidats de signer leur composition ou d'y mettre un signe quelconque pouvant indiquer sa provenance.

ANGLAIS

Vous rédigerez en Anglais et en 400 mots une synthèse des documents proposés. Vous indiquerez avec précision à la fin de votre synthèse le nombre de mots qu'elle comporte. Un écart de 10% en plus ou en moins sera accepté. Votre synthèse comportera un titre comptabilisé dans le nombre de mots.

DOCUMENT 1

America's Elite : a Hereditary Meritocracy

Before the word meritocracy was coined by Michael Young, a British sociologist and institutional entrepreneur, in the 1950s there was a different name for the notion that power, success and wealth should be distributed according to talent and diligence, rather than by accident of birth: American. For sure, America has always had rich and powerful families, from the floor of the Senate to the boardrooms of the steel industry. But it has also held more fervently than any other country the belief that all comers can penetrate that elite as long as they have talent, perseverance and gumption¹.

Compared to those of days past, [today's elite] is by and large more talented, better schooled, harder working (and more fabulously remunerated) and more diligent in its parental duties. It is not a place where one easily gets by on birth or connections alone. At the same time it is widely seen as increasingly hard to get into.

Some self-perpetuation by elites is unavoidable; the children of America's top dogs benefit from nepotism just as those in all other societies do. But something else is now afoot. More than ever before, America's elite is producing children who not only get ahead, but deserve to do so: they meet the standards of meritocracy better than their peers, and are thus worthy of the status they inherit.

This is partly the result of various admirable aspects of American society: the willingness of people to give money and time to their children's schools; a reluctance to impose a uniform model of education across the country; competition between universities to build the most lavish facilities. Such traits are hard to object to, and even if one does object they are yet harder to do anything about. In aggregate, though, they increase the chances of wealthy parents passing advantage on to their children. In the long run that could change the way the country works, the way it thinks about itself, and the way that people elsewhere judge its claim to be an exceptional beacon² of opportunity. (...)

The educational benefits of being born to wealthy parents are already clear in toddlers. Families which are used to and eager for success try to build on them at kindergarten. Competition for private kindergarten places among high-status New Yorkers is farcically intense.

Once children enter the public school system—which about 90% of them do—the advantages of living in a well-off neighbourhood kick in. America is unusual in funding its public schools through property taxes. States have a floor price for the education of each child, but parents can vote to pay more local tax in order to top this up, and frequently do. (...) The result is that America is one of only three advanced countries that spend more on richer pupils than poor ones, according to the OECD (...).

More than 50 years ago Michael Young warned that the incipient meritocracy to which he had given a name could be as narrow and pernicious, in its way, as aristocracies of old. In America some academics and thinkers on the left are coming to similar conclusions. Lani Guinier of Harvard speaks for many when she rails against the "testocracy" that now governs America. Once progressives saw academic testing as a way of breaking down old structures of privilege; there is now a growing sense that it simply serves to advantage those who have been schooled to excel in such situations.

Adapted from "America's new aristocracy" *The Economist* Jan 24 2015

¹ boldness ; initiative ; guts (*colloquial*)

² a source of guidance or inspiration (literally = a signal fire; a signal light; a lighthouse)

DOCUMENT 2

Is the New Meritocracy a Sham?

Although the number of working-class students going to university rose under New Labour, social mobility actually decreased between 1997 and 2010. Five years before Blair came to power, polytechnics³ had morphed into universities. But the change was more semantic than real. Employers could still distinguish between degrees from traditional universities and born-again former polytechnics. The old hierarchies were still in place. It simply resulted in academic inflation – a new currency came into being and the market readjusted itself to its old ways. So employers demanded masters and PhDs rather than just a common degree. And whereas the privileged few who went to university in the old days did so for free, in 1998 Blair introduced tuition fees for the many who now went. The result? Working-class people had to incur tens of thousands of pounds of debt to qualify for jobs that previously didn't need a degree. Blair's experiment might have been well intentioned, but ultimately it helped increase the gap between rich and poor.

(...) Lee Elliot Major of the Sutton Trust talks of an academic arms race. "Every time opportunities widen for those from less privileged backgrounds, the middle classes find some way of defining merit to their advantage again. Never underestimate the skills and the tenacity of the middle classes to reinforce their privileged position in society. So there was a university expansion, but if you look at the more prestigious universities, there's still a stark gap in terms of those from more advantaged backgrounds versus those from disadvantaged backgrounds. And increasingly you're seeing post-graduate degrees."

It is 11 years since the Sutton Trust published its headline-making report about social mobility. "It shocked the Blair government, showing that not only had social mobility declined over recent generations, but that we have lower social mobility than most other developed countries," Elliot Major says. "Two factors outlined in that original research were educational inequality and income inequality; what happens inside the school gates and what happens outside them. And those two things interact and reinforce each other despite all the educational reforms. The challenge we face is deeply profound."

The Sutton Trust has discovered that one statistic remains virtually unchanged in its 19-year existence – roughly half the elites among the professions were privately educated – and this despite the fact that only 7% of pupils attend private schools. "That means we are missing out on a lot of talent from the 93% that are still at state schools," Elliot Major says. (...)

Today, my children's generation are, by and large, better educated, poorer and less job-secure than my generation. We hear about their latest startups, their brilliant multitasking, the fact that they don't want to waste their life working in one boring field like their parents. And, yes, there might be some truth there, but it also reeks of desperation; of making the best of a world without jobs; where everybody, bar the elite of the elite who are wealthier than ever, belongs to the precariat.

Adapted from Simon Hattenstone *The Guardian* 10 August 2016

DOCUMENT 3

Rise of the Meritocracy?

Set in 2034, [Michael Young's] novel [*The Rise of the Meritocracy*] takes place after a social movement has succeeded in replacing the aristocracy with a system of advancement based solely on individual merit. Entrance to higher education in this new meritocracy, and to any position of status in society, is based on a simple formula: Merit = IQ + Effort. When an individual's merit is accurately assessed, there are no longer high-merit folks languishing in the lower social classes, nor are there any stupid, lazy people sneaking by in the upper classes just because they were privileged by birth.

³ tertiary education teaching institutions in the UK ; their original focus was applied education for professional work and professional practice and their original roots concentrated on engineering and science

Technology advances in this futuristic society mean that IQ and Effort are tested more and more accurately, at younger and younger ages. This purports⁴ to be a much fairer system, though when taken to its logical conclusion the results include children being taken from their parents at birth for placement in merit-based social classes, and a social division of such proportions that class warfare is imminent.

Though fictional and humorous, Young's meritocracy raises issues that should be taken seriously. How does a society measure merit? In the U.S., we tend to consider ability and aptitude as the primary indicators of merit. These factors, however, are so wrapped up with one's socioeconomic status and family background, that in some ways those are the factors actually being measured. Family background, as used in the aristocratic sense, is reframed as objective merit, when in fact it is largely still a measure of privilege. The difference is that this measure is seen as objective and fair, often by the privileged and underprivileged alike. As the protagonist in [*The Rise of the Meritocracy*] repeatedly and staunchly defends the meritocracy, (...) Young recalls that the satirical subtext was meant to convey something quite different: "If the rich and powerful were encouraged by the general culture to believe that they fully deserved all they had, how arrogant they could become, and, if they were convinced it was all for the common good, how ruthless in pursuing their own advantage."

Adapted from Ryan Wells *The Huffington Blog* 31 August 2012

⁴ to purport = to claim