

**Unit
4**

Speaking Task

(1) Do you think the number of students in your college with summer jobs is changing in a similar way to that shown in Figure 1? Please explain.

Figure 1 reveals some interesting insights into the number of students of Hampton University who find summer jobs. In the first place, there has been a drastic fall in the numbers during the past fifty years. This decline was particularly sharp between 1994 and 2014. Since then, the numbers have leveled off, and there has been only a slight fall from around 33 to 32 percent. This figure is far lower, however, than the 45 percent employed in 2004 and the 56 percent employed in 1974. I think this might also be the case in my own college because I don't know a lot of students who work over the summer. Many of my classmates use the time to improve particular skills such as English or computer skills.

(2) Do you like to work during summer vacation, or do you prefer to take a break?

Of course, I like to take a break during my summer vacation. However, I do not take the whole of the vacation time off, and I always find work for at least part of the time between semesters. There are two main reasons for this. The first is financial. I think the cost of living is rising in Taiwan, and I know that if I want to enjoy my life during term-time, I must prepare for it by earning some money during the break. The second reason that I choose to work during my vacations is that I hate to be idle. Even in quite low level jobs, I can learn something about serving customers, and as I plan to work in business after I graduate, I take my summer jobs as opportunities to learn something for my future.

(3) In your opinion, is it a good idea for students to take on jobs during their summer vacation? Why or why not?

Yes. Partly for the reasons I have just given, I think it is very important for students to accept jobs during their summer vacation. Okay, we all need a break, but not one lasting two months. That's much too long. As young people, we have a lot to learn about the working world. And I think summer vacation, when we are not burdened with coursework, provides the perfect opportunity. I, personally, have learned so much from my vacation jobs that I would urge anyone in the same position to be proactive and go out and find employment during their summer break. Even voluntary work, if it is something related to your interest or future career, will present you with so many opportunities to learn.

Suggested Response Strategies

This speaking task focuses on students' summer jobs. According to the task instructions, the following requirements should be addressed in sequence:

- Question (1) requires summarizing the changes presented in the chart and comparing them with one's own experience. The first part of the sample answer, which summarizes the chart data, has two notable strengths: (1) the opening sentence, "Figure 1 ... summer jobs," clearly indicates the topic of the chart; (2) the second sentence, "... a drastic fall ...," and the fifth sentence, "This figure is far lower," echo and reinforce each other, making it easier for the listener to grasp the key points.
- Question (2) asks students to state their preference on whether to work or rest during the summer. Note that the sample answer provides two reasons to support the stated preference.
- Question (3) requires students to extend their personal preference and express their viewpoint on whether summer jobs benefit students. The sample answer provides a more complete explanation of the benefits of summer work.

Writing Task

The line graph shows the employment rate of Jin Tai University graduates from 2018 to 2023. Overall, around 75% to 82% of Jin Tai graduates are in employment, with a steady increase from 2020 to 2023.

The graph also reveals that graduates who took advantage of Jin Tai's Professional Development courses have been more successful in finding employment. This suggests that these courses are very helpful to students, a view reinforced by a Jin Tai professor. But Greg, a former student, says the courses may help graduates land a job but do not adequately prepare them for the real working world.

I worry that I might experience similar emotions to those Greg describes when I enter the workplace. Once I have a full-time job, I will lose my freedom. Also, I will face a steep learning curve before feeling totally comfortable in the office environment.

Nevertheless, I have a lot to offer a company. That is why I am looking forward to setting out on my career path after graduation.

Suggested Response Strategies

This writing task focuses on examining whether career preparation courses offered by universities are helpful for students' future careers. The writing materials include two types of sources: a line graph and opinions from interviews of a teacher and a student. According to the task instructions, the following requirements should be addressed in sequence:

- Question (1) requires summarizing the key information from the line graph and the interview data.
- Question (2) asks students to express their personal opinions on the topic of workplace adjustment.

The sample answer is organized into four paragraphs, and the author uses the following organizational strategies to make the essay more complete and coherent:

- Paragraph 1 explains changes in Jin Tai University graduates' employment rates based on the line graph. The purpose is to provide essential background information.
- Paragraph 2 integrates the line graph and interview data to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of career preparation courses.
- Paragraph 3 focuses on the difficulties faced by university graduates when entering the workforce, and, drawing on personal experience and observations, presents the author's own opinions.
- Paragraph 4 concludes the essay by summarizing the author's attitude toward his/her future career path.