

About *21st Century Cup National English Speaking Competition* organized by *China Daily 21st Century English Newspapers*

China Daily is the first and only national English-language newspaper group in modern China since 1949. **China Daily** is well aware of the severe competition and increasing importance of international exchange in the world market. It believes that a pool of high quality foreign language talents is the key for China to enter into the international arena and in turn for the world to understand modern China. In 1993, **China Daily**, in response to the demand of a broad base of English learners, founded the **21st Century English Newspapers** prior to China's bid to organize the 2008 Olympic Games. This weekly publication focuses on reporting international affairs and providing English learning guidance. It creates an ideal learning platform to nurture English-speaking talents in China.

The *21st Century Cup National English Speaking Competition* (the competition) was founded by *China Daily* in 1996. With an aim to encourage sustainable development of the English language teaching profession and modernization of Chinese people, the competition has strong support from the State Council Information Office and Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. Since then, the competition has been designated as the official tournament to select Chinese candidates to participate in the annual International Public Speaking Competition organized by the English Speaking Union.

The competition is an influential international event for academic exchange. The judging panel consists of language experts of the world's leading English teaching institutions, and professors of renowned universities in the UK and the US. Since 2002, the 21st Century International English Language Teaching Forum has been organized concurrently with the competition. Representatives from leading international institutions such as the English Speaking Union (ESU), Educational Testing Network Service (ETS), the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES) and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) participate in symposia to promote the English teaching profession in China.

So far, the *21st Century Cup National English Speaking Competition* has been successfully held in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Nanjing, Wuhan, Shenzhen and Macau, over a period of 11 years. With its tight-knit organizational structure and strict governing rules, the competition is the most reputable English speaking contest in China. The outstanding performance of the contestants has gained great attention inside and outside the country, thereby fulfilling our goals in meeting the highest standard of English speaking and education.

Over the years, the *21st Century Cup* has successfully nurtured a group of English speaking elites. For instance, Ms Liu Xin (劉欣), champion of first *21st Century Cup*, was the overall champion in the International Public Speaking Competition held in 1996 in London. She received high commendations from the Ministry of Education and related officers-in-chief and she is currently the host of CCTV Overseas Centre English Channel. The champions of 1999 and 2002, Mr. Cai Li (蔡力) and Mr. Zheng Yong (張勇), were

named “The Best Non-native Speaker” in the international tournament in London. Last year, Mr. Xia Peng (夏鹏), the overall champion of the *21st Century Cup 2005*, won the overall championship and the “Most Popular” award in London. He was later invited by Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh for a special treat in July. Their brilliant performances have demonstrated the strong English speaking skills of Chinese students.

About the Tournament

Stage 1: essay competition preliminaries

- Eligibility: university students nominated by their own universities
- Schedule: June – September
- Format: each contestant submits a 500-word essay and an audio tape of their speeches. Oral test via telephone by judging panel.

Stage 2: regional contest

- Eligibility: 30 winners in each region from stage 1. A total of 120 candidates will be selected in 4 regions.
- Schedule: October - November
- Venue:
 - Northern region: Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, Shanxi, Heilongjiang, Liaoning, Jilin, Inner Mongolia
 - Eastern region: Shanghai, Zhejiang, Anhui, Jiangsu, Shandong, Henan
 - Southern region: Hunan, Hubei, Jiangxi, Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan
 - Western region: Xinjiang, Tibet, Qinghai, Ningxia, Shanxi, Gansu, Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, Chongqing
- Format: prepared speech, impromptu speech, Q&A

Stage 3: national tournament

- Eligibility: 10 mainland winners from last year’s competition, 40 winners from regional contests in stage 2, and 10 candidates from Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and other Asian countries
- Schedule: March or April
- Venue: a selected major city in China
- Format: semi-final and final in 3 days, including prepared speech, impromptu speech and Q&A

About the Prizes

Major Prizes

- Grand champion, first and second runners-up, first-prize (7 winners): study trips to UK, Australia or Singapore
- Second prize (15 winners): cash prize of 1,500 yuan
- Third prize (35 winners): cash prize of 1,000 yuan

Special Prizes

- The Most Promising Speaker Award: a scholarship to take part in the annual International Public Speaking Competition in London

- The Lenovo Creativity Award: cash prize of 3,000 yuan
- The Most Humorous Speaker Award: cash prize of 2,000 yuan
- The Most Graceful Speaker Award: cash prize 2,000 yuan
- The Outstanding Foreign Speaker Award: 2,000 yuan

Prizes for tutors

Tutors of the grand champion, first runner-up and second runner-up will be invited to attend the annual IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language) Conference to be held in 2007 in UK. Tutors of 4th and 5th place winners will be sponsored by Macquarie University for a one-week study tour to Sydney.

All contestants and their tutors receive certificates and book prizes.

About The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Established in 1963, **The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)** is well known as a leading comprehensive research university in Asia. The current student enrolment is over 19,000. Its faculties of arts, business administration, education, engineering, medicine, science, social science, and the school of law offer more than 300 undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

CUHK is known for the quality of its teaching and research. Its faculty includes two Nobel Laureates. Steeped in its bilingual and bicultural heritage, **CUHK** has a forward-looking international vision and takes upon itself to contribute to the synthesis of Chinese and western cultures. Many overseas and mainland students are drawn to **CUHK**, contributing to a multi-cultural campus that broadens the horizon of local students as well. **CUHK** also runs exchange programmes with over 180 universities around the world.

CUHK has the vision to be a leading university in China and the region, and the international university of choice in East Asia, by striving for excellence in teaching and research, providing education of the best quality, and nurturing a large pool of talent.

About China Daily / 21st Century English Newspapers

Founded in May 5, 2003, the **21st Century English Newspapers** is a popular English weekly offering a broad base of English readers knowledge of international affairs and English learning guidance. It is the national English news publication with the highest circulation and coverage in the mainland.

The **21st Century English Newspapers** was launched by **China Daily**, the market leader in China English Newspaper series. **China Daily** is the first and only national English-language newspaper group in the mainland with circulation in more than 150 countries and regions. It is an important source of information on China's politics, economy, law, military affairs, culture, sports and social life. As the country's most quoted English newspaper, its stories are frequently picked up by international wire services, newspapers, as well as radio and TV stations. **China Daily** is widely recognized as one of the most authoritative English publications in China.

21st Century English Newspapers has actively promoted media education and provided English learning guidance. It has an average circulation of 120,000 per issue, the largest circulation and coverage in China. **21st Century English Newspapers** is designed to foster an ideal English learning environment and nurture English speaking talents in more than 500 universities. With a solid 13-year history, the **21st Century** is tailored for the unique needs of English learners in China. It widely adopts the content of major international media, providing timely and comprehensive coverage of the latest news and information about culture, English learning, and overseas studies. It has won the support of college students, teachers, and young executives.

The weekly established **21st Century Teens** in 2001 to meet the needs of a younger set of students. It is available in senior and junior editions. In June 2004, **21st Century** established the **ELT Review**. It covers the latest information on English teaching events and services, with an aim to establish an authoritative communication platform for English learners and teachers as well as a window to exchange ideas with the outside ELT world. Since then, **21st Century** has become a popular English series newspaper group catering to the needs of a wide audience at various age groups. Its circulation has reached 1.2 million.

21st Century has established a strong distribution network with more than 500 universities across the country. Besides, it has established experimental English reading bases in more than 200 strategic high schools. Each year, it organizes a series of English learning activities, such as speaking competitions, essay writing competitions, forums and training seminars. This makes **21st Century** a centre of international cultural exchange and educational services.