

Assessment framework of the HKDSE English Language Examination

1. Mode of Assessment

The public assessment of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) English language Exam consists of a public examination component and a school-based assessment component.

A. Public Examination component

In English Language, the mark of the public examination component is worth 85% of the final subject mark.

Paper	Weighting	Duration
Paper 1 Reading	20%	1.5 hours
Paper 2 Writing	25%	2 hours
Paper 3 Listening & Integrated Skills	30%	About 2 hours
Paper 4 Speaking	10%	About 20 minutes

Paper 1 Reading (20%)

- There are two parts in this paper: Part A Compulsory and Part B.
- In each part, candidates read one to two texts and answer a range of questions including Multiple-choice items, matching, short responses and more extended open-ended responses, etc.
- For Part B, candidates choose either Section 1 (easier) or Section 2 (more difficult).
- The highest level attainable by attempting Part A and Part B Section 1 is Level 4, whereas that by attempting Part A and Part B Section 2 is 5**.

Paper 2 Writing (25%)

- There are two parts in this paper: Part A (10%) and Part B (15%).
- For Part A, candidates complete a short, guided task in about 200 words.
- Part B involves an extended and more open-ended writing task in about 400 words. Candidates choose one out of eight questions, each based on one of the eight modules in the Elective Part of the curriculum.

Paper 3 Listening and Integrated Skills (30%)

- There are two parts in this paper: Part A Compulsory and Part B.
- Part A is compulsory, consisting of a variety of theme-based listening tasks.
- For Part B, candidates choose either Section 1 (easier) or Section 2 (more difficult). Both sections consist of a variety of integrated listening / reading and writing tasks based on the same theme. At least one of the writing tasks involves an extended piece of writing in 100-200 words.
- The highest level attainable by attempting Part A and Part B Section 1 is Level 4, whereas that by attempting Part A and Part B Section 2 is 5**.

Paper 4 Speaking (10%)

- There are two parts in this paper: Part A Group Discussion and Part B Individual Response.
- For Part A, candidates will have 10 minutes for preparation, during which they will read a given short text and sometimes visuals related to the group discussion task. The text and visuals may include advertisements, film reviews, articles, letters, news reports, etc.
- In Part B, each candidate will respond individually to one or more questions based on the group discussion task.

B. School-based Assessment (SBA) component

The component is compulsory for all school candidates. There are two parts to this component, contributing to 15% of the final subject mark.

Part	Weighting	Assessment types
Part A	10%	Group discussion or individual presentation
Part B	5%	Group interaction or individual presentation

Part A (10%)

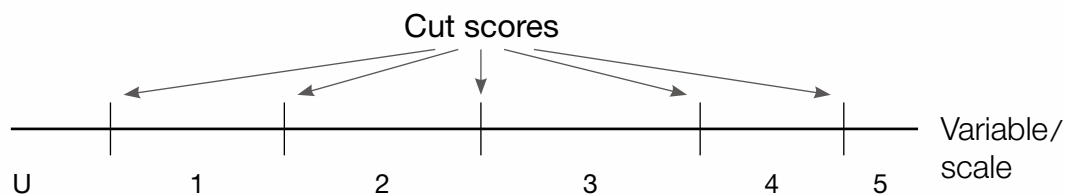
- Part A is a reading / reviewing programme, in which students are required to:
 - read / view four texts, at least one each from the four categories, namely print fiction, print non-fiction, no-print fiction and no-print no-fiction;
 - respond to and reflect on the texts;
 - participate in group discussions or individual presentations.
- Assessments will be made based on students' oral performance.
- Two assessments will be conducted in S5 and S6 and two marks, one based on a group discussion and the other on an individual presentation, will be reported.

Part B (5%)

- Part B consists of a group interaction or an individual presentation related to the modules in the Elective Part of the curriculum.
- The assessment will be based on the students' oral performance, focusing on their ability to reflect on, use and talk about the knowledge, skills and experience they have gained in the Elective Module(s).

2. Standards-referenced Reporting

The HKDSE makes use of standards-referenced reporting, which means candidates' levels of performance will be reported with reference to a set of standards as defined by cut scores on the variable or scale for a given subject. The following diagram represents the set of standards for a given subject:

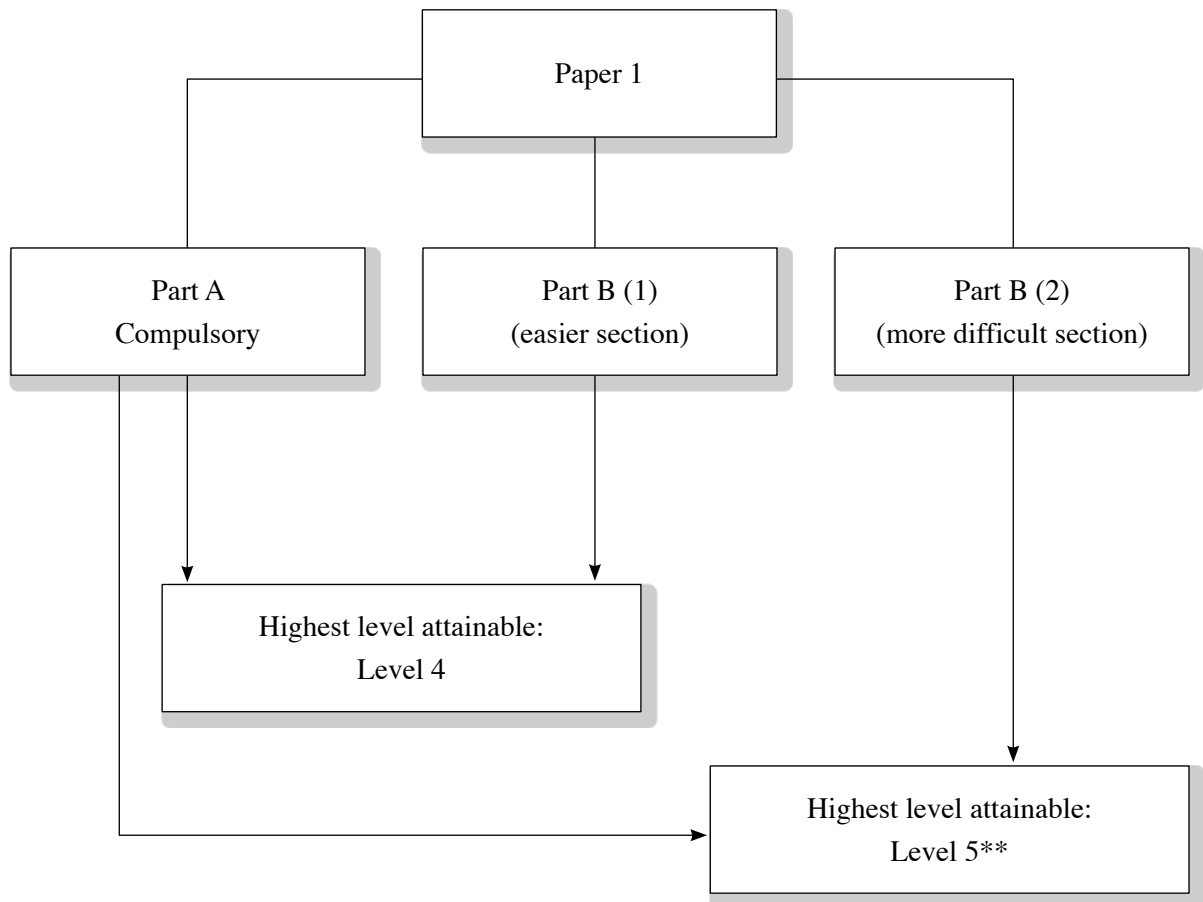


Within the context of the HKDSE there will be five cut scores, which will be used to distinguish five levels of performance (1–5), with 5 being the highest. The Level 5 candidates with the best performance will have their results annotated with the symbols ** and the next top group with the symbol *. A performance below the threshold cut score for Level 1 will be labelled as 'Unclassified' (U).

Exam Strategies

Paper 1: Reading

The examination format for Paper 1 can be shown as follows:



Essential Reading Skills

Skill development

Practise both skimming and scanning so that you can get what you want from a text quickly.

In an examination, time is limited. Effective reading skills, which helps you tackle the questions more efficiently, are essential. This section provides you with some basic but crucial reading skills for the exam.

Skimming and scanning

Skimming and scanning are two very important skills that help you get the gist of a passage in a short time.

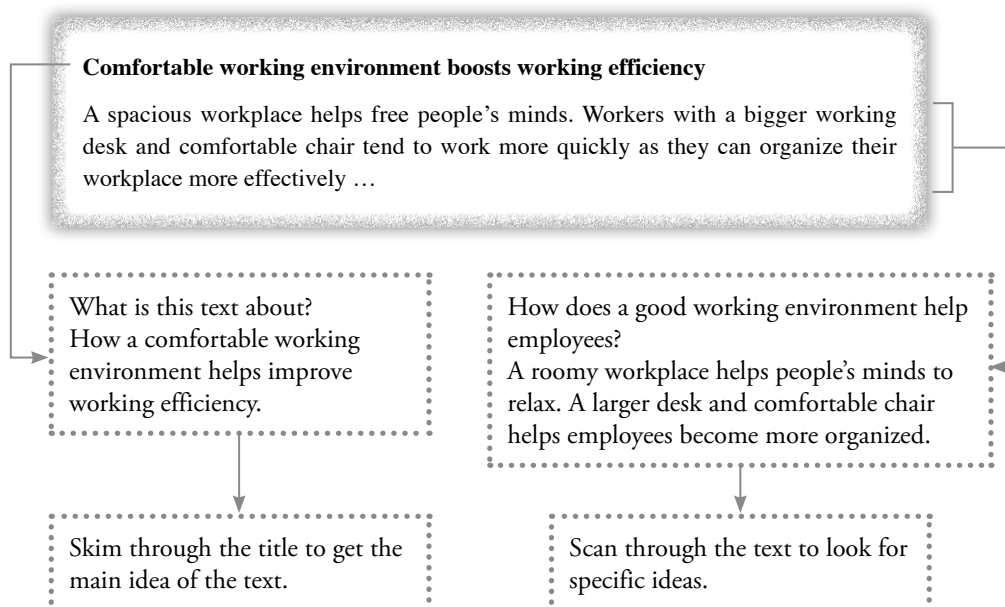
Skimming

- Skimming means you read only the title, subtitle, subheadings, topic sentences, and illustrations of a text to quickly get the main ideas of it.
- You also skim for specific information, e.g. dates, names and places, or review graphs, tables, and charts.
- As you do not need to read through the text word by word, it enables you to get an idea of a text in a very short time.

Scanning

- Scanning means you concentrate on looking for a target piece of information.
- Your eyes scan through the text quickly to identify the specific keywords or ideas.
- You may make use of the author's use of organizer, e.g. numbers, letters, steps or signpost words. Examples of signpost words include *first, firstly, next, then, after that / this, following that / this, finally*.

Demonstration



Strategies

Always look for the topic sentence because it states the main idea of the paragraph.

Identifying topic sentences

You have to look for the topic sentence of each paragraph when skimming. Topic sentences enable you to predict the content, follow the development of ideas, and get the writer's tone in a short time.

How to identify topic sentences

- The topic sentence is usually located at the beginning of a paragraph. It is often the first sentence.
- The topic sentence is always followed by explanation and examples.

Demonstration

With the inevitable widespread of Internet usage, many people, especially young people, find it difficult to control the time they spend online. We can refer this as Internet addiction. These people may find themselves compulsively surfing for long hours ... Basically, they detach themselves from their real social life.

The example above shows that sometimes a paragraph begins with an introductory sentence, followed by a sentence that is about the rest of the paragraph. Thus, the main topic is the second sentence.

Internet addiction is a serious problem with many side effects. First of all, it affects people's daily life ... Secondly, it affects people's health ...

The example above shows that the topic sentence is in the first line of the paragraph, which is followed by explanations and examples.

Identifying themes and facts

Thematic and factual questions are the two question types you may have to tackle in the HKDSE exam. Below are the differences between the two:

Skill development

Factual questions require more in-depth reading than thematic questions. Nonetheless, skimming and scanning are both useful in helping you tackle both types of questions.

	Thematic Questions	Factual questions
What would be asked?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify the text type• Identify the main theme• Identify a possible or alternative title for the text• Suggest where you can find the text	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General factual questions<ul style="list-style-type: none">– look for answers relating to the main ideas of the text• Specific factual questions<ul style="list-style-type: none">– look for answers relating to specific ideas of the text
How to tackle the questions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skim the text to get the gist and the tone of the text	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skim the text for keywords, topic sentences, and signpost words• Scan the text for pieces of information relating to the given facts and ideas

Proposal

A proposal is a plan that provides suggestions or recommendations on a certain subject. It usually contains details of the proposed actions, events or activities, and is submitted by assistants to someone in a higher position.

Useful expressions

<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Statistics / A recent survey has shown that ...</i> • <i>The school / company / department has decided that ...</i> • <i>This proposal is to suggest ...</i> 	<p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We would like to organize / hold / arrange / carry out ...</i> • <i>We propose / suggest / recommend that ...</i> • <i>We think / gather / suppose that ... can / will help ...</i>
<p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We sincerely hope that you can consider ...</i> • <i>We hope that you will accept / approve our proposal.</i> 	

Demonstration

Title of proposal

Proposal for School-based Sports Activities for the year 20__-20__

Introduction
A survey conducted earlier this year shows that our students have a relatively low participation rate in sports activities. In order to promote a healthy lifestyle and raise students' interests in exercising regularly, the Sports Club has decided to hold a series of sports activities in the coming academic year. This proposal has been compiled to suggest activities that students would like to be organized.

Activities
We would like to propose the following events:

1. Table tennis and basketball training courses in November and February
These are the two strengths of our team members. We suggest that the school hold two training courses in November and February respectively and invite some professionals from outside the school to coach our students at the beginning. Our team members can then take over and provide tutoring on a regular basis. The courses will hopefully help students develop their interest in these easily accessible sports and provide room for sustained practice.
2. Teacher-student sports match in May
We think that a sports event in which both teachers and students participate will be highly attractive. We propose that a series of inter-class matches be held first. The winning team will play against the teachers team towards the end of the event. The matches will involve the whole school and will be able to help everyone relax before the exams.

Conclusion
We believe that the events suggested above will help promote sports in school and we sincerely hope that you will kindly consider and approve our proposal.

Introduction

- Explain the reason behind the proposal and the purpose

Main body

- Support each recommendation with a reason and state its expected effects

Conclusion

- Ask for consideration and approval from the superiors

Reports

Reports may be written for various purposes. One of the most common purposes is to present survey results. It aims to provide the facts and findings obtained in the survey. It sometimes offers recommendations based on those facts and findings.

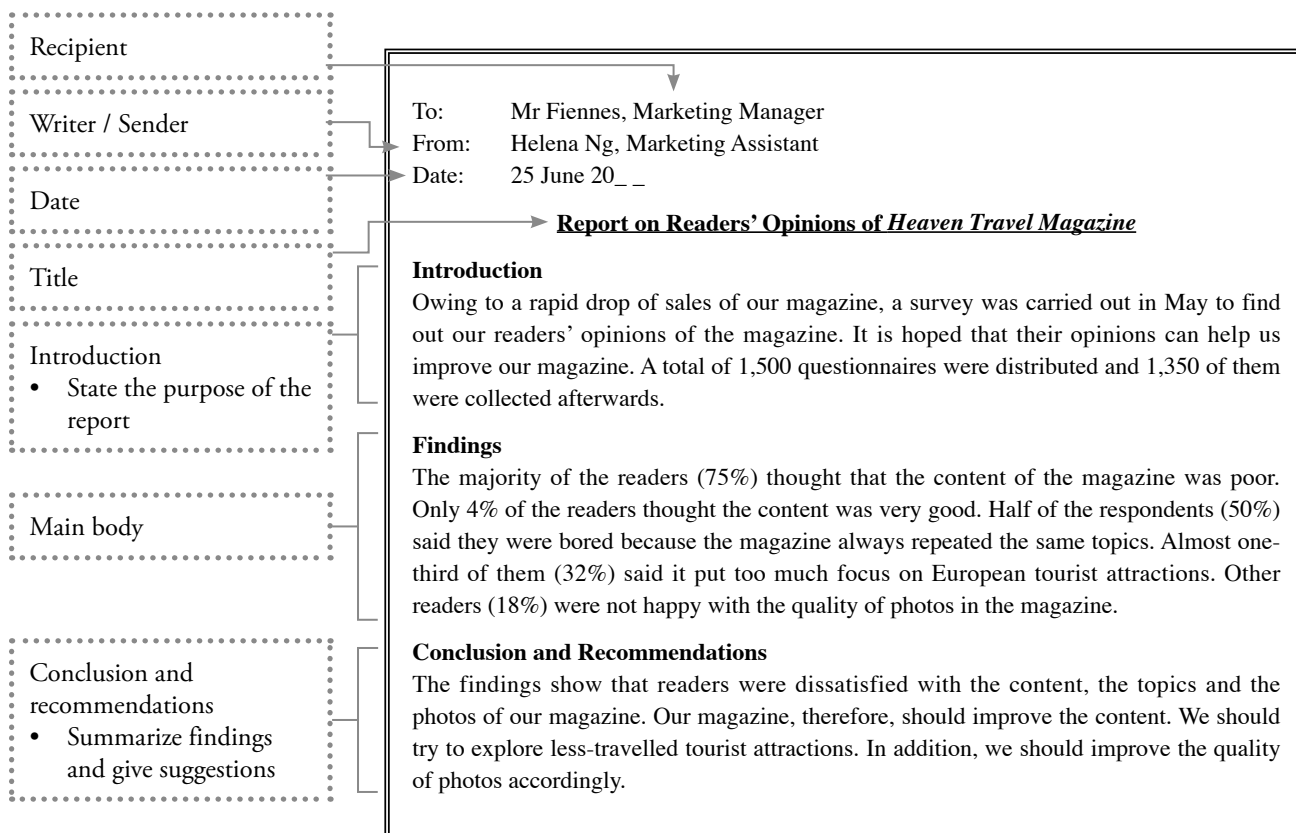
You should pay attention to the following when you write a report:

- Remember to put a title.
- Give each section a heading.
- Pay attention to the task instructions to find out what you need to include in the report. Sometimes, you need to include the recipient and the date.
- Use simple and clear language.
- Write in an impersonal tone.
- Be familiar with common expressions used in a report, especially those relating to numbers. Quote the figures or percentages accurately in the report.

Useful expressions

- *The survey was conducted on / from ...*
- *The purpose of the survey is to find out ...*
- *A total of XXX responded.*
- *Based on the findings, we can conclude that ...*

Demonstration



Mock Exam Set 1

Paper 1

Part A (51 marks, Questions 1–19)

1. B
2. (a) celebrate
(b) mark
(c) used // unwanted
(d) grapes
(e) welcoming
(f) symbolize
(g) healthy
(h) dinner
(i) practice
3. the people of Madrid, Spain
4. (a) flock
(b) consume
(c) adventurous
(d) ascend
5. A
6. good health
7. (a) Conversely
(b) friendly
(c) stimulate // grow
(d) Ancient
8. the Zulus of South Africa, the ancient Hebrews
9. D
10. (a) mourning
(b) purity and innocence
(c) mourning
(d) danger, violence, or bloodshed
(e) good fortune
11. B
12. C
13. D
14. C
15. Philippines, Japan, Singapore
16. C
17. (a) T
(b) T
(c) X
(d) F
(e) X
(f) T
18. to understand cultural differences
19. wild → wide
symbol → symbolize
desert → dessert

interpreting → interpretations
luck → mourning
corona → OK
French → France
defensive → offensive
absent → present
are → is

Part B

Section 1 (46 marks, Questions 20–35)

20. C
21. A
22. (a) F
(b) X
(c) T
23. Australia
24. (a) exciting
(b) high
25. D
26. C
27. (a) renowned
(b) contemporary
(c) unrivalled
(d) blend
28. calm, scenic
29. (a) ideal
(b) magnificent
(c) lodged
(d) cozy
30. A
31. it is not far away // there is no need to travel far, people understand what you are saying, can enjoy meals at a fraction of the price in Hong Kong (any two: 1 mark each)
32. always very crowded at immigration control, have to keep an eye on personal belongings all the time
33. B
34. (a) D
(b) C
(c) B
(d) A
(e) F
(f) G
35. (a) Koh Samui
(b) go scuba diving
(c) It is renowned as a city where the contemporary and the historical blend seamlessly.
(d) visit galleries and museums
(e) walk along the streets

Task 10 (17 marks)

Markers note: Bracketed items can come in any order.

Areas of content**Opening**

- (1) any appropriate opening DF12

Reasons for the interview

- (2) good food quality } DF12, 13, TS
 (3) a team of professional servers } DF12, 13, TS
 (4) decoration in its own style } DF12, 13, TS
 (5) maintain food safety and hygiene } DF12, 13, TS

Time slot for the interview

- (6) 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. } DF12, 13, 18
 (7) May 24 (Saturday) } DF12, 13, 18

Rundown of the interview

- (8) ask questions on the operation of his business } DF12, 19
 (9) question 1: difference between his restaurant and other Korean restaurant } DF12, 13, 19
 (10) question 2: whether he has plans to expand his business in the near future } DF12, 13, 19
 (11) question 3: his advice to people who would like to open a Korean restaurant } DF12, 13, 19
 (12) take photos of the inner and outer part of the restaurant DF12, 18
 (13) take close-ups of the favourite dishes of the restaurant DF12, 18
 (14) try the dishes DF12, 19
 (15) ask them to get ready for 3 signature dishes beforehand DF12, 13, 19
 (16) take a photo of the interviewer and interviewee DF12, 18

About the story in the magazine

- (17) the interview will be featured as the cover story } DF12, 13, 19
 (18) including the first 3 pages of the magazine } DF12, 13, 19
 (19) he will receive 50 copies of the next issue } DF12, 19

Closing

- (20) any appropriate closing } DF12
 (21) complimentary close and the name of sender } DF12

Task completion (max. 10 marks)

Description	Marks
18–21 points	10
14–17 points	8
10–13 points	6
6–9 points	4
3–5 points	2
0–2 points	0

Language (max. 5 marks)

Readability and coherence (max. 2 marks)

Tapescript

Mock Exam Set 1



Track 2

Part A

Open your Question-Answer Book. You should use a pencil for this part of the paper.

Part A is about to begin. Look at page 2 of your Question-Answer Book.

(5-second pause)

Situation: You are Nick Leung, a reporter for *Sunny Bay School Magazine*. The editor of the magazine, Brian, has asked you to work on a topic called Asian Cuisine for the coming issue, which aims at introducing readers to some famous Asian foods and restaurants. You need to work with him and Alison, another reporter in your team.

You will have a total of four tasks to do.

Follow the instructions in the Question-Answer Book and on the recording to complete the tasks. You will find all the information you need in the Question-Answer Book and on the recording.

You have two minutes to familiarize yourself with Tasks 1–4 before the recording begins.

Later you will have five minutes to study Part B and the Data File to complete the Tasks in Section 1 or 2.

(2-minute pause)



Track 3

Task 1

You are talking to two teachers on the phone about their eating habits and views on Asian food. Listen to the conversations and fill in the forms below. Put ticks (✓) in the appropriate boxes.

You have 20 seconds to study the forms. At the end of the task, you will have one and a half minutes to tidy up your answers.

(20-second pause)

Announcer: Conversation 1.

Mr Wong: Hello.

Nick: Hello, Mr Wong. This is Nick Leung from the school magazine. We are now doing a survey about Asian cuisine. Can you spare a few minutes for us?

Mr Wong: Sure.

Nick: Thank you. First of all, how often do you have Asian meals outside your home? We do not count Chinese meals in this.

Mr Wong: Well, I usually eat at home. But I always have Asian meals with my friends when we eat out. Say 3 times a week.

Nick: That's very often. You seem to be a fan of Asian food! What do you think about it?

Mr Wong: I think Asian cuisines have a strong spicy flavour. Different kinds of spices are widely used in many Asian cuisines such as Thai, Indonesian and Korean.

Nick: So there's a strong flavour. Just now you mentioned some cuisines. Which one is your favourite?

Mr Wong: Well, I like Korean cuisine best because I like kimchi.

Nick: So your favourite Asian dish must contain kimchi, right?

Mr Wong: Yes. Mixed cold noodles are my favourite too. Often they're mixed with meat, seafood and kimchi. That makes me feel like I'm in Korea whenever having mixed cold noodles.

Nick: I like that too. And your favourite restaurant?

Glossary

1. Useful vocabulary

(a) Paper 1 vocabulary support

Set 1 Part A & Part B1 (Around the world)

English	Chinese	English	Chinese	English	Chinese
affirmation	<i>n</i> 肯定／證實	exotic	<i>adj</i> 異國情調的／來自異國的	omen	<i>n</i> 預兆
attribute	<i>v</i> 歸因於／認為是……所為	fraternity	<i>n</i> 群體／兄弟會	partake	<i>v</i> 參與／享用
belief	<i>n</i> 看法／信仰／信念	ideology	<i>n</i> 思想／意識形態	practice	<i>n</i> 習俗／慣常做法
blend	<i>v</i> 融合／混合／調製	implication	<i>n</i> 含意／牽涉／可能的影響	purity	<i>n</i> 純潔
Buddhism	<i>n</i> 佛教	indicative	<i>adj</i> 標示的／陳述的	retreat	<i>n</i> 隱退／撤退／離去／退縮
celebration	<i>n</i> 慶典	interpret	<i>n</i> 解釋	seductive	<i>adj</i> 誘人的
connotation	<i>n</i> 含義	innocence	<i>n</i> 純真	skiing	<i>n</i> 滑雪
contemporary	<i>adj</i> 當代／屬同時期的	gesture	<i>n</i> 手勢／表示	snack	<i>n</i> 小吃／點心
custom	<i>n</i> 習俗／習慣	getaway	<i>n</i> 度假地	snowcapped	<i>adj</i> 頂部被雪覆蓋著的
delicious	<i>adj</i> 美味的	Hinduism	<i>n</i> 印度教	spirit	<i>n</i> 靈魂／幽靈／精神
derogatory	<i>adj</i> 貶義的	homosexuality	<i>n</i> 同性戀	standpoint	<i>n</i> 立場
destination	<i>n</i> 目的地	hurtle	<i>v</i> 飛馳	stroll	<i>v</i> 散步
devil	<i>n</i> 魔鬼	hustle and bustle	<i>n</i> 喧囂 <i>phra</i>	subscribe to	<i>v</i> 支持 <i>phra</i>
distinctive	<i>adj</i> 獨特的	mourn	<i>v</i> 哀悼	togetherness	<i>n</i> 團結／親密無間
enthusiasm	<i>n</i> 熱情	offensive	<i>adj</i> 冒犯的／極其討厭的／攻擊性的	ward off	<i>v</i> 防止／避免 <i>phra</i>