

Candidates' Performance

(The examination analysis video can be viewed on the website: <https://goo.gl/CnMu5S>)



Paper 1

Paper 1 consisted of three parts: Part A, Part B1 and Part B2. All candidates were required to complete Part A and then choose either Part B1 or Part B2. Part B1 was designed to be the easier section, while Part B2 was designed to be the more difficult section. 29.66% of candidates chose to do Part B1 while 70.34% chose to do Part B2. Candidates who attempted Parts A and B2 were able to attain the full range of levels, while Level 4 was the highest level attainable for candidates who attempted Parts A and B1.

Overall results

A statistical analysis of Paper 1 was carried out. The overall results are given in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Paper 1 overall results

	Full Mark	Mean Score (%)	Standard Deviation (%)
Part A	40	57.5	15.25
Part B1	40	42.5	14
Part B2	40	42.5	14.25

Part A (Compulsory section)

Part A consisted of two reading passages on the same theme. The first passage introduced the theme of living a healthy life and explained how working out can help trim down. The second passage was written from the perspective of a fashion blogger and marketing manager talking about the challenges fat people face in Hong Kong.

Part A comprised of 21 items. Reading skills tested included matching, multiple-choice questions as well as open-ended questions. Easier questions included the matching items, finding words or phrases with similar meanings as stated in the question as well as True/False/Not Given items. Some of the more difficult questions involved interpreting the implicit meaning in the text.

In Part A, Text 1 is relatively short and is therefore easy to grasp. Most candidates were able to write the correct number of the app in Q.1 and Q.2 and put the correct order of Bertha Chan's experience in Q.11. Among the three questions, the only problem is that some candidates did not read the instructions carefully. Some of them lost all the marks since they wrote the name of the apps instead of the number

of the apps. They also performed well in answering factual questions like Q.15 and Q.18.

However, for Q.6, some candidates wrongly induced the answer from the examples, writing answers such as 'thin people' instead of 'beefy people'. For Q.8, most students were able to write the answer 'living a healthy lifestyle' but only some could give the other answer 'She creates more bold and creative designs' accurately.

Candidates also performed unsatisfactorily in Q.12 as they were found weak in both grammar and the awareness of the verb form. As for Q.13, only a few students could generalize the two correct ways Wu's customers have changed in their tastes. Also, candidates had problems as they moved on to questions which require higher-order thinking skills, like Q.12 and Q.19. Many of the candidates were unable to locate the correct information from the reading passage.

More importantly, they failed to rephrase the target terms into appropriate word-form. They simply ignored the grammatical rules when they filled in the blanks for the summary. For example in Q.12v, they didn't realize 'everyone' is a singular noun which needs a third-person singular verb 'has'. Instead they wrote 'have'. Similarly, in Q.19v, they didn't realize they need an adverb 'formally' for modifying the verb 'has not been trained'. Instead they wrote 'formal'.

Overall

While some questions required finding clearly stated information in the text, the majority of the questions require understanding of the text as a whole and interpretation of the informative given. It is therefore recommended that candidates gain an understanding of the whole text before answering individual questions.

Part B1 (Easier section)

Part B1 consisted of one reading passage introducing 10 things which were considered inappropriate gifts in Chinese family. Most candidates did pretty well in this section. Most of them did very well in Q.26 and Q.31 that they were able to locate the target information concerning the taboos of giving shoes and a knife wrapped in ribbon as a gift from the passage.

However, many of them had problems in tackling reference and inference questions. They did particularly poorly in Q.23, Q.28 and Q.39. They were unable to work out the answers to these questions. They simply quoted the phrases from the reading passage which are not exactly relevant to the questions. Also, a lot of candidates had problems in making logical deduction. They failed to relate the True/False statements to the reading passage.

More difficult question involved scanning for words with similar meanings as stated in Q.34. One of the more difficult items was Q.38. The answer required candidates to give reason to explain why the author thinks a dollar can make a gift become not a gift any more. The key idea is to discuss the fact that the receiver paid for the gift; yet most candidates just copied answers from the reading text. These candidates were not awarded a mark for this item. The performance obviously reflects that they do not pay a comprehensive attention on the reading materials.

Overall

Many of the questions in this section seemed to be challenging for a great number of students. Most of the students were only able to handle questions requiring explicitly stated information. However, for questions which required a higher degree of inferencing skills, students seemed to perform quite poorly. Only a very small number of students who attempted Part B1 scored high marks.

Part B2

The passage of Part B2 is a narrative with lots of explanations of historic incidents. The topic of the passage may not be familiar to the candidates. It shows most of them could not comprehend the passage well. Candidates were required to identify the main ideas and connections in between the incidents. Candidates who attempted Part B2 gave a satisfactory performance. They did well in matching, True/False/Not Given statements and multiple-choices questions.

However, long question seems to be their weakest link, especially the explanatory ones. For example, in Q.64, a number of candidates tended to copy sentences directly from the reading passage without rephrasing any words. They were unable to provide the key words like 'saved', 'works of art' and 'from destroying' which are essential to the answer on describing how Chiang Kai-shek's stealing act was beneficial to the Chinese culture.

Most candidates failed to write the correct answers in Q.47. They wrote 'attacked traditional values' and 'criticised party officials' instead. Also, the answers of Q.56 were found incomplete. Candidates were able to mention the first two points 'emphasize Chinese identity' and 'foster nationalism' only but missed the last point 'generate economic profit'. Besides, candidates did poorly in Q.58. They failed to provide a complete explanation of the meaning of 'cherry picking'.

Sequencing question may be another challenging one for candidates. Candidates were also incapable of arranging the incidents listed in Q.64 in the correct order.

Overall

Candidates should be more cautious of their language. For example, they should pay attention to the use of correct grammatical forms in parallel structure. Besides, it is recommended that candidates comprehend the passage as a whole rather than locating answers by referring only to a particular paragraph. It is suggested that candidates develop a better reading strategy to avoid giving up questions that they can actually manage.

Overall recommendations

As recommended above, candidates should gain an understanding of the overall text before answering individual questions. When expected to make references, students may be required to make inferences about attitudes and arguments in the text. In terms of vocabulary questions, candidates are recommended to practice deducing meaning from context.

For reference questions, candidates should carefully locate the reference word in the reading passage. Usually, the target of the reference word appears in either the previous or the following sentence. Candidates are advised to read the questions carefully and search for key words before they start retrieving information from the reading passage.

When attempting open-ended questions, candidates should answer in the own words and make sure they directly answer the question without adding extraneous irrelevant information. Marks will be awarded if the correct meaning is conveyed clearly enough, despite grammatical or spelling errors. If the answer to a short-response question is stated explicitly in the text, candidates should try to copy only what is relevant to answering the question.

Candidates are advised to have more exposure to newspaper and magazines in English. It is suggested that they should broaden their scope of knowledge by reading more social issues and news in English. They can also make use of some online learning tools to enrich their vocabulary bank.

Paper 3

Paper 3 consisted of 3 parts: Part A, Part B1 and Part B2. All candidates were required to complete Part A and then choose either Part B1 or Part B2. Part B1 was designed to be the easier section, while Part B2 was designed to be the more difficult section. Around 20.6% of candidates chose to do Part B1 while around 79.4% chose to do Part B2.

Overall results

A statistical analysis of Paper 3 was carried out. The overall results are given in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Paper 3 overall results

	Full Mark	Mean Score (%)	Standard Deviation (%)
Part A	46	47.83	21.52
Part B1	53	33.96	12.64
Part B2	61	40.98	13.11

Part A (Compulsory section)

In Part A, candidates had to assume the role of Mary Wong, a F.6 student taking part in the volunteer scheme at the Hong Kong Wetland Park.

Task 1 (Mean = 43.3%)

Candidates were required to fill in a note sheet about the World Wetland Day. Many candidates could not achieve good note-taking skills and did not check the overall meaning. For instance, many did not notice the different meaning between the wrong answer 'leave the tap' and the correct answer 'leave the tap running'. Many students did not know how to spell 'tap' and gave another wrong word 'tub' instead. Also, students were unable to use bare infinitive from items 7, 8, 9 and 10. Students ignored the plural marker in item 3.

Task 2 (Mean = 47.1%)

In Task 2, candidates had to note down the interesting points of being a volunteer. Candidates' performance was unsatisfactory. Misspelt words like 'humar' were commonly found. They split the word 'wildlife' into two. Again, many candidates showed weak foundation on word recognition. For instance, they misrecognized 'passion' as 'patient/patience', not to mention they failed to be aware of the nuance between the wrong answer 'good at playing with children/good at taking care of children' and the

correct umbrella phrase 'good with children'. Many candidates failed to put down self-confidence (noun) as the answer. They used its adjective (self-confident).

Task 3 (Mean = 44.3%)

In this task, candidates were required to fill in the form which is based on Lucy's comments to get the correct answers. In this task, most candidates showed very low abilities in selecting the correct dates in the form. Also, candidates failed to circle the dates. Some students are careless while reading the instructions. Students did try and fill in most blanks but they needed to focus on their grammatical accuracy. In item 35, some of the students put a ✓ or any other symbol to indicate the date of the proposed activity on the calendar. The candidates overlooked the task instruction saying that a cross (✗) should be used on the proposed date.

Task 4 (Mean = 52%)

In this task, students were required to fill in the form in order to get the correct answers. A lot of candidates failed to show a logical sense like filling in a blank with a matched item. For example in item 44, it is uncommon and illogical to regard 'Wetland Park' as the runners-up prize. The wrong answer 'Wetland Park' showed that candidates did not pay attention to logic checking. Candidates were unable to capitalize the first letter of the name of newspaper. The awareness of the use of the right parts of speech is rather weak. Little attention is paid to the given words so some students are not able to use the correct form of words or connect the given words with their answers.

Recommendations for Part A

Candidates should spend the preparation time in familiarizing themselves with the tasks. With the help of the given instructions/headings/prompts/choices, they should be able to predict the content and the vocabulary of a text. Candidates are encouraged to pay more attention to the authentic use of English around them. Some words in the paper appear in different media, such as TV, news and even computer games all the time. In terms of note-taking, students are advised not to simply recite the recording word by word, but to get the whole meaning. Then, proofread their work to check if there are any obviously unreasonable sentences or ideas. For table-filling tasks, candidates should remind themselves the importance of giving detailed answers that people without listening to the recordings could still understand the content of their note sheets

Part B

In both parts B1 & B2, candidates were judged on their ability to effectively locate and communicate relevant content, with effective communication, including the accuracy of language use, coherence and organization and appropriacy. Markers not only focus on whether candidates were able to locate the relevant information from the Data File, but also on whether candidates could appropriately extract content from the Data File for a wide variety of writing purposes and produce their own original language using a range of sentence structures with accurate grammar, spelling and punctuation to create grammatically correct texts.

Candidates' mean scores for the six tasks are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Mean scores (%) in Paper 3 Part B tasks

Part B1			Part B2		
Task 5	Task 6	Task 7	Task 8	Task 9	Task 10
9.41%	25.38%	56.52%	35%	31.05%	54.17%

The following is a discussion of candidates' performance in the different tasks.

Part B1 (Easier section)

Part B1 consisted of three tasks:

- Completing a note about the likes and dislikes of different activities
- Writing a report for the directors on the visit to the Hong Kong Wetland Park
- Writing a letter of reply to the complaint from the householder

The B1 Data File included the following kinds of texts: two conversations, which candidates listened to; notes; letters; and advertisements.

Task 5

In this task, candidates were required to use information from the recording and the Data File to complete a note about the likes and dislikes of different activities. The task, which was worth 17 marks, was divided into 14 marks for task completion and 3 marks for language, judged according to the comprehensibility and accuracy of the answer.

The performance of this part was unsatisfactory. Many students failed to attempt this task. The instruction of this task required students not to give specific examples but many students tended to

over-rely the Data File and copy a large chunk of irrelevant examples from the Data File directly. Most candidates could identify only one or two likes or dislikes for the activities. Random guessing and non-sense answers were commonly found in their scripts. They could not identify and put in the information correctly into the correct boxes, so they could not score marks. For those that did attempt the question, they tended to use one or two-word answer instead of a comprehensive one.

Task 6

This task, which was worth 13 marks, was divided into 10 marks for task completion, 2 marks for language, judged according to the comprehensibility and accuracy of the answer, and 1 mark for appropriacy. This task was quite challenging for candidates, who were required to write a report for the directors on the visit to the Hong Kong Wetland Park. Candidates had to locate relevant information from the Data File and present it appropriately, in the form of report for the directors. At times, it was necessary for candidates to synthesize information from more than one text in the Data File. Candidates sometimes failed to combine the sources and match the relevant content with the correct subheadings.

Most of the candidates answered the purpose of sending volunteers to Hong Kong correctly. However, the majority of candidates had problem with 'Costs incurred per person'. They selected irrelevant information from Data File. They just copied single trip costs directly from the Data File. Candidates performed badly in calculating the cost incurred per person. Almost none of them answered it correctly because they have missed to calculate both go and return fee. Also, they sometimes put the points under the wrong paragraphs. Moreover, candidates failed to spell the words like 'convenient'.

Task 7

This task, which was worth 23 marks, was divided into 14 marks for task completion, 5 marks for language, judged according to the comprehensibility and accuracy of the answer, 2 marks for coherence and organization and 2 marks for appropriacy. This task was the most challenging task for candidates, who were required to write a letter of reply to the complaint. In this task, candidates were required to synthesize a range of sources and organize the information into a coherent letter. This involves candidates in manipulating information from the Data File as well as in using their own original language. For example, candidates were asked to write a closing of the letter. The weaker candidates failed to state the purpose of the writing clearly and end the email with appropriate closing. Some students failed to write a clear topic sentence for each paragraph.

This task also required candidates to present the content from the Data File in the format of letter. The performance of candidates in this task is the best in B1. The relevance of the information from Data File was high. There is a right pick of complimentary close (i.e. Yours sincerely), but it is not perfect in

format. Most of them were clear about their roles and used suitable tones. However, not many of them could get the answer 'should have been more specific in our instruction' correctly. For item 7.4a, quite a number of candidates wrote HK\$30,000 as the compensation for the host family. Candidates are advised to think whether this makes sense at all.

Part B2 (more difficult section)

Part B2 consisted of three tasks:

- Writing a brief description about the comments on each volunteer activities
- Writing a report for the directors on the visit to the Hong Kong Wetland Park
- Writing a proposal on a trip to Singapore

The B2 Data File included the following kinds of texts: two conversations, which candidates listened to; note; suggestion form; letter; advertisements; feedback sheet; and transcript of telephone conversation.

Task 8

The task required candidates to write four short paragraphs summarizing the volunteer activities. In order to produce a good passage, candidates are required to precisely note down details related to each activity. However, the performance proved that the note-taking skill is highly discriminatory in determining candidates' performance. Besides, the mastering of connectives also plays a significant role in stratifying stronger candidates from those performing less satisfactorily. The stronger candidates were able to organize information into focused paragraph. They successfully utilized devices of cohesiveness to transit the viewpoints stated in the text. In contrast, weaker candidates could barely able to illustrate main points in an organized manner. They can only demonstrate their ability of using additive connectives as well as interpreting materials accumulated in the note sheet to generate an idea which is in turn vague and empty in content.

Most of them were able to correctly place the information provided in the Data File into four different categories. However, nearly all of them could not jot down the point of 'working with experienced volunteers', probably due to their incompetent listening skills. Candidates found difficulty in finding the points for items 8.1a-c, items 8.2b-c and item 8.3a from Data File. For items 8.1d-e, candidates mistook 'the provision of mosquito repellent and appropriate clothing' as 'volunteers should bring them themselves'. Only high achievers could catch the adjective 'worthwhile' to conclude the attitude or opinion on habitat conservation in item 8.4a. Overall, many candidates failed to give generalized conclusions for each activity like 'experience the enjoyment of children' in item 8.1a.

Task 9

Overall, candidates' performance of this task was unsatisfactory. Summarizing, integrating, and generalizing skills were not well performed. Most candidates copied too many specific chunks of information from Data File and/or recordings indiscriminately or in dis-organized manner without the appropriate adjectives like 'successful' in item 9.1b, 'not expensive' in item 9.2a, 'satisfactory' in item 9.3a, 'too high' in item 9.3c, and 'enjoyable' in item 9.4a to give the overall comments. Candidates failed to find the correct costs incurred per person. Nearly all candidates had problems coming up with the figure \$452 per person for item 9.2d. They wrote a lot of numbers individually without counting the return trip and tallying the sum. Some candidates mixed up 'the advantages of home stay arrangements' and 'views of volunteers regarding the home stay arrangements'. As a result, they lost quite a lot of marks in these two sections.

Task 10

In this task, candidates are expected to write a proposal for a trip to Singapore for the directors. Thus, a high degree of formality is needed to complete the whole task. However, quite a significant proportion of candidates still mistakenly use a wrong register to label the receiver. Most candidates gave a wrong tone. For item 10.2, they should give criteria rather than citing two good volunteer examples. In addition, they failed to use topic sentences and paragraphs since lists of ideas in incomplete sentences and point-form like ideas were commonly found in their scripts. Quite a number of them even repeated answers for different sections with the lack of coherence. Some even used the ideas from Task 9 incorrectly for items 10.1.

Some candidates could successfully locate the content points but they failed to include the keyword like 'flight' and the correct expenses per person. Some candidates did not apply the facts when mentioning the cost of the flight. They just copied the amount of \$1500 directly from the Data File, adding that the cost might amount to \$3500 during high season, without justifying that since the flight is on Labour Day, the cost of flight would rise.

Recommendations for Part B

In Part B, when candidates attempting for the tasks, they should be highly aware of the target audience and the purpose of writing different texts like report and proposal. They should show their skills to locate the relevant content from the Data File and synthesize the extracted content from different parts of the Data File in their writing. Most of them could grasp the main points provided in the Data File and thus their content marks are generally high. However, only some of them could reproduce the wordings in the Data File with their own words.

To show the awareness of target audience, candidates should pay attention to the format of the writing texts and organize the content by using appropriate linguistic resources like the accurate and effective use of language. Candidates should take advantage of the opportunities to show their original writing skills when they were required to write an opening, the purpose of writing and a closing on their own.

Awareness of audience and the purpose of writing must always be kept in mind when doing the tasks. This will help candidates to select ideas that will meet the demands of the task and provide sufficient and relevant background information. Candidates should pay attention to the use of language, coherence and organization, and appropriacy in their writing. They are advised to showcase their original writing skills by adapting elements of the Data File, and avoid copying large chunks from the Data File.

Candidates are also advised to learn to use cohesive devices more meaningfully and effectively when necessary. Good use of cohesive devices can help to achieve a smooth transition between different sections, especially in extended tasks, while poor use of connectives can disrupt the flow of the whole piece of work and negate relevant content points.

The better candidates should be those who have prepared well to demonstrate their ability to effectively construct the necessary genre, drawing on appropriate linguistic resources to achieve a wide variety of writing purposes in different given scenarios.