



DSE English Talk

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Welcome



The vocabulary challenge

- Number of words
- Vocabulary changes
- *tweet*
- *blog*
- Knowing how to use vocabulary

HKEAA Examination Report

“Stronger candidates were able to use a range of vocabulary ...” (HKEAA, 2014: 176)

In today's session we will explore ...

- **how many** words you need to know;
- **which** words;

and

- what you need to **know** about these words and be able to **do** with them.

How many words are there in the English language?

- more than 54,000 word families
 - *demonstrate, demonstrates, demonstrating, demonstration, demonstrator* = 1 family
- How many do you think **I** know?
- Approximately 20,000
- How many are **you** expected to know at the end of S6?
- 5000

5000 out of 54,000

- Which 5000?
- The most useful ones!
- Which are the most useful ones?



Which of these words do you know already? Which do you think it might be useful for you to know?

- *severe*
- *ultimately*
- *attribute*
- *devote*
- *constitute*
- *resistance*
- *remarkable*
- *advocate*
- *expenditure*
- *precisely*
- *stain*
- *allege*
- *damn*
- *tackle*
- *sanction*
- *boom*

Word frequency lists

New General Service List (2013)

2,818 words

- *2044 - severe*
- *2091 - ultimately*
- *2213 - attribute*
- *2216 - devote*
- *2238 - constitute*
- *2270 - resistance*
- *2327 - remarkable*
- *2363 - advocate*
- *2415 - expenditure*
- *2465 - precisely*
- *2541 - stain*
- *2560 - allege*
- *2569 - damn*
- *2573 - tackle*
- *2616 - sanction*
- *2656 - boom*

Word frequency lists

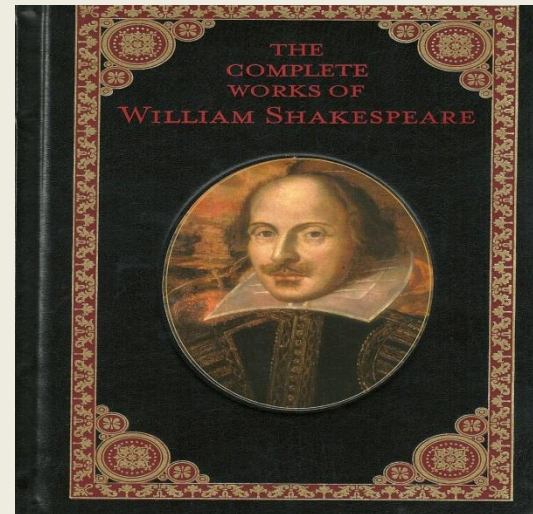
- How are these lists relevant to me?
- If you know these words, you should be able to recognise, approximately, **90%** of the words in most general English texts.
- General Service List (1953)
2,285 words
New General Service List (2013)
2,818 words

Vocabulary and reading

- “Wider reading in general is likely to help with spelling and word choice, and candidates should try and balance narrowly-focussed grammar and vocabulary activities with free-writing and extensive reading in order to maximise the chances of a good performance.” (HKEAA, 2014: 176)

Building vocabulary knowledge through reading

- **READ REGULARLY & READ WIDELY**
- Does it have to be “high” literature?
- Read different kinds of texts eg novels, news articles, film reviews, advertisements.



Making the most of reading

- **READ THE SAME TEXT AGAIN ...**
- **AND AGAIN ...**
- **AND AGAIN!**
- Far more vocabulary is learned if the same text is read several times (Horst & Meara 1999)
- **READING ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH ...**
- **STUDY THE VOCABULARY IN THE TEXTS**
- No pain, no gain: activities which require you to think and to focus on vocabulary appear to help with learning and memory

What kinds of things can you do to focus attention on vocabulary?

- Learning vocabulary is not only about learning the meaning, the spelling, the pronunciation, but also how the words are **used** in texts.

Looking at vocabulary in a text

- Highlight all the words that refer to phones.
- What do you notice?

Rise in MTR thefts bad for the ears

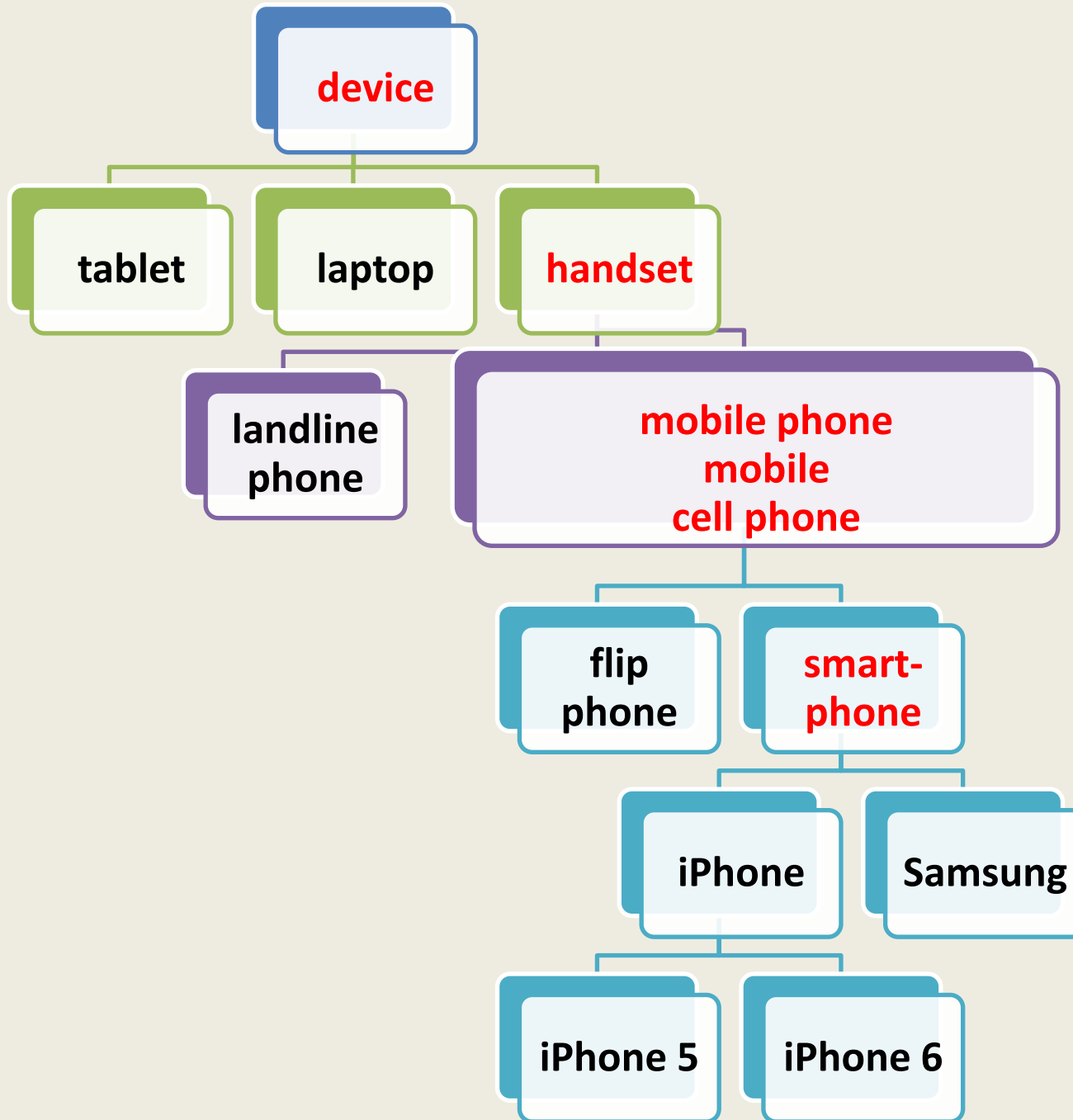
- MTR passengers are losing **mobile phones** as thieves step up their unwelcome calls. Police recorded 167 thefts in the first 10 months of the year, compared with 143 for the whole of last. **Handsets** are often snatched as train doors are closing, and culprits escape onto the platform.

Some thieves snatch **smartphones** at stations after singling out passengers listening to music or viewing video clips using earphones. Lam Mei-Lai, police commander of the Kwun Tong line, said crooks often steal **mobile phones** from pockets or bags by pulling the wires of earphones. “We recently found that some thieves target train passengers who are using earphones,” Lam said. “They follow the wires to where the **phones** are, grab them and make a quick getaway.” Since passengers are focussed on the music or on the screen, they may not even be aware of a stranger standing very close to them. Some people are not even aware that their **mobile** has been stolen until they check to see why the music has stopped.

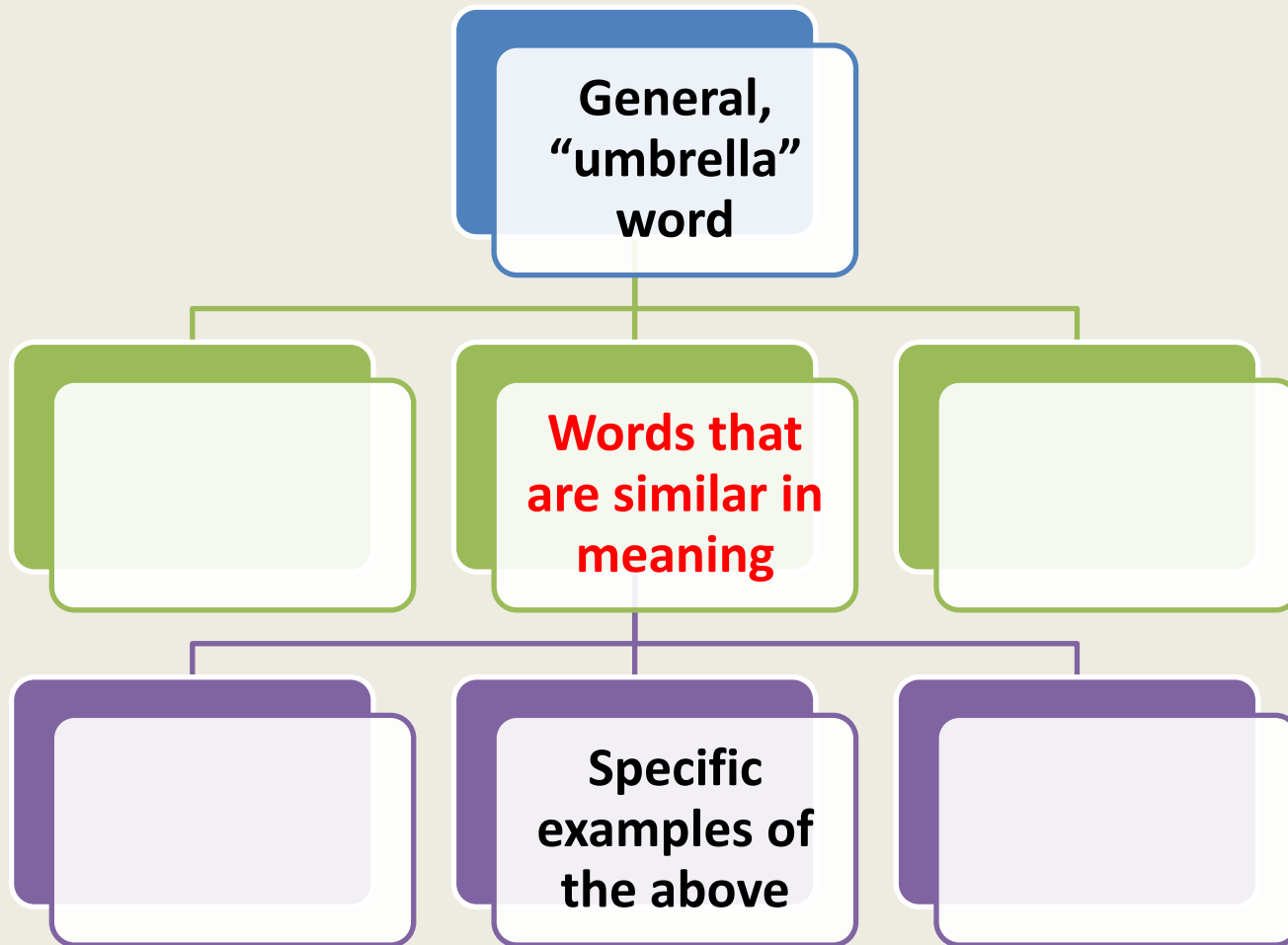
Lam said taking a **device** from a passenger as the door is closing leaves the victim stranded on the train, unable to do anything as the culprit makes an escape. More officers will be deployed at stations but **mobile phone** owners are reminded to be more vigilant when surfing the internet, checking their emails, or listening to music on the MTR .

(Adapted from The Standard, November 29, 2012)

- **Can you draw a diagram to show the relationship between these words?**



Developing “lexical richness”: avoiding excessive repetition of the same word(s)



Avoiding excessive repetition of words

- Knowing and using words with **similar** meanings eg *mobile phone, cell phone*
- Knowing and using the names of “**general**” words eg *device* for *mobile phone*, *vehicle* for *car*, *building* for *apartment block*
- Knowing and using the names of specific examples / “**types of**” eg *smartphone* is a type of *mobile phone*, *cottage* is a type of *house*, *sports car* is a type of *car*

Other 'word chains'

- Don't look at the text!
- How many words do you know to refer to someone who steals?
- How many other words do you know that are similar in meaning to "steal"?

- Now, look at the text.

Rise in MTR thefts bad for the ears

MTR passengers are losing mobile phones as **thieves** step up their unwelcome calls. Police recorded 167 thefts in the first 10 months of the year, compared with 143 for the whole of last. Handsets are often **snatched** as train doors are closing, and **culprits** escape onto the platform.

Some **thieves snatch** smartphones at stations after singling out passengers listening to music or viewing video clips using earphones. Lam Mei-Lai, police commander of the Kwun Tong line, said **crooks** often **steal** mobile phones from pockets or bags by pulling the wires of earphones. “We recently found that some **thieves** target train passengers who are using earphones,” Lam said. “They follow the wires to where the phones are, **grab** them and make a quick getaway.” Since passengers are focussed on the music or on the screen, they may not even be aware of a stranger standing very close to them. Some people are not even aware that their mobile has been **stolen** until they check to see why the music has stopped.

Lam said **taking** a device from a passenger as the door is closing leaves the victim stranded on the train, unable to do anything as the **culprit** makes an escape. More officers will be deployed at stations but mobile phone owners are reminded to be more vigilant when surfing the internet, checking their emails, or listening to music on the MTR .

(Adapted from The Standard, November 29, 2012)

Different forms of a word

Rise in MTR **thefts** bad for the ears

MTR passengers are losing mobile phones as **thieves** step up their unwelcome calls. Police recorded 167 thefts in the first 10 months of the year, compared with 143 for the whole of last. Handsets are often snatched as train doors are closing, and culprits **escape** onto the platform.

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Words that go together

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What's the relationship of meaning?

Rise in MTR thefts bad for the ears

MTR passengers are losing mobile phones as thieves step up their unwelcome calls. Police recorded 167 thefts in the first 10 months of the year, compared with 143 for the whole of last. Handsets are often snatched as train doors are closing, and culprits escape onto the platform.

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Lam said taking a device from a passenger as the door is closing leaves the victim stranded on the train, unable to do anything as the culprit makes an escape. More officers will be deployed at stations but mobile phone owners are reminded to be more **vigilant** when surfing the internet, checking their emails, or listening to music on the MTR .

(Adapted from The Standard, November 29, 2012)

Analysing vocabulary in texts can help you to ...

- increase your vocabulary
- remember vocabulary
- develop your reading skills
- develop your writing skills

Something else from the HKEAA ... (Paper 2)

- There was **far too much attention to discourse markers** as a way of organising a text (**firstly, secondly, furthermore, moreover, besides**) which led to their overuse in paragraphs.
Stronger candidates distinguished themselves from other candidates in ...
... their use of **more sophisticated** means of developing coherent and cohesive text. They were able to make use of such techniques as **lexical repetition, word families** and **pronoun referencing...**" (HKEAA, 2014: 176)

Using “stock phrases” in Paper 2

- The first recurring to my mind.
- The justification to which my stance can be ascribed are manifold
- My justification to which my propensity can be ascribed are manifold
- Situated in such stagnant plight, I see no point in
- An incontestable truth
- My heart was racing like a galloping horse
-

(adapted from HKEAA, 2014)

- **Which of the above would you use in your own writing?**

HKEAA Recommendation 2014

Paper 2: Parts A and B

- “Markers noted the frequent use of quotations, cliches, stock phrases and unusual vocabulary in candidates’ answers. While there is no rule against using these types of expressions, they should be used sparingly and in the correct context.” (HKEAA, 2014: 173)
- One area where the quality, and consequently the marks, of candidates’ responses suffered was through poor choice and use of stock phrases, cliches and quotes. The biggest problems were with the accuracy and appropriateness of these phrases, which may give the reader a negative impression of the writer ... Some of the phrases may be grammatically correct, but because of their verbosity would be better suited to satire or comedy.” (HKEAA, 2014: 175)

Sharing Our Experiences of Paper 1

Sunny Chow and Joanne Fung

(BABEd Year 3)

Reading (Paper 1): Preparing for the Exam

- **Vocabulary building and learning**

- ✓ Synonyms and antonyms
- ✓ Specific (theme-based) or general
- ✓ Keep vocabulary records

- **Genre**

- ✓ Read extensively: read anything!
- ✓ Read for pleasure
- ✓ Reading speed

Reading (Paper 1): In the Exam

- **Text Type and Context**

- ✓ Identify the text type
- ✓ Make predictions eg look at the title
- ✓ Preview the text to get the general idea
- ✓ Ask yourself questions before and while you read
- ✓ Summarise what you have read

- **Meaning**

- ✓ Literal
- ✓ Implicit

Use your time well

- Would it be better to:
 - A. learn up to 10,000 + words
- or
 - B. develop strategies to deal with lack of vocabulary knowledge?

Strategies for dealing with unknown words in a text

- Ask yourself if it is **necessary** to know the word to understand the text?
- **Ignore** words that seem unimportant.
- If it's a key word, try to **work out the meaning**:
 - general idea
 - more detailed understanding
- Use your knowledge of **how words are used in texts** eg words with similar/opposite meanings, “general” words.

Working out meaning: a possible approach



1. Focus on the **word**.

Look at the **form of the word**. Does it tell you what **part of speech** the word is? Is it a noun, verb, adjective, etc? Does it tell you anything about the **meaning**?

Is it **similar to any words you already** know?

- **mardy**
- [List of prefixes](#)
- [List of Suffixes](#)

2. Look at its **position** in the sentence and the **immediate context** of the unknown word. Simplify this context if necessary.

Ask yourself the following kind of questions:

If it is a noun, does it have an article (which might suggest if it is countable or not)? If it is a verb, does it have an object? Do you think it's positive, negative or neutral?

Don't be so mardy.

3. Look at the **wider context** of the unknown word.

Look at the relationship between the clause containing the unknown word and surrounding clauses and sentences.

Look out for 'signposting' words, such as *but*, *and*, *however*, *so*, that might give a clue as to how the word is connected to its context.

She said she wanted to have a tattoo but I refused. She's only 15 after all. She wasn't at all happy and stormed out of the room, slamming the door. "**Don't be so mardy**" I shouted. She's a typical teenager. She won't speak to me now for a couple of days but she'll get over it.

4. **Guess** the meaning of the unknown word.

5. **Read on** and see if the guess is correct.

If not, and if the word seems essential to your understanding of the text, go back and repeat the above steps.

If the word does not seem essential, carry on reading. Perhaps the meaning will become clearer later on.

Based on Nation and Coady (1988) and Thornbury (2002)

- **Meaning of mardy is ...**
- **bad-tempered, moody, sulky**

- I grew up in a big house on the outskirts of Manchester. Every night, after dinner, we'd sit around the fire and listen to the radio. How I loved that man's voice. I used to drift off listening to his deep rich tone ... until my dad spotted me and said, "Come on lad, get up the **dancers**, it's time you were in bed."
- dancers = stairs
- Use your **knowledge of the world** as well as the information in the text

Working out Meaning: Questions from 2014 DSE Paper

- What does “a lunatic” (line 48) mean? Someone who is ...
- In paragraph 4, find a word that can be replaced by “put”.
- Which word in paragraph 8 means “boring and frustrating”?
- Find a phrase in paragraph 1 that means “makes me happy”.
- In paragraph 3, find a word that is similar in meaning to “letters”.
- What does “the big picture” (line 71) refer to?
- What does it mean when the robot says “insufficient value” (line 93)?

Multiple skills

- You may need to use the following strategies simultaneously:
 - **Identifying important words** and **ignoring** unimportant words;
 - **working out meaning** of important unknown words;
 - using knowledge of **vocabulary use in texts**;
 - using our knowledge of **paragraph structure**;
 - using **world knowledge**; and
 - reading ahead to **confirm**.
- You might need to use these strategies to answer these kind of questions:
 - Working out the **general meaning** of a text
 - Working out the **purpose** of a text
 - **Summarising** a text
 - Identifying **tone** and **mood**
 - Identifying writer's **intention** and **choice of words**
 - ...

Paper 1 B2: 2014

- Ever since I can remember I had dreamt of being famous. I know how **embarrassing** an admission this is. From the first moment I was aware of such a class of person existing, I had wanted to be a celebrity. We are forever telling ourselves that we live in a celebrity-obsessed culture; many hands are daily wrung at the supremacy of appearance over achievement. To *desire* fame argues a shallow and delusional outlook. This much we all know. But if we clever ones can see so clearly that fame is a snare and a delusion, we can also see just as clearly that as each year passes a greater and greater proportion of the western world's youth is becoming entrammeled in that snare and dazzled by that delusion.
- **68. According to paragraph 4, what does the writer think is embarrassing?**
 - A. The western world becoming more obsessed with fame.
 - B. So many people wanting to be famous.
 - C. Saying that he wanted to be famous.
 - D. Talk about his own fame.

68. According to paragraph 4, what does the writer think is embarrassing?

- Ever since I can remember I had dreamt of being famous. I know how **embarrassing an admission this** is. From the first moment I was aware of such a class of person existing, I had wanted to be a celebrity. We are forever telling ourselves that we live in a celebrity-obsessed culture; many hands are daily wrung at the supremacy of appearance over achievement. To *desire* fame argues a shallow and delusional outlook. This much we all know. But if we clever ones can see so clearly that fame is a snare and a delusion, we can also see just as clearly that as each year passes a greater and greater proportion of the western world's youth is becoming entrammeled in that snare and dazzled by that delusion.
- **What does “admission” refer back to?**

68. According to paragraph 4, what does the writer think is embarrassing?

- Ever since I can remember **I had dreamt of being famous**. I know how embarrassing an admission this is. From the first moment I was aware of such a class of person existing, I had wanted to be a celebrity. We are forever telling ourselves that we live in a celebrity-obsessed culture; many hands are daily wrung at the supremacy of appearance over achievement. To *desire* fame argues a shallow and delusional outlook. This much we all know. But if we clever ones can see so clearly that fame is a snare and a delusion, we can also see just as clearly that as each year passes a greater and greater proportion of the western world's youth is becoming entrammeled in that snare and dazzled by that delusion.
- **Read ahead to confirm. This is a topic sentence. Is this idea expressed again later?**
- **Look for words that are similar in meaning or more general words.**

68. According to paragraph 4, what does the writer think is embarrassing?

- Ever since I can remember I **had dreamt of being famous**. I know how embarrassing an admission this is. From the first moment I was aware of such a class of person existing, I **had wanted to be a celebrity**. We are forever telling ourselves that we live in a celebrity-obsessed culture; many hands are daily wrung at the supremacy of appearance over achievement. **To desire fame** argues a shallow and delusional outlook. This much we all know. But if we clever ones can see so clearly that **fame** is a snare and a delusion, we can also see just as clearly that as each year passes a greater and greater proportion of the western world's youth is becoming entrammeled in that snare and dazzled by that delusion.

Q71 . i) What is “the phenomenon” (line 30)?

ii) In the writer’s opinion, what is a worse alternative to this phenomenon?

- You may wonder how our culture can be so broken and so sick as to venerate a pack of talentless nobodies who offer no moral, spiritual or intellectual sustenance and no discernible gifts beyond unthreatening photogeneity. My counter-argument to this would be, firstly, **the phenomenon** simply is not as new as everyone thinks it is. Read any novel published in the early part of the twentieth century and you will find female uneducated characters who spend their spare moments dreaming of movies stars, tennis players, explorers ... The propensity to worship is not new. We humans are naturally disposed to worship gods and heroes. I would rather see that impulse directed into the adoration of daft singers than into the veneration of militant politicians.
- **Highlight the part of the text which describes the phenomenon.**

Q71 . i) What is “the phenomenon” (line 30)?

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- **Which words are important for understanding this sentence?**
- **Which words do you know?**
- **Which words can you guess?**
- **Which words seem important but cannot be guessed?**

Identifying key words and ignoring others

- You may wonder how our culture can be so broken and so sick as to **venerate** a pack of **talentless nobodies** who **offer no moral, spiritual or intellectual** sustenance and **no discernible gifts beyond unthreatening **photogeneity****. My counter-argument to this would be, firstly, the phenomenon simply is not as new as everyone thinks it is. Read any novel published in the early part of the twentieth century and you will find female uneducated characters who spend their spare moments dreaming of movies stars, tennis players, explorers ... The propensity to worship is not new. We humans are naturally disposed to worship gods and heroes. I would rather see that impulse directed into the adoration of daft singers than into the veneration of militant politicians.

Guessing words' meanings

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- **Which word is important but hard to guess?**

Identifying important, yet difficult words

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- **What can you do to help you understand what this word might mean?**
- **Read ahead. This too is a topic sentence. Can you find similar/related ideas expressed using different vocabulary?**

Read ahead and look for similar/related ideas expressed using general words or words that are similar in meaning

- You may wonder how our culture can be so broken and so sick as to **venerate** a pack of talentless nobodies who offer no moral, spiritual or intellectual sustenance and no discernible gifts beyond unthreatening photogeneity. My counter-argument to this would be, firstly, the phenomenon simply is not as new as everyone thinks it is. Read any novel published in the early part of the twentieth century and you will find female uneducated characters who spend their spare moments **dreaming of movies stars, tennis players, explorers** ... The propensity to **worship is not new**. We humans are naturally disposed to **worship gods and heroes**. I would rather see that impulse directed into the adoration of daft singers than into the veneration of militant politicians.
- **Which word might be a synonym?**

Reading ahead and looking for general words or words that are similar in meaning

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- **The phenomenon refers to our worship of talentless people who have nothing to offer to society.**

ii) In the writer's opinion, what is a worse alternative to this phenomenon?

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Look out for these kinds of words...and try to use these words ...

argument

pattern

problem

trend

issue

phenomenon

incident

....

situation

Paper 1 B2: 2014

- Q 74. In paragraph 7, what is the false dichotomy that the writer refers to?
- Thirdly, look at the kind of people who most object to the childishness and cheapness of celebrity culture. Does one really way to side with such apoplectic bores? I should know, I often catch myself being one and it isn't pretty. I will defend the absolute value of Mozart over Miley Cyrus, of course I will, but we should be wary of **false dichotomies**. You do not have to choose between one or the other. You can have both. The human cultural jungle should be as varied as the Amazonian rainforest. We are all richer for biodiveristy. We may decide that a puma is worth more to us than a caterpillar, but surely we can agree that the habitat is all the better for being able to sustain each. Monocultures are uninhabitably dull and end as deserts.
- Widely recognized as one of the greatest composers in the history of Classical music
- A teen idol and pop singer

Paper 1 B2: 2014

Q79 i) What does 'Oh Stephen' (line 61) suggest about the writer's feelings?
ii) Why does he feel like that?

- Work was coming in thick and fast. But I was not famous. A few invitations to film premieres and first nights began to trickle in, but I found that I could walk the red carpet entirely unmolested. I remember going to some event with Rowan Atkinson, the press night of a new play, I think. To hear his name shouted out by photographers and see the crowd of fans pressing up against the crash barriers caused the most intense excitement in me, combined with a sick flood of fury and resentment that no one, not one single person, recognised *me* or wanted *my* picture. **Oh, Stephen.** I have clicked on and selected that sentence, deleted it, restored it, deleted it, and restored it again. A large part of me would rather not have you know that I am so futile, so fatuous and feeble-minded, but an even larger part recognises that this is our bargain. I cannot speak for others or presume to drag out their **entrails** for public inspection, but I can speak for (and against) myself. Maybe, to put a kinder construction to it, I was living proof that you could want to be famous *and* want to do the work, you could relish the red carpet, *and* relish working into the early hours cranking out articles, scripts, sketches and scenarios with a genuine sense of pleasure and fulfilment.
- An English actor best known for his performance in the sitcom/movie *Mr Bean*

Vocabulary and speaking

- “As in previous year, most candidates succeeded in contributing something to the discussion, but their **lack of vocabulary** ...often made their **ideas imprecise** and **ineffective**.” (HKEAA, 2014:183)
- “Examiners also noted a **strong reliance** on the part of many candidates on the use of **stock expressions** such as ‘**I agree**’ or ‘**That’s a very good idea**’ **without further elaboration** on what they agree on or why it was a good idea.” (HKEAA, 2014:183)
- “**To acquire a broader range of vocabulary**, candidates are encouraged to expose themselves to a wide range of genres.” (HKEAA, 2014:185)

Sharing Our Experiences of the Oral Exam

Gordon Ching, Thomas Li and Pika Wong
(BABEd Years 1 and)

Speaking (Paper 4)

- **Articulation and Intonation**
 - Construct ideas
 - Deliver them in fluent English
 - Fun learning
 - Value of listening
- **Confidence** (not over; not under)
- **Listen and respond**

Speaking (Paper 4)

- **Gesture and Basic Courtesy**
 - Think about how you look
 - Show you are listening and show interest
 - Share the conversation with other candidates
- **Preparing for the Exam**
 - Don't feel embarrassed – practise!
 - Videotaping
 - Study Group
 - Skype Chat Group

Any Questions?

**Thank you very
much
and
GOOD LUCK!**

Paper 4: Speaking

- Read the text in front of you:
- Make some notes on what you could talk about – think of 3 things to discuss.
- **Anticipate:** What would be some possible questions for the response section?

Some possible responses

- How can we measure happiness in society?
- What makes you happy?
- Do you think that people worry too much about their work?
- Are young people happy in HK?
- How would you solve the problem of an unhappy HK?
- Why are some poorer countries in the world happier than HK?
- What comes first? Money or family?

Some suggestions

- Use the materials given to you. They are there to help you – identify points relevant to your discussion, but do NOT just read aloud from the text.
- Don't be afraid to use your own ideas
- Don't just agree with others – ask questions, make comments, provide support for your peers.

- Give some elaboration – give some more evidence or support for your answer. Why? How? What? When? etc.
- Listen to your groupmates and build on what they say.
- Ask questions!

Organise your 1 minute speech

Rephrase the question that is given to you.

Q: “What makes a good film?”

A: “When I think of **what makes a good film**, I think of **two / three** things....the first one of those is...

1-minute response

Show surprise / buy time

Q: “Why aren’t HK people happier?”

A: “Wow, why aren’t HK people happier? I’ve never really thought about this, but let me try. I guess there are 2 reasons...”