

2013-DSE
ENG LANG

PAPER 2 Model Essays

**2013 HKDSE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE
PAPER 2
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PART A

Title: An act of true courage

This is a photo of my best friend, Charlie. Sadly, she has to spend a lot of time in hospital, so she misses a lot of school. As a result, she is often **behind with** work, and teachers never tend to ask her questions in class, because she rarely knows the answers.

On the day that this photo was taken, a new teacher asked Charlie to solve a maths equation on the blackboard in front of the whole class. We were **dumbstruck**, none more so than Charlie herself! However, instead of saying she couldn't do it, Charlie got up and **had a go**. I was impressed by her bravery, and managed to **sneakily snap** this photo on my phone without the teacher noticing. What's more, Charlie got the equation right!

Title: Strength in numbers

Last summer, there was a fire in my neighbour's apartment, and he lost everything. Having heard about this, I **felt very sorry for** him, and decided to do something to help him. So I put up a message on Facebook, asking people bring **household** items that they don't need.

The post **went viral**, and I was amazed by the number of donations that arrived. By the evening, our apartment had been filled with clothes, books and pieces of furniture. Someone had even brought along a goldfish! My friends and I took this photo at the end of the day. It reminds me of the power of teamwork and the **generosity** of people towards strangers **in need**. I'll never forget the look on my neighbour's face when we presented him with so many gifts.

(263 words)

PART B

2. Learning English through Sports Communication

Dear Ms Chan,

I would like to present to you my idea for the **coverage** of a local sporting event for Campus TV: the final of the regional professional **arm-wrestling** competition. As it happens, this event is being held in the community hall just down the road from our school. It would be a great shame not to report on such a **prestigious** and exciting event, particularly because it is taking place locally to us.

The programme will include various features to be shown before coverage of the event. To begin the programme, I shall give a brief history of arm-wrestling as a sport. It has a **fascinating** history, which will be interesting to the viewers of Campus TV, since it is a relatively new professional sport. Following this, there will be a summary of the main events of the competition so far, **building up** to the thrilling final that will be covered in detail in the show. This feature will serve both inform viewers about the typical events of an arm-wrestling match, and build tension in preparation for the final. This will include detailed profiles of the finalists themselves, in the style of conventional televised profiles for sporting events: a **flattering** video shot of each finalist, with an **animated** fact file about their sporting history. This will be **visually exciting**, and continue to build tension.

The programme will then cover the event itself. I have arranged for interviews with the finalists before and after the match. The pre-match interview will continue to build tension and excitement for the match, as both competitors are guaranteed to be **cocksure** and overly confident of their **impending success**. This will lend further appeal to the post-match interviews, in which one will be able to **bask in** glory, and the other have to **eat humble pie in the light of** his **humiliating** defeat. The match itself will be relatively brief, but I have arranged for our camera-woman to have a prime spot for recording the action in great detail. A commentary can be provided and super-imposed on the footage during the post-filming production stage, as the event will not be broadcast live on Campus TV.

I am confident that this programme will be interesting to the students at this school. Arm-wrestling is a sport about which relatively little is known by your average student. The programme will provide details of how to become involved in professional arm-wrestling, which will certainly **intrigue** certain members of the school community! Furthermore, the questions to be asked in the interviews will be formulated by a student, meaning that they will be **in line with** the expectations and interests of other students at the school. In keeping with the current and up-to-date feel of Campus TV, the editing will be colourful and **dynamic**, and current music will be used as a backing track to the event coverage.

Thank-you for your time, and I hope that you will consider this to be a suitable suggestion for Campus TV.

Yours sincerely,
Chris Wong

(502 words)

3. Learning English through Drama

Dear Diary,

I feel awful. When we are young, the distinction between good and evil is simply something we accept willingly and blindly from our elders; when we become older, life deals us increasingly complex situations, forcing us into **moral dilemmas** which challenge our previous conceptions of right and wrong. One such dilemma came to a head today, **culminating** in the destruction of a friendship I have treasured for years.

Jemma and I have been friends since we were youngsters. Our years at primary school afforded no greater challenges to our friendship than **miniscule issues** such as who got to play with which doll first, or whose mummy was better at **tying plaits** in our hair. When we arrived at secondary school, things changed. Jemma started joining in with other girls when they **mocked** me for my good grades, although I knew she was **capable of the same**. The strange thing was that outside of school, we were still the best of friends. Although tempted to confront her about her behaviour at school, I decided to say nothing, preferring **the route of least resistance**.

Then, at lunchtimes, Jemma began to disappear with her new friends. When she returned to afternoon lessons, she would act strangely, **giggling** at everything, and seeming not to care when the teachers sent her out of the room. Deciding to solve this mystery, one day I asked if I could join her on one of her **lunchtime excursions**. She hesitated, and looked me in the eye for a long time, as though trying to read my mind, then said, "Ok. But you mustn't tell anyone about it." I nodded tacitly, excited at the prospect of spending time with Jemma during the school day, when she would usually pay me minimal attention.

We went to a small space behind the school buildings. The other girls were there already, and were passing around what looked like a strange cigarette; a **pungent, earthy smell** emitted from it. Jemma grabbed the smoking roll of paper from her friends, and inhaled the smoke, sighing deeply with satisfaction. She looked me in the eye again – a challenge – and offered it to me. I **stared at her in disbelief**, beginning to realise the explanation for the strange afternoon behaviour of Jemma and her friends. I turned on my heel and ran back into school, my mind **whirling** with contradictions. I knew that taking drugs was wrong, but so was **betraying** a friend!

My teacher found me crying in the corner of an empty classroom, and asked what was wrong. After **struggling with** my **conscience** for a few more moments, I told her what I had just witnessed. Now Jemma is in trouble, and of course she knows exactly who told on her. I've lost my best friend. And for what? I hope that in the end she will realise that what I have done is for her own good. Perhaps now she can turn her life around. But will she ever forgive me? That **remains to be seen**.

(505 words)

4. Learning English through Social Issues

Dear Sir/Madam,

As a student who regularly uses a private school-bus to attend school, I would like to express concern about **malpractice** amongst bus drivers of private school-bus operators. Firstly, I shall outline my main concerns, and then provide several recommendations for how these services can and should be improved.

On private school-buses, I have consistently **witnessed astonishing** examples of malpractice: both **negligence** and active misconduct. Not only is this highly unprofessional, it **endangers** the lives of the children on board: **cargo** which I'm sure you'll agree should be considered more precious than any other. Not only are the children on these buses put in danger, but they are also regularly witnessing irresponsible driving. Children are extremely **impressionable**, and follow the example of those **in positions of authority**. As such, adults who work with children hold a great deal of responsibility to act in such a way that children should be expected to follow. I will now go on to suggest several ways in which the drivers of private school buses should improve upon their current behaviour.

At present, few private school-buses have seatbelts; on those that do, the seatbelts rarely function, and I have never yet heard a driver **insist** upon children wearing them. These days, we are all well aware of the vital importance of seatbelts to survival in the case of an accident. Why, then, are children so regularly allowed to take journeys without them? Seatbelts should be provided on all school-buses, and regularly tested to ensure that they are **fully functioning**. Furthermore, it should be the responsibility of the driver to ensure that all children are wearing seatbelts. This would ensure that, in the case of an emergency, the children are as safe as possible.

Some private school-bus operators undertake actions which **beggar belief**. On more than one occasion, I have witnessed a bus driver allowing himself to be **egged on** by the children to drive at speeds well over the speed limit. The dangers of this practice go without saying. It is not the job of a bus driver to impress his passengers, but rather to **deliver** them safely to their destination. Drivers should be constantly reminded to stick to the speed limit, and perhaps should undergo **rigorous** testing to ensure their suitability for such a responsible role.

I believe that you would be shocked to witness how often bus drivers speak on their mobile phones whilst driving. Studies have shown that allowing oneself to be distracted by a mobile phone **significantly** increases one's chances of being in a serious accident. If the law is not enough to **dissuade** these irresponsible drivers, perhaps rigorous **enforcement** of this rule will. Passengers of the school-bus should be encouraged to report this behaviour, and their complaints taken seriously by the Bus Operators Association.

Thank-you for your time, and I sincerely hope that you will take my suggestions on board. It is evident that some things need to change **drastically**, in order to ensure the safety of our city's **next generation**.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong

(506 words)

5. Learning English through Debating

Dear Sir/Madam,

My attention has recently been drawn by the number of complaints about the new skate park which is being constructed near Stanley Market. The skate park is being built **in reaction to** the requests of young people in the area, who claimed that there was not enough **affordable** entertainment suitable for them. Allow me to recount the complaints that I have heard about this new facility; I shall then go on to explain why I consider these complaints to be unreasonable.

The complaints that I have heard regarding the new skate park have mainly been based around its apparent '**unsuitability**' for the area. Stanley Market is a popular tourist destination, and some believe that having young people hanging around in the skate park nearby would dissuade tourists from visiting the area, because they may feel **intimidated**. Another common complaint is that residents feel that it will encourage teenagers to **flock to** the area, and **congregate** in threatening groups; proposed effects of this have **ranged from** 'making the area look untidy' to 'increasing crime rates'.

I believe that these complaints are entirely unreasonable, and based on unfair and inaccurate **stereotypes** of Hong Kong's teenagers. Firstly, allow me to address the issue of tourists being '**put off**' by the skate park. The priority of every city should be to meet the needs of its residents, not to create an **unrealistic illusion** for tourists. I **acknowledge** that tourism provides a vital contribution to Hong Kong's economy, but tourists should not – and I believe do not – expect to avoid entirely evidence of the 'real' Hong Kong. This city is first and foremost a fully functioning place, where people live and work. Tourism should be secondary to this. As such, the skate park should be celebrated as evidence of the council's consideration of local residents.

The other complaints outlined above are also unreasonable, in my view. Before the construction of this skate park, residents complained about teenagers hanging around on street corners and causing trouble on the streets. For these same residents to now complain about the fact that teenagers will have something to do is simply **absurd**. This skate park will solve the issue of aimless teenagers, not exacerbate it! Furthermore, the **assumption** that teenagers will cause trouble is based upon an **unsubstantiated** stereotype, and promotes unhealthy relationships between the different generations of our city. The people who are making these complaints are, I propose, more **antagonistic** towards the youth than the youth are towards them; it is they who are **perpetuating** the **inter-generational tensions** which threaten the **harmony** of our communities.

I hope that you will consider publishing a story in the *Hong Kong Post* in favour of the skate park, so that those who are complaining about it might recognise its positive contribution to Hong Kong.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong

(470 words)

6. Learning English through Workplace Communication

Are You Working TOO HARD?

It has been noted that there has been a recent trend of people staying increasingly late at work. Whilst management **appreciates** this impressive **work ethic** and obvious **dedication** to your work, consider this: are you working too hard? You may not be achieving as much as you think by staying so late. Studies have shown that staying later at the workplace tends to have an **adverse effect** on efficiency. This article requests that you consider the **negative outcomes** of working late, both on yourself and your work.

Lack of sufficient '**down-time**' is damaging both towards your health and your working efficiency. Firstly, the less important of the two: your efficiency at work. It has been scientifically proven that the longer the hours people work, the less efficient their output. This is because human beings appear to **thrive on** deadlines. When we know that a certain amount of work must be completed within a certain amount of time, we **rise to the challenge** and **strive to** achieve. In contrast, the current practice of some workers at this company – simply to work until the work is done – encourages **procrastination** and inefficiency. Furthermore, failing to spend sufficient time relaxing has been proven to be **detrimental** to your health. Long working hours have been **connected to** stress-related conditions, such as high blood pressure and even heart attack. Health is, of course, vitally important, and often something that we take for granted until we **hit a snag**. Don't let it get to that point.

So how can you change your ways? One thing to try is to ensure that you are working efficiently during normal working hours. Try some of the following tips: take regular, short breaks; drink plenty of water to stay **hydrated** and focused; set achievable, short-term targets in your work; turn off your personal phone if you **tend to** be distracted by taking personal calls; consider blocking websites that are **irrelevant to** work, by which you may be distracted. By taking these small measures, you may find that the amount that you are able to achieve during your contracted hours rockets, thus **eradicating** the **perceived** need to stay at work for so long.

Sometimes, no matter how efficiently you work, you may still feel **overwhelmed** by your workload. If you have tried the above tricks, yet still feel that you cannot achieve your work targets within your **contracted hours**, speak to your line manager. You should by no means feel ashamed to admit that you cannot cope with your workload; if you can show that you have been taking measures to work efficiently, your line manager will be **sympathetic**. S/He will be able either to suggest measures for more efficient work, or to reduce your workload as a final resort.

It is simply not necessary to work **far beyond** your contracted hours. It is neither healthy nor efficient, and as such we do not want the employees of this **esteemed company** to create a **damaging atmosphere**, in which people feel under pressure to stay at work longer than necessary. Work hard, but not TOO hard!

(518 words)

7. Learning English through Popular Culture

It's a Small World After All

In the past few years, Asian pop culture has been breaking its boundaries and gaining popularity in the Western world. If the worldwide popularity of 'Gangnam Style', the **smash hit** by South Korean singer 'Psy', is anything to **go by**, it would seem that Asian pop culture is no longer just for Asia. So why the change? It is possible to **attribute** the new-found popularity of Asian stars **to** what is sometimes referred to as the '**global village**' phenomenon: that is, the **metaphorically** decreasing size of the earth, due to improvements in technology **enabling** travel and communications around the world.

Ease of travel has undoubtedly played a highly **influential** role in the increasing popularity of Asian stars in the Western world. Particularly amongst young people, who are often considered the **crusaders** of popular culture, travel is an increasingly common **pursuit** in the Western world. It is common for middle-class young people to take a 'gap year' either before or after attending university, during which they will often **venture** beyond the closer comforts of Europe, and experience Eastern culture. This 'gap year' culture has **bred** its own success, as travel companies **cash in** on this new market of young backpackers, and make travel to Asia cheaper and thus more accessible to a less wealthy **demographic**. This has meant that more Westerners have gained **exposure** to Asian pop culture than ever before, thus contributing to the rise of Asian stars in the Western world.

The internet has arguably been the most influential technological development of our time; it has made things possible that were **previously unimaginable**. One of these things is the ease of communication between anybody who has access to the internet, regardless of **physical distance** or cultural difference. This means that people from Western and Asian cultures are currently able to communicate to an **unprecedented extent**, including the sharing of pop culture through social media and video-sharing sites such as Youtube. It was this form of communication which **prompted** the success of Psy's song 'Gangnam Style', which was the first video on Youtube to reach a billion views worldwide. The popularity of this song in Western culture was down to curiosity about the song and video's colourful **absurdism**, as it provided something wholly different to the relatively bland nature of conventional Western chart music. Following the popularity of 'Gangnam Style', Westerners have been intrigued to discover more about Asian pop culture, and can now use the internet to do so.

The world is small and getting smaller. Due to the increasing ease and cultural acceptance of travel, and the remarkable sharing capacity of the internet, Westerners are finally gaining a taste of the **vibrancy** of Asian pop culture. Consequently, Asian influences are expanding across the world, and our stars are becoming their stars, too.

(470 words)

8. Learning English through Poems and Songs

Class of 2013. It is my honour to speak to you today, in your final hours of schooling. It is the job of the President of the Students' Union to deliver to the graduating classes great words of wisdom, which they will carry with them for the rest of their days. I put a great deal of thought into the **overriding** message with which I would like you to leave this school, and decided upon the following: don't waste time.

The phrase 'waste of time' is, in my opinion, often used too **lightly**. "Don't walk to school instead of driving – it's a waste of time!" or "Don't do that homework – it's a waste of time!" or even "Don't speak to her – it's a waste of time." We hear the phrase almost **on a daily basis**, and as such we become **desensitised to** its true meaning. What does it really mean to 'waste time'? When you stop to think about it, wasting time is a terrifying concept. We have a **finite** amount of time in our lives, and as every second passes, time **relentlessly** brings us ever closer to the moment at which our lives **cease**. It may seem like a **morbid** thought, and indeed it is morbid to think of our own **demise**, but instead of looking at the negative side of this idea, consider how this *memento mori* can have a positive impact on the way you live your life.

Teach yourself to view time as precious, and value every single second. Let's try it now. Close your eyes, and try to make yourself conscious of the passing of time. Perhaps you might count seconds, or you may become conscious of your breathing, both of which are measures of the time we have left to live. This is your graduation ceremony – the only one you will ever have. Instead of **yawning** through my speech, wishing that time would pass more quickly so that you can rush off to the parties which will **inevitably** follow, bring yourself into the present, and appreciate the now. Because this 'now' will never be 'now' again. It is a difficult skill to acquire, and I'm sure nobody manages it all the time, but the appreciation of the present is a **sure-fire way** to ensure that you do not waste time.

As you go out into the big wide world, and leave the familiar and comforting structure of the school day to **embark on** your varying adventures, you may find time beginning to **gallop**, rushing by. Suddenly you have a job, suddenly you have a family of your own, suddenly your hair is beginning to go grey. Before you know it, your time is up. If you can live in the present, enjoying and appreciating all the millions and millions of 'nows' that you will live through, rather than always looking ahead to the next weekend, the next holiday, the next year, time will seem to slow down. There is no better way to waste time than to wish it away.

(506 words)

9. Learning English through Short Stories

When Detective Murphy had first heard about this incident – **vandalism** – he had been **reluctant** to investigate it. He was a highly qualified and well-respected detective, who had become **famous for** solving the great mysteries of his time: murder, kidnap, dramatic events like that. Vandalism? That was work for the **novice** detectives. But as Murphy **gazed at** the vandalised paintings in the Hong Kong Museum of Art, he realised that something far more complex was going on.

The first **puzzling** thing was the fact that the criminal had decided to vandalise, rather than steal, the artwork. These masterpieces were worth millions, and would have been like **gold-dust** to any private collector who **held no regard for** the law. The criminal had managed to disable the multiple security measures in the exhibition room, which was a **feat** in itself, then simply **defaced** the paintings rather than taken them for his own gain. This was no **mindless** destruction, and the criminal was not in it for the money. What then? This led Murphy to the next mystery: the nature of the defacement. The criminal had used a knife to scratch out the faces in each painting. It was bizarre, and seemed to suggest deep **psychological disturbance** on the part of the criminal.

Murphy had been **at the scene** of the crime earlier that day, but it was his regular practice to return to the scene of the crime after hours, when the **bustling** of **forensic scientists** and journalists had **died down** to a calm silence, leaving him to stand silently with the crime. It was in these moments of quiet **contemplation** that he was usually hit with his famed inspiration, solving the most **peculiar** mysteries with the power of his **scrupulous** thought. That night, he had arrived again at the exhibition room of the museum, having been **granted** special access. Suddenly, the lights were switched off. Murphy sighed and waved his arms around, thinking that perhaps he needed to activate some kind of motion sensor.

“Detective Murphy, I thought I’d find you here,” came a deep, calm voice from the darkness.

“Who is it?” **snapped** Murphy irritably, “Turn the light on. Enough with this **foolery!**”

“Are you impressed by my little **stunt** with these paintings, then?” asked the voice. Murphy’s heart began to pound. The criminal! What was he doing here? Was this some kind of trap? “You see,” continued the voice, its tone hinting at a **sly** smile, “I knew they would give you this case. Very... puzzling, isn’t it?”

“Turn the light on. At least let me speak to you face to face.” Murphy reached out in the dark, suddenly feeling lost and afraid. The darkness could be hiding all manners of danger.

“Ah, but I can’t do that. You see, you’re the only person on this earth, I believe, who would be able to solve the **ingenious** crime I’m about to commit. And so you have to be removed. There’s nothing else for it, I’m afraid.”

The lights **flickered** on, allowing Murphy a glimpse of his killer just before he hit the ground.

(513 words)