

2015-DSE  
ENG LANG

PAPER 2 Model Essays

**2015 HKDSE  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
PAPER 2  
Model Essays**

## PART A

Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my opinion on the article dated 12th March, 2015, about how starting the school day at 8:00am makes students feel very tired. As a student myself, I am in agreement that most students spend the school day half-asleep, but I disagree with the author's suggestion that a 9:00am start would solve this issue.

The author of the article stated that pupils are unable to start the day energetically because the school day starts too early. I disagree that this is the main cause of students' fatigue. In my view, the main reason is that students stay up too late, usually doing homework or extra-curricular activities. Because they have so many deadlines looming over them all the time, it is impossible for most students to finish work before 11pm. Recent research by the Education Bureau showed that students have an average of just 5.5 hours sleep per night. This is woefully inadequate, and evidently, it is making students very tired the next day.

Another factor contributing to students' lack of sleep is stress. It is a fact of life these days that schoolchildren suffer from stress, due to high pressure relating to their academic performance, and also due to relationship problems. As the source of this stress is often school, this can even lead to school-avoidance behaviour. This stress can also cause insomnia, which clearly contributes to students' tiredness during the day.

Finally, the atmosphere of classrooms can also make students feel sleepy. For example, if the majority of lessons in school are lectures delivered in a monotone, with minimal interaction between teacher and students, it is understandable that students would find it very boring, and lack focus and alertness. Similarly, if they sit in the same classroom for the whole day, without being given opportunities to move around, students will also lack energy, making them very tired.

Consideration of these factors shows that, contrary to the author's view, a later start time to the school day would not present a solution to this problem. Giving students an extra few minutes in bed would not remove the pressures on their time, their stress, or improve the learning environment. There are, however, more suitable solutions.

A more effective solution would be to encourage and assist students in managing their time. They should be taught how to meet their deadlines in plenty of time, and how to rearrange their schedules to avoid having to push themselves beyond their limits. Delaying the start of lessons for an hour would simply encourage students to procrastinate, and would not tackle the problem at its root. Instead, students should take some responsibility for changing their lifestyles for the better.

Schools can also address the situation themselves. For example, schools could assign teachers or social workers to deal with students' mental health, by giving them appropriate guidance if they are struggling with stress or insomnia. Schools should also arrange their timetable in a way that focuses on keeping students alert, such as by having regular breaks, and putting Physical Education lessons in the morning.

This is an issue deserving serious attention, as the mental health of young people is at stake. However, focusing on the starting time of the school day would not tackle the heart of the problem, and would simply move the vicious circle to a different time.

Yours faithfully,  
Chris Wong

(563 words)

## PART B

### 2. Learning English through Sports Communication

Dear Ms Chan,

As chairperson of the Class Association for Form 2, I feel that it is incumbent upon me to inform you of the opinions of my classmates, regarding the physical education (PE) lessons provided at our school. My classmates and I agree that the lessons are not as interesting as they could be, so I would like to suggest some alternative activities to solve this problem.

First, allow me to outline the issues that my classmates and I have with PE lessons as they currently stand. Our primary concern is that we very rarely have practical lessons. Just one lesson in every five or six allows us to go outside and partake in the ‘physical’ activity that the name of the classes suggests. For the majority of the time, we sit inside and study the rules of sports that we never get to play! Secondly, in our rare practical lessons, there is very little variety in the types of sports that we play.

To address the first issue, I would like to suggest that a minimum of three out of four PE lessons should involve physical activity outside of the classroom. The benefits of practical lessons are manifold. My classmates agree that we relish every opportunity to break from the usual routine of sitting still in a classroom for hours at a time. Whenever we have a practical lesson, we feel more focused and energetic in the lessons that follow. Furthermore, regular physical activity in PE lessons is crucial for combating the sedentary lifestyle that many students lead. For these reasons, I believe that more practical PE lessons would benefit students’ mental and physical health, as well as their grades in other subjects.

Regarding the lack of variety in our practical lessons, I believe that having a set syllabus of sports to play throughout each school year would tackle this problem effectively. Our teacher is a committed basketball player, and whilst we appreciate the opportunity to receive coaching from such a skilled sportswoman, it would be beneficial to all students if we could learn other sports as well. There may be students who excel in sports other than basketball, and learning a variety of sports would allow us to develop a range of physical skills.

I hope that you agree that the aforementioned changes to PE lessons would hold a number of advantages. I trust that you will consider the suggestions that I have made on behalf of Form 2, and look forward to hearing from you soon about this issue.

Yours sincerely,  
Chris Wong

(427 words)

### 3. Learning English through Drama

“Please stop asking me about this. I’m afraid it is simply impossible for your grandmother to travel in her condition.”

Jess had become tired of hearing the word “impossible”, as she tried to make her grandmother’s dream come true. Since Grandma had moved into the old people’s home, it was as though she was trapped in a prison. The spark had begun to fade from her eyes, and the fire that had always burned in her soul had started to fizzle out.

“Thanks for trying, Jess,” she would sigh, whenever Jess updated her on her latest attempts, “But I’ve just come accept it now. I’m old and unwell. I’ll never go to Ireland.”

Jess clenched her fists The owner of the residential home was adamant that Grandma was too ill to travel the thousands of miles to her spiritual home. Several generations ago, Grandma’s mother had moved from Ireland to Hong Kong. She had never returned to Ireland, but had inspired in Grandma a desire to go to the place about which her mother had always talked so fondly. As much as Jess hated to admit it, Grandma was right. She was too frail to travel so far on a plane. It was time for Jess to be a bit more creative.

After a few more conversations and negotiations with the residential home staff, and what felt like a million phone-calls and bookings, the day finally arrived.

“Where are we going, Jess?” asked Grandma, a few sparks of excitement beginning to glitter in her green eyes as Jess pushed her wheelchair along the corridors of the home, “What’s happening?”

When they reached the closed door of the sitting-room, Jess turned to her Grandma with a dramatic flourish. “Grandma,” she announced, “We’re going to Ireland!”

She opened the door slowly, and traditional Irish music started to play. A row of Irish dancers sprang into action in the middle of the room, which was garishly decorated with strings of shamrocks and Celtic symbols. Above the fireplace, a portrait of Grandma’s mother looked proudly at the room, smiling gently as if amused by the scene she saw before her.

“What do you think, Grandma?” whispered Jess, suddenly anxious that this hadn’t been such a good idea after all, “There’s Irish stew for lunch, and I even persuaded the staff to let you have a pint of Guinness.”

Grandma didn’t say a word, and Jess filled the silence with more chatter. “So I know that it’s not really Ireland – obviously – but maybe – I just thought that – we could at least pretend – just for the afternoon.”

Grandma reached out and took Jess’s hand. “Thank-you,” she choked through tears of joy, “Thank-you for making my dream come true.”

(452 words)

#### 4. Learning English through Social Issues

##### Mass Exodus from Hong Kong's Schools

Have you noticed the classrooms becoming emptier? Playgrounds devoid of children? Teachers sitting idly with no classes to teach? Well, perhaps not, but this could be a bleak vision of the future if the trend for children being sent abroad for their schooling continues to increase.

According to interviews with parents making this decision, there are two main reasons why they feel that their children would be better off completing their schooling abroad. The first is that some parents are concerned about the well-being of their children in the current Hong Kong system. As we know, there is an almost exclusive focus on academic scores in Hong Kong's schools, perhaps at the expense of more holistic educational development. Parents feel that their children would enjoy a broader style of education abroad, which isn't so heavily focused on scores and grades.

A second reason is that parents feel that completing schooling abroad will give their children an edge in today's competitive job market. Especially if parents send their children to English-speaking countries, students develop proficiency in English, which can be a passport to a high-paying job back in Hong Kong. Furthermore, if children can gain a place at a prestigious school, such as Eton College in England, their chances of attending a high-status university are much improved, thereby setting them up for a successful future.

But what is the impact on the local schools in Hong Kong, and on the children who are sent away? Well, as top students are sent abroad, the quality of Hong Kong schools inevitably decreases. Perhaps, however, this trend of disappearing students will encourage Hong Kong schools to work harder to keep their top pupils. Maybe this is the push that the policy makers need to focus more on the needs of students.

Studying abroad also has a huge impact on the children themselves. As well as enjoying the benefits outlined above, there are a number of possible disadvantages to studying abroad. There may be some negative psychological impacts of being so far from one's parents, and even a disconnect from Hong Kong, which may prevent them coming back to their home country. They may also feel a huge amount of pressure, as most students will be well aware of the phenomenal costs of sending your child to study abroad.

Here at our school, let's hope that our classrooms don't begin to empty, as hoards of students flock abroad for a better education. For what it's worth, I think our school offers more than any school abroad could offer.

(429 words)

## 5. Learning English through Debating

Dear Editor,

It's time that we paid some attention to Hong Kong's dull and underdeveloped harbour front. Large parts of the harbour front are not developed at all, either privately or for public use. I am writing to express the admittedly unpopular opinion that this space should be used for housing and commercial use, rather than being left as an open area for the general public.

The need for housing in Hong Kong is reaching breaking point, and the harbour front would be the perfect place for high-rise flats to accommodate our growing population. Over-crowding is a serious issue in Hong Kong, and a related problem is the resulting housing shortage. Many people are living in cramped and over-crowded conditions, and it simply must not continue. It is lovely to have big, open public spaces, but in my view, the living conditions of our inhabitants should be considered a matter of priority. Surely it is more important for every citizen of Hong Kong to have somewhere decent to live, than to have open public spaces?

Secondly, allowing businesses to open offices and other commercial buildings in this area would encourage even more corporations to choose Hong Kong for their business centre. Hong Kong is already a global financial centre, but why limit ourselves? The harbour front would be a very desirable location for businesses to have their offices, because of the beautiful views. Expanding our economy, and thus creating a more prosperous city, is more important to me than creating even more public spaces for citizens.

This brings me to my final point. Hong Kong already has plenty of open spaces and public areas that visitors and residents alike can enjoy. There are countless parks and gardens across the whole of Hong Kong, including some waterfront parks. Although I can understand the demands for more modern public spaces, I believe that such spaces are a luxury. Space is in high demand in Hong Kong, and consequently I believe that more large public spaces are a luxury that we can't afford. The harbour front is a space that would be much better used for more practical purposes, ensuring that residents' basic needs are being met.

Open public spaces are wonderful things, and I acknowledge that the harbour front would provide a beautiful backdrop for parks and public spaces. However, we have a responsibility to ensure the safe housing and economic development of Hong Kong, and this must take priority.

Yours faithfully,  
Chris Wong

(412 words)

## 6. Learning English through Workplace Communication

RE: Complaints regarding the customer service department

Dear Jackie,

I hope you're well. I'm writing to inform you about a number of complaints that we have had recently, and to suggest some solutions to this problem. Unfortunately, the complaints have been regarding our own customer services department.

I have received several complaints lately about poor customer service provided by the complaints department. Many customers are irate because they have had to wait on hold for a considerable length of time. Some also feel that their complaints haven't been taken seriously, and that the staff answering the phones do not have sufficient knowledge about Hong Kong Mobile's products and services.

From my experience in the customer services department, I have some suggestions for how to improve this situation. Firstly, I believe that the long wait times that customers are experiencing on the phone lines is caused by insufficient staff in the customer services department. There are only three or four people in the office at a time, which is not enough people to deal with the volume of calls that come through each day. I would recommend considering hiring several more members of staff, in order to improve customers' experience of our department.

Secondly, staff training in how to deal with complaints would solve the issue that customers do not feel that their complaints are being taken seriously. I was surprised to find out that, as a summer intern, I was expected to take calls from customers straight away, without any training in how to handle customers. From the behaviour of some of the employees, such as shouting down the phone or hanging up on customers, it is clear that the staff in this department have not had sufficient training. Further training would be invaluable in ensuring that customers feel valued and respected by Hong Kong Mobile's staff.

Finally, staff should be provided with more information than that which is available on the Hong Kong Mobile website. As far as I am aware, staff simply browse the public website in order to answer customers' queries and problems. Often, callers have done this already, meaning that they are then frustrated when the customer services department is unable to provide them with the further information that they require. It would make sense for staff in this department to have access to a very comprehensive source of information, so that they can help customers in a more effective way.

I hope that you will consider these solutions. As a newcomer to the department, I feel that I am well-placed to recognise some of the shortfalls about which customers have been complaining.

Best wishes,  
Chris Wong

(441 words)

## 7. Learning English through Popular Culture

### Dealing with low attendance at cinemas

Watching a film at the cinema is becoming a decreasingly popular leisure activity. This report considers the reasons for this trend, and outlines suggestions for how to encourage more people to go to the cinema.

#### Why people don't attend the cinema

The key reason for decreasing attendance at local cinemas is the cheap and easy availability of films online. There are both legal and illegal avenues for watching films on the internet. Illegally, people can easily watch brand new releases for free from the comfort of their own home. There are also legal websites on which people can pay to view new films, or simply wait for films to become available on subscription websites such as Netflix. For these people, it is cheaper and more convenient to wait for films to become available online, rather than going out to the cinema.

#### Solution 1: Cheaper cinema tickets

In order to encourage people to go to their local cinema, cinemas need to recognise consumers' desire for an experience that is value for money. As cinemas are finding it difficult to reduce the prices of tickets due to falling custom, local governments or even charities might decide to subsidise ticket prices, in order to avoid the closure of local cinemas. Another option for cinemas would be to implement a policy of free cinema tickets, with moviegoers encouraged to spend money on 'extras', such as premium seats, snacks and drinks. The result would be to draw huge crowds of people to the cinema with the free tickets, allowing the cinema to make a profit on the extra perks that people choose to purchase.

#### Solution 2: Enhanced cinema experience

Another solution to this problem would be to make the experience of cinema more luxurious and multifaceted, so that people no longer see cinema simply as a more expensive and inconvenient version of Netflix. Rather than offering the tired options of popcorn and fizzy drinks, cinemas could focus on providing gourmet snacks and even meals for people to enjoy before or during the film. They could make use of new technology to enhance the cinema-going experience, such as kinetic seats and IMAX dome screens. Thus, rather than just being an over-sized television or laptop screen, the cinema would become a worthwhile experience, which people would be happy to leave their houses and spend money on.

#### Summary

Advances in the internet and personal technology have contributed to the downfall of the local cinema. Local cinemas need to act quickly in order to survive. They might consider cheaper or free cinema tickets, and creating an enhanced cinema experience, to entice more customers through their doors.

(443 words)

## 8. Learning English through Poems and Songs

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am Chris Wong, the chairperson of Peak School's Poetry Club. I was very excited to hear that you are hosting a language arts festival this summer, and I would like to make some suggestions for what activities could be held at the festival. The first is a slam poetry performance, and the second is a poetry translation workshop.

Slam poetry is an increasingly popular form of poetry, which would be a welcome addition to the language arts festival. It is a spoken medium, meaning that it accentuates the sounds and rhythms of the English language. Performers are usually highly energetic, making slam poetry one of the most exciting styles of poetry to watch live. With politicised, personal and emotional subject-matter, slam poetry performances never fail to be engaging and fascinating to audiences. Not only would such a performance at the language arts festival introduce students to a new form of poetry, but it would also increase their interest in the English language. Slam poetry, as an exclusively spoken medium, relishes the unique rhythms and patterns of the English language. Listeners can't help but marvel at the beauty of English, and I am confident that the audience will be inspired to pursue their own learning of English even further.

My second suggestion is a workshop in which students are assisted by experts in translating traditional Chinese poetry into English. Translation is a fine art, and enhances appreciation of both the original and the target language. Translators must be able to look both very closely at each individual word, and also at the poem as a whole. One of the most fascinating things about translation of poetry is the wide variety between English translations of the same Chinese poem; every participant in the workshop will have their own individual English translation. Surely this intriguing activity will capture the imaginations of the students who take part, and provide them with a renewed enthusiasm for the English language. Who knows, perhaps it will even inspire some new career aspirations! The ability to translate from and into English is a very desirable trait for employees; the workshop could emphasise the value of this skill, which is likely to impress and excite students, too.

As chairperson of a Poetry Club, I could be biased. However, I think that incorporating activities relating to different styles of English poetry would provide flavour and variety to your language arts festival. The aforementioned activities are sure to be enjoyable for students, as well as inspiring them with enthusiasm for learning English.

Yours faithfully,  
Chris Wong

(428 words)

## 9. Learning English through Short Stories

RE: 'Meet the Author' evening for reading week

Dear Ms Li,

I hope you are well. I am very much looking forward to the reading week next term, and feel honoured to be involved in planning the events. I am writing to let you know that I have found an author who might be available to take part in our 'Meet the Author' evening: Veronica Roth.

I am aware that Veronica Roth is a very famous, American author, and you are probably wondering how and why she would come to our school's modest event. In fact, I happen to know that Roth is touring Hong Kong during the time of our reading week. She also has a connection to our school, since one of her nieces is in Form 1 here. I have spoken to this relative, Jackie Chiu, and she has said that she is sure that Roth will be willing to set aside a few hours one evening to take part in our 'Meet the Author' evening.

The reasons why Roth would be a suitable author for our event are self-evident. As a hugely successful children's author, she would draw hundreds of students to our event. Her popular 'Divergent' series, which has recently been turned into Hollywood blockbuster movies, has been read by almost every pupil at our school, meaning that many students will be able to ask relevant and interesting questions. As Roth speaks only English, this event will also be a valuable opportunity for students to practise their listening and speaking skills in English.

The members of the Reading Club have had lots of ideas about what activities Roth could lead on the 'Meet the Author' evening. Naturally, we should hold a question and answer session, during which students can ask any burning questions that they have about Roth herself, or about her books. One student has suggested that Roth might hold a story-writing workshop, in which she can guide students through the process of writing a successful story, such as building realistic characters and developing exciting plots. Another suggestion is that Roth judge a short story competition. Entries could be provided before the event, and Roth could judge and award a winner on the day of the event. I can't think of a stronger incentive to take part in a story-writing competition, than to have such an esteemed author read my work.

If you are happy with these ideas, I will attempt to contact Veronica Roth through Jackie Chiu. I have very high hopes that Roth will be available and willing to take part in our reading week. If she agrees to attend, this year's reading week will surely be the most successful yet. I look forward to hearing your reply.

Best wishes,  
Chris Wong

(460 words)