

Be prepared! Getting ready for the new school year



Forward Foreword



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The HKDSE exam is the culmination of years of exam preparation and hard work. For your students in lower secondary forms, this arduous journey is just beginning. Language exams, however, need a different approach. Encourage your students not to think of them as academic pursuits, such as studying for science or history exams. English is not just another school subject (often with additional social pressure), but a vital communication tool and life skill.

Language development is also progressive; you start with a foundation and build on this. Improving language skills takes time, dedication and effort. In addition to asking students to complete as many practice papers and mock tests as they can, get them out of the classroom so that they can practise their language skills in a variety of settings. The summer break is the best time for them to do that.

It's never too late for your students to start reading English texts for leisure. Help them to find a genre they are interested in and motivate them to read books that appeal to them. Encourage them to watch English films and online videos. English is all around us, so let's help students discover the joy of learning a language, to make exam preparation less stressful and more interesting.

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Dr V. Gasper
Editorial Manager, English Language
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Oxford HKDSE Exam Analysis Sharing Session

Expert insights on the 2017 HKDSE English exam

The Oxford HKDSE Exam Analysis Sharing Session 'Expert insights on the 2016 HKDSE English exam' was held on 29 April 2017.

Following some opening remarks from OUP Publishing Director Christine Chau, Editorial Manager Vesela Gasper explained the importance of scaffolding when preparing students for the HKDSE. Using past papers under exam conditions, for example, may frustrate Form 4 students who are not currently at that level in their language development. Students find instruction and materials most beneficial at a level just beyond their current independent capability. Thus, graded resources, such as the Oxford Senior Secondary course *Advantage* (Second Edition), are vital if we wish to help students unlock their full potential in the run-up to the HKDSE exam.

Project Editor Iris Hung outlined some of the new formats in the 2017 HKDSE English Language Papers 1–3. Extracts of new features from the exam were shown, along with explanations and examples of the latest formats incorporated in our new course *Advantage* (Second Edition) and HKDSE Mock Tests.

The next part of the seminar invited two teachers from schools in Hong Kong to share their insights on the 2017 HKDSE Papers 1 and 3. Mr Lester Sze of Fanling Lutheran Secondary School analysed the 2017 HKDSE English Language Paper 1. After going through how the texts and question types have changed over the years, Lester pointed out some areas where students may have struggled in the newest paper. He also talked about his personal strategies for preparing students, such as utilizing extensive reading to expand student exposure to different thematic and functional vocabulary. He also mentioned teaching students grammar such as morphology, so that they are able to break down sentences to successfully extract their meaning.

Ms Lisa Wong of Wah Yan College Kowloon analysed the 2017 HKDSE English Language Paper 3. She discussed the paper's progression compared to previous years, according to the task types, marks given, listening tracks and formats. She also shared some tips on how to gear students for success on Paper 3, such as the importance of time management and effective note-taking skills.

As long as students prepare well for the HKDSE, they should achieve the results they desire.



Oxford Junior Secondary English Seminar

Come and experience a new *e*ra of learning

The Oxford Junior Secondary English Seminar was held on 25 March 2017, to discuss e-learning in the classroom and provide teachers with more information on the Oxford Junior Secondary series *New Treasure Plus* (Second Edition).

A short video from OUP General Manager Mei-mei Ng welcomed everyone to the event. The MC for the event, Mr Jason Chan, then invited OUP Publishing Director Christine Chau to say a few words.

Teachers John Man and Jimmy Yuen spoke about how they use e-activities at Lee Kau Yan Memorial School. They piloted an English e-lesson using the *New Treasure Plus* (Second Edition) unit on 'Animal Friends' on Oxford iSolution. They took a poll of the students' favourite animals for the warm-up activity. Students answered on iPads and the grand total was projected for everyone to see. Another novel approach was implemented in the vocabulary building stage, where students took selfies with animal filters and shared them in order to learn relevant vocabulary. This led to a writing input task, where students had to describe an imaginary animal based on what they had learnt. The students found this learning experience on Oxford iSolution enjoyable.



Ms Si Wing Ng, of True Light Middle School, talked about teaching reading in a hybrid classroom. This combines digital media with traditional teaching methods, as opposed to pure e-learning. Technology should enhance instruction by increasing collaboration, critical thinking and creativity. For example, some websites make pre-reading video tasks engaging by automatically stopping at certain parts to ask related questions. Other apps can help flip the traditional reading model; instead of students highlighting a passage by themselves and then discussing it with the teacher, the teacher can annotate a projected passage as they give immediate feedback. Certain websites even allow students to work on a text individually whilst making their comments viewable to everyone else.

This approach also works well for writing. Ms Jenny Leung Ching Luen of FlippEducators@HK and HKBUAS Wong Kam Fai Secondary and Primary School spoke about teaching writing with e-learning. Students can write one text per group, adding their comments and amendments in real time. Once each group uploads their draft, other groups can add further comments. This encourages feedback, since there is no longer any need to rewrite or copy out sections of the amended text by hand.

Although e-learning is relatively new, there are already many resources available for teachers to utilize.



2017 HKDSE analysis: Teachers' thoughts

The guest speakers from our OUP HKDSE Exam Analysis Sharing Session share some useful insights and preparation tips, to complement our analysis of the latest HKDSE.

Mr Lester Sze, English Panel Chair,
English Department, Fanling Lutheran
Secondary School



Paper 1

This year's Part A text was an article criticizing the current practice of recycling. It also included American spellings, such as 'judgment' and 'garbage'. There was a range of authentic text types, from an infographic and presentation slides (Part B1) to an academic article (Part B2). This wide variety proves how vital extensive reading is, so that students are exposed to different texts before the exam.

I recommend teachers focus on both thematic and functional vocabulary when teaching different texts. For example, the Part A text included thematic vocabulary related to recycling and the environment, such as 'incinerator', 'atmosphere' and 'decompose'. Functional vocabulary includes synonyms used to report statistics throughout the paper, such as 'surge' instead of 'increase', or 'plummet' instead of 'decrease'. It also includes the reporting verbs 'assure', 'deny' and 'reveal'.

If students understand how words can signpost particular parts of a sentence, it will help them infer meaning. For instance, the conjunctive adverb 'on the other hand' can signpost a contrasting argument. This is useful because this year's paper included more specific factual questions than before, meaning students need to understand more than just the gist. You could set your students chunking and deletion tasks, so that they have to deconstruct sentences to predict their premise. Take the following sentence: *'The clearest truism with regard to today's young people is that they have been asked throughout their childhood to chase financial security and, now they are adults, it is clear that this caused the crash in the housing market.'* If we delete the fillers, we are left with *'... today's young people ... have been asked ... to chase financial security, and now they are adults ... this caused the crash in the housing market.'* This strategy can help students extract key information without focusing on every word.

I hope my tips on sentence deconstruction and why vocabulary matters can help your students to delve deeper into HKDSE texts with confidence.

Ms Lisa Wong, English Panel Chair,
English Department, Wah Yan College,
Kowloon



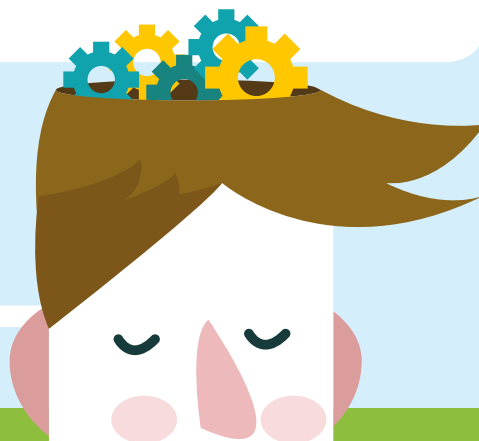
Paper 3

The tasks in this year's Paper 3 generally progress in difficulty. This progression is not, however, entirely linear; in Part A, for example, Task 3 is considerably more difficult than Task 4 because of the recording speed and amount of writing required. Students need to be prepared to write a lot even when full sentences are not required because many questions ask for longer or open-ended answers without scaffolding. As a result, it can be hard to know exactly how much to write in order to be awarded full marks.

I would advise that teachers should set their students some timed practice exercises to overcome this. Time them when they are handwriting a set amount of words or extracting answers. If students can see how long these activities take them, they will manage their time better in the exam. It will also be useful for students to look at how long 100 (or so) words look in their own handwriting, since they will not have time to count each individual word under exam conditions.

Speaking of timing, note-taking is also an important skill that is often overlooked. Ensure your students make full use of the preparation time provided before the recordings. They should look through the Question-Answer books and predict the answers based on the question formats. Will they need to tick boxes, or give a longer answer? They should also annotate the Data Files, highlighting and assigning them to particular tasks. These tips will save them time later.

Lastly, 2017's Paper 3 had an international flavour, with many countries mentioned and even an American accent in Part B. It will therefore stand your students in good stead to present them with different accents in your lessons, such as American, Australian or South African English. Or, if you're feeling brave, you could try putting on an accent the next time you read something aloud to your class!



Useful resources for authentic English

Ms Jacqui Koo, English Panel Chair at HKBUAS Wong Kam Fai Secondary and Primary School, has some suggestions on classroom activities to expose your students to authentic English in the new school year.

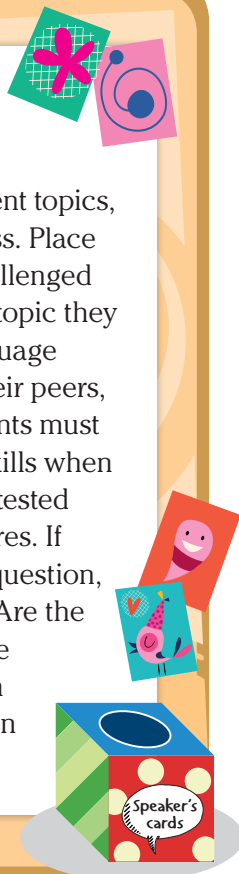


Newspaper cuttings

Students should summarize a newspaper article and look up synonyms of more challenging words in a thesaurus. Teachers can also ask students to comment on the writer's tone. Students really enjoy challenging one another, so get them to set questions for each other in pairs. You may be surprised by the results!

Speaker's cards

Prepare some cards with different topics, such as steps in a simple process. Place them in a box. Students are challenged to speak for one minute on the topic they draw. This flexes receptive language skills when students listen to their peers, or a question read aloud. Students must also use expressive language skills when answering. Their vocabulary is tested if their card includes only pictures. If students receive a step-related question, they must use logical thinking. Are the steps logical? What verbs can be used to describe them? You can ask also students to set their own questions.



Dictogloss

The teacher reads a short text and learners make notes before trying to reconstruct it in groups. The aim is not to reproduce the text word for word, but to convey the meaning and style of it. The teacher could set the scene with a photo to establish key vocabulary. The teacher would then read the text once at normal speed, while the students listen. During the second reading, the students can make notes, then sit in small groups to compare them. They should then try to reconstruct the gist of the text together. Other students can comment and correct any errors. Finally, the teacher can compare the original story with the class, focusing on key vocabulary or grammar.



Junior Secondary Oxford English Writing Competition Whodunnit?

The Oxford English Writing Competition *Whodunnit?* was launched on 7 October 2016, at the students' workshop 'Catching the Secret of English Learning'. Contestants were required to complete a detective story started off by the Hon Jasper Tsang Yok-sing, former president of the Legislative Council. The competition received overwhelming support from junior secondary students, with over 1,600 entries from more than 100 schools. After numerous hours of marking and scoring by our judging panel, there were eight merit award winners and three finalists.

The merit awardees and runner-ups received book coupons as their prizes. The champion award went to Valerie Chee from Maryknoll Convent School. She was rewarded with a place on a study tour at the University of Oxford, this coming summer. You can find Valerie's winning entry on the next page.

Whodunnit?

Mr Jasper Tsang's beginning of the detective story:

It was the last lesson of the day, an English lesson. The teacher, Mrs Wu, had been talking non-stop in front of the class for the last twenty minutes, oblivious to the noise of the many private conversations going on in the classroom. Tommy looked around at his classmates. Then he looked at his wristwatch. The school bell would ring in fifteen minutes. 'Fifteen more minutes,' he thought, 'and I'll be safe.'

The minutes passed like hours. A big man suddenly appeared at the classroom door, silhouetted against the afternoon sunlight. Tommy could not see the face clearly but he knew it was Mr Lee, the Deputy School Principal. Tommy's heart missed a beat.

Mrs Wu went over to the door, and Mr Lee said something to her in a subdued voice. Tommy could not hear what was said, but he saw the serious look on Mrs Wu's face.

Mrs Wu stepped aside and Mr Lee walked into the classroom. 'Boys and girls,' he said aloud, 'one of your bags contains something that should not be there. We have to take a quick look in each of your bags.' 'What are you looking for, sir? Has someone reported a theft?' asked a little boy in the front row.

'Can't tell you yet, sonny,' replied Mr Lee. 'Now, boys and girls, put your bags on your desks and open them.'



The stern tone in Mr Lee's voice seemed to have frozen everyone. Tommy looked around again, but no one moved a muscle.

'Do not make me say it again,' said Mr Lee. Even Mrs Wu looked a little bit frightened. Then all the students acted, and waited for another instruction. Tommy had no choice but to follow. 'Please assist me, Mrs Wu,' said Mr Lee as he checked the first row carefully. Mrs Wu started to check the last row.

* * *

Tommy was on his way to school. The gentle breeze swiped his face, and the sun shone on him brightly. However, to him, it was just another boring day. Reaching the front gate, Tommy walked quickly to his classroom. There were not many students. He put his phone in his pocket and headed for the washroom.

He walked into the last cubicle and took out his phone. 'Wait just a second,' he thought. 'Did I see something?' He turned back and saw four lines of tidy words written on the wall in purple, the colour of mystery.

A sound of a bird, a man and a festival
Hidden in where, glister and rattle
Opens the room of items, it's a one-shot opportunity
Choose the right key, or the door shuts permanently



Below the words stood a purple, perfectly square box. Out of curiosity, Tommy opened it slowly and carefully. Inside, there was a chain of silver keys, each with a word carved on it. He quickly looked through the words. 'Answers to the riddle,' he thought. As the bell rang, he decided to solve it later. He slipped the box in his pocket and went back to the classroom.

'A sound,' he thought. He took out all the keys with words related to sound and put them on the table. 'Room of items. Oh, must be the storage room. I've got one chance to open the door then.' He looked back at the keys. 'The connection of where, glister and rattle? Think, Tommy!'

* * *

'Tommy? Tommy!' Mr Lee broke his thoughts.

'Yes, sorry,' replied Tommy nervously.

'Hands away, I need to examine it.' Tommy obeyed. A classmate whistled a note and gave him a thumbs down. He looked up and saw half of the class was standing outside, holding their gaming devices and other illegal things at school. Mr Lee searched his whole bag but, of course, found nothing.

Suddenly, a thought came to Tommy. He looked at the guy who whistled.

'The beginning of "where" is "wh", the middle of "glister" is "is" and the end of "rattle" is "tle". The sound of those three makes "whistle"!'

'Could you stand up? Your left pocket seems too full.'

'I've only got a little box inside.'

Mr Lee held up his fat palm, and Tommy put the box there.

'What is the answer?' murmured Mr Lee, looking at the box.

'Whistle,' said Tommy confidently.

He felt a sudden pressure on his shoulder. Before he could say anything, he and Mr Lee were in a void, with nothing else. He looked at his teacher, mouth open. 'What?' he said hoarsely.

'We teachers know the answer. But we'd like to find the smartest students and eliminate them. We don't want anyone with a high IQ to study here, so we can control the ones left. You're lucky to be the first one for us to find.'

'Absurd!' Tommy's fear turned into hatred, and that turned into anger. 'Take me back!'

'Don't worry,' the evil Mr Lee smiled. 'Your relatives and friends will be brainwashed so that you'll be forgotten. Enjoy your time here.'

Tommy was left alone.



~ Valerie Chee, F.3A, Maryknoll Convent School (Secondary Section)

Watch this space

Things to look out for in the coming months

New for 2017

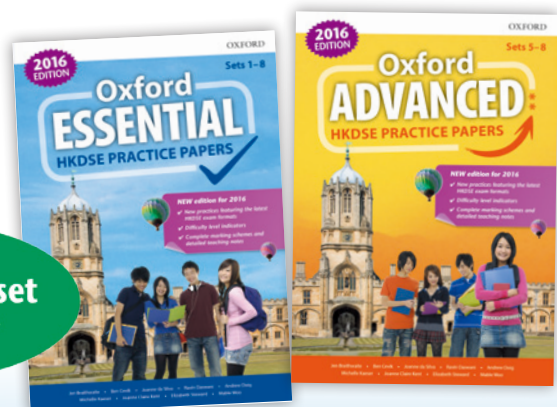
New Treasure Plus (Second Edition)

New Treasure Plus (Second Edition) is an engaging course, specifically designed for the Junior Secondary Curriculum. This series has been developed according to the latest requirements of the Curriculum Development Council's Syllabus for Secondary English, and comes packaged with a powerful e-learning platform, comprehensive resources and assessment materials. *New Treasure Plus* (Second Edition) is also designed to facilitate hybrid learning, active self-directed learning and effective language skill development, equipping students for the challenges they will face in the Senior Secondary English language curriculum.



Oxford Essential & Oxford Advanced HKDSE Practice Papers

2017 bonus set of the HKDSE Practice Papers can be downloaded from our website.



2017 bonus set
available online

Enjoy the upcoming summer break!

In the next issue of *Oxford Forward*

- More news, interviews and students' activities

Look out for the next issue of
Oxford Forward in October 2017



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