



The pleasure of reading

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Forward Foreword



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One question that parents and teachers never tire of asking—How can I cultivate a serious reading habit in young people? I suspect, in the minds of these gravely concerned adults, reading seriously is more a problem of ‘what to read’ than ‘how to read’. Reading seriously, for them, is burying oneself in literary classics like *A Tale of Two Cities* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*, or news magazines such as *Time* and *The Economist*.

But that is the wrong question to ask. We need not worry about what our children and students are reading as long as they are reading. Young people will not become serious readers just because we want them to be. They will only find reading off-putting, even insufferable, if they are forced to read seriously. What teachers and parents should do, instead, is to help them read just for the fun of it.

Scholars call this ability the capacity for higher pleasure. With this capacity, it will be just a matter of time before one ‘reads upward’—from, say, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* to *The Catcher in the Rye*, and from *South China Morning Post* to *The International New York Times*. Happy readers read for pleasure and to satisfy their curiosity, not out of a sense of duty and as if they were taking their medicine. That’s why they are often the envy of the serious readers.

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Perry Lam
Editorial Director, English Language
Teaching Department

Oxford Secondary English seminar: Teaching English as an Exam Skill

Oxford's joint Junior and Senior Secondary English seminar, 'Teaching English as an Exam Skill', was held on Saturday, 14 March 2015.

After opening remarks by OUP Editorial Director Perry Lam, members of the ELT Editorial team welcomed teachers aboard the 'Through Train to Exam Success', explaining how Oxford's Junior and Senior Secondary titles can help guide students to success in the HKDSE. This featured an 'insider's look at exam skills' from HKDSE 5** student Theodore Tam.

This was followed by a lively and insightful panel discussion with guest speakers Ms Debbie Shek of Lee Kau Yan Memorial School, Ms Rowan Sit of Raimondi College and Mr Lester Sze of Fanling Lutheran Secondary School, moderated by Mr Perry Lam.

The guest speakers were then joined by Theodore Tam for a Q&A session which prompted numerous questions from the enthusiastic audience.



An evening of Shakespeare: *The Merchant of Venice*



On 8 July, some OUP editors attended Shatin Pui Ying College's production of *The Merchant of Venice*. They were treated to a gripping rendition of the Shakespearean classic from start to finish.

The whole production was a large-scale effort involving hundreds of people. The sets were beautifully

designed, the costumes were tailor-made and the props were impressive — there was a moving gondola! All the effort paid off; the audience became absorbed in the musical performance which retold the well-known story in a manner that was easy to understand. Also of note were the professional subtitles and

the songs, written and performed by the students.

The star of the show was without a doubt Sharon Au who played Shylock. Her acting was both amusing and effective, and her pronunciation was the clearest of the whole cast.

The evening proved to be an enjoyable one, not lacking in entertainment.



Hong Kong Book Fair 2015

The 26th HKTDC Hong Kong Book Fair took place from 15–21 July at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. Here is an overview of some of the events OUP editors attended:

Learning English *when you walk the streets*

Oxford's themed seminar, '行街學英文' ('Learning English when you walk the streets'), was held on 16 July and received remarkable support from book fair attendees. Our guest speaker, Dr Paul Sze, introduced his secret passage to learning English—the enhancement of language awareness. Based on his invaluable teaching experience, Dr Sze believes that this can be achieved if people pay more attention to the English language in their everyday lives. With vivid examples taken from shop notices, road signs and public announcements, Dr Sze demonstrated how English can be mastered in a lively way.

After the presentation, OUP Editorial Director Mr Perry Lam exchanged his views on the topic with Dr Sze. This was followed by a Q&A session which prompted various questions from the enthusiastic audience.



Open Public Forum: How and What and Why Do Writers Write?

On 17 July, philosopher Alain de Botton, historian Simon Sebag Montefiore and biographer Carol Thatcher joined Sir David Tang on stage to discuss writing. The authors' reasons for writing varied from a desire to expel angst (de Botton) to relaying experiences of 'preposterous things' (Montefiore). Thatcher stated her purpose for writing was not the result of a desire to change the world, while de Botton cited this as a driving force behind his writing.



All agreed that social media and technology are having a positive impact on how writing takes shape, with de Botton highlighting the usefulness of social media in allowing him to 'test run' excerpts of his work before publication and the ability of technology to unite us with exactly the books we need to read. The role the market plays in dictating what writers write was also discussed, and de Botton surmised 'writers care about the market and money, not just what the soul dictates'.

Although some carefully considered questions related to developing a craft as a writer and the role of personality in writing were brushed aside, the forum was engaging and certainly an interesting way to spend a Friday evening.

What should I read next?

Do you ever struggle when deciding what you should read? If so, the next time you go to the library or the bookshop, why not check out some of the recommendations below?



Miss Sandy Leung
Panel Chair, English Department,
STFA Leung Kau Kui College

At a young age, I liked reading *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë, as well as classics by Jane Austen and Charles Dickens. When I was a bit older, I liked the detective genre. In particular, I enjoyed reading *Sherlock Holmes* and Agatha Christie's works. Christie's books are really good. I read the translated versions in Chinese first and later read the originals in English.

For junior secondary students, I would suggest reading fiction because students of this age have a natural curiosity to follow the plot and find out more. I recommend Roald Dahl's works and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. As well as the very interesting content, these authors write in an amusing style that can really connect with young people.

Senior form students, on the other hand, can try reading non-fiction, biographies and works related to their own lives. Students of this age are mature enough to be exposed to social issues and history. They already know what is happening in the world, and reading more will help them become more engaged with global issues. I would also recommend *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*. The book is a straightforward read about traditional and strict styles of parenting, a topic that students in Hong Kong may relate to and enjoy reading.

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When I was a student I enjoyed reading detective novels and horror stories. I particularly liked Agatha Christie. *And Then There Were None* is my personal favourite as it keeps you hooked from beginning to end.

When deciding what to read, consider the type of books you enjoy reading and seek them out. For junior secondary students who are interested in fantasy, I would recommend the *Hunger Games* series or *Howl's Moving Castle*; these books are also films, so you can watch the films too and compare them to the books. Perhaps, like me, you would prefer reading something that will make your blood run cold. If so, *A Monster Calls* by Patrick Ness may do the trick.

Senior secondary students' lives don't have to be consumed by revision; you can read for pleasure too. As mentioned, Agatha Christie is a great writer of whodunnits. If sci-fi is more up your street, you could check out *Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld, which introduces a beauty-centred world with an ugly underside. You don't have to trawl through classics that are difficult to understand, unless you want to. Pick something that will bring you pleasure and your English ability will improve. You won't even have to think about it!

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Jacqueline Brownhill
OUP editor



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In secondary school, I particularly enjoyed reading short story collections and history. Short stories are intriguing because authors employ techniques like twists and suspense to make them often as exciting as novels. Books about history were also my favourites because they provide new perspectives of looking at past events.

For junior form students, I recommend Roald Dahl's short story collections aimed at adults, like *The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar and Six More*, which provide an interesting insight into literary techniques like suspense, fantasy and autobiographical writing. Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* will also be a rewarding read for those interested in war history.

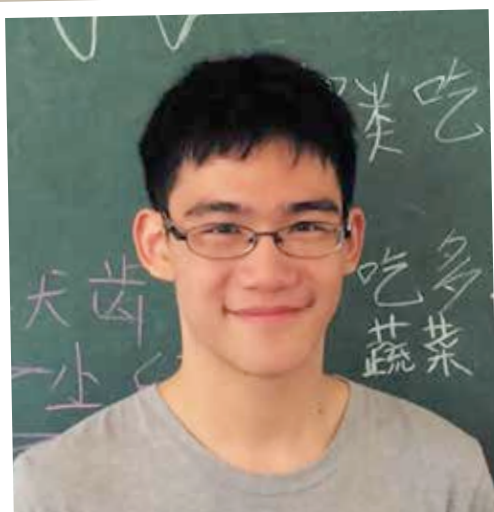
For senior form students, I personally recommend Harper Lee's classic novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, whose predominant theme is racial injustice in America back in the fifties. It will be a thought-provoking experience for sure.

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Theodore Tam

2014 HKDSE top scorer and HKU English undergraduate



Ivan Ma

2014 HKDSE top scorer and HKU Medical School student

During my secondary school years, I enjoyed reading fiction the most, especially detective stories. Fiction and its twisted plots have always inspired imagination and kept me intrigued for days and weeks.

Junior secondary students have a good few years before the pressure of public examinations dawns on them. Reading extensively will help develop their English proficiency in preparation for their senior years. Popular titles such as the *Harry Potter* series and Roald Dahl's books, for example *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and *Matilda*, are good starting points. If students like short stories, they should not miss O. Henry's books, which are famous for their unexpected endings.

Although some may say that senior secondary students should spend their time drilling examination papers, I believe that leisure reading can also be a good way to prepare for exams and, at the same time, entertain yourself. Some good reads are detective stories, such as the *Sherlock Holmes* series. I would also recommend books written by George Orwell, such as *Animal Farm* and *1984*, which have strong symbolism and can help students learn through reflection.



Literature lovers quiz



Main character clues

Can you name the book or series based on its main characters?

Main characters	Book
Mowgli, Baloo, Kaa	
Bella, Jacob, Edward	
Jim Hawkins, Long John Silver	
Violet, Klaus and Sunny Baudelaire	
Mary Lennox, Colin Craven, Dickon Sowerby	

Puzzling pictograms

Can you guess the title of the book from these pictures?



Short synopses

Can you name the book based on the synopsis?

- 1 *A group of rabbits goes in search of a new home after one young rabbit foresees danger to their warren.*
 - A *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis
 - B *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame
 - C *Watership Down* by Richard Adams
 - D *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London

- 2 *A teenage boy discovers the body of his neighbour's dog one evening. The boy is determined to discover who killed the dog.*
 - A *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger
 - B *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon
 - C *The Art of Racing in the Rain* by Garth Stein
 - D *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel

- 3 *Hazel, a teenager with cancer, meets a boy at her cancer support group. Their shared love for literature helps build a strong bond between them.*
 - A *If I Stay* by Gayle Forman
 - B *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky
 - C *Zac and Mia* by A.J. Betts
 - D *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green

- 4 *A snowdrift causes a train to stop during the night. The next morning one of the passengers is found dead in his compartment. Detective Poirot is tasked with finding out whodunnit.*
 - A *Murder on the Orient Express* by Agatha Christie
 - B *The Hound of the Baskervilles* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
 - C *Strangers on a Train* by Patricia Highsmith
 - D *The Silence of Murder* by Dandi Daley Mackall

- 5 *One day Milo is given a gift which transports him to the Lands Beyond, a world of imagination. There he is sent on a mission to rescue two princesses. During his quest Milo and his companions have many adventures.*
 - A *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle
 - B *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster
 - C *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak
 - D *Where the Sidewalk Ends* by Shel Silverstein

- 6 *A group of schoolboys are evacuated from Britain during the war. Their plane is shot down and they end up on a deserted island. While trying to get rescued, they have to learn to survive without grown-ups.*
 - A *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley
 - B *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding
 - C *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
 - D *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck



Watch this space

Things to look out for in the coming months



Events

Students' workshop series

Translating Exam Skills into HKDSE Success

Oxford University Press (China) Limited is proud to present 'Translating Exam Skills into HKDSE Success', a series of workshops aimed at helping students cross the finishing line of their secondary English education. Our guest speaker is Mr Theodore Tam, a top performer in the 2014 HKDSE Examination.



The October workshop, 'Setting the Tone', is the first in the series. Join us for a rewarding afternoon and learn how you can do your revision right and get off to a flying start! In this workshop, Theodore will talk about the importance of laying a firm groundwork to achieving success in the HKDSE English Language examination. He will also highlight the specifics of the exam and share exclusive strategies and tips for tackling each of the four papers.

Setting the Tone

Date: 15 October 2015 (Thursday)

Time: 4.30–6 p.m.

Venue: Ma On Shan Tsung Tsin Secondary School
(5 Hang Shun Street, Ma On Shan, Shatin)

Language: Cantonese

In the next issue of *Oxford Forward*

- More news, interviews and students' activities

Look out for the next issue of *Oxford Forward* in November 2015

Students' pages (Answers)

Main character clues

The Jungle Book by Rudyard Kipling,

Twilight by Stephenie Meyer,

Treasure Island by Robert Louis

Stevenson,

A Series of Unfortunate Events by

Lemony Snicket,

The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson

Burnett

Puzzling pictograms

1 The Hunger Games

2 Animal Farm

3 Oliver Twist

4 Cloud Atlas

5 The Bell Jar

Short synopses

1 C 2 B 3 D 4 A 5 B 6 B



Oxford HKDSE English Language Mock Exams and Sharing Sessions

Following the success of last year's event, Oxford University Press will hold Paper 1 (Reading) and Paper 3 (Listening and Integrated Skills) HKDSE Mock Exams in November 2015.

Date: 28 November 2015 (Saturday)

Venue: Lee Kau Yan Memorial School
(596 Prince Edward Road East, San Po Kong, Kowloon)

For enquiries, please contact the OUP Account Executive for your school.