

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPER 1

### PART A

### Reading Passages

8:30 am – 10:00 am (1½ hours)  
(for both Parts A and B)

#### GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- (1) There are two parts (A and B) in this paper. All candidates should attempt Part A. In Part B, you should attempt either Part B1 (easier section) OR Part B2 (more difficult section). Candidates attempting Parts A and B2 will be able to attain the full range of levels, while Level 4 will be the highest level attainable for candidates attempting Parts A and B1.
- (2) After the announcement of the start of the examination, you should first write your Candidate Number and stick barcode labels in the spaces provided on the appropriate pages of the Part A Question-Answer Book and the Part B Question-Answer Book which you are going to attempt.
- (3) Write your answers in the spaces provided in the Question-Answer Books. Answers written in the margins will not be marked.
- (4) For multiple-choice questions, you are advised to blacken the appropriate circle with a pencil so that wrong marks can be completely erased with a clean rubber. Mark only **ONE** answer to each question. Two or more answers will score **NO MARKS**.
- (5) Supplementary answer sheets will be supplied on request. Use separate supplementary answer sheets for Part A and Part B. Write your Candidate Number, mark the question number box and stick a barcode label on each sheet, and fasten them with string **INSIDE** the relevant Question-Answer Book.
- (6) No extra time will be given to candidates for sticking on barcode labels or filling in the question number boxes after the 'Time is up' announcement.
- (7) The two Question-Answer Books you have attempted (one for Part A and one for Part B) will be collected together at the end of the examination. Fasten the two Question-Answer Books together with the green tag provided.
- (8) The unused Question-Answer Book for Part B will be collected separately at the end of the examination. This will not be marked. Do not write any answers in it.

#### INSTRUCTIONS FOR PART A

- (1) The Question-Answer Book for Part A is inserted in this Reading Passages booklet.
- (2) Attempt ALL questions in Part A. Each question carries ONE mark unless otherwise stated.

## PART A

Read Text 1 and answer questions 1-18 in the Question-Answer Book for Part A.

### Text 1

## Tim Harford: A New Look at Messiness

- 1 [1] Today the trend is to declutter and simplify our lives. We talk to Tim Harford, who suggests that we should be messy instead.

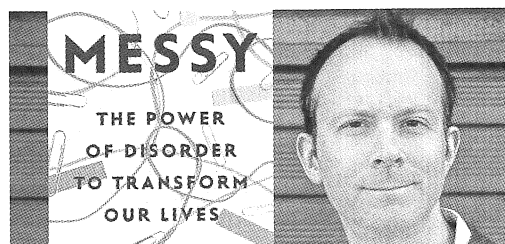
### Who is Tim Harford?

[2] Tim is an economist, journalist and broadcaster.

- 5 [3] He is the author of “Fifty Things That Made the Modern Economy” and the million-selling “The Undercover Economist”.

### Why are we talking to him?

- 10 [4] He is currently promoting his latest book, “Messy”, while writing another. One would assume he’s an impeccably organized person that is able to juggle this tangle of commitments with ease. He’s not — but, according to his latest book, that’s sort of the point.



- 15 [5] Tim argues that switching between tasks is a “messy” strategy that’s worked for many famous creatives. Focusing on one project might seem like the most efficient and simple way to organize one’s work. But when someone is stuck on an issue involved in one project, having another to focus on allows that person time for the brain to unstuck itself, contributing back to the original project.

### Extract from the interview:

#### Tim, what does it mean to be messy?

- 20 [6] In the book, I talk about all kinds of different things in the context of mess: improvisation, distraction, multi-tasking, physical mess, ambiguity and imperfection. There are lots of different things that I’m discussing in the book, but I suppose what they have in common is they are arguing for the virtues of the stuff that doesn’t fit into the standard categories; the stuff that we can’t quantify; the stuff that we can’t organize or put into a neat box; the stuff that we can’t script. These things tend to make us feel anxious. We feel that we should have a script; that we should have a number; we should have a target; we should have a tidy desk. Of course, those things have their place, but there’s virtue in all the ambiguous, all the unquantifiable and all the imperfect stuff as well.

- 25 [7] I see “Messy” as an argument against the excessive attempts to organize. If you think about your desk, what you find is if you spend a lot of effort trying to clear your desk or trying to tidy it, you will have vast archives of paperwork because you filed everything away. But you filed it so quickly that you don’t really understand your own filing system. So now you have these incredibly well-organized wastepaper baskets basically. Let’s contrast that with someone who keeps piles of paper on their desk. You would think, “Well that’s a problem. That’s not very efficient.” It turns out this is highly efficient.

- 30 [8] Number one: Your pile of paper is self-organizing. The stuff that you keep using keeps arriving on the top of the pile. The stuff that you don’t touch sinks to the bottom of the pile. We think of it as being a random pile, but it’s not a random pile. It’s actually naturally and organically organized by the process of using it. The second advantage is you’ve got this desk with paper on it, so you’re surrounded by physical reminders of what you have to do, so you don’t need a carefully managed to-do list because you can see in a very visible way the stuff that you have to do. The third advantage is you have a very clear sense of what needs throwing away. It’s the stuff at the bottom of the piles.

- 35 [9] So you have this weird situation where if you walked into someone’s office or you looked at someone’s desk, you would see that a person who appears to be disorganized because there’s paper everywhere actually has a much better organized system and they’re much more on top of their work. Whereas with the person who seems highly organized, actually everything looks neat but underneath the surface, the system is dysfunctional.

**Is this true for everyone?**

45 [10] Of course I'm talking about averages here; I'm generalizing. Everybody has their own system, and people can make all kinds of different systems work. If people have found a system that works for them, well that's fine.

[11] In the book, I write about Benjamin Franklin, one of the most productive and successful people in history, incredibly messy and somewhat guilty about the fact that he was incredibly messy. He carried a lot of baggage around, literally, in terms of paper, but also psychologically. He felt bad that his desk was messy. Benjamin Franklin! If Benjamin Franklin can feel guilty about not getting enough stuff done because he's messy, I think  
50 the rest of us can cut ourselves some slack.

[12] Nevertheless, in offices we often find somebody in management has decided that there needs to be some kind of clean desk policy, for reasons that are often not very clear. Maybe it's just aesthetic. They want the place to look like a magazine shoot. Or maybe they've read something about how operating theatres work or about how high-functioning precision engineering production lines work. And then in a very inappropriate way, they  
55 say, "Oh, and the same must be true for this regular office, which has just got paper and computers in it." People are ordered to tidy their desks. Now, we've already discussed that actually a messy desk can be very effective, very functional.

[13] But there's another problem on top of that, which is that people really hate being told what they can and can't do with their own desks. It destroys their sense of their own space, of their control of their environment.

60 **So, is there such a thing as a bad mess or a bad distraction, or do they always have merit?**

[14] No, I think clearly there are many situations where messes are just entirely dysfunctional, and distractions just make it impossible to get stuff done. My argument in the book is not that mess is always good, distraction is always good, or there's no situation that can't be improved by adding a little chaos. I don't believe that at all. What I do believe is that we found that our organizational systems can be so effective, and they make us feel so  
65 comfortable that we take them from situations where they work extremely well, and then we start trying to apply them in situations where they're completely inappropriate.

[15] The argument of the book is just to try nudging the pendulum a little bit more toward mess. If we experiment a little bit more with improvisation, with ambiguity, with a bit of disruption and a new challenge, we might well be surprised by how that improves things.

**END OF READING PASSAGE**

Sources of materials used in this paper will be acknowledged in the *HKDSE Question Papers* booklet published by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority at a later stage.