

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

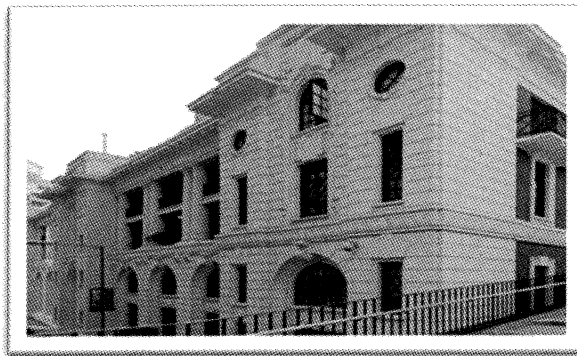
- (1) The Question-Answer Book for Part A is inserted in this Reading Passages booklet.
- (2) Attempt ALL questions in Part A. Each question carries ONE mark unless otherwise stated.

PART A

Read Text 1 and answer questions 1-19 in the Question-Answer Book for Part A.

Text 1

Tai Kwun: The Big House is Finally Open

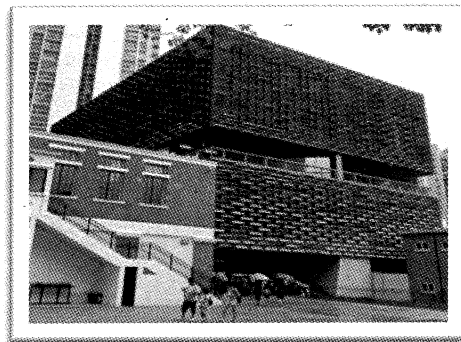


1 [1] For 179 years, the former Victoria Prison and Central
Police Station compound stood aloof in the heart of Hong Kong, visible yet inaccessible – unless you enforced
the law or fell on the wrong side of it. Now everyone has a chance to step inside its walls. After a long and
arduous conversion into a centre for art and heritage, Hong Kong’s most significant heritage conservation project
5 is finally complete.

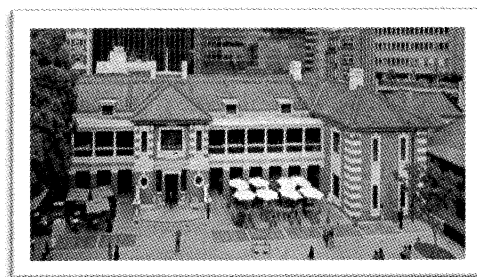
[2] Officially re-christened with its former nickname, Tai Kwun, the Cantonese equivalent of ‘the big house’, the
compound now includes art galleries, exhibitions on local history, shops, restaurants and bars. “The philosophy
has been very clear from day one,” says Winnie Yeung, Tai Kwun’s head of heritage. “We’re trying to turn a
closed-off site that Hong Kong people were familiar with but never had a chance to go inside into a site that is
10 open to the public with easy access.”

[3] That was a challenge like nothing Hong Kong had seen before. The first iteration of Victoria Prison was built
in 1841. It was the first permanent structure built by the British in their new colonial possession. With 18
different buildings, three of which are declared monuments – a designation that imposes legal restrictions on how
a building can be modified – the restoration work was destined to be particularly complicated.

15 [4] The Jockey Club, which was asked to lead the restoration
project, spared no expense, hiring renowned Swiss architectural
firm Herzog & de Meuron to design a new arts pavilion for the site,
along with a master plan for how to convert the historic site into its
new role as a public facility. Their first proposal called for a
20 spindly tower inspired by bamboo scaffolding – and it was
furiously rejected by nearby residents, who said it would ruin their
views and overshadow the venerable old buildings. Eventually, the
architects came up with a plan for two boxy structures that floated
above parts of the old prison courtyard. One houses a 200-seat
25 auditorium, the other an art gallery. Both are clad in black
aluminium blocks that give them the appearance of leather
jewellery boxes.



30 [5] When Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron visited Hong
Kong last December to inspect Tai Kwun, they still seemed
disappointed their original vision for the site had been rejected.
“We were honestly a bit shocked to find that Hong Kong has
neighbourhoods worse than Switzerland, that they would complain
about such a radical transformation,” said Herzog. But the
feedback made them realise that what people valued about Tai
Kwun was its low-rise character in a high-rise city. “It’s a
35 horizontal oasis,” he said. “It has always been an attractive space
just waiting to be discovered by the public.”



40 [6] Herzog describes the final design as “less radical”, but with the same goal of opening up a space that had long
been sealed off to the general population. But even the toned-down aluminium-clad additions have been
controversial. “Many people feel they are totally out of place and I personally think they’re too heavy. They
dominate the entire site,” says neighbourhood activist Katty Law, who is the convener of the Central and
Western District Concern Group.

45 [7] Others defend the new additions. “When we talk about heritage conservation now, we talk about adaptive reuse – giving a building new life. There’s only so much you can do with the existing buildings,” said architectural conservationist Fredo Cheung last year. “The point is not to mimic the old but to distinguish the old from the new,” he said. “It’s about authenticity.”

50 [8] There have been some missteps. In 2016, a wall in one of the site’s oldest buildings collapsed during an attempt to reinforce it. And the Jockey Club has been criticised for failing to preserve some of the non-architectural elements of the site’s heritage, like graffiti that had been scrawled by prisoners on the walls of their cells. “The renovation is sometimes excessive, overly new, leading to a loss of the original patina of the heritage buildings,” says Law.

55 [9] That criticism is echoed by art critic John Batten, who sat on one of Tai Kwun’s advisory committees. “But, over time, the buildings will evolve into a new appearance and function,” he wrote in a magazine column last May. And that new function will be one markedly different from its past role. “What we’ve noticed is that neighbours will just drop by in the evening to meet up with their friends because Central doesn’t have many open spaces,” says Yeung.

60 [10] Tai Kwun’s new life as a public gathering space was one of the reasons its inaugural heritage exhibition, *100 Faces*, focuses on its presence in the surrounding neighbourhood. The history of Tai Kwun itself is conveyed through eight storytelling spaces scattered throughout the site. Some of that history deals with well-known figures like Vietnamese Communist leader Ho Chi Minh, who was jailed in Victoria Prison as he used Hong Kong as a base from which to plot his revolutionary war against France. But other stories are more humble in scope. One of Yeung’s favourites is from the owner of a Sheung Wan printing press.

65 [11] “When the owner was still a very young boy, he cried a lot when he was sleeping at night,” she says. “His father had to get up early the next morning, so what his mother did was to bring him all the way to Chancery Lane next to the prison and get them to sleep there – because Victoria Prison after lights off was the quietest place in Central. It gives you a sense of how the site has always had this very strong connection to the community even though it was surrounded by walls.”

70 [12] The walls are still there, but now the gates are open – and a new chapter of history has begun. More than just a museum, or an art gallery, or an historic site, Tai Kwun is a place that brings many different threads of Hong Kong life together. “Never have we done such a large scale conservation and revitalisation project all in one go,” says Yeung. “In Hong Kong, in the past, we always just conserved one building and then another. This is conserving an entire site – a place.”

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.