

## PART B2

Read Text 4 and answer questions 60-84 of the Question-Answer Book for Part B2.

### Text 4

An excerpt from the autobiography of Stephen Fry, a well-loved British actor, writer and comedian.

### Celebrity



[1] The morning after *The Cellar Tapes*<sup>1</sup> was aired on BBC2, I went for a walk along the King's Road. How ought I to treat those who approached me? I switched on a sweet gentle smile and practised a kind of 'Who?...me?' gesture that involved looking behind me and then pointing with questioning disbelief at my own undeserving chest. I made sure, before setting out, that there were pens in my pocket for autographs.

[2] The first people I passed as I made my way up Blacklands Terrace were an elderly couple who paid me no attention. Foreigners possibly, or the kind of Chelseaites<sup>2</sup> who thought it smart not to have a television. I walked twice around Sloane Square. Not one person stopped me. There was simply no reaction from anyone anywhere. I went into a newsagent and hung around the piles of television listings magazines. To pick up a *Radio Times* people had to ask me to step aside; obviously and by definition these persons must have been television watchers, but my features, by now set into a wild, despairing grin, meant nothing to them. This was most strange. Television, everybody in the world knew, conferred instant fame. Instead I had woken up to find myself anonymous. I was still nothing more than another face in the London crowd.

[3] I pulled a compensatory *BBC Micro* magazine from the shelf and left. As I was trailing disappointedly back to the flat I heard a voice behind me.

'Excuse me, excuse me!'

I turned to see an excited young girl. At last. 'Yes?'

'You forgot your change.'

[4] Ever since I can remember I had dreamt of being famous. I know how embarrassing an admission this is. From the first moment I was aware of such a class of person existing, I had wanted to be a celebrity. We are forever telling ourselves that we live in a celebrity-obsessed culture; many hands are daily wrung at the supremacy of appearance over achievement. To *desire* fame argues a shallow and delusional outlook. This much we all know. But if we clever ones can see so clearly that fame is a snare and a delusion, we can also see just as clearly that as each year passes a greater and greater proportion of the western world's youth is becoming entrapped in that snare and dazzled by that delusion.

[5] You may wonder how our culture can be so broken and so sick as to venerate a pack of talentless nobodies who offer no moral, spiritual or intellectual sustenance and no discernible gifts beyond unthreatening photogeneity. My counter-argument to this would be, firstly, the phenomenon simply is not as new as everyone thinks it is. Read any novel published in the early part of the twentieth century and you will find female uneducated characters who spend their spare moments dreaming of movie stars, tennis-players, explorers... The propensity to worship idols is not new. We humans are naturally disposed to worship gods and heroes. I would rather see that impulse directed into the adoration of daft singers than into the veneration of militant politicians.

[6] Secondly, is it not a rule in life that no one is quite as stupid as we would like them to be? If the social-networking services of the digital age teach us anything it is that only a fool would underestimate the intelligence, intuition and cognitive skills of the 'masses'. I am talking about more than the 'wisdom of crowds' here. If you look beyond sillinesses like the puzzling inability of the majority to distinguish between *your* and *you're*, you will see that it is possible to be a fan of reality TV, talent shows and bubblegum pop and still have a brain. Which is all a way of questioning whether pop-culture hero worship is really so mentally damaging, so corrupting of the soul of mankind as we are so often told.

[7] Thirdly, look at the kind of people who most object to the childishness and cheapness of celebrity culture. Does one really want to side with such apoplectic bores? I should know, I often catch myself being one, and it isn't pretty. I will defend the absolute value of Mozart<sup>3</sup> over Miley Cyrus<sup>4</sup>, of course I will, but we should be wary of false dichotomies. You do not have to choose between one or the other. You can have both. The human cultural jungle should be as varied as the Amazonian rainforest. We are all richer for biodiversity. We may decide that a puma is worth more to us than a caterpillar, but surely we can agree that the habitat is all the better for being able to sustain each. Monocultures are uninhabitably dull and end as deserts.

[8] Against all that it might be said that the quarrel is not with harmless idolatry. The problem, some would argue, is not that everybody worships celebrity, but they *want it for themselves*. Online user-generated content and the rise of the talent show and reality TV have bred a generation for whom it is not enough to flick through fan magazines, they want their own shot at stardom. They want, moreover, to go straight to fame and fortune, short-circuiting tedious considerations like hard work and talent.

[9] Work was coming in thick and fast. But I was not famous. A few invitations to film premieres and first nights began to trickle in, but I found that I could walk the red carpet entirely unmolested. I remember going to some event with Rowan Atkinson<sup>5</sup>, the press night of a new play, I think. To hear his name shouted out by photographers and see the crowd of fans pressing up against the crash barriers caused the most intense excitement in me, combined with a sick flood of fury and resentment that no one, not one single person, recognized *me* or wanted *my* picture. Oh, Stephen. I have clicked on and selected that sentence, deleted it, restored it, deleted it and restored it again. A large part of me would rather not have you know that I am so futile, fatuous and feeble-minded, but an even larger part recognizes that this is our bargain. I cannot speak for others or presume to drag out their entrails for public inspection, but I can speak for (and against) myself. Maybe, to put a kinder construction to it, I was living proof that you could want to be famous *and* want to do the work, you could relish the red carpet *and* relish working into the early hours cranking out articles, scripts, sketches and scenarios with a genuine sense of pleasure and fulfilment.

#### Notes

1. Stephen Fry's first major television show
2. people who live in Chelsea, an affluent area in London
3. widely recognized as one of the greatest composers in the history of Classical music
4. a teen idol and pop singer
5. an English actor best known for his performance in the sitcom/movie *Mr Bean*

Candidate Number

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**HKDSE 2014  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
PAPER 1 PART B2  
QUESTION-ANSWER BOOK**

**B2**  
DIFFICULT SECTION

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Write your Candidate Number and stick a barcode label in the space provided on this page.

Read Text 4 and answer questions 60-84. (41 marks)

60. How was the writer feeling when he started his walk (paragraph 1)?

- A. excited
- B. relieved
- C. ashamed
- D. confused

A B C D  
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

61. Why did the writer think he would be approached?

\_\_\_\_\_

62. What three things did the writer do to prepare for his walk that were probably not normal for him? (3 marks)

i) \_\_\_\_\_

ii) \_\_\_\_\_

iii) \_\_\_\_\_

63. Why did the writer say, in paragraph 2, that the couple he walked past were possibly foreigners?

- A. The couple looked like the kind of people who didn't own a television.
- B. The writer had seen the couple when working on his television show.
- C. The writer had never seen the couple in this area before.
- D. The couple didn't recognize the writer.

A B C D  
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

64. Why did the writer hang around the television listings magazines?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

65. What assumption about television did the writer have which turned out to be not true?

\_\_\_\_\_

66. Why did the writer say 'At last' (line 19)?

(2 marks)

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67. Who was the girl (line 19)?

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68. According to paragraph 4, what does the writer think is embarrassing?

- A. The western world becoming more obsessed with fame.
- B. So many people wanting to be famous.
- C. Saying that he wanted to be famous.
- D. Talking about his own fame.

A      B      C      D  
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

69. Which 'class of person' (line 22) does the writer refer to?

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70. Based on the information in paragraph 4, complete the summary by writing ONE word to fill in each blank. You should make sure that your answers are grammatically correct, paying attention to word form, plurals, etc. (5 marks)

When the writer was young, he desired (i) \_\_\_\_\_, like many young people today. It is a common worry that society now places less importance on ability than on (ii) \_\_\_\_\_. While it may seem obvious that wanting to be a celebrity is superficial and (iii) \_\_\_\_\_, it can also be (iv) \_\_\_\_\_ seen that more and more youths are (v) \_\_\_\_\_ by fame every year.

71. i) What is 'the phenomenon' (line 30)?

(1 mark)

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ii) In the writer's opinion, what is a worse alternative to this phenomenon?

(1 mark)

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72. According to paragraph 6, social networking services teach us that ...

- A. a large number of idiots use these sites.
- B. people are smarter than is often thought.
- C. certain TV shows and pop music are very popular.
- D. worshipping some types of celebrity is dangerous.

A      B      C      D  
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

73. What does 'one' (line 45) refer to? \_\_\_\_\_
74. In paragraph 7, what is the false dichotomy that the writer mentions? (2 marks)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
75. What does the writer compare diverse culture to?  
\_\_\_\_\_
76. What metaphor does the writer use for comparing Mozart and Miley Cyrus?  
\_\_\_\_\_
77. In paragraph 8, identify two differences the writer mentions between this generation and previous ones. (2 marks)  
This generation \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
78. Which word in paragraph 8 means 'boring and frustrating'? \_\_\_\_\_
79. i) What does 'Oh, Stephen' (line 61) suggest about the writer's feelings? (1 mark)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ii) Why does he feel like this? (1 mark)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
80. Which sentence is the writer referring to when he says 'that sentence' (lines 61-62)?  
A. 'A few invitations to film premieres and first nights began to trickle in, but I found that I could walk the red carpet entirely unmolested.' (lines 56-57)  
B. 'To hear his name shouted out by photographers and see the crowd of fans pressing up against the crash barriers caused the most intense excitement in me, combined with a sick flood of fury and resentment that no one, not one single person, recognized *me* or wanted *my* picture.' (lines 58-61)  
C. 'Oh Stephen.' (line 61)  
D. 'A large part of me would rather not have you know that I am so futile, fatuous and feeble-minded, but an even larger part recognizes that this is our bargain.' (lines 62-64)

A B C D  
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

81. What is 'entrails' (line 64) a metaphor for?

\_\_\_\_\_

82. Who is the writer referring to when he says 'you' (line 65)?

\_\_\_\_\_

83. Below are some quotes on fame. Which one most closely matches the writer's opinion?

- A. 'An interest in fame is natural and not unhealthy in itself.'
- B. 'I fear today's youth are obsessed with celebrities to an unprecedented level.'
- C. 'I don't understand why some people are so obsessed with celebrity.'
- D. 'I have learned that fame is one of the few ways to make an impact on the world.'

A      B      C      D  
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

84. Match the main ideas with the paragraphs by writing the letters (A-G) in the table below. The first one has been done for you. (6 marks)

Main ideas	
A	Choice is important in a healthy society
B	An example of the writer's own obsession with celebrity
C	<i>A story from the writer's life to introduce the topic (example)</i>
D	Worshipping celebrities is not unique to our present-day society
E	A love of celebrities does not automatically make someone unintelligent
F	The writer's desire to be a celebrity despite negative views of fame
G	People nowadays desire to be worshipped

Paragraph	Main idea
1-3	C
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	

END OF PART B2