



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.

Not to be taken away before the
end of the examination session

PART A

Read Texts 1 and 2 and answer questions 1-23 in the Question-Answer Book for Part A.

Text 1

Government defends axing century-old banyans on safety grounds

- 1 [1] Four trees collapsed in Hong Kong on Monday morning following a night of heavy rain. This comes after the government's controversial decision to cut down four century-old Chinese banyans after several similar trees fell from stone walls during recent storms.
- 5 [2] The report of the fallen trees comes days after experts expressed anger over the Highways Department's controversial felling of four century-old banyan trees in Sai Ying Pun, without consulting a panel advising the government on tree management.
- [3] The government cited 'unforeseen' circumstances and considerations of public safety, after a giant banyan tree growing out of a masonry wall in Sai Ying Pun collapsed on 22 July. A neighbouring tree was cut down immediately as cracks were found in the wall behind it.
- 10 [4] The Head of the Developments Bureau's Tree Management Office said the trees in Sai Ying Pun were rooted in old stone masonry walls on a slope of almost 80 degrees.
- [5] Following the collapse on 22 July, the Highways Department's contractor inspected the remaining trees and carried out major trimming work. But by midweek last week, cracks were found in the wall behind the trees and were seen to have worsened.
- 15 [6] "Since the trees were growing on this wall, we could not evaluate the trees and the wall separately," said the Head of the Tree Management Office. "We agree with the department that the trees had to be removed immediately. They could have collapsed and pulled the wall with them."

Text 2

A Tree Worthy of Worship: Hong Kong's Banyans

- 1 [1] Mr Lam was a teenager when he installed a shrine to the local earth god under a banyan tree in Tai Hang. "That was over 70 years ago," he says. After World War II, he received permission from the government to transform the shrine into a temple.
- 5 [2] It is no coincidence that Lam's temple started with a banyan tree. These behemoths are ubiquitous in Hong Kong, growing in parks, street planters and even between the cracks of stone walls. Their imposing presence defines the cityscape. "If Hong Kong was abandoned it would be taken over by banyans in a few hundred years," says Jim Chi-yung, chair of the University of Hong Kong's Department of Geography, who is popularly known as the Tree Professor for his arboreal enthusiasm.
- 10 [3] Banyan trees are immediately recognisable for their spindly aerial roots, which cast outwards in search of water and nutrition. When a root finds a suitable source, either in the soil or another tree, it becomes a thick, woody trunk. This is what allows the banyan to grow in varied conditions, which is why they are the most prominent forms of greenery in the hilliest and most densely packed parts of Hong Kong. Jim has counted more than 1,100 trees growing from the sheer surfaces of masonry walls on Hong Kong Island. "They can become 20 metres tall, as big as trees growing out of the ground, except they are growing out from the wall," he says.
- 15 [4] When I first met Jim, in 2009, he took me to Forbes Street in Kennedy Town, where 22 banyans grow out of the surface of a 12-metre-high stone wall, which was built using a traditional Hakka technique that does not require mortar between stone joints. Seeds carried by the wind or dropped by birds find their way into the cracks. As the tree grows, its roots plunge dozens of metres into the soil behind the wall.
- 20 [5] Jim loves the way the banyans form a lush green canopy across Forbes Street. He sits on a number of government committees, and he told me he once proposed pedestrianising the street to make it a destination for *al fresco* dining, a place where people could sit and relax under the shade of the banyans. The government's reception was frosty.

- [6] "See what's happening here?" he asks, touching a root that had been concreted over to stop it from growing. "The people who do this, they don't understand trees. They're defacing heritage. Imagine doing this to an ancient monument."
- 25 [7] Last summer, after days of heavy rain, a wall tree collapsed onto Bonham Road, which led the Highways Department to surreptitiously chop down four healthy banyans nearby. Their sudden removal was defended by the government as a precautionary measure, but experts like Jim said it was an unnecessary overreaction. It sparked outrage from local residents, who tied balloons and messages of support to the trees' roots, which still clung to the wall that had supported them for 100 years.
- 30 [8] Respect for banyans runs deep in southern Chinese culture. Banyan trees are considered to have excellent *feng shui*, symbolising longevity, fecundity and perseverance. They are also believed to be home to earth gods, the indigenous deities that protect each village, and shrines are often built at their base. In many cases, people worship the trees themselves, not just the earth gods. That is the case in Lam Tsuen, where a pair of banyans known as the Wishing Trees have become a tourist attraction. Visitors write their wish on a piece of yellow paper, tie it to an orange 35 and toss it onto one of the trees' branches. After the weight of all the wishes caused a branch to collapse in 2005, worshippers were instructed to tie their wishes to a plastic tree instead.
- 40 [9] Anthropologist P.Y.L. Ng notes that banyan trees were worshipped because they were often the only surviving trees in a landscape that had been steadily deforested over hundreds of years. "Its wood is gnarled and so cannot be used as timber. It will not flame and so cannot be used for firewood. Its very lack of useful properties ensures its invincibility and survival," he wrote in a 1983 study of the New Territories.
- [10] The 17th century playwright Li Yu saw the banyan tree as a symbol of love. "Anytime a smaller tree grows before a banyan tree, this banyan will sooner or later lean its body towards the smaller tree. After a time, it wraps its branches around the smaller tree's body, and the smaller tree gradually falls into the banyan's embrace. The two trees become one, so that even if you cut them with an axe you would not be able to separate them."
- 45 [11] Modern Hong Kong has found ways to accommodate banyan trees. To Yuen Street near City University forks around a particularly large banyan, an accommodation also made on Dragon Road near Victoria Park. Nearly two-thirds of the 481 trees on the government's Register of Old and Valuable Trees are banyans. According to the government, there are 29,000 banyans under maintenance in city parks and streets, though many more exist undocumented in the wild. A total of 3,491 new banyans have been planted in the city since 2011.
- 50 [12] And while the future of many old and prominent banyans is contentious you can count on banyans to find a way to survive even in the most difficult conditions. New sprouts are already growing from the stumps of the severed banyan trees on Bonham Road. There is a reason they are worshipped, after all.

END OF READING PASSAGES

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.

Candidate Number

Please stick the barcode label here.

**HKDSE 2024
ENGLISH LANGUAGE
PAPER 1 PART A
QUESTION-ANSWER BOOK**



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

Read Texts 1 and 2 and answer questions 1-23. (42 marks)

Text 1

1. Based on the information in paragraph 1, complete the sentence by selecting the best option from the choices below. (2 marks)

(i) _____ banyan trees were removed while several others (ii) _____ as a result of heavy rainfall.

- (i)
- A. Eight
 - B. One hundred
 - C. Four-year-old
 - D. Four hundred-year-old

A B C D

- (ii)
- A. loosened
 - B. fell down
 - C. were crushed
 - D. were cut down

A B C D

2. According to paragraphs 1 and 2, why was the ‘decision’ (line 2) considered ‘controversial’ (line 2)?

3. According to paragraph 5, how did the wall become a problem?

4. Who or what does ‘them’ (line 17) refer to?

5. According to Text 1, are the following statements True (T), False (F) or Not Given (NG)? (3 marks)

Statements

T F NG

- (i) Two government departments had the same view towards the tree felling decision.
- (ii) The trees in Sai Ying Pun were taken down after experts were upset.
- (iii) No one was hurt by the fallen trees.

6. What is the text type of Text 1?

- A. A news report
B. Health and safety advice
C. A profile of banyan trees in Hong Kong
D. A leaflet promoting Hong Kong’s heritage

A B C D

Answers written in the margins will not be marked.

Answers written in the margins will not be marked.



Text 2

7. With reference to paragraph 1, complete the sentence below.

Over 70 years ago, Lam installed a shrine, which has been _____

8. What does the phrase 'these behemoths' (line 4) refer to?

9. What does Jim imply when he says 'If Hong Kong was abandoned it would be taken over by banyans in a few hundred years' (line 6)?

10. Find a word in paragraph 2 which can be replaced by each word or phrase given below. (2 marks)

(i) 'seen everywhere' _____

(ii) 'significant' _____

11. Below is a summary of paragraph 3. In five of the lines there is ONE mistake. If you find a mistake, underline it and replace the word with one that expresses the correct idea. Write the word in the Correction column. Both grammar and spelling must be correct. In one of the lines, there is no mistake; put a tick () in the Correction column. One has been done for you as an example. (5 marks)

Summary	Correction
Thin airborne branches seek food; making banyan trees easily identifiable.	(i)
Over 1,100 banyans growing out of stone walls on Hong Kong Island	(ii)
were recorded by Jim Chi-yung. Finding protection from another	(iii)
tree or the soil enables it to produce a thin trunk. Since banyans	(iv)
grow in few situations they are the most dominant form of greenery	(v)
even in areas that have very little space or are very <u>flat</u> .	hilly (example)

12. Complete the notes about paragraph 4 by writing ONE word taken from the paragraph in each blank below. (4 marks)

Jim shows the writer trees growing out of a stone wall built according to a (i) _____ method.

This type of wall needs no (ii) _____ in the gaps between each stone. He explains that birds let go of banyan (iii) _____ or they are carried by the wind and fall into these gaps. It is here that very long roots (iv) _____.

Answers written in the margins will not be marked.

13. Complete the summary of paragraph 5 by selecting the best option from the choices below. (3 marks)

Jim is impressed by the way that the trees create a green (i) _____ that covers the road. He says that he once suggested creating a (ii) _____ street with restaurants for people to eat outside under the banyans. The government reacted in (iii) _____ way to the idea.

- (i) A. banyan
B. umbrella
C. backdrop
D. destination

A B C D

- (ii) A. traffic-free
B. driver-friendly
C. pedestrian-free
D. environmentally-friendly

A B C D

- (iii) A. a warm
B. a negative
C. a sarcastic
D. an optimistic

A B C D

14. What does 'it' (line 22) refer to?

15. In paragraph 6, what is Jim's attitude towards people who concrete over roots: Positive, negative or neutral? Give one reason from Text 2 to support your answer.

16. What does 'an unnecessary overreaction' (line 27) refer to?

17. According to paragraph 7, why did local residents in Bonham Road attach balloons to the tree roots?

18. According to paragraph 8, are the following statements True (T), False (F) or Not Given (NG)? (3 marks)

Statements

T F NG

- (i) Visitors to Lam Tsuen buy prepared wishes to put on the tree.
(ii) Since 2005 there has been a decline in the number of worshippers at Lam Tsuen.
(iii) Shrines are frequently built in the branches of trees.

19. Why did the 'lack of useful properties' (line 39) ensure the survival of banyans?

Answers written in the margins will not be marked.

20. Provide ONE example of how the behaviour of banyans can be seen as 'a symbol of love' (line 41).

21. According to paragraph 11, give ONE example of how the government is protecting banyan trees.

22. According to Text 2, what quality of banyan trees does the writer have in mind when he says 'There is a reason they are worshipped, after all' (line 52)?

23. Use the information in Text 2 to match each of the following comments with a person/organisation mentioned in the text. Write the letter of the comment in the Answer column. One comment is NOT used. One has been done for you as an example. Use each letter ONCE only. (5 marks)

Person/organisation	Answer	Comments
Li Yu	A (example)	A. Banyan trees represent love.
Mr Lam	(i) _____	B. There are too many trees growing out of walls.
P. Y. L. Ng	(ii) _____	C. We needed to play it safe. We just had to be cautious.
Jim Chi-yung	(iii) _____	D. This tree has been part of my life for so long now.
Visitor to Lam Tsuen	(iv) _____	E. I don't mind if it's artificial as long as my wishes are heard.
The Highways Department	(v) _____	F. It's useless. The wood is not smooth enough to make anything out of.
		G. My nickname is accurate. I can tell you everything there is to know about banyans.

END OF PART A