HONG KONG EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY

HONG KONG DIPLOMA OF SECONDARY EDUCATION EXAMINATION 2017

A
COMPULSORY

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. Write your Candidate Number, mark the question number box and stick a barcode label on each sheet and fasten them with string **INSIDE** the 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 Text 1 and answer questions 1-21 in the Question-Answer Book for Part A.

Text 1

The Myth of Recycling

[1] If you live in the United States, you probably do some form of recycling. It's likely that you separate paper from plastic and glass and metal. You rinse bottles and cans, and you might put food scraps in a container destined for a composting facility. As you sort everything into the right bins, you probably assume that recycling is helping your community and protecting the environment. But is it? Are you in fact wasting your time?

[2] In 1996, I wrote an article arguing that the recycling process as we carried it out was wasteful. I presented plenty of evidence that recycling was costly and ineffectual, but its defenders said that it was unfair to rush to judgment. Noting that the modern recycling movement had really just begun a few years earlier, they predicted it would flourish as the industry matured and the public learned how to recycle properly.

[3] So, what's happened since then? While it's true that the recycling message has reached more people than ever, when it comes to the bottom line, both economically and environmentally, not much has changed at all.

[4] Despite decades of initiatives, it's still typically more expensive for local governments to recycle household waste than to send it to a landfill. Most recycled materials are exported, and the prices for these materials have plummeted because of lower oil prices and reduced demand for them overseas. The slump has forced some recycling companies to shut plants and cancel plans for new technologies.

[5] The future for recycling looks even worse. As cities move beyond recycling paper and metals, and into glass, food scraps and assorted plastics, the costs rise sharply while the environmental benefits decline and sometimes vanish. "If you believe recycling is good for the planet and that we need to do more of it, then there's a crisis to confront," says David Steiner, the CEO of Waste Management, the largest recycler of household trash in the United States. "Trying to turn garbage into gold costs a lot more than expected. We need to ask ourselves: What is the goal here?"

[6] Recycling has been relentlessly promoted as a goal in and of itself: a public and private virtue that is indoctrinated in students from kindergarten through university. As a result, otherwise well-informed and educated people have no idea of the relative costs and benefits.

[7] They probably assume, for instance, that recycling plastic must be helping the planet. They've been encouraged by the Environmental Protection Agency (E.P.A.), which assures the public that this results in fewer carbon emissions being released into the atmosphere. But how much difference does it make? Here's some perspective: To offset the carbon impact of one passenger's round-trip flight between New York and London, you'd have to recycle roughly 40,000 plastic bottles, assuming you fly economy. If you sit in business- or first-class, it could be more like 100,000.

[8] Even those statistics might be misleading. Residents are instructed to rinse bottles before putting them in recycling bins, but the E.P.A.'s life-cycle calculation doesn't take that water into account. That single omission can make a big difference, according to author Chris Goodall. He calculates that if you wash plastic in water that was heated by coal-derived electricity, then the net effect of your recycling could be more carbon in the atmosphere.

[9] To many public officials, recycling is a question of morality, not cost-benefit analysis. The Mayor of New York, Bill de Blasio, declared that by 2030 the city would no longer send any garbage to landfills. "This is the way of the future if we're going to save our earth," he explained while announcing that New York would join other cities in moving toward a "zero waste" policy, which would require an unprecedented level of recycling.

[10] But while politicians set higher goals, the national rate of recycling has stagnated in recent years. Yes, it's popular in affluent neighborhoods, but residents of low income areas don't have the same fervor for sorting garbage in their spare time.

[11] The national rate of recycling rose during the 1990s to 25 percent, the goal set by an E.P.A. official, Winston Porter. He advised state officials that no more than 35 percent of the nation's trash was worth recycling, but some ignored him and set goals of 50 percent and higher. Most of those goals were never met and the national rate has been stuck around 34 percent in recent years.

[12] "It's practical to recycle cardboard and some paper, as well as selected metals and plastics," he says. "But other materials don't make sense, including food waste and other compostables. The zero-waste goal makes no sense at all — it's very expensive with almost no real environmental benefit."

[13] With the economic rationale gone, advocates for recycling have switched to environmental arguments. Researchers calculate that there are indeed such benefits to recycling, but not in the way that many people imagine.

[14] Most of these benefits do not come from reducing the need for landfills and incinerators. Unlike earlier ones, a modern well-lined landfill in a rural area can have relatively little environmental impact. Decomposing garbage releases methane, a potent greenhouse gas, but landfill operators have started capturing it and using it to generate electricity. Modern incinerators, while politically unpopular in the United States, release so few pollutants that they've been widely accepted in the eco-conscious countries of Northern Europe and Japan for generating clean energy.

[15] Moreover, recycling operations have their own environmental costs, like extra trucks on the road and pollution from recycling operations. Composting facilities around the country have inspired complaints about nauseating odors, swarming rats and defecating seagulls.

[16] The environmental benefits of recycling come chiefly from reducing the need to manufacture new products — less mining, drilling and logging. But that's not so appealing to the workers in those industries that have accepted the environmental trade-offs that come with those jobs. Nearly everyone, though, approves of one potential gain from recycling: reduced emissions of greenhouse gases.

[17] However, according to the E.P.A.'s estimates, virtually all the greenhouse benefits — more than 90 percent — come from just a few materials: paper, cardboard and aluminum in soda cans. Once you exclude these materials, the total annual savings in the United States from recycling everything else — plastics, glass, food, yard trimmings, textiles, rubber, leather — is only two-tenths of 1 percent of America's carbon footprint.

END OF READING PASSAGES

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