

**Workplace English in our DSR subjects:  
Are students learning something new,  
relearning what they were taught for the DSE  
or even unlearning it?**

**Business English Interest Group (BEIG)**

21 Jan 2020

# Background

# Two Theme Songs

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**“Let it go”**

**“Into the unknown”**

# Business English Interest Group (BEIG)

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**(1) The question of “How do you know...?”**

**(2) Jobs for the next generation don't exist yet.**

**(3) Members of BEIG**

*Christy, Frankie, Hannah, James, Mitchell, David*

# Our Questions

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- (1) To what extent is workplace English covered in the local secondary school English Language curriculum?**
- (2) How is workplace English assessed in the DSE English Language Examination?**
- (3) What are the implications for us as ELC teachers when delivering our DSR workplace English subjects to students?**

# From Education Bureau

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**(1)**

**The elective module:**

***Learning English through Workplace  
Communication (Secondary 4 - 6)***

**A Resource Package**



# From Education Bureau

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(2)

**Learning and Teaching Resources for  
*Learning English through Workplace  
Communication***



# From Education Bureau

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**(3)**

**English Language:  
Curriculum and Assessment Guide**





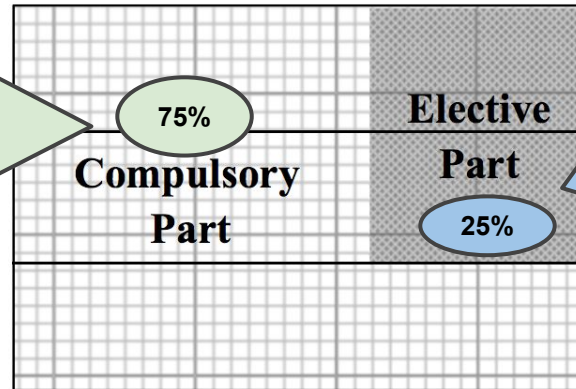
# Workplace English in the secondary school English Language curriculum

# Senior Secondary English Language Curriculum

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1. Getting along with others
2. Study, school life and work
3. Cultures
4. Wonderful things
5. Nature and environment
6. The individual and society
7. Communicating
8. Technology
9. Leisure and entertainment

Total: 310-375 class hours



(2-3 modules out of 8)

## Language Arts

1. Drama
2. Short stories
3. Poems and songs
4. Pop culture

## Non-language arts

5. Sports communication
6. Debating
7. Social issues
- 8. Workplace communication**

# Workplace Communication

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A Resource Package offered by EDB covers...

- **Unit 1 – Describing jobs and companies**
  - Jobs, career advice, telephoning, memo, presentations etc.
- **Unit 2 – Employment**
  - Job interviews, cover letter, meetings, agenda, minutes etc.
- **Unit 3 – Brands and advertising**
  - Favorite brands, poster presentation, report writing, sales letters etc.
- **Unit 4 – Customer service**
  - Problems with goods, handling complaints, information finding etc.

# Job Interviews

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**CT Restaurant**

...is now looking for a  
**Restaurant Manager**  
Competitive salary offered

**Requirements:**

- At least 5 years' relevant experience
- Fluent in English and Chinese
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Immediate availability preferred

Greet the candidate and ask her / him to introduce herself / himself.

Ask the candidate about her / his relevant qualifications and experience.

Ask the candidate if s/he has any questions.

Ask the candidate about her / his reasons for applying.

Ask the candidate about her / his personality, interests and weaknesses / strengths.

# Tips

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1. Find out about the company first: environment; services; products; projects; training; promotion opportunities.
2. Predict questions you might be asked and prepare good answers for them (write down keywords to help you to remember your answers.
3. Think of useful questions you would like to ask.
4. Ask different friends or family members to help you to practise several times before the interview.
5. Relax and enjoy the interview as a very useful learning experience.

<p><b>1. Talking about why you're interested in this position</b></p> <p>This job would offer professional development.</p> <p>This company has a very good reputation.</p>	<p><b>2. Talking about your qualifications</b></p> <p>I did quite well in my HKDSE exams.</p> <p>I received...for my English.</p> <p>I passed...</p>
<p><b>3. Talking about your experience</b></p> <p>I've got lots of experience in this field.</p> <p>I have had two part-time jobs.</p> <p>My last job finished in March last year.</p>	<p><b>4. Talking about you</b></p> <p>I am a very organised person.</p> <p>I feel that I could play a key role in the company.</p> <p>I get on really well with people.</p>
<p><b>5. Talking about your interests</b></p> <p>I'm really keen on... (computers)</p> <p>I enjoy...ing (meeting people)</p>	<p><b>6. Talking about responsibilities</b></p> <p>I am ready to take on more responsibilities.</p> <p>I enjoy having responsibilities.</p>
<p><b>7. Describing your weak points</b></p> <p>Sometimes I'm a bit too + adjective (e.g. serious, hard-working), and this might...(e.g. make my colleagues feel uncomfortable).</p> <p>I think I get too + adjective/adjectival phrase (e.g. involved / caught up) in my work. That sometimes means... (e.g. I am thinking about work even at lunch or at home).</p>	<p><b>8. Asking questions</b></p> <p>If I were offered the job, ...how soon could I start?</p> <p>...would there be any on-the-job training provided?</p> <p>What expansion plans does the company have? Would I get the chance to be part of those plans if I were offered the job?</p>

# Cover Letter

## Introduction:

State the job applied for and where it is advertised

## Body paragraphs (2 to 3):

Briefly describe the qualifications, experience, skills, personality and interests that are relevant to the job applied for, why the applicant would like to apply for the job and why s/he is a suitable candidate

## Ending:

Express the readiness to be invited for an interview and the wish to receive a favourable reply from the potential employer

Dear Mr Ng

I am **writing** in reply to the post of Accounting Clerk advertised on your website. I believe my experience as a student ambassador at school, my HKDSE qualifications in mathematics as well **as** my interest in business would make me a useful member of your company.

In addition to my **experience** and qualifications, I can offer a variety of skills that could **be** useful to you **in** the future, in particular, my knowledge of computers. Also, my proficiency in English could be useful for your clients from overseas.

I am attracted **to** your accountancy programme because your company **has** grown rapidly in the last three years, making you one of **the** most successful accountancy firms in Hong Kong. I am also impressed by the package you offer your employees.

I have attached my CV and would greatly appreciate an interview to discuss at greater length the contributions **I** could make to your team.

Thank you for **taking** the time to review my application.

Yours sincerely

*Colin Cheung*  
Colin Cheung

# Meetings

You have been awarded a free one-week trip because of the good work you and your colleagues have done for the Marketing Department. Along with you and your team members, there will be three managers aged 40-60 and seven assistant managers aged 25-35. In your group, look at the possible destinations and discuss which ONE place is the best.

<p><b>Japan</b> <u>General information:</u> • tour of the capital, Tokyo • delicious food <u>Activities:</u> visiting temples, shopping, skiing near Tokyo and using spa facilities</p>	<p><b>China</b> <u>General information:</u> • tour of city Guilin • unique scenery • great snacks <u>Activities:</u> visiting parks, trekking, river cruising</p>
<p><b>New Zealand</b> <u>General information:</u> • beautiful countryside and villages • good food <u>Activities:</u> swimming and cycling, horse riding</p>	<p><b>Italy</b> <u>General information:</u> • tour of the capital, Rome • excellent food <u>Activities:</u> visiting famous museums and churches, walking around the beautiful city, shopping</p>

## Discussion Skills

- a) **Getting the chairperson's attention**
- b) **Agreeing**
- c) **Asking for opinions**
- d) **Clarifying with a question**
- e) **Advising and suggesting**
- f) **Disagreeing**
- g) **Asking for spelling**
- h) **Giving opinions**
- i) **Asking for repetition**
- j) **Ending the meeting**
- k) **Asking for contributions**
- l) **Correcting information**

# Meetings

Your school has decided to send 5-10 students to work as student trainees at a television broadcasting company.

Go into groups of five. Only ONE student from each group can be sent to work as a student trainee. **Each student must convince the chairperson why s/he should be chosen.** Try to convince the others that you should be able to represent your school in the community. **You only have a maximum of two minutes to sell yourself.**



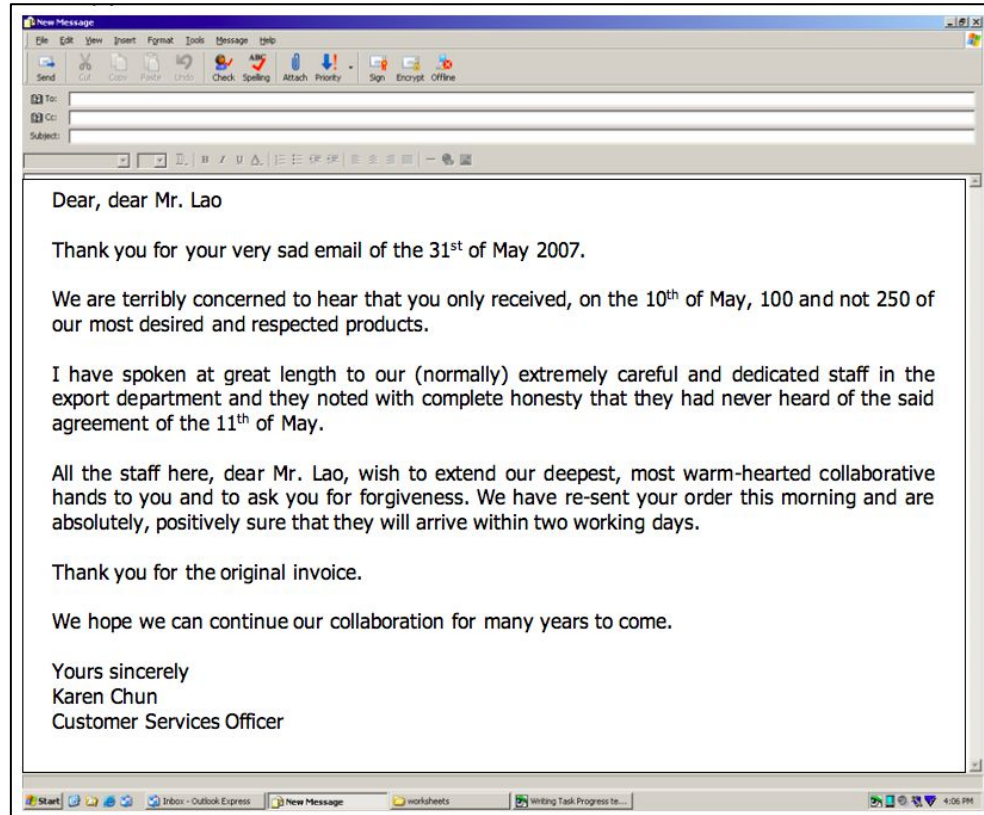
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# Handling complaint by email

- — —
1. Acknowledge / Apologise.
  2. Explain what has happened.
  3. Promise action / Describe what actions you are going to take.
  4. Finish with a closing statement.



# Report writing

**Introduction:** a brief summary of the contents to follow.

**Main body:** What did you do? What have you found out? What is the significance of your findings?

**Conclusion:** a brief summary of the information that you draw from the body.

**Recommendations:** suggestions for action or changes.

Your company is planning to hold **the Christmas dinner** at a western restaurant. Your boss has asked you to do a search on **possible venues for the dinner**. Try to collect information from two restaurants by doing an online research or telephone enquiries. On a separate sheet of paper, write **a short report (150 - 200 words)** about your findings.

## Report on Travel Package for Company Retreat

### Introduction

Our company is organising the annual three-day retreat next month. The aim of the retreat is to provide an opportunity for all staff members to communicate ideas about company issues in a relaxing environment and to build corporate and team spirit through group activities. This 1) report aims to 2) present the findings on possible destinations for the retreat.

### Procedure

A simple questionnaire survey was 3) conducted in early October to 4) seek staff members' views on whether mainland China, a Southeast Asian country or Hong Kong was preferred for the company retreat. Information on travel packages was then collected from three travel agencies.

### Findings

Results of the questionnaire survey 5) indicated that the 6) majority of staff members preferred the company retreat to be held in a Southeast Asian country. Taking into consideration the budget of \$2,800 per head, the three-day duration, interests of staff and the hope of involving staff members in some team-building activities during the retreat, the following options are 7) considered more feasible:

#### Phuket

The price for a three-day package to Bangkok is around \$2,600. Staff members can enjoy activities such as whitewater rafting, elephant or jungle trekking, sea canoeing or horse riding. Spa services are also available. Accommodation will be at a four-star hotel situated in the city centre, and conference or multi-purpose rooms will be available for company meetings or activities.

#### Taizhong (Central Taiwan)

The price for a three-day package to Taizhong is around \$2,200. Staff members can enjoy the picturesque scenery and visit traditional-styled cafes and restaurants. They can also visit temples and parks. Accommodation will be at a three-star hotel where staff members can enjoy hot springs.

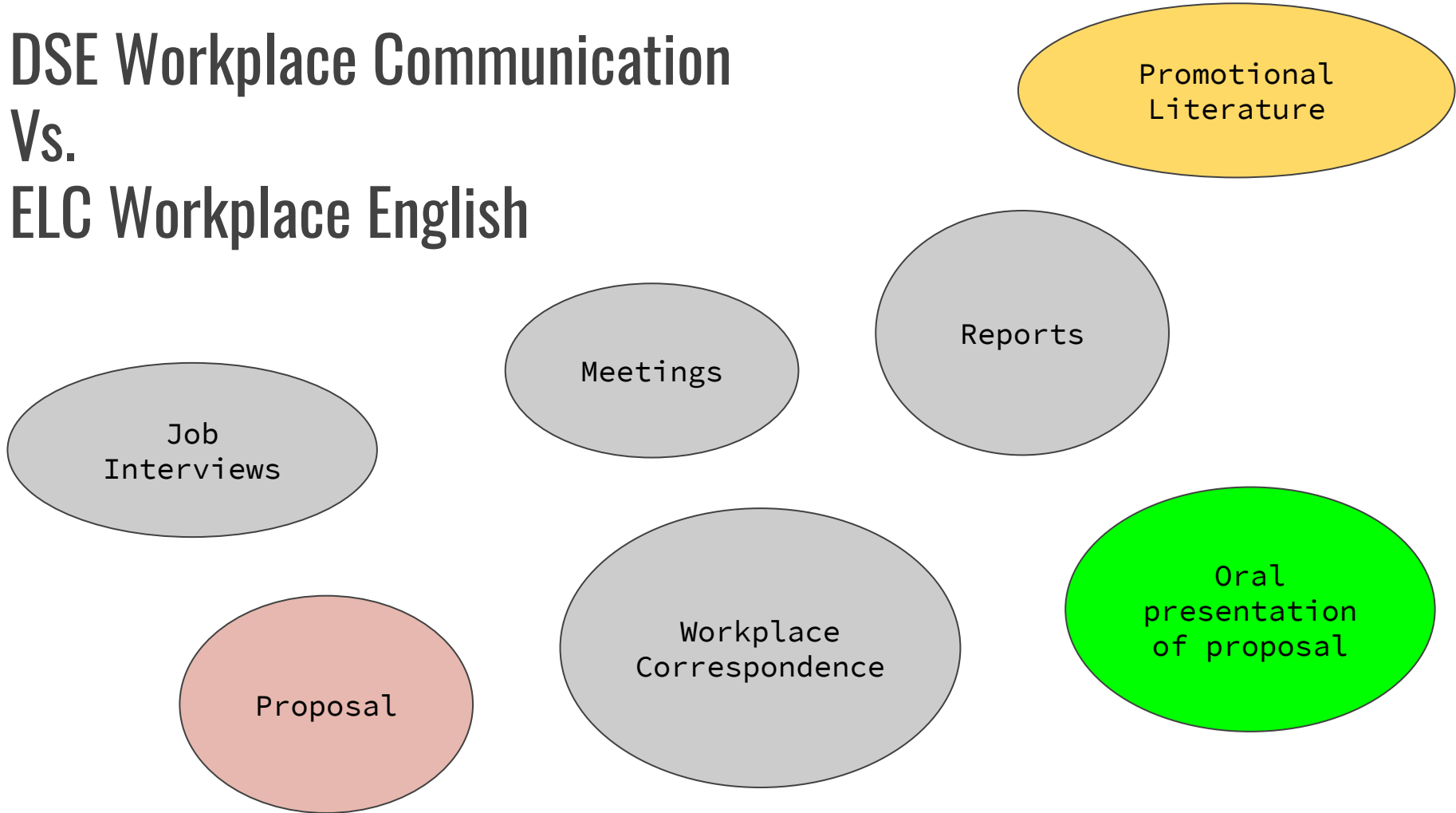
### Conclusion

Based on the information 8) gathered, the price for the Taizhong package is lower than the one to Phuket by \$400 per head. Accommodation at Phuket is, 9) however, of a higher standard and venues are available for company meetings or activities. For both venues, staff members will have a variety of leisure activities to choose from.

### Recommendation

Phuket is 10) recommended for our company retreat as it provides a relaxing environment and a good venue for meetings and activities. Activities such as whitewater rafting or sea canoeing can also be turned into team-building activities where staff members can form into teams and compete.

# DSE Workplace Communication Vs. ELC Workplace English



# Senior Secondary English Language Curriculum

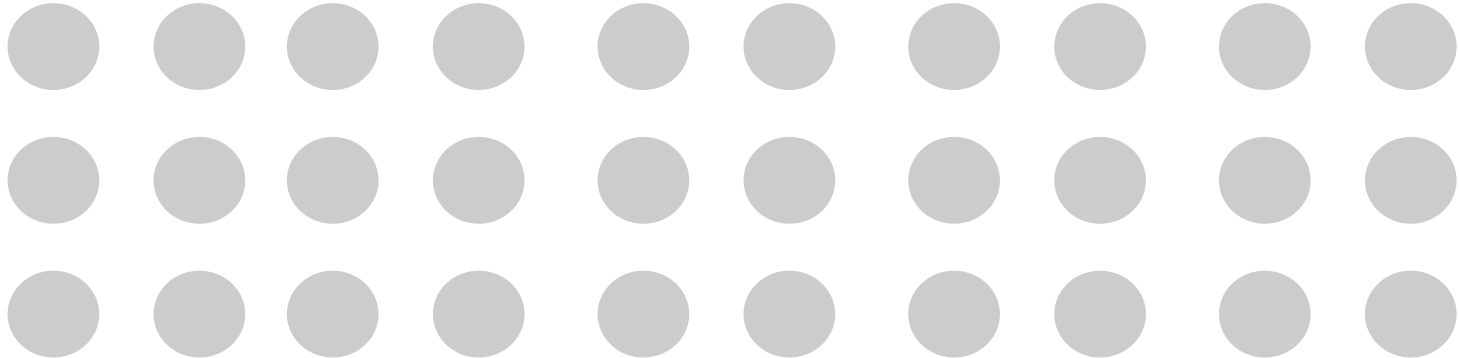
Drama / Short stories / Poems and songs / Pop cultures  
/ Sports communication / Debating / Social issues

Workplace  
Communication

Elective Part  
(2 - 3 modules)



Compulsory  
Part



# Senior Secondary English Language Curriculum

Drama / Short stories / Poems and songs / Pop cultures /  
Sports communication / Debating / Social issues

Elective Part  
(2 - 3 modules)



Compulsory  
Part



# Workplace English in the DSE English Language Examination

# DSE English Language Examination

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Drama / Short stories / Poems and songs / Pop cultures / Sports communication / Debating / Social issues / **Workplace communication**

- **Paper 1** – Reading (20%)

- **Paper 2** – Writing (25%)

Part A (10%) Compulsory learning contents - 200 words  
Part B (15%) Elective learning contents - 400 words

- **Paper 3** – Listening & Integrated skills (30%)

writing

- **Paper 4** – Speaking (10%)

- **School-based assessment (SBA)** (15%)

Part A (7.5%) Compulsory learning contents  
Part B (7.5%) Elective learning contents

speaking

# Paper 2 - Writing Part B (15%)

## PART B

For questions 2 – 9, choose **ONE** question and write about 400 words in the space provided on Pages 6 – 8. Mark which question you are going to attempt using the question number box on Page 6.

### 2. Learning English through Drama

You are the director of a play. Yesterday you held the first rehearsal. Complete your diary entry describing what happened at the rehearsal, whether you think it was a success and what you need to improve before the next rehearsal.

### 3. Learning English through Short Stories

You are a reporter for the school magazine. You recently attended some events at the Hong Kong Book Fair. Your favourite one was a talk by three different authors on what makes a good short story. You are now writing an article about the event, explaining why you found it interesting and what you learnt.

### 4. Learning English through Poems and Songs

You recently read a letter to the editor of the *Hong Kong Express* which said that songs which contain foul language have a negative influence on society. However, you believe we all have the right to freedom of speech and these songs are just a means of expression. Write a reply to the editor expressing your views.

### 5. Learning English through Popular Culture

Your school would like to film and broadcast a weekly reality TV show on the school TV network for one term. The principal is looking for suggestions for the theme and content of the show. Write a proposal to the principal offering your ideas for the show, explaining why this would be popular with students in the school and describing how to make the first episode appealing to viewers.

### 6. Learning English through Sports Communication

There is talk of certain schools removing PE lessons from the curriculum so students can concentrate more on academic subjects. Write a letter to the Secretary of Education expressing your views on this proposal.

Drama / Short stories / Poems and songs / Pop cultures / Sports communication / Debating / Social issues / **Workplace communication**

### 7. Learning English through Debating

You are a member of the school debating club. Your club is entering a debating contest and the motion is *Nuclear power is the best source of energy for the future*. Decide whether you are for or against the motion and write your debate speech. The members with the best speeches will be chosen to represent the school at the competition.

### 8. Learning English through Workplace Communication

Your friend is going for a job interview for the position of 'Part-time Promoter' for a mobile phone company. It will be a group interview. Your friend is very nervous and has asked you for your advice. Write an email to your friend offering advice on how to prepare for the interview and what to do during the interview.

### 9. Learning English through Social Issues

You want to give a speech at the following conference:

## Growing up in H.K. in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

**A conference for young people aged 13 – 18**



**We are looking for students to give short talks on the topic of**

**'The joys of being a teenager in Hong Kong'**

Write a speech for the conference.

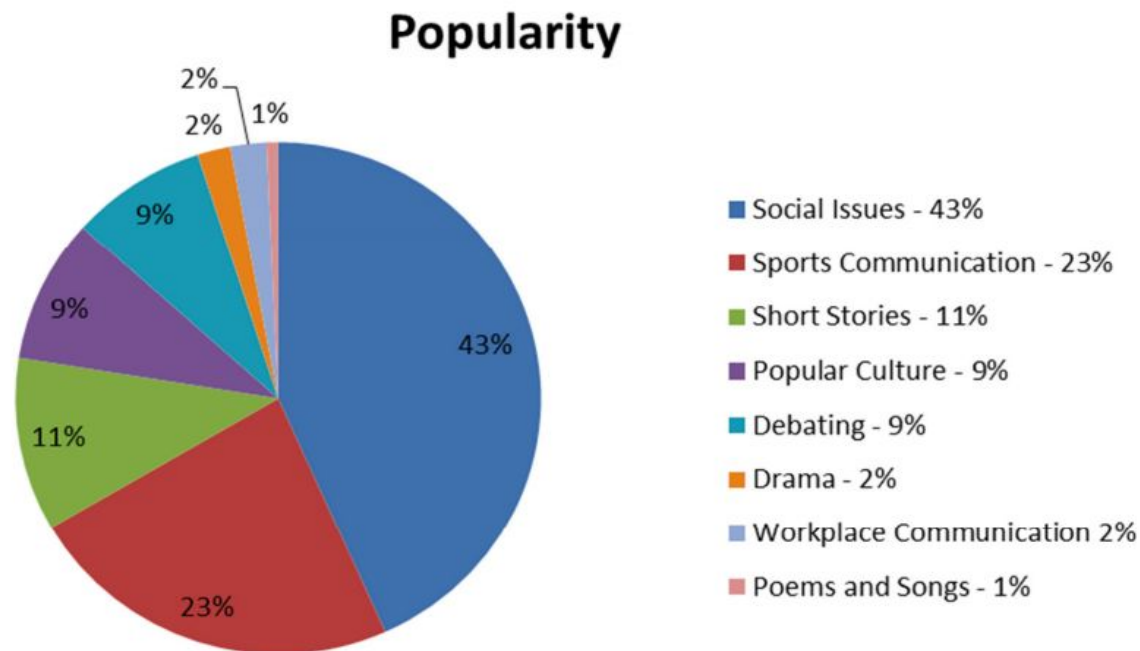


# Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) 2018-19

## Paper 2 – Writing

### Part B Popularity of the questions

Below is a pie chart that shows the popularity of each elective question in percentages (with rounding)



# School-based Assessment (SBA) Part B (7.5%)

— — —  
Students are required to give a presentation on the module in the Elective Part.

Drama / Short stories / Poems and songs / Pop cultures / Sports communication / Debating / Social issues / **Workplace communication**

The grade given is based entirely on the student's *oral performance*. Students are assessed by their own subject teachers in assessments carried out by their school. The grades awarded contribute towards their results in the HKDSE.



# DSE Grade (English Language)

Drama / Short stories / Poems and songs / Pop cultures / Sports communication / Debating / Social issues / **Workplace communication**

Compulsory Part

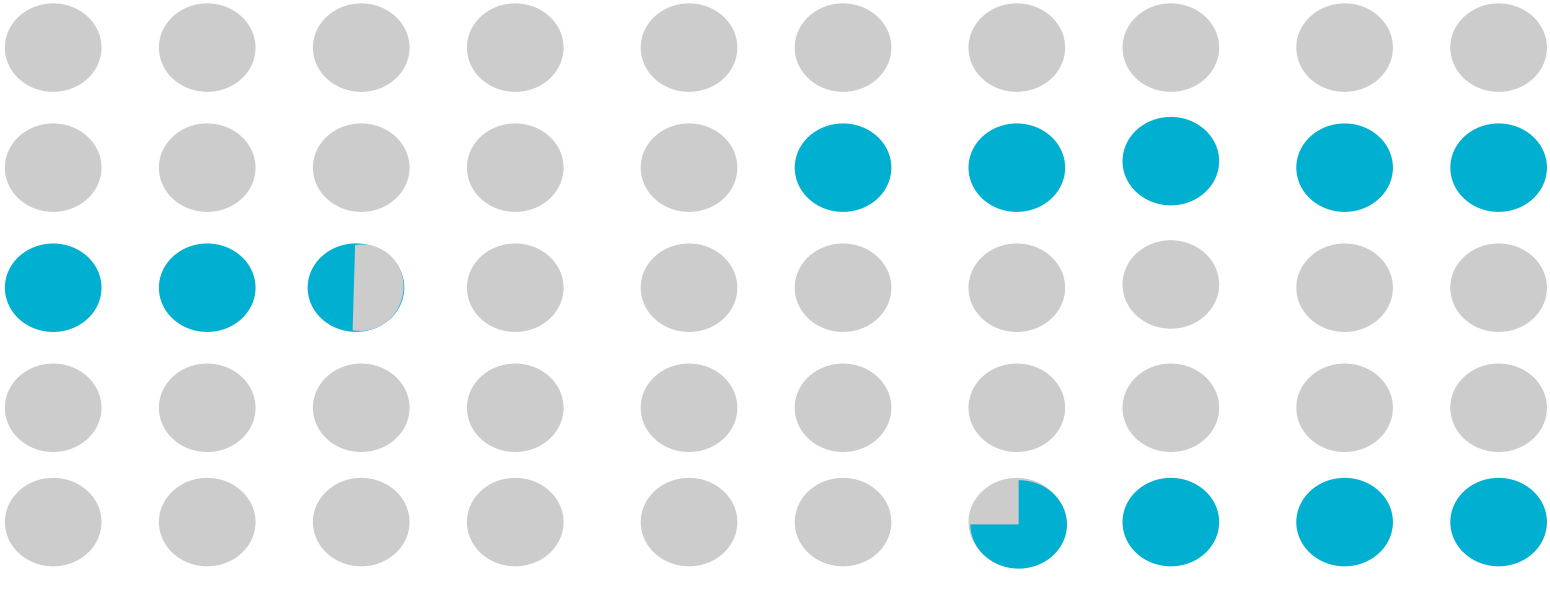
Paper 1

Paper 2

Paper 3

Paper 4

SBA



Elective Part

# Implications for ELC teachers

# Brief Summary

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Of the 300 hours that DSE students spend on the English Language Curriculum:

- Around 95 hours are spent on the electives
- 2 or 3 subjects are selected of which 1 might be Workplace English
- Around 30-35 hours might be dedicated to Workplace English

If it is chosen at all...

# Do we simply “Let it go”?

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Very few of our local students might have studied the DSE Workplace English elective

Those that have, perhaps have not studied it in enough meaningful detail to have relevance to our courses

What about mainland/foreign/exchange students with their different educational backgrounds...?

# Our argument and why we have run this session is: NO!

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Significant relevance to a number of our DSR courses:

Business

Engineering

SHTM

# Group Discussion

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- 1) Do we use the DSE elective materials in our DSR courses? How? Can they be made relevant? How do we build on students' knowledge? What about those who did not study that DSE elective?
- 2) 'Jobs for the next generation don't exist yet' What does this mean exactly? How can we use these above DSE materials and then our materials to help students to prepare for these non-existent jobs? Should we even try?



# Feedback from the group discussion:

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- 1) It is generally useful to be aware of the workplace English materials that can be used in the DSE electives. But, it is clear that only a very small number of local DSE students actually take this option. The materials are 'traditional' and may not really be suitable for today's rapidly changing workplace and employer requirements. They only briefly cover certain areas that are dealt with in greater detail in our workplace courses. None of our students have yet complained that what is taught in the ELC courses is 'something they've already done'

# Feedback from the group discussion:

2) Job requirements and the workplace are rapidly changing. The time where people 'only' had 1-2 jobs in their career has long gone. Flexibility is the key (e.g. the 'gig' economy)

So we need to particularly focus on soft skills that some of our students are lacking: creating a good impression and other interpersonal skills.

Additional points to consider:

HR manager Ms Elsie Yung mentioned no more cover letters

The importance of a LinkedIn (online) description

New style of CV's

This very relevant Pinterest page has been shared by Andy

Morrall

# 10 Things that require ZERO talent

- (1) Being On Time
- (2) Work Ethic
- (3) Effort
- (4) Body Language
- (5) Energy
- (6) Attitude
- (7) Passion
- (8) Being Coachable
- (9) Doing Extra
- (10) Being Prepared