

ADVANCED SUPPLEMENTARY LEVEL

Hong Kong Studies (Written Examination)

The overall performance of candidates was satisfactory. The specific requirements of the paper embody two major categories of skills: these are arguing a case/evaluating a viewpoint and explaining a phenomenon using the information given. With regard to the first of these skills, the better candidates were often able to grasp the gist of a viewpoint and discuss it from relevant perspectives, which are often dependent on their social consciousness. With regard to the latter skill, the most outstanding candidates were able to draw on relevant information, provide a detailed analysis, generalize from their observations and draw conclusions. The weaker candidates plainly copied from the given information.

The ability to communicate effectively in English or Chinese is also an important component of assessment in this paper. This involves the fluency with which an answer is presented, the logic of an argument and the overall organization of an answer. It should be noted that appropriate paragraphing and clear handwriting would help to enhance the readability of an answer.

Candidates exhibited quite a high level of social consciousness in their answers. The more socially-conscious ones were able to draw on relevant examples or experiences to substantiate their answers. The poorer ones sometimes gave outdated and erroneous information.

Some candidates did not manage their time well: many questions were poorly answered obviously because the candidates did not allocate sufficient time to them.

Question Number	Popularity	Performance in General
Section 1		
1	Compulsory	The better candidates were able to focus on the viewpoint or perspective posed by each sub-question. However, some maintained their own stance on the issue and therefore failed to use the given information objectively. Candidates are advised to be more careful about when they are required to elaborate their personal values and views and when they are not, especially where they are asked to defend a stance that runs counter to their personal values and views. A few candidates plainly copied indiscriminately from the given information without really answering the question.
Section 2		
2 (a)	Compulsory	Some candidates overlooked the requirement that they should rank the different types of freedom in order of importance and justify their answers. The most outstanding ones were able to compare the different types of freedom with specific reference to their nature and importance.
(b)		The better candidates were able to examine the grounds for each worry and come up with a balanced view.
(c), (d) & (e)		Parts (c), (d) and (e) assessed candidates' ability to correlate the given data and appraise causal-effect relationships, which requires a sensitivity to citizenship and the general concerns of people. The performance was not as good as in (a) and (b). Data were sometimes misinterpreted and over-generalization was a common problem.

Question Number	Popularity	Performance in General
Section 3		
3	25%	The better candidates were able to see both the positive and negative impact of subject specialization, and take a balanced view based on updated information in their appraisal of the possible future trend. A few candidates failed to grasp the notion of specialization and misinterpreted the data.
4	40%	Most candidates were able to analyse the opposing views about the new airport project in some detail. The outstanding ones provided a balanced evaluation of the two viewpoints with reference to their pros and cons.
5	12%	Candidates generally did not make full use of the information provided in the cartoon and appeared to be unfamiliar with the principle and practice of 'one country, two systems'.
6	23%	Answers tended to be superficial and not well substantiated.

Environmental Studies (Written Examination)

Question Number	Popularity	Performance in General
1	Compulsory	Poor
2	Compulsory	Satisfactory
3	30%	Fair
4	19%	Unsatisfactory
5	39%	Good
6	12%	Satisfactory

The overall performance was satisfactory. However, it was found that some candidates did not read the questions carefully and failed to present their answers in an organized and logical manner. Furthermore, some of them were

unable to relate environmental issues with their daily lives. It is important that candidates be able to analyze the issues from different perspectives and come up with a sound judgement.

Section 1

- Q.1 (a) Only a small number of candidates could point out that the high rate of recovering waste in Hong Kong was mainly due to the effort of the scavengers who earned their living by picking up profitable recycling materials from street bins.
- (b) Candidates should have tried to suggest and elaborate on the factors which make further improvement in waste recovery in Hong Kong difficult to achieve.
- (c) In criticizing the use of incineration for dealing with the waste collected in Hong Kong, most candidates only centred on air pollution caused by incineration. Other factors like location of incinerator, cost and effectiveness of incineration etc. were neglected. Some candidates wrongly stated that methane and CFC were produced during incineration.
- Q.2 (a) Most candidates failed to point out that there might not be a direct relationship between the number of a particular type of vehicle registered and its number when on the road. Most of the vehicles running on the roads are not private cars.
- (b) Many candidates failed to interpret Table 3 properly and could not give an in-depth and logical analysis of the average travel speeds provided in the *Strategy* columns and the *Trend* columns. This showed that candidates did not read the notes beneath Table 3 carefully enough.
- (c) Most candidates were able to put forth a detailed analysis of the effectiveness of the government's short-term measures. However, some of them failed to discuss the effect of the increase in the passage tax of the two cross-harbour tunnels.

(d) Quite a large number of the candidates only explained the effectiveness of the medium and long-term proposals in solving traffic congestion. However, they failed to discuss how these measures could contribute to the solving of the environmental problems caused by traffic congestion, which is the main crux of the question.

Q.3 On the whole, candidates were able to give a detailed analysis of the progress on environmental education. However, many candidates failed to give relevant and updated examples for the progress in the areas of the 'polluter pays principle'. Apparently, some of them did not know that the sewage charging scheme had already commenced in April.

Q.4 Some candidates gave a very good analysis of the 'other factors' important in forcing governments in the US/Europe to enact laws to deal with acid rain. However, most candidates failed to explain why there were 'more decisive' measures taken for ozone depletion. They regarded the harmful effects of the acid rain and ozone depletion as the two most important factors forcing the government to pass new laws.

Q.5 The answers revealed that most candidates had a very thorough understanding of the issue. However, some of them did not explain whether they agreed or disagreed with Mr Walker's proposal and they only repeated the viewpoints quoted in the newspaper article. Some candidates did not realize that the Hong Kong Government had already set up adequate legislation to prohibit the import/sales of rhino horns and their related products.

Q.6 In general, candidates were able to give appropriate examples to support their positions. However, not too many candidates managed to explain their views on the question of how the balance between the protection of our environment and the development of technologies could be achieved.

Human Relationships (Written Examination)

The overall performance of candidates was quite good. The paper assessed, among other factors, candidates' abilities in interpreting and evaluating information in context-specific cases as well as in expressing their personal opinions. It was pleasing to find that the brighter candidates were able to see things from the perspectives of different people and give insightful

and perceptive answers. However, the weaker ones were not always able to grasp the gist of the questions. On the whole, candidates performed better in questions that required them to draw upon their personal experience or judgement. Students should be encouraged to examine human relationship issues from different perspectives.

The performance of candidates who answered in Chinese was obviously better than those who answered in English. This is probably due to the fact that the questions demanded free expression of ideas, and thus candidates answering in a second language were much more inhibited by language barriers. Candidates, therefore, are strongly advised to choose the language in which they are more proficient.

Answers were generally logical and systematically organized. An introduction and a conclusion were sometimes used for in-depth analysis. However, candidates are reminded that fictitious information and factual errors would jeopardize the readability of an otherwise good essay.

Time management in answering questions was a common problem. Many answers were poor obviously because the candidates failed to allocate their time properly among the questions.

Question Number	Popularity	Performance in General
Section 1		
1 (a)	Compulsory	Answers were good.
(b)		The better candidates were able to appreciate the feelings of people doing a boring job. The weaker ones, however, merely gave answers similar to (a).
(c)		Most candidates explained how the Chinese culture affects employer-employee relationships, but many failed to appraise the validity of Andy Kwan's view by taking into consideration other possible influences that might reduce the impact of the Chinese culture.

Question Number	Popularity	Performance in General
(d)		The better candidates were able to evaluate the consequences of both changing jobs and managing stress in explaining their own stance on the issue. Many, however, gave one-sided answers.
Section 2		
2 (a)	Compulsory	The weaker candidates failed to see that males and females have different aptitudes, and some even misinterpreted the data as concerning subject streaming.
(b)		The quality of answers was partly dependent on whether (a) was interpreted correctly. The brighter candidates were able to use the given information to conjure up a story-line to explain how self-esteem affects males and females in their learning process. The weaker ones merely copied information from the quotation given.
(c)		Performance was determined by the candidates' scope of macro influences of society on human behaviour.
3	Compulsory	The performance was amazingly good. The brighter candidates provided both an overall analysis and a detailed item analysis of the data given. In explaining the data, the notion of equality of sexes was most popularly used, and long-term socio-economic factors were also referred to quite often. A few candidates managed to include the forces of change as well as the forces of resistance in their discussion of specific items listed in the table.

Question Number	Popularity	Performance in General
Section 3		
4 (a)	70%	Most candidates explained why they agreed or disagreed with the principal's view, but only a few managed to point out that students also have a role to play.
(b)		Most candidates managed to point out other factors, but only a few attempted to evaluate their importance relative to the lack of communication.
5 (a)	13%	Most candidates failed to make an inference from the hint that Mr Strachan was the Director of Social Welfare.
(b)		Candidates were generally able to view the issue from different perspectives and evaluate both the positive and negative impact of making divorce easier. The weaker candidates, however, merely interpreted the problem as one that concerns the increasing number of divorces in Hong Kong.
6 (a)	5%	Some candidates failed to grasp the basic premise of the government's position.
(b)		This part was generally well answered.
7 (a)	12%	Candidates were generally able to infer the nature of human relationships from the similarities and differences in the personalities of Joey and Victor.
(b)		Most candidates took the view that a school social worker could help Joey and Victor, and concentrated on discussing how far he/she could do so. The better ones managed to bring in the notions of self-confidence and self-image in their discussion.

The Modern World (Written Examination)

Question Number	Popularity	Performance in General
1	Compulsory	Good
2	Compulsory	Fair
3	Compulsory	Satisfactory
4	38%	Mediocre
5	25%	Satisfactory
6	23%	Quite good
7	14%	Weak

General Comments

The performance of candidates in the Modern World was generally satisfactory. The candidates exhibited a comprehensive understanding of the problems of the modern world. Some candidates were even able to explain particular issues in detail. The answers showed that candidates were sensitive to the major developments and current events of the international community.

As far as effective communication was concerned, most of the candidates were able to express their ideas logically and clearly. It was encouraging to note that many candidates were able to present arguments and interpretations from different perspectives in their answers. This showed that candidates had grasped the ability to think independently and were willing to seek alternative viewpoints.

Perhaps candidates could go one step further to strengthen their arguments by citing more relevant examples in their answers. Some candidates were able to raise a valid logical statement, yet they failed to substantiate the statement with concrete evidence or data.

Section 1

- Q.1 The answers were very impressive and candidates explained the cases in detail. The extent to which the United Nations succeeded in resolving crises and troubles was sufficiently discussed.
- Q.2 Candidates in general were able to discuss how sport could in theory promote international understanding. Yet the case of the cancellation of Li's visit to Japan as a protest against the Japanese invitation of a

Taiwan government official to attend the Asian Games was not properly addressed.

Section 2

- Q.3 In (ai), most candidates clearly explained how the four factors hindered the development of Third World countries. However, the parts dealing with bureaucratic practices and underdeveloped infrastructure were relatively weaker. In (a ii), a number of other factors which might also hinder the development of Third World countries were suggested. This illustrated that candidates had a thorough understanding of the problems hindering the development of the Third World. In (a iii), the reasons for the frequent occurrence of political instability in Third World countries were also well explained. In (b), candidates tended to assume that the situations in the 'Four Little Dragons' were all the same, and therefore did not differentiate which lessons the Third World countries could learn from which 'Little Dragons'. For instance, the practice of minimum government in social welfare and economic services was probably true of Hong Kong but perhaps not of Singapore.

Section 3

- Q.4 Most candidates merely copied the points provided in the table, instead of extracting and elaborating the relevant points in order to analyse the effects of foreign aid on the domestic and foreign policies of recipient countries. The impact of the 'hidden' objectives of foreign aid was not thoroughly discussed.
- Q.5 Most of the candidates were able to present the arguments and counter-arguments of the statement. On the whole, they were able to express in a clear and logical manner their views towards the prospect of a 'global village'.
- Q.6 The changing balance of power in the post-Cold War era was quite well described and explained. Each of the factors quoted in the comment was discussed, though candidates held different views on the impact of each factor and on the present status of the balance of power.
- Q.7 Most candidates were not able to spell out or identify Hong Kong's relationship to the Third World with respect to trade, let alone give

reasons to explain such a relationship. Candidates' skills in interpreting data, as reflected in their answers, were fairly weak.

Science, Technology & Society (Written examination)

Question Number	Popularity	Performance in General
1	Compulsory	Satisfactory
2	Compulsory	Mediocre
3	Compulsory	Fair
4	22%	Poor
5	56%	Rather weak
6	0%	-
7	22%	Unsatisfactory

There were only 9 candidates taking this module. The overall performance of the candidates was satisfactory. However, most candidates failed to express their views very effectively and were not able to explore the issues from different perspectives. They should try to interpret the data/information thoroughly and give an in-depth and logical analysis of the issues posed in the questions. Candidates should also pay more attention to their argumentative skills.

China Today (Written Examination)

Question Number	Popularity	Performance in General
1	Compulsory	Satisfactory
2	Compulsory	Rather weak
3	Compulsory	Fair
4	39%	Good
5	8%	Poor
6	38%	Good
7	15%	Mediocre

The overall performance was satisfactory. The answers showed that most candidates had achieved a reasonable level of understanding of the recent developments in China.

The candidates' answering skills could certainly be improved by paying more attention to the quotations or the data provided in the questions. This would make their answers more precise and to the point.

Most candidates were able to grasp the basics of the questions, yet many answers were found to be loosely organized. Candidates should be aware of the importance of presenting their answers in a coherent and logical manner, especially for questions in Section 3.

Section 1

Q.1 Most candidates were able to point out the reasons for the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) engagement in business and trade activities. Its effects on the politics of China were also adequately covered by most candidates. Yet very few candidates discussed both the positive and negative impacts of the PLA's engagement in these areas.

Q.2 Candidates were rather weak in presenting valid and substantiated evidences to show the extent to which SEZs had fulfilled their functions. Most answers given were vague and made general statements about the intended objectives of the SEZs, rather than an evaluation of the achievements of the SEZs.

Section 2

Q.3 In (ai), most candidates were able to identify the significant features of the Chinese economy in the period 1992-93. In (aii), the impact of these was also satisfactorily discussed. However, not many candidates attempted to link up the answers in (ai) with those in (aii). In (b), although most candidates identified the changes in the average income of the Chinese peasants, they failed to provide a detailed explanation of such changes. Very few candidates pointed out why the nominal income increased at a rate less than that of the real income. The challenges facing the Chinese peasants were, however, covered well.

Section 3

Q.4 Most candidates were able to explain their views on the roles and functions of the National People's Congress (NPC). The answer to the question would have been more systematic if candidates had analyzed the NPC from the legislative, supervisory, and representative perspectives.

- Q.5** Most candidates failed to grasp the main theme of this question. Candidates should have focused on the question of whether the belief that the status of teachers as ‘an exploiting class with strong bourgeois prejudices’ was still commonly held by ordinary people after 1980. In answering this question, candidates were expected to compare and contrast the status of teachers before and after 1980 and to suggest reasons for such changes.
- Q.6** The differences with regard to the relationship between the judiciary and the government in China and Hong Kong were well discussed by most candidates. The answer would have been more comprehensive if candidates had attempted to discuss the different principles of the legal systems adopted in Hong Kong and China.
- Q.7** Most candidates managed to discuss the current ‘capitalist’ practices in the Chinese economy. Yet the discussion on the theoretical features of the socialist economy advocated by Marx was not adequate. Thus the answers to the question of whether the Chinese economy of the 1990s is a typical example of the Marxist version of a socialist economy were fairly weak.