

FUKIEN SECONDARY SCHOOL
S5 First Term Uniform Test (2021-2022)

English Language Paper 1

Reading

Reading Passages

Date: 9th November 2021

Name: _____

Time: 8:30a.m.-10:00a.m.

Class: S 5_____ No.: _____

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Write all your answers in the Question-Answer Book.
2. DO NOT write any answers in the booklet because they will not be marked.

PART A

Read Text 1 and answer questions 1–27 in the Question-Answer Book for Part A.

Text 1**Food for thought:****How Hong Kong's farmers can bring about positive changes**

The time has come to think in terms of sustainability rather than affordability, says John Glenis.

- [1] A promising initiative has brought together local farmers, restaurants and shops to promote quality, fairness, collaboration and sustainability. Basically, a group of local farmers joined forces and started to grow radish in November, aiming to have their produce ready for the Lunar New Year festivities in the following year. The radish went directly to local restaurants, which in turn prepared radish cakes for the Lunar New Year season. The cakes then reached local shops, which were responsible for promoting and selling the end product. The effort was a huge success: the first round of pre-ordered cakes was quickly sold out.
- [2] This project shows it is possible for the tiny Hong Kong SAR to rely less on food transported in from elsewhere. Bearing in mind the government statistics, according to which 90 percent of all food in the city is imported, that is really saying something. The same government figures show a staggering dependence on mainland farms: 94 percent of fresh pork, 100 percent of fresh beef, 92 percent of vegetables and 66 percent of eggs in Hong Kong come from the mainland.
- [3] Regardless of the origin, such overwhelming reliance on outside food comes at a cost. The solution is not to stop imports. It is by definition impossible for Hong Kong to be self-reliant, and anyway its openness to the world makes the city what it is. The argument is that we have reached a point where it is worth trying to strike some sort of balance.
- [4] When it comes to imports from large corporations, it is hard, if not impossible, for local farms to maintain competitive pricing. In a wet market, you can easily get three baskets of monstrously overgrown vegetables for HK\$10 or so. But do we actually need that much? Or are we simply being tempted into buying something we don't really need at a price we can't really resist?
- [5] It is more important that we think more about where and how such vegetables are grown. Choosing quantity over quality can offer immediate, obvious benefits, but it may also have long-lasting and far-reaching consequences — health-wise and market-wise. It does not take a scientist to see that unnaturally oversized or suspiciously under-priced food could, in the long term, have a negative impact on our health.
- [6] Market-wise, when our decisions are based on cost-efficiency, we might end up supporting a business that has lost its moral compass — putting profits over honest and fair business practices. In his book *What Money Can't Buy*, Michael Sandel echoes this concern when he argues that 'market reasoning [...] empties public life of moral argument'. Later in the book, he writes that 'market reasoning is incomplete without moral reasoning'. In that sense, growing food locally seems a far better option when compared to a massive market operating almost exclusively on profit.
- [7] Mark Boyle makes a similar point in his book *The Moneyless Man*: 'It's extremely difficult to make a profit from growing food organically, on a small scale, as supermarkets have completely altered what the public perceives to be a normal price. The few farmers that do are certainly not in it for the money, as there are much easier ways to make a living; most do it because they are passionate about growing chemical-free food in a way that respects the long-term health of the soil.'

[8] Imports present other challenges as well. Some of Hong Kong's imported food is flown in on a regular basis. Considering that almost 4 million kilograms of food (90 percent of which is imported) is wasted in Hong Kong every day, it is reasonable to assume some of this food is flown in only to be thrown away. The result: waste of food, waste of fuel, waste of resources, unnecessary damage to the environment and a huge problem for already suffocating landfills.

[9] By contrast, local farm products have to go only a short distance to reach the consumer. The obvious benefit is freshness. Another advantage is the reduction in packaging and the amount of plastic needed — over 2,000 kilograms of plastic ends up in local landfills every day, and a lot of it comes from food packaging. Yet another benefit — and perhaps most important of all — is the purity of the final product itself, as opposed to mass-produced food, which Boyle describes as 'unhealthy [...] given the amount of oil-based pesticides, herbicides and synthetic fertilisers sprayed on conventionally farmed fruit and vegetables'.

[10] Moreover, community farms can boost the local job market in the long term. More job opportunities within Hong Kong would allow the city to have more voice, more choice and a greater say in how things get done — all of which would mean it would no longer have to depend so greatly on any single source of supply.

[11] Of course, farming alone is not enough to give Hong Kong the financial stability needed to protect itself against major challenges. If other industries follow the example of local farms and collaborate on the principle of fairness, reasonable profit and respect for both nature and consumers, the city will not need to depend almost entirely on imports (especially, say, during a pandemic).

[12] Making the switch won't be easy, but the time has come to think in terms of sustainability rather than affordability. Obviously, change of this size cannot happen overnight, but collaborative initiatives at a local level are a good start — and well-begun is half-done!

END OF READING PASSAGE

Part B

Read Text 2 and answer questions 28–46 in the Question-Answer Book for Part B.

Text 2**Lunchtime in Mumbai: the dabbawalla delivery service**

[1] In Mumbai, one of the world's busiest cities, the weekday lunch hour brings on a surge of bustling activity. Through this urban chaos and buzz, a small army of deliverymen zip around town, weaving through traffic on their bicycles, delivering lunchboxes—called dabbas—to thousands of office workers. These deliverymen, or dabbawalas, are the engine behind an indispensable citywide food delivery
5 operation, one which has endured for more than 125 years.

[2] Dabbas are no ordinary lunchboxes. They are home-cooked lunches delivered in tiffin tins. These tiered containers are filled with rice or roti, different curries, vegetables, and desserts, all lovingly prepared at home, typically in villages surrounding the city. Dabbawalas deliver these delicious lunches with incredible punctuality, satisfying the demand for hot, timely, home-made lunches. The service is cheap and
10 reliable. It also happens to be one of the most remarkably efficient delivery systems in the world, transporting more than 80 million lunches every year. It is so efficient, in fact, that even major global delivery companies, such as FedEx, have studied this operation.

[3] One of the most interesting features of the dabbawala system is its fundamentally low-tech nature. Around mid-morning, dabbawalas travelling on foot or by bike collect the lunchboxes from village homes
15 and drop them off at local train stations or offices. There the containers are sorted and then sent out on the city's rail network to train stations throughout Mumbai. At these train stations, the lunchboxes change hands yet again; new teams of dabbawalas pick up the tins and deliver them to their final destinations. Each day is an epic relay race across the city. With over 200,000 lunchboxes delivered a day, it seems like a logistical nightmare, but the dabbawalas have it down to a fine art. The system relies on a code scrawled on
20 the top of the tins, indicating the precise destination of every lunchbox. Although it can take up to three months to learn all the ins and outs of the dabbawala code, there's no doubt that it works. According to a study by the Harvard Business School, the system makes fewer than 3.4 mistakes per million orders.

[4] To maintain this enviable level of accuracy, the dabbawalas run a very tight ship. Even customers are subject to their strict demands of efficiency; clients who repeatedly fail to have their lunches ready at the
25 appointed pick-up time are quickly dismissed from the roster. The system functions like clockwork with little room for error.

[5] Part of the success of this system may lie in the enormous pride that the dabbawalas take in their work. The organisation runs as a co-op in which all of the deliverymen and managers share equal status. It pays reasonably well too, by local standards. But the work also carries a sense of prestige, since the dabbawala organisation is a highly valued institution in the city. In their white uniforms and caps—and with their distinct cargo—the dabbawalas are recognized wherever they go. So esteemed are they that people typically make way for them on the street so as not to hinder the delivery process. Perhaps the biggest draw of the job, however, is the spiritual satisfaction that many dabbawalas find in this line of work. The majority of dabbawalas belong to the same Hindu sect, which emphasises the virtue inherent in seeing that people are fed.

[6] The simple idea for a lunchbox delivery service dates back to 1890. Mahadeo Havaji Bachche, the founder of the dabbawala organisation, took advantage of the still relatively new rail network in the city to offer a rapid lunchtime delivery service. He recruited 100 local couriers and began offering the service. It quickly took off. Now, more than 125 years later, the number of dabbawalas has swollen to 5,000. Some of them are the direct descendants of the earliest dabbawalas, carrying on a family commitment to the vocation through the generations.

[7] Despite this storied past, there are some questions about the future of this low-tech operation in an increasingly high-tech world. Food delivery apps have popped up in cities around the globe—Mumbai is no exception. But the dabbawalas aren't worried about these new rivals. They believe that their intimate knowledge of local streets and traffic patterns along with their unparalleled record of reliability give them the edge over other companies. Yet they're not unwilling to change with the times. They've already embraced modernisations, such as allowing online and SMS orders.

[8] Only time will tell whether the dabbawalas can continue to maintain their position of dominance in the food delivery market. Their current strategy, however, seems to be serving them well for the moment. The organisation has been growing at a rate of about five to ten per cent a year and shows no immediate signs of slowing down. The workers of Mumbai still love their dabbas!

Comments

Scott 26 September 2019 10:08

I'm not from Mumbai, but I've visited it several times, so I've seen the dabbawalas racing across the streets. It's obvious that they have an amazing commitment to their job. I find that quite admirable—especially these days. A lot of people could stand to learn a thing or two from the dabbawalas' work ethic.

Devang 26 September 2019 11:02

I love the dabbawalas. I can't imagine this city without them. It's not just that their service is
60 unmatched—even by all of these new high-tech food delivery apps. It's that the dabbawalas have a clear
social conscience. They recently started a programme to deliver uneaten lunches to the hungry. That's the
kind of thing that makes people want to support an organisation and ensure its continued future.

Ashley 27 September 2019 1:24

Although the dabbawala organisation is undoubtedly impressive, I don't think it will stand a chance against
65 some of the up-and-coming tech companies in this market. Right now, these companies are still working
out the kinks, but in the near future, there's no question that they will dominate. Drones will be delivering
food with speed and efficiency that just can't be matched by human couriers.

END OF READING PASSAGE