

Graded Approach for English Paper 1 and 3

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Next year will see the first run of the new Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination. This represents the culmination of the most recent round of educational reforms, when it was decided that all students would be required to complete three years of junior secondary education followed by three years of senior secondary education.

Standards-Referenced Reporting

Unlike the pre-2007 to get a clearer picture of the norm-referenced examinations, where candidates' performances were compared with each other and ranked accordingly, a standards-referenced reporting (SRR) system has been developed for the new examination, with descriptors of levels of performance for each of the papers, as well as for the subject overall. The descriptors outline what a student reaching the end of the sixth year of secondary education is able to do, without their being tied to the performance of the other candidates taking the same examination. The reporting system also enables stakeholders to get a clearer picture of the students' abilities, with performance being tiered in five levels, of which Level 5 is the highest and Level 1 the lowest. Level 5 candidates will be further stratified with the very best being awarded a 5**, and the next best awarded a 5*. A performance below Level 1 will be labelled as "Unclassified".

Extended reading

Level descriptors, sample papers and related information for new senior secondary subjects are available for purchase or viewing on the HKEAA website (http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/hkdse/Subject_Information).

The Graded Approach for Paper 1 Reading (20%) and Paper 3 Listening & Integrated Skills (30%)

One major difference in the format of the HKDSE papers from the HKCEE is the use of the Graded Approach. Because students will only take one set of public exams (at the end of S.6), the exam will have to cater for a wider range of ability. The Graded Approach is expressly designed to accommodate this wide range and to enable candidates to demonstrate a distinct level of achievement.

The Graded Approach will be adopted for two out of the four papers: Paper 1 (Reading) and Paper 3 (Listening and Integrated Skills). These two papers are each divided into three parts: Part A is compulsory and contains tasks/items ranging from 'easy' to 'difficult', Part B1 consists of 'easier' tasks / items and Part B2 consists of more 'difficult' tasks / items than the compulsory section. Candidates will have to choose whether to attempt Part B1 or Part B2. It is advisable for candidates to make this decision before they enter the examination centre as there will not be time for them to read all the Parts in detail and complete all the tasks in the paper successfully.

Reminder

- ◆ Candidates should make their decisions based on the advice of their teachers', their performance in assessment activities in school, and their own knowledge of their proficiency in the different skills areas.
- ◆ Candidates attempting Parts A and B1 will be able to achieve as high as Level 4.
- ◆ Candidates attempting Parts A and B2 will be able to achieve as high as Level 5**.