

Optimising Senior Secondary English Language: FAQs on Assessment

Q1	<p>When will the sample writing papers be available for downloading?</p> <p>The sample papers will be posted on the HKEAA website at the end of the consultation process and should be available by June 2021.</p>
Q2	<p>Will both language arts and non-language arts be covered in Part B of the revised Writing Paper?</p> <p>As language arts is part of the curriculum, it could be tested in any of the four public examination papers and/or SBA.</p> <p>With regards to Writing Paper, a range of topics, genres, writing roles and intended audiences will be considered when setting each question. The choice of questions in Part B will be sufficiently different so as to cater for a variety of interests.</p>
Q3	<p>Will fewer writing prompts be provided for questions in Part B of the revised Writing Paper?</p> <p>In the development of the questions, the moderation committee considers carefully how much detail is optimal in order to guide candidates in structuring their answer and at the same time in order to allow the markers to discriminate between stronger and weaker candidate performances in a fair and consistent way. This can vary from question to question. The moderation committee will continue to apply these same principles in designing questions in the new format from 2024 as it has done since 2012.</p>
Q4	<p>Would there be any changes to the assessment criteria and marking guidelines for the Writing Paper with the delinking of the writing topics from the elective modules?</p> <p>The changes to the Writing Paper are relatively minor in nature. As such, the assessment criteria would not change so we do not envisage changes to the marking guidelines because of adopting the revised Writing Paper format. Having said that, the HKEAA continually reviews the marking guidelines in order to improve their effectiveness and reserves the right to make changes in</p>

	<p>the future to the marking guidelines as it has in the past. Teachers will be updated accordingly.</p>
Q5	<p>What is the rationale for reducing the number of questions in Part B of the Writing Paper?</p> <p>Delinking the electives from Part B of the Writing Paper is a natural outcome of the optimising of the curriculum. As there will be no need to have one question dedicated to each elective, this is an opportunity to simplify Paper 2 for candidates by reducing the number of questions given in Part B. Candidates will still have a choice but a reduction in the number of questions will allow candidates to spend less time on deciding which question to attempt and more examination time on their writing. The reduction is also supported by statistics of question popularity in past examinations.</p>
Q6	<p>Can the graded approach in Paper 1 and Paper 3 be replaced and all students be given the same set of paper with items of varying levels of difficulty?</p> <p>The graded approach was introduced in 2012 in Papers 1 and 3 as a means of dealing with an extremely diverse candidature. It is a means of optimising and making more efficient use of the limited time available to assess candidates' ability. If there were only one single paper, weaker candidates would be faced with a large number of items which would be beyond their abilities and stronger candidates would spend a significant amount of time attempting items below their level. This is not an efficient use of exam time and there would only be a limited number of effective items to discriminate candidates. Hence, the graded approach allows all candidates to attempt a whole paper more suited to their level and gives the HKEAA much more reliable data with which to make fair and reliable grading decisions.</p>
Q7	<p>Will the assessment guidelines of SBA and Paper 4 (Speaking) be aligned?</p> <p>The tasks in SBA and Paper 4 are similar so the four domains in the assessment guidelines, namely pronunciation and delivery, communication strategies, vocabulary and language patterns and ideas and organisation, are the same. As the current assessment guidelines have proved effective in reliably discriminating candidates since 2012, we do not envisage changes to</p>

	<p>the marking guidelines because of the proposed changes to SBA.</p> <p>However, if SBA assessment criteria were to be adjusted, schools would be informed of these changes before they conduct assessment for their students.</p>
<p>Q8</p>	<p>Will there be more information on the computer-based speaking assessment?</p> <p>In order to stay abreast with current examination practices across the world, the HKEAA has been conducting a small-scale research project to investigate the feasibility of using a computer-based speaking test in the future. This has become even more relevant given the difficulties examination bodies in all countries have had in administering face-to-face speaking exams during the pandemic.</p> <p>However, the HKEAA is also aware that introducing a computer-based speaking assessment would be a significant change. It is therefore proceeding with due care and will consult with stakeholders, including school administrators and teachers, in order to evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of such an assessment.</p>
<p>Q9</p>	<p>What is the reason for conducting SBA only based on the reading and viewing programme?</p> <p>The SBA component is an assessment of English oral language proficiency based on topics and texts drawn from a wide range of sources, including print, video / film, fiction and non-fiction material, such as newspapers and web-based material. The SBA has been successfully assessed through activities linked to a reading and viewing programme integrated with the general English Language curriculum.</p> <p>In the proposed optimisation of the curriculum, the learning and teaching of elective modules will be integrated into the core curriculum. Since the breadth and depth of teaching of this part may vary from school to school, it was recommended that SBA should be based only on the reading and viewing programme.</p> <p>The aim of the reading and viewing programme is to enhance students' reading, listening and writing skills. Teachers are reminded that the</p>

	assessment will be based on the student's oral performance and that the reading / viewing / writing will only serve as the means to this end.
Q10	<p>Can SBA be cut down to one assessment or abolished?</p> <p>No. In the proposed assessment framework, students are required to take part in two SBA tasks. It should be noted that the learning and teaching of the four skills are equally important. In order to reflect the learning outcomes stipulated in the <i>English Language Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4-6)</i>, the weighting, number of tasks and duration of the assessment of four skills in the public exam and SBA should be comparable. In order to maintain this standard, two assessment tasks is the minimum number of tasks that candidates should complete.</p>
Q11	<p>Will there be any restrictions on the choice of texts (i.e. print/non-print and fiction/non-fiction) for the two SBA marks submitted?</p> <p>In the course of three years, students are required to read at least one print text and one non-print text. Of the two marks submitted, one should be based on individual presentation and one on group interaction.</p>

HKEAA

March 2021