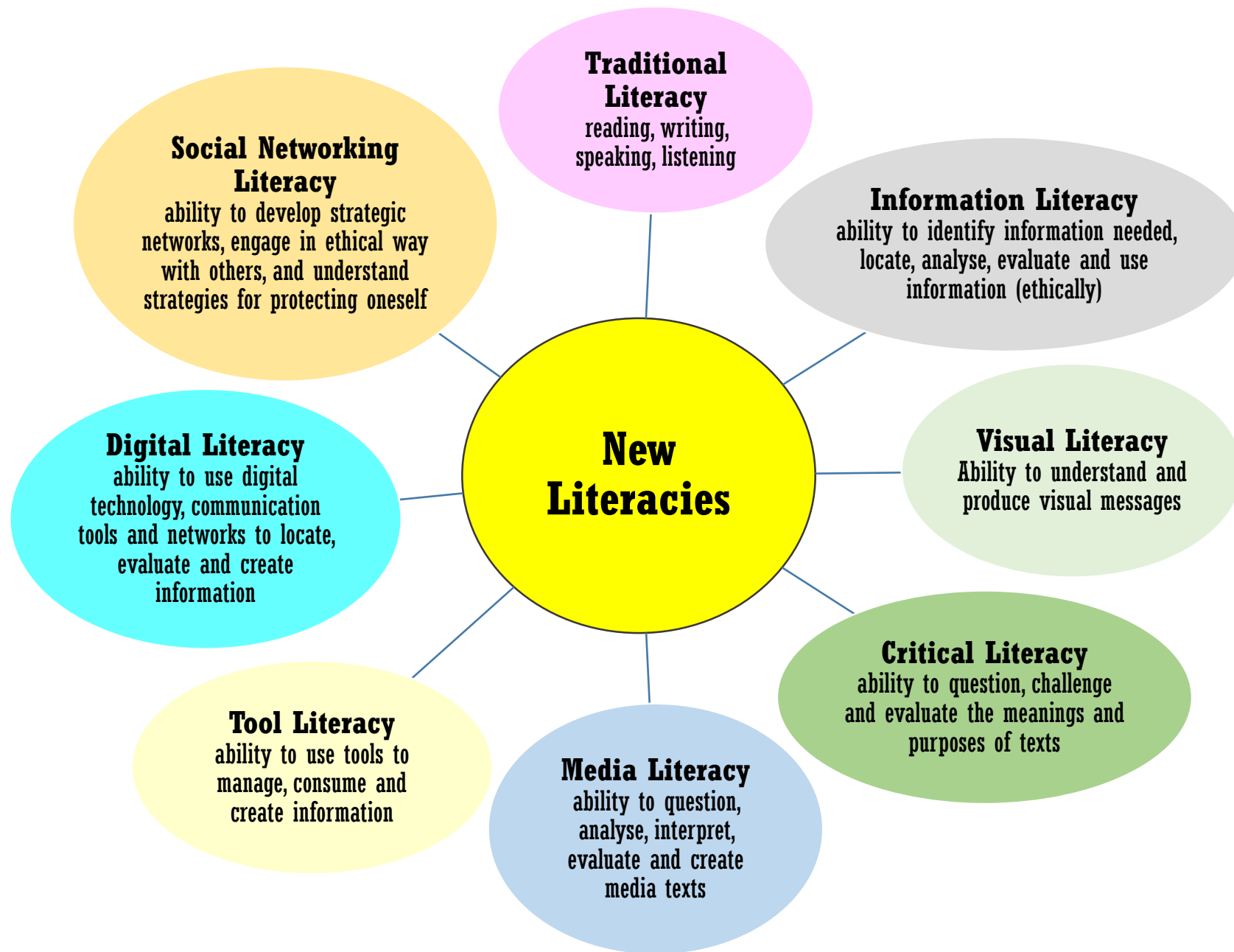


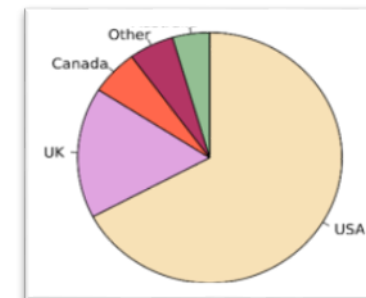
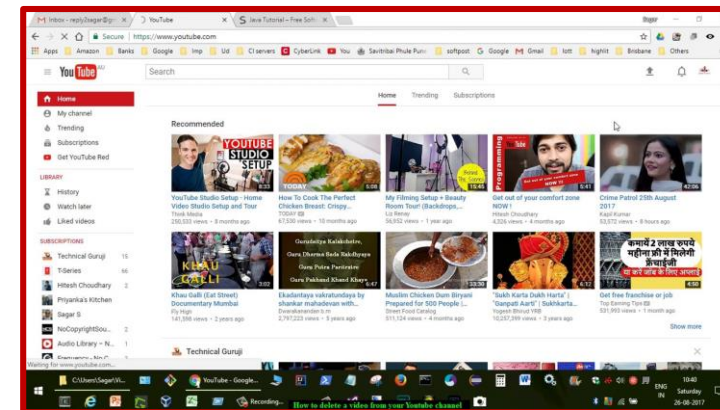
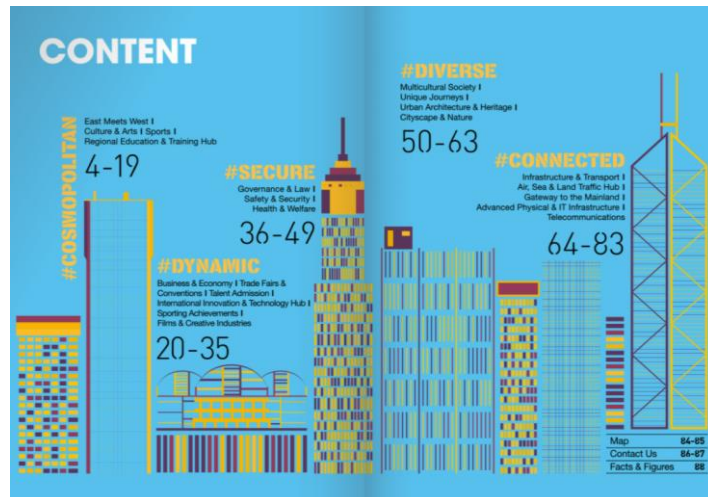
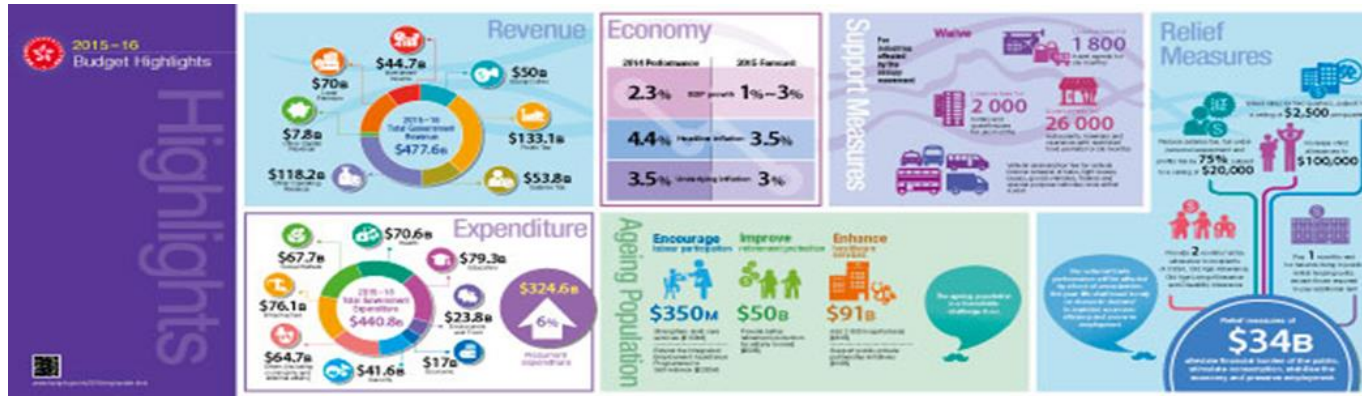
# **Critical Reading and Viewing: Developing Students' Visual Literacy in the English Language Classroom**

*English Language Education Section  
Curriculum Development Institute  
Education Bureau (August 2021)*



# Visual Literacy is a Life Skill

Reading and viewing are increasingly **inseparable with** the rise of new media and abundance of multi-modal texts

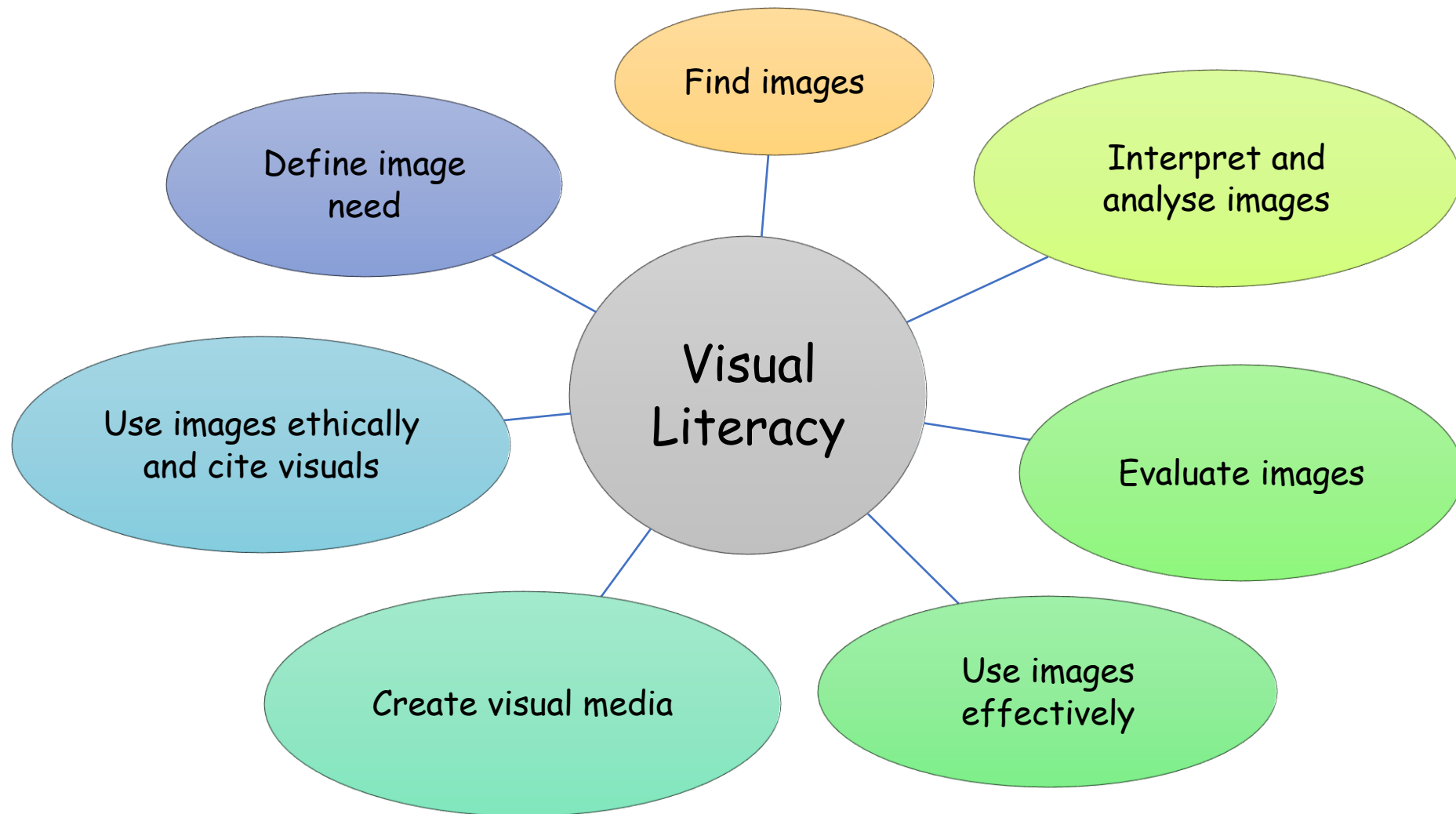


e.g. maps and signs, comics and graphic books, images and photographs, tables and graphs, infographics  
posters, websites, TV commercials, films, videos

# The Power of Visuals

ILLUSTRATIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to illustrate something</li></ul>
AFFECTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to enhance interest and/or motivation</li></ul>
ATTENTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to attract and direct attention</li></ul>
DIDACTIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to show something difficult to convey in words</li></ul>
SUPPORTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to help less able learners</li></ul>
RETENTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to facilitate memory</li></ul>

# What does it mean to be a visual literate?



# Interpreting & Evaluating Visuals

Four components of the “rhetorical situation” :

- ☐ Sender/Author/Creator
- ☐ Receiver/Audience/Viewer
- ☐ Intention/Purpose/Goal
- ☐ Message/Content

# Paradigms/Frameworks to help Students Analyse Visual Texts

Jon Callow (2005)	Frank Serafini (2014)	Focus of the dimension
affective	perceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ viewer's feelings</li><li>➤ emotional response to the text</li></ul>
compositional	structural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ how the text is constructed and presented</li></ul>
critical	ideological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ hidden messages,</li><li>➤ embedded values,</li><li>➤ social-cultural impacts</li></ul>

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“Archie comics example” by andy z on slide 4 (retrieved from: <https://search.creativecommons.org/photos/526afbf9-da62-4e0d-9fa8-f76625c9b9f4>)

“Fun Movies” by Sheryl's Boys on slide 4 (retrieved from: <https://search.creativecommons.org/photos/341cbfdc-fcf5-4df1-b973-36a66eaf0c65>)

#### References:

Goldstein, B. (2016). Visual literacy in English language teaching: Part of the Cambridge Papers in ELT series. [pdf] Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Serafini, F. (2014). Reading the visual: An introduction to teaching multimodal literacy. New York: Teachers College Press.



# **Critical Reading and Viewing: Developing Students' Visual Literacy in the English Language Classroom**

## **Part 2 Analysing 2D Visual Texts**

# READING AN IMAGE

## **Be mindful:**

How do you “read” the image?

Where do your eyes land first?

Where do they go next?

Why do they move in such a way?

How does the image make you feel?

What makes you feel in such a way?

What message is the image getting  
across?

# APPLYING CALLOW'S THREE-DIMENSION FRAMEWORK

Dimension	Focus(es)
Affective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Viewers' feelings and emotional responses to the text</li><li>- Personal interpretation where viewers bring their own experiences and aesthetic preferences to an image</li></ul>
Compositional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How the text is constructed and its presentation</li><li>- Concepts such as symbols, shot length, angles, gaze, color, layout, salience, lines and vectors</li></ul>
Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Hidden messages and embedded values of the text and its social-cultural impacts</li><li>- How an image positions the viewer to think or feel a particular way</li></ul>

# AFFECTIVE

Suggested questions:

- What catches your attention first?
- How do your eyes move across the image?
- How does the image make you feel?
- Can you relate to anyone or anything in the text in any way?
- Which part is particularly striking/weak?

# COMPOSITIONAL

Suggested questions:

- What do you see? What is happening?
  - Action
  - Event
  - Setting
- What is the most salient?
- What make(s) it salient?
  - Colour
  - Shape
  - Size / volume
  - Contrast
  - Gaze / Vector
  - Shot distance
  - Angle
- Any symbolic objects?
- Why?

# CRITICAL

Suggested questions:

- How the images support /stereotype certain group of people?
- Is/are there any implication(s) behind the choice of images?

# WHEN AN APPLE ISN'T ALWAYS AN APPLE - SYMBOLISM

- What do you see?
- What do they symbolise?
- Does the context change your interpretation?
  - Disconnection?
  - Broken communication with Mrs. Piggott?

# How analysing 2D texts relates to English Language learning and teaching – DSE Writing topics

2019 DSE Paper 2 Language  
Examination (Q. 8)



# HOW TO SUPPORT STUDENTS TO ARTICULATE THOUGHTS AND IDEAS

<b>Salience</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The point of salience within the image is ...</li><li>• ... catches / attracts my immediate attention.</li><li>• My gaze is / eyes are fixed on ...</li></ul>	<b>Message / Implication</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ... symbolizes ...</li><li>• The use of ... suggests / shows / implies (that) ...</li><li>• ... creates a sense that ...</li><li>• ... conveys that message that</li></ul>	<b>Vector / eye contact</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The pointing finger leads my eyes to shift from ... to ....</li><li>• My eyes follow the lines of ...</li><li>• The character looks directly into the viewer's eyes, establishing a connection with the viewer.</li><li>• The character looks away, invite the viewer to look at what the character is looking at.</li></ul>
<b>Salience (reasons)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ... is placed in the central foreground.</li><li>• The ... contrasts in colour against ..., which makes it stand out / pop.</li><li>• The size of ... makes it the point of salience.</li></ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">↑ When you are making a suggestion / guess, use hedging words.</p>	

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# **Critical Reading and Viewing: Developing Students' Visual Literacy in the English Language Classroom**

## **Part 3 Analysing audio-visual texts**

# Examples of audio-visual texts

- Films
- TV programmes
- YouTube clips
- commercials



# Three-dimension framework (Callow, 2005)

## Affective

- Viewer's feelings and emotional response to texts

## Compositional

- How texts are constructed and presented

## Critical

- Hidden messages
- Embedded values
- Social-cultural impact



# Key aspects of analysing audio-visual texts



## Literary

- Characters
- Setting
- Plot
- Theme



## Dramatic

- Appearance
- Costumes
- Acting



## Cinematic

- Use of music & sound effects
- Camera shots
- Editing



# Short film “Snap Chat” – Literary aspect



[https://emm.edcity.hk/media/Shorts%3A%20Snap%20Chat/1\\_rrivoqeh/172368862](https://emm.edcity.hk/media/Shorts%3A%20Snap%20Chat/1_rrivoqeh/172368862)

- Who are the main characters?
  - Jacob who likes taking and uploading pictures to a social media platform and Yolanda whom Jacob has a crush on
- Where is the film set?
  - It is set in contemporary Hong Kong, revolving around the everyday lives of a few teenagers.
- What is the plot of the story?
  - Jacob, portrayed as a Snapchat addict, has a crush on Yolanda whom he meets on a ferry. When his friends know about this, they take a photo of them in a café, make up a romantic story and share the photo. Yolanda is furious when she sees the photo. She confronts Jacob but he knows nothing about it. Jacob is at a loss for words and can only let Yolanda leave.
- What message can you get from the story?
  - Obsession with social media is harmful to social life and relationships.
  - The virtual world can be deceiving.





# Short film “Snap Chat” – Dramatic aspect



- How would you describe the characters' facial expressions and body language?
  - Jacob and his friends are in a café. They are sitting around the same table and texting one another using their smartphones.
  - Although they see one another face-to-face, they focus all their attention on their smartphones and ignore the physical presence of their friends as if they were strangers.





# Short film “Snap Chat” – Dramatic aspect



- Watch the excerpt of Jacob and his friends in the café. Are there any speeches/dialogues among them?
  - No, Jacob and his friends are not talking to one another. They are only texting using their smartphones.
- What is the impact?
  - The absence of speeches/dialogues here emphasises the overuse of social media which hampers face-to-face interaction and true engagement with others.



# Short film “Snap Chat” – Cinematic aspect



- Describe the music and sounds in the excerpt.
  - The music is fast, funky and rhythmic.
  - Sounds of keypad clicks, camera shutter clicking and sending messages are added.
- What is the function of adding these sounds and music?
  - To show and complement Jacob's brisk daily routines



- ▶ What sounds are added in this excerpt?
  - ▶ Keypad clicks, giggling
  - ▶ No music
- ▶ What is the function?
  - ▶ To emphasise the absence of verbal communication among a group of friends sitting around the same table



# Short film “Snap Chat” – Cinematic aspect



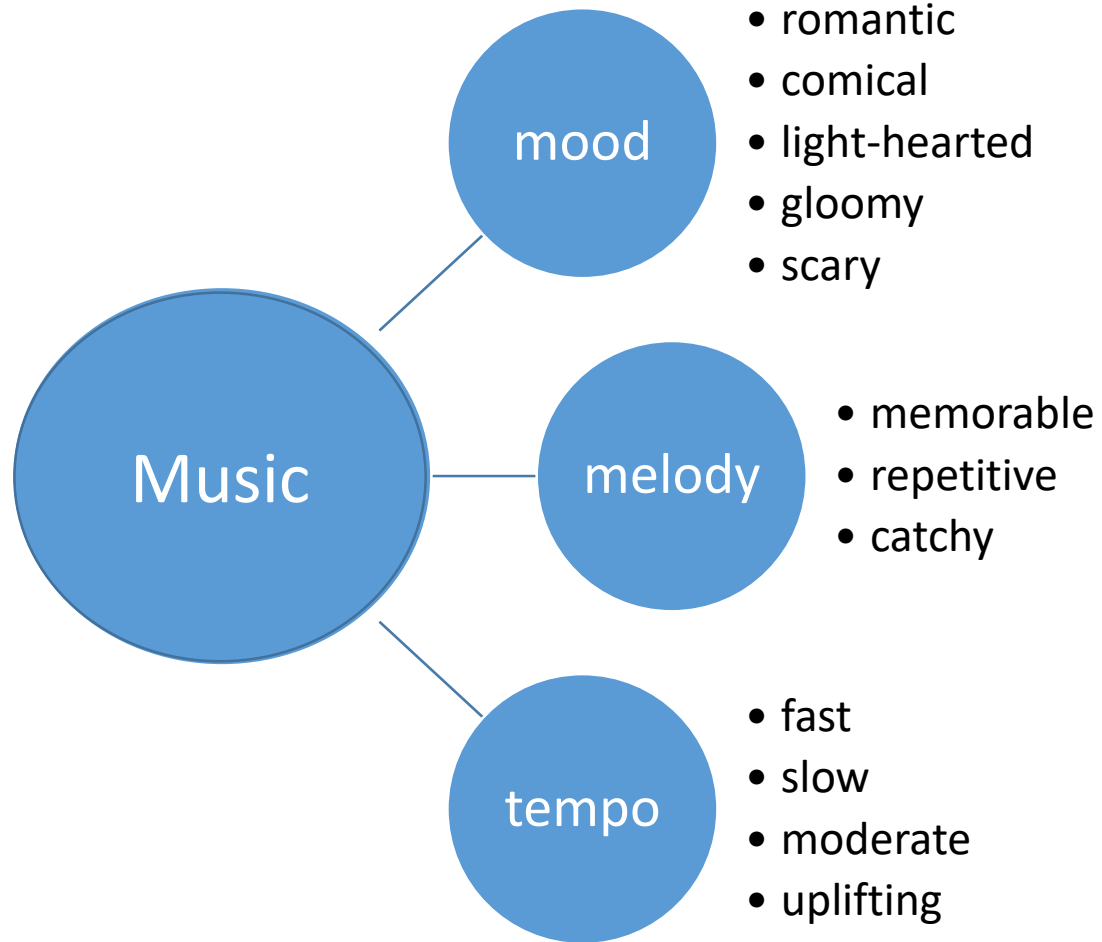
- How does the background music change when Jacob meets Yolanda on the ferry? What effect does it create?
  - fast and light-hearted → slow and heartwarming
  - To create a sense of tenderness
  - To show Jacob’s adoration of Yolanda



- ▶ How does the background music change when Yolanda confronts Jacob with the photo? What effect does it create?
  - ▶ soft music conveying a sense of romance and tenderness → comical circus music
  - ▶ To create a sense of funniness/absurdity and show how Jacob is ridiculed

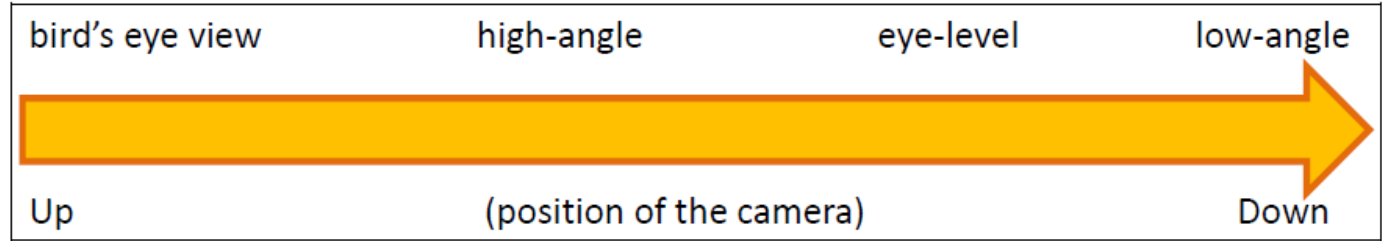


# Vocabulary for describing music





# Short film “Snap Chat” – Cinematic aspect



- Describe the camera angles of the two shots.
  - In picture 1, a low-angle shot is used.
  - In picture 2, a high-angle shot is used.
- What is the function of using these camera angles?
  - Alternating high and low-angle shots are used to present the final confrontation of Yolanda and Jacob and show their imbalance of power, clear split and separation.



# Short film “Snap Chat” – Cinematic aspect

- What editing techniques are used to facilitate the temporal and spatial transitions between scenes?
- What are the effects created?



- ▶ Rapid cuts are used to show Jacob’s actions in a disjointed way.
- ▶ To mimic the motion of a camera shutter
- ▶ To suggest frequent interruptions and distractions arising from the use of smartphones



- ▶ Scenes of Jacob fantasising dating Yolanda alternate with scenes of his friends altering a photo and sending it.
- ▶ To intensify the conflict and complicate the plot



**Part 4:**  
**Introducing Visual Literacy**  
**in the English Language Curriculum**

Planning and Implementation

# **Critical Reading and Viewing: Developing Students' Visual Literacy in the English Language Classroom**

## **Part 4: Introducing Visual Literacy in the English Language Curriculum**

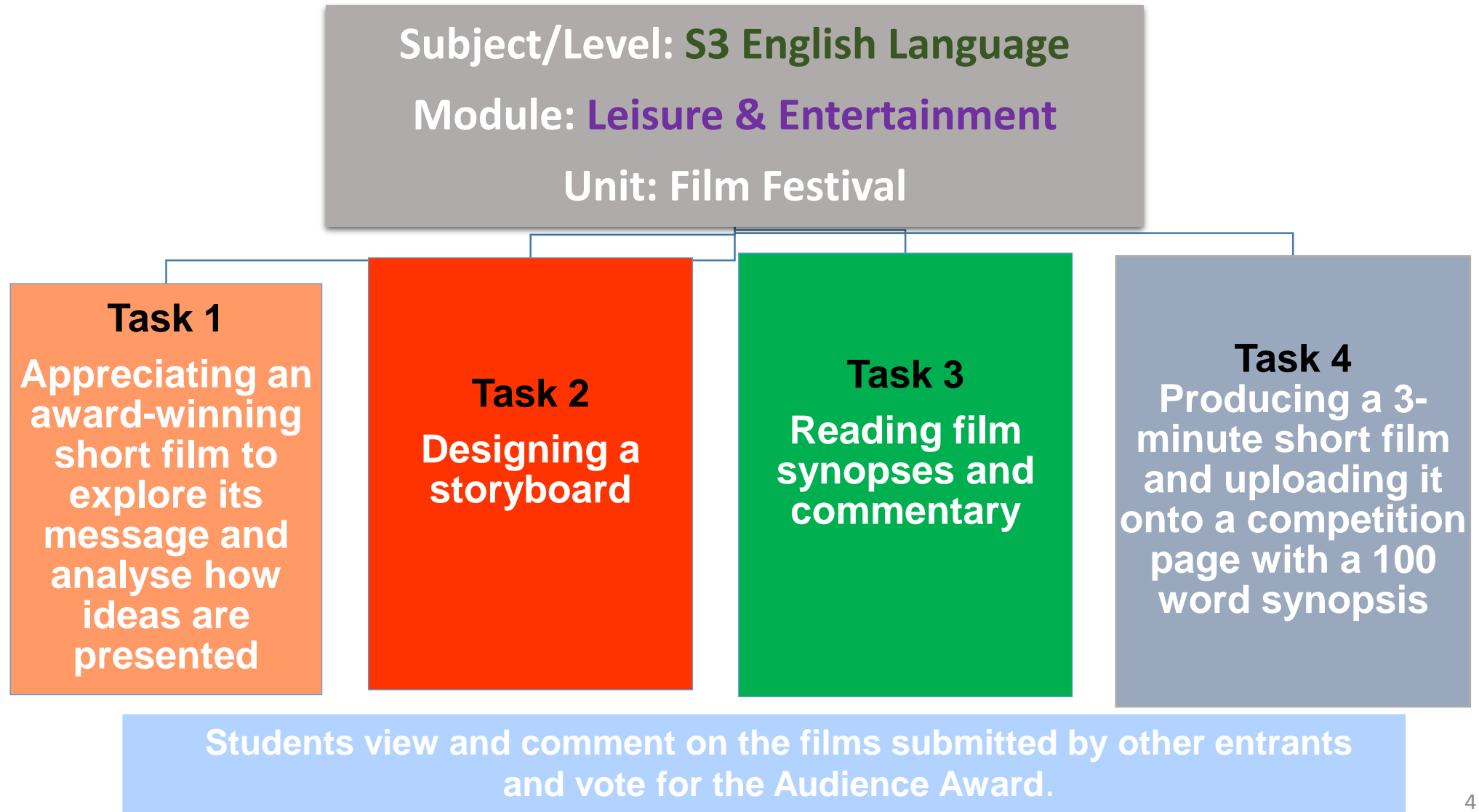


# Possible Modes of Implementation

- Designing **units / modules of work using the Task-based Approach**
- Incorporating **multimodal / audio-visual texts into theme-based units / modules**
- Addressing elements of visual literacy through **school-based / cross-curricular / lesson activities**

# Designing Units / Modules Using the Task-based Approach

## A School Example



# Incorporating Multimodal / Audio-visual Texts into Theme-based Units / Modules

## Purpose:

- to deepen exploration of topics
- to facilitate the development of literacy skills (e.g. listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing) in a holistic and integrative manner
- to inspire creative thinking and expression

- Getting along with Others
  - Friendship and Dating
  - Sharing, Co-operation, Rivalry
- Study, School Life and Work
  - Study and Related Pleasure/Problems
  - Experiments and Projects
  - Occupations, Careers and Prospects
- Cultures of the World
  - Travelling and Visiting
  - Customs, Clothing and Food of Different Places
- Wonderful Things
  - Successful People and Amazing Deeds
  - Great Stories
  - Precious Things
- Nature and Environment
  - Protecting the Environment
  - Resources and Energy Conservation
  - Biodiversity
  - Animal Protection
- The Individual and Society
  - Crime
  - Human Rights (personal rights, civic rights, respect)
- Communicating
  - The Media and Publications
  - The Internet
- Technology
  - Changes Brought about by Technology
- Leisure and Entertainment
  - The World of Sports
  - "Showbiz"

# 1. Analysing posters and comics

Discussion questions:

- What **message** is expressed?
- How do **choices of colour, font and font size** help draw our attention?
- What **effects** are created by the combination of words, images and sounds (e.g. shock, mismatch, humour)

# 2. Selecting powerful images to design an e-book to present an environmental problem:

- Identify the **salient and prominent message** highlighted in each image
- Compare the **emotional appeal** of different images
- Discuss how **elements of visual communication** (e.g. colour, typography/font, size, angle, space, contrast) are used to achieve effects

### **3. Reading satirical comics / illustrations**

- Unpacking visual metaphors
- Inferring attitudes and views

## Lesson Activities:

### 1. Picture Writing / Story-telling

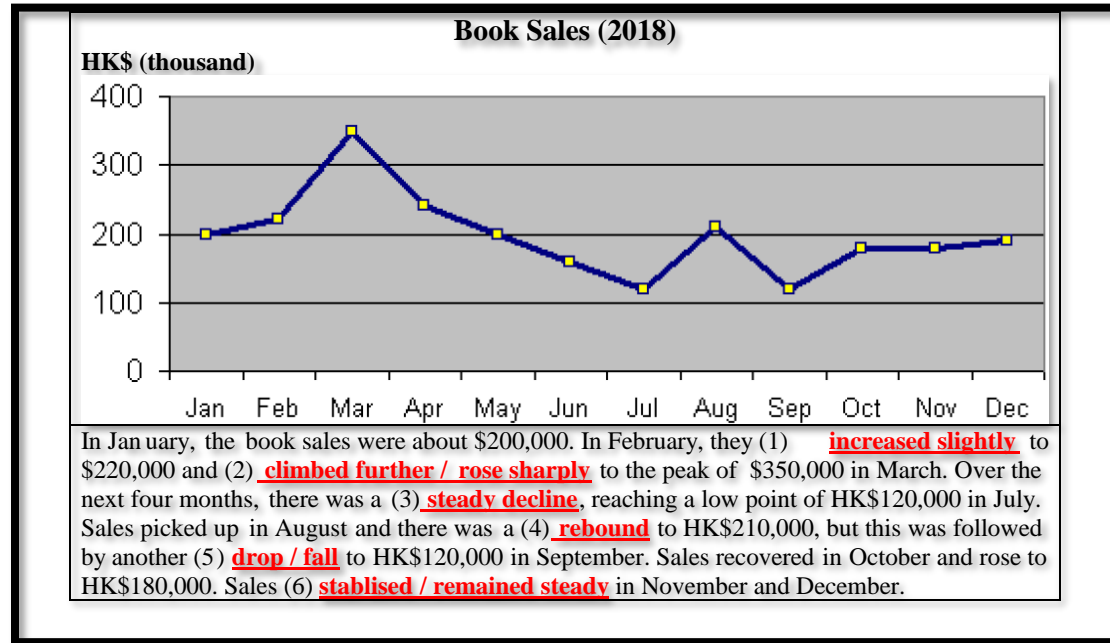
Interplay of words, frames & gutter

- build the characters
- shows transformation/development

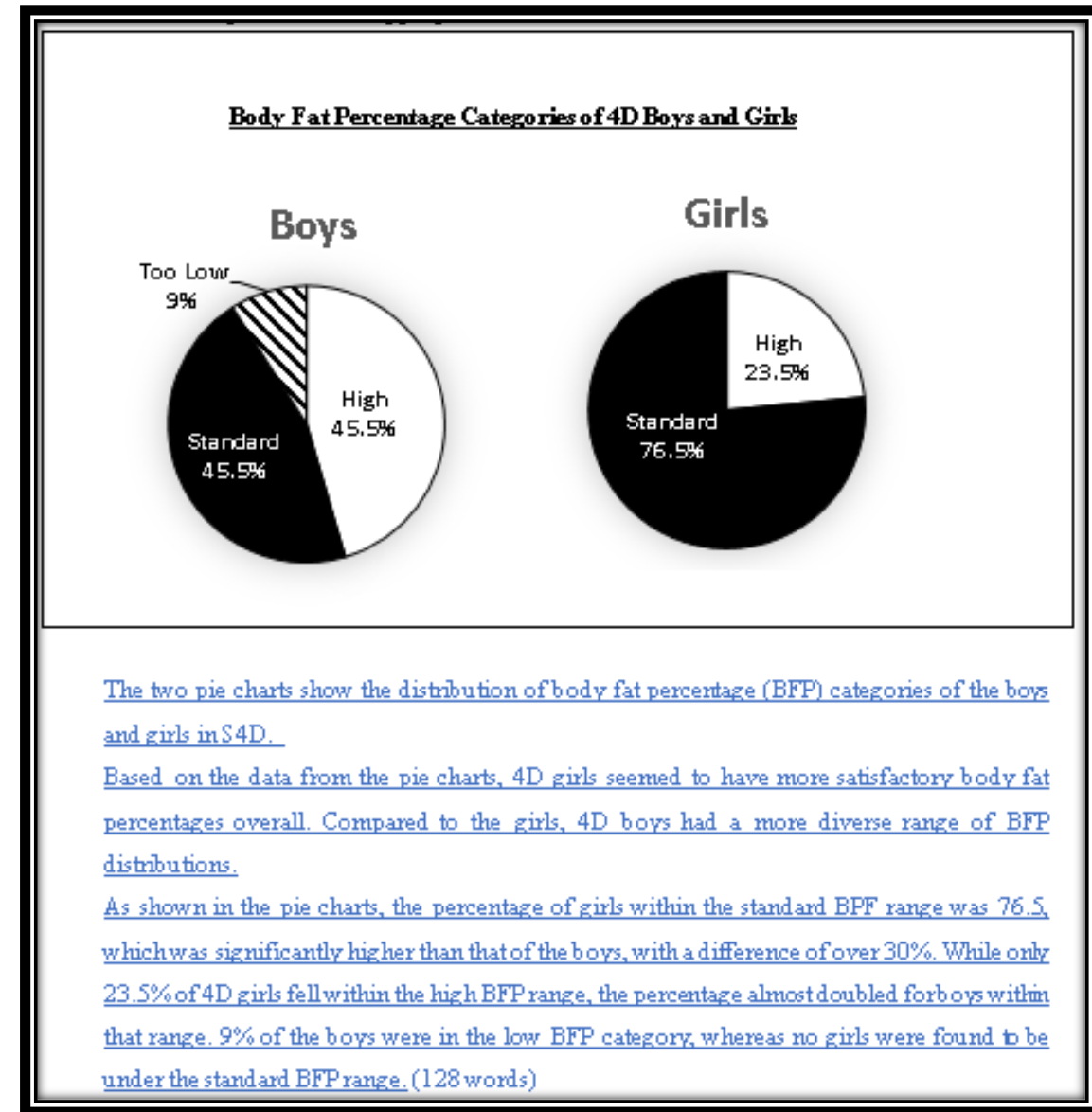
### 2. Writing activities based on visual input

- Photos and images
  - **2013 HKDSE English Language Writing Paper (Short Task)**
    - Symbolism
    - Theme / message
    - Camera angle and distance

- Tables and graphs



- Reporting statistics
- Identifying trends and patterns



## **Lesson Activities:**

### **3. Creating visual representations of both fiction and non-fiction texts**

**e.g.**

- mind-maps / concept maps with iconography
- stories with special use of fonts, colours and shapes (calligrams)



## Text Transformation Activities

From visual to text - 5 second video haiku



Siu mai in the steamer  
Expanding and contracting  
Bright yellow lanterns

# Text Transformation Activities

## Poetry Remake Competition

From text to visual: Turn a poem into a picture



fence (from *Dreaming Cities*, 2016)

skyscrapers

all eyes looking at the centre

henry aspires to harvard business  
and throws away his harmonica

jenny is driving a car  
into her global spider networked future

jonah unfurls like a creased carpet  
on the eighth floor to watch voodoo tv

someone is working on her tablet cv  
on winning beans and influencing people

dorcas must pass her abrsn  
she bangs her piano or else her mother

skyscrapers, fence  
all eyes looking



# Text Transformation Activities

## Poetry Remake Competition



City

Louise Ho

No fingers claw at the bronze gauze  
Of a Hong Kong December dusk,  
Only a maze of criss-crossing feet  
That enmeshes the city  
5 In a merciless grid.

Between many lanes  
Of traffic, the street-sleeper  
Carves out his island home.  
Or under the thundering fly-over,  
10 Another makes his own peace of mind.

Under the staircase,  
By the public lavatory,  
A man entirely unto himself  
Lifts his hand  
15 And opens his palm.  
His digits  
Do not rend the air,  
They merely touch  
As pain does, effortlessly.

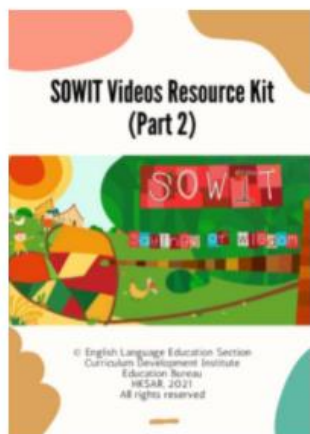
"City" was published in *Incense Tree: Collected Poems of Louise Ho* by Louise Ho, p.45. Copyrights © 2009 by Hong Kong University Press. Reprinted by permission of HongKong University Press.

# Resource and References

## English Language Education – References and Resources (Secondary Level)

### Educational Multimedia (EMM) Resources

### Title



SOWIT Videos Resource Kit (Part 2)

2021 (Online)



Short Film Appreciation (II): Snap Chat

2021 (Online)

[Teacher Version](#)

[Student Version](#)

Developing Students' Multimodal Literacy in the Secondary English Language Classroom



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