

## B. Word-stress rules: common prefixes

### 1. Unstressed prefixes

- (a) Most words with prefixes have the main stress on the first syllable of the root word.
- (b) The prefixes **a-**, **ad-**, **be-**, **col-**, **com-**, **con-**, **cor-**, **de-**, **dis-**, **en-**, **ex-**, **for-**, **il-**, **im-**, **in-**, **ir-**, **ob-**, **per-**, **pre-**, **pro-**, **re-**, **sub-**, **sur-** and **with-** are always unstressed when they are used to form verbs (e.g. a **WA**-ken, ad-**MIRE**, be-**LONG**, de-**FINE**, ex-**PECT**, for-**GET**, in-**CREASE**, per-**FORM**, re-**WRITE**, with-**HOLD**).

### 2. Lightly stressed prefixes

The prefixes **out-**, **over-**, **un-** and **under-** are lightly stressed when used before a verb (e.g. out-**RUN**, o-**ver-DO**, un-**DO**, un-**der-GO**).

### 3. Strongly stressed prefixes

The prefixes **fore-**, **out-**, **over-**, **pro-**, **re-**, **under-** and **up-** are often strongly stressed when they are joined to a one-syllable noun (e.g. **FORE**-ground, **OUT**-look, **O**-**ver**-pass, **PRO**-gramme, **RE**-search, **UN**-**der**-pass, **UP**-grade [n]), but not when joined to multi-syllable nouns (e.g. **pro**-**DUCT**-ive, re-**GRET**-ta-ble).

**Task 2:** With a partner or as a class, pronounce the words in Table 1, making sure you have the proper stress on each syllable.

**Table 1:** Stress patterns – common prefixes

Prefix	Example
a-	a- <b>BOARD</b>
be-	be- <b>FRIEND</b>
com-	com- <b>PLAIN</b>
de-	de- <b>MAND</b>
dis-	dis- <b>PLAY</b>
en-	en- <b>ROL</b>
ex-	ex- <b>PORT</b> (verb) <b>EX</b> -port (noun)
in-	in- <b>VEST</b>
mis-	mis- <b>TAKE</b>
ob-	ob- <b>JECT</b> (v) <b>OB</b> -JECT (n)
out-	out- <b>RUN</b> (v) <b>OUT</b> -look (n)
over-	o- <b>ver-DO</b> (v) <b>O</b> - <b>ver</b> -pass (n)

Prefix	Example
per-	per- <b>SUADE</b> (v)
pre-	<b>pre</b> - <b>Hist</b> -or-y <b>PRE</b> -school
pro-	pro- <b>TEST</b> (v) <b>PRO</b> -test (n)
re-	<b>re</b> - <b>TYPE</b>
sub-	sub- <b>SIST</b> <b>SUB</b> -way
sur-	sur- <b>ROUND</b>
un-	un- <b>A</b> -ble
under-	un- <b>der</b> - <b>STAND</b> <b>UN</b> - <b>der</b> -pass (n)
up-	up- <b>GRADE</b> (v) <b>UP</b> - <b>grade</b> (n)
with-	with- <b>OUT</b> with- <b>IN</b>

# Unit 4: Linking vowels and consonants

## A. Introduction

Words are also affected by the sounds before and after them. We link syllables and words together to produce a natural rhythm. This requires us to change the sound of some syllables depending on the sounds they are used with.

**Table 15:** Phonetic symbols – vowels

/i:/	me, see	/ɒ/	lot, not	/ɜ:/	fur, bird	/aʊ/	cow, now
/ɪ/	hit, sit	/ɔ:/	all, saw	/ə/	about, again	/ɔɪ/	boy, join
/e/	men, ten	/ʊ/	foot, put	/eɪ/	day, say	/ɪə/	near, here
/æ/	cat, sat	/u:/	too, through	/əʊ/	no, throw	/eə/	hair, there
/ɑ:/	arm, aunt	/ʌ/	run, enough	/aɪ/	five, my	/ʊə/	cure, pure

**Table 16:** Phonetic symbols – consonants

/b/	<u>b</u> at, tab <u>b</u>	/l/	l <u>l</u> et, pull	/t/	t <u>t</u> ell, fat <u>t</u>	/tʃ/	<u>ch</u> ild, cat <u>ch</u>
/d/	<u>d</u> oll, red <u>d</u>	/m/	<u>m</u> an, room <u>m</u>	/v/	<u>v</u> ery, adv <u>ic</u> e	/dʒ/	<u>j</u> ob, larg <u>e</u>
/f/	<u>f</u> ace, aft <u>er</u>	/n/	not, <u>m</u> ain	/w/	<u>w</u> et, alw <u>ay</u> s	/ð/	<u>th</u> e, eith <u>er</u>
/g/	<u>g</u> et, egg	/p/	<u>p</u> ut, map	/y/	<u>y</u> ou, play <u>er</u>	/θ/	<u>th</u> ing, with
/h/	<u>h</u> elp, beh <u>ind</u>	/r/	<u>r</u> ed, for	/z/	<u>z</u> ero, pleas <u>e</u>	/ʒ/	meas <u>ur</u> e, usu <u>al</u>
/k/	<u>c</u> ar, black	/s/	<u>s</u> it, less	/hw/	<u>w</u> hen, <u>w</u> here	/ŋ/	ring, king
						/j/	<u>sh</u> e, fish

## B. Linking: vowel to vowel

Vowel-to-vowel linking occurs both within and across words to allow words and syllables to be linked smoothly. This linking is used when a word or syllable ends with a vowel and the next word or syllable begins with a vowel. Some vowels are linked with a brief /y/ glide and some are linked with a /w/ glide.

1. When a word or syllable ending in an /i:/ (be), /eɪ/ (say), /aɪ/ (my) or /ɔɪ/ (boy) sound are followed by a word or syllable starting with a vowel, connect the two words with a /y/ glide.
2. When words or syllables ending in a /u:/ (blue), /əʊ/ (tow) or /aʊ/ (how) sound are followed by a word or syllable starting with a vowel, the two words are linked with a /w/ glide.

# Unit 3: Starting the discussion

## A. Introduction

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Discussions always have a purpose. In workplace discussions, it is usually up to the chairperson or other person who called the meeting to get things started by focusing on this purpose. In classroom and exam discussions, there is no appointed leader, so someone has to open the discussion. There is no reason to fight over who gets to start because you get no extra marks for doing so, but you should be prepared to speak first in case no one else is willing to.

### Don'ts

1. In the exam format, some students like to repeat the whole discussion question. This can become a bit long and boring since everyone has just been reading the question for 10 minutes before starting. So it is more efficient to jump to the first point: e.g. *Let's start by discussing what kinds of articles we should include in the magazine.*
2. Examiner 2 is supposed to start the discussion by saying *You may start now.* Many candidates repeat this by beginning *Let's start.* This seems like a waste of time. It would be more efficient to jump right to the first point. *Let's start by discussing the medical dangers of extreme dieting.*
3. For other expressions to avoid in the opening, see page 51, Table 26, #1.

## B. Expressions used to introduce a topic

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Here are some examples of common expressions that are used to introduce a topic. Note that none of these are the memorised phrases the examiners complain about, because each one requires you to complete the sentence with your own words. *Discuss/discussing* can be replaced by *talk/talking about*.

1. Let's look at / talk about / discuss the benefits of sports.
2. Let's begin with how it has changed in the past decade.
3. Let's first examine / consider / discuss which place students would enjoy most.
4. Let's start by discussing which events we should host.
5. Let's talk about which tourist attractions to include.
6. Let's first decide what information we want to give them.
7. Would you like to start with whom we should invite?
8. I think we should start by discussing what kinds of websites to recommend.
9. Should we start with this first point – which Hong Kong festivals are the most popular?
10. What would you like to start with? How about how long we should stay in each place?
11. Why not start by discussing the main points of the talk?
12. Why don't we start by discussing which place to visit?
13. I think we should start by discussing which kinds of jobs would be most suitable.
14. (I guess) the first thing we need to talk about is why students eat so much junk food.
15. (I suppose) we could begin by talking about / discussing the arguments for the motion.

**Task 31:** Choose the grammatically correct option.

1. A. Let's starting by talk about the benefits of visit museums.  
 B. Let start talk about the benefits of visiting a museum.  
 C. Let's us start by talking about the benefits of visiting museums.  
 D. Let's start by talking about the benefits of class visits to museums.
2. A. Let's first examine the benefits of cosmetic surgery.  
 B. Let's examining the benefits of cosmetic surgery.  
 C. Let us to examine the benefits of cosmetic surgery.  
 D. May us examine the benefits of cosmetic surgery first?
3. A. Why not start by discussing about the benefits of internet research?  
 B. Why not start by discussing the benefits of internet research?  
 C. Why not start by discuss about the benefits of internet research?  
 D. Why not start by discussion about the benefits of internet research?
4. A. Should we start of this first point then: the problems with internet research?  
 B. Should we start along with this first point then: the problems with internet research?  
 C. Should we start with this first point then: the problems with internet research?  
 D. Should we starting on this first point then: the problems with internet research?

**Task 32:** Fill in the blanks.

1. I think we should start by \_\_\_\_\_ where to hold the party.
2. Would you \_\_\_\_\_ to start with this first point – the purpose of Parents' Day.
3. I think we should start by \_\_\_\_\_ at why students eat so much junk food.
4. What would you like to start \_\_\_\_\_? How about the reasons?

## C. Grammar point: objects of prepositions

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Prepositions are almost always followed by nouns or noun substitutes. A noun substitute is a pronoun (e.g. *I, he, it, they*), gerund (*-ing* word), noun phrase (noun + determiners + adjectives), or noun clause (clauses beginning with *how* and *wh*-words).

In the following examples, the **preposition** is in bold and its object is underlined. The type of object is in brackets.

1. Let's start **by** discussing the reasons for this problem. (gerund phrase)
2. Let's first look **at** why this happens. (noun clause)
3. Why don't we start **by** talking about the reasons for this problem. (gerund, noun phrase)
4. Would you like to start **with** what each of us found to be the biggest problem in Form 1?  
(noun clause)
5. I think we should start **by** examining the reasons for this problem. (gerund phrase, noun phrase)
6. I suppose we could begin **by** discussing the reasons for this. (gerund phrase, pronoun)
7. Should we start **with** this first point – the reasons? (noun phrase)

## D. Common errors: objects of prepositions

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- Using a verb instead of a noun as the object of a preposition.  
*Let's start **by discuss** the reasons. ✗ (by discussing ✓)*
- Using a clause other than a noun clause as the object of a preposition.  
*Why don't we start **by we talk about** the reasons for this problem. ✗ (by talking about ✓)*
- Using the wrong word order in a noun clause.  
*Let's first look **at why does this happen**. ✗ (at why this happens ✓)*
- Using the past perfect tense in a noun clause to talk about things that always happen.  
*Let's first look **at why this had happened**. ✗ (at why this happens ✓)*

**Task 33:** Choose the grammatically correct option.

- Let's start by ...
  - discussing about that makes a healthy diet.
  - talking about what makes a healthy diet.
  - look at what makes a healthy diet.
  - we examine what does a healthy diet make.
- Let's start with ...
  - give examples of an unhealthy diet.
  - we list examples of an unhealthy diet.
  - what is examples of an unhealthy diet.
  - examples of an unhealthy diet.
- Why don't we start by talking about ...
  - sensible weight-control methods students should consider?
  - what sensible weight-control methods should students consider?
  - students should consider sensible weight-control methods?
  - sensible weight-control methods should be considered?
- I think we should start by ...
  - discussing about the problems diet pills can cause.
  - we discuss the problems with diet pills.
  - discuss the problems with diet pills.
  - discussing the problems with diet pills.
- Let's look at ...
  - what have problems of diet pills.
  - diet pills have problems.
  - the problems with diet pills.
  - problems have with diet pills.
- Why don't we begin with ...
  - discussion of the reasons of dieting?
  - look at the reasons students diet?
  - examining why do students diet?
  - the question of why students diet?
- Would you like to start with ...
  - the first point number one?
  - the first point?
  - a first point?
  - this first one point on the list?
- Let's talk about ...
  - how to promote good nutrition.
  - promoting of good nutrition.
  - ways of promote good nutrition.
  - we can find ways of promoting good nutrition.
- Should we start with ...
  - extreme dieting is dangerous?
  - what dangers of extreme dieting?
  - the dangers of extreme dieting?
  - how dangerous of extreme dieting?
- What would you like to start with? How about ...
  - list the most common weight-loss methods?
  - listing the most common weight-loss methods?
  - we list the most common weight-loss methods?
  - make a list of the most common weight-loss methods?

## F. Staying on topic

Since everyone in the group will lose marks if you stray off topic, make sure you quickly direct the discussion back on track. Here are some ways to do this:

- *We're getting off the point a bit. We're supposed to be discussing...* ✓
- *Perhaps we'd better move back to the main point...* ✓
- *That's an interesting point, but let's stick to the topic.* ✓

Many students tend to give up if other members of the group disagree with them. But if you are right and the others are off topic, you should not give up. Try to make your point in a different way so that they can see that they are off topic.

## G. Expressions to show you are listening

**Table 33:** Functions that show you are listening

	Function	Example
1	Encouraging the speaker	(a) Yes. (b) I see. (c) Right. (d) Oh yes. (e) Exactly. (f) That's true. (g) Good point. (h) That's right. (i) You're right. (j) I think so, too. (k) Really! <i>or</i> Really? (l) Yes, I like that (idea). (m) I know what you mean. (n) That's a good / great idea.
2	Going back to a previous point	(a) Talking of.... (b) You suggested.... (c) You said earlier.... (d) On the subject of.... (e) (But) to go back to an earlier point.... (f) We were talking earlier about.... Well, .... (g) I'd like to go back to a point X made earlier. (h) You mentioned...just now/a minute ago....Well,....
3	Checking that you have understood (from p.75, # 13)	(a) So...? (b) Does this/that mean...? (c) You mean..., (right)? (d) That means..., (right)? (e) In other words..., (right)? (f) So am I right in saying...? (g) So what you mean is..., (right)? (h) So what you're really saying is..., (right)? (i) I'm not sure I understand. Does this/that mean...?

## H. Making suggestions

**Table 34:** Functions – making suggestions

Statements	Questions
1. Let's....	8. Shouldn't we...?
2. I know! Let's ....	9. Why not ..., (then)?
3. I suggest/propose....	10. Let's... then, okay?
4. We might as well....	11. How about..., (then)?
5. We could always..., (then).	12. Why don't we..., (then)?
6. (Maybe/Perhaps) we could....	13. Surely we could..., (then)?
7. Couldn't we...?	14. We could ..., couldn't we?

## I. Summarising your discussion of each point

If you think of yourself as the group chairperson, you will find this a useful discussion technique. Do a quick summary of your discussion of each point and use this as a springboard to introduce the next point. Here's a sample discussion:

In Hong Kong many companies buy music legally but then play it in their businesses for the enjoyment of their customers and employees. According to copyright law, they must pay an additional copyright fee for the right to do this. Your school is planning an open house and your group is planning the musical entertainment for the event. The Principal has given permission for the music to be broadcast over the PA system. Discuss what music you would like to play and what you should do about the copyright issue. You may want to talk about:

- what kind of music to play
- whether you should check about the copyright situation
- whether you should buy a copyright licence if it is required
- anything else you think is important

Let's say, after some discussion of musical entertainment, there is general agreement that you should play recorded Cantonese pop music. Summarise that decision and move on to the next point.

*(a) OK, we agree that we'll play Cantonese pop music. Do you think we should check on the copyright situation?*

Do the same for the other points:

*(b) Okay, we've decided we're going to check whether we would have to pay a copyright fee, and if so, how much. If there is a copyright fee, do you think we should pay it?*

*(c) OK, so we've decided that we cannot afford a copyright licence. Then we need to discuss alternatives.*

Then the final summary.

*So, we'd like to play Cantonese pop music, but we need to check the copyright situation first. If there is a fee, we can only afford it if it is very small. If it is too high, we have decided to cancel the musical entertainment. Would anyone like to add anything?*

# Unit 13: Useful oral idioms

## 1. Introducing suggestions

	Idiom (in bold)	Meaning / use
1	<b>How about</b> going to a French-speaking country?	used to introduce a suggestion
2	<b>What about</b> arranging a beach barbecue?	used to introduce a suggestion
3	<b>If you ask me</b> , it would be better to invite an experienced policeman.	I think...
4	<b>It wouldn't hurt</b> to do a student survey first.	It would be a good idea...
5	<b>To be on the safe side</b> , let's plan something everyone likes, like a buffet dinner.	To play it safe / To be sure...
6	<b>To whet their appetite</b> , we could offer prizes.	To get them interested...
7	<b>Do you mind</b> if we move on to the next point?	polite way of making a suggestion
8	<b>For the sake of argument</b> , let's say we all go to the same school, which has a very strict discipline system.	To help the discussion work...

## 2. Introducing/changing opinions

	Idiom (in bold)	Meaning / use
9	<b>I'll bet that</b> most students would prefer to go to Japan.	I'm sure that...
10	<b>I've changed my mind.</b>	have a new opinion
11	<i>I don't like our uniform.</i> <b>For starters / For a start / To start with</b> , it's ugly.	For one reason...
12	<b>No doubt / without a doubt</b> smoking is the most common problem.	certainly; used to emphasise that what you say is true
13	<b>On second thought</b> , I think we should use posters instead of leaflets.	I've changed my mind. On second thoughts (UK)
14	<i>It would work from the students' point of view, but maybe not the teachers'.</i>	opinion / way of looking at things
15	<b>The thing is</b> , most people just don't care.	<i>The fact is...</i> ; used to introduce an explanation or excuse, or to emphasise the importance of what follows
16	<i>It just crossed my mind</i> that maybe going to university isn't the best thing for everyone.	occurred to me / I just realised
17	<b>It's no use</b> just telling the students to exercise more. We've got to point out the benefits.	There's no point / It won't help
18	<b>It stands to reason</b> that the more time they spend watching TV, the less time they will have for studying.	It is clear
19	<b>Just think</b> of the cost of a TV ad campaign.	Imagine...
20	A: Please let me <b>make my point</b> B: Go ahead. <b>Make your point.</b>	say just what I / you mean
21	A: <i>I don't think tennis is very popular in our school.</i> B: <b>As a matter of fact</b> , it's very popular.	used to introduce an important point or an opposing view

## Individual response 7: Problem + solution

**Question:** *What do you think can be done to make Hong Kong's parks more friendly to the elderly?*

**Modal verbs.** Every sentence in this response has at least one modal verb (*can, could, should, must, may, would, might*) or a semi-modal (*have to*). These are used to give opinions (*should, have to, must*), and to show levels of certainty from strong (*must, have to*) to medium (*should*) to weak (*may, might, could*).

**Signposts.** The speaker also uses clear signposts (*First, Second, Next, Finally*) to show when she is moving on to a new point. These signpost words are much more common in speech than in writing because your listeners do not have paragraphs and headings to tell them when you are changing topics.

Sample response	Comments
<p>I <b>can</b> think of a couple of things that might make the parks more convenient and interesting for elderly people.</p> <p>First, we <b>have to</b> realise that quite a few elderly people use wheelchairs. We don't see many of them in parks, but this <b>could</b> be because of the iron bars that block the entrances to keep out hawkers carts. We <b>should</b> not be blocking disabled people from using the parks like this. There <b>must</b> be another way to control hawkers in parks.</p> <p>Second, many elderly people <b>may</b> not have to use wheelchairs, but they <b>may</b> still have difficulty walking and worry about falling. Installing rails along the walkways <b>would</b> encourage more elderly people to walk without fear of falling. They <b>would</b> be more healthy as a result.</p> <p>Next, there <b>should</b> be more water fountains in the parks. It <b>might</b> be easy for young people to run to the other side of the park when they are thirsty, but it <b>may</b> take an elderly person a long time to do the same. In the hot weather this <b>could</b> be dangerous.</p> <p>Finally, I think there <b>should</b> be more activities in the parks to attract elderly people – perhaps more singing, music, tai chi, and so forth.</p> <p><b>While</b> I think our parks are pretty good in general, with our aging population, we <b>have to</b> think about changes like this. <b>Thank you.</b></p>	<p>General opening focusing on benefits</p> <p><b>First problem</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reason</li> <li>• solution</li> </ul> <p><b>Second problem</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reason</li> <li>• solution</li> </ul> <p><b>Solution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explanation</li> <li>• problem</li> </ul> <p><b>Solution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reason</li> </ul> <p>• contrast – good but could be better</p>

**Task 63: Common errors 1** – Discuss what information to put on an exam-prep website.

**Instructions:** Some lines are correct. The rest have only one error per line, but the error may involve one OR two words together. Underline the error and write the correction on the right.

A	Well, let's start by talk about what to include on the website. Maybe it could divide into subjects, and then divide each subject into sections, just like notes, tips and practice, or something like that.	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____
B	That sounds good. First, which subjects we should cover?	5. _____
C	Why not all subject?	6. _____
B	Well, I was thinking about the amount of times this would take. I can imagine do this for two or three subjects, but not 10 or 15.	7. _____ 8. _____
D	Yes, that's a good point. We won't able to spend much time working on this website. We have to study too. Why doesn't we focus on English, Chinese and Maths?	9. _____ 10. _____ 11. _____
A	That sounds fine. Let's use English as an examples and first talk about what kinds of notes could we put on the website.	12. _____ 13. _____
C	Well there have so many good grammar websites, there is no point in designing our own, isn't it? We could just list ours recommended websites.	14. _____ 15. _____ 16. _____
B	Good idea. Maybe we could listing our favourite two or three, and write a brief report on what offers on each website.	17. _____ 18. _____
C	That sounds fine. Is everyone agree?	19. _____
A	Sure. I'm like it.	20. _____
D	That's sound good.	21. _____
C	So, for the grammar section we will list two or three of the best websites, along with a brief review of each. Does you know what? I think we could be useded the same format for all three subjects. First, we could have a section with suggested websites and reviews, then a section on subject notes, then another sections on tips, and a final section on practice.	22. _____ 23. _____ 24. _____ 25. _____ 26. _____ 27. _____
B	In my opinion, I think a separate section on common errors or problems would also be helpfully.	28. _____ 29. _____
C	That's a not bad idea. In fact, it's an excellent idea.	30. _____

**Task 73: Exam practice 3****Part A: Group Discussion** (Prep:10 mins; Discussion: 8 minutes per group of 4)

The extract below appeared in a news report on a survey by Community Business.

**Work-life balance**

An October 2008 survey by Community Business, a non-profit organisation specialising in corporate social responsibility, found that a third of Hong Kong employees would consider changing jobs to get a better work-life balance. The survey was done by random telephone interviews of 1,011 full-time employees. It also showed that despite government efforts to improve the work-life balance, employees had even less private time in 2008 compared to 2007. Also, women tended to have less personal time than men – one and a half hours less per week.

Over 60 per cent of respondents said that their poor work-life balance was resulting in “prolonged fatigue and tiredness”, and 38 per cent said that long working hours were having a negative effect on their productivity and work quality.

Whereas in 2007 respondents said financial security was their greatest work-life challenge, in 2008, long working hours were cited as the biggest obstacle to a good work-life balance.

Community Business concluded that the survey showed the importance of employers’ dealing with work-life imbalance in their organisations. If they choose to squeeze extra effort out of their employees when the economy is bad, they may lose their best people, particularly as the economy improves.

You want to prepare a presentation on the importance of keeping a healthy work-life balance for young people who will be starting their first full-time job. Discuss with your group what you will include in the presentation. You may want to talk about:

- questions they should ask in job interviews
- the problems that can result from a poor work-life balance
- whether it is worth accepting a lower salary for a healthier work-life balance
- anything else you think is important

**Part B: Individual Response** (one minute per candidate; no preparation)

1. Do you think your teachers have a good work-life balance?
2. Why do you think Hong Kong people work so hard?
3. Would you be willing to work very long working hours in return for a high salary?
4. Do you know anyone whose health is affected by long working hours?
5. Do you or any of your classmates have a poor schoolwork-life balance?
6. Do you think Hong Kong people work harder than people in other places?
7. Do you know anyone who loves working long hours?
8. Do you think it is good business or bad business for an organisation to push its employees to work long hours?
9. Do you think hard work leads to success?
10. If you were a manager what do you think your employees would think of you?

## Vocabulary and ideas for the discussion

**Questions they could ask in job interviews related to work-life issues:** working hours per day and week; number of days worked per week; immediate boss; job description (work duties and responsibilities); opportunities for advancement; training provided; support for further education; annual holidays).

**The problems that can result from a poor work-life balance:** family difficulties resulting from too little time spent with spouse and children and too little communication with them; stress; possible health problems resulting from stress; possible interpersonal problems with colleagues resulting from stress; damage to friendships; little or no time to build relationships, hobbies and interests outside work.

**Whether it is worth accepting a lower salary for a healthier work-life balance:**

**YES** – if it means healthier family and other personal relationships; if can allow you to develop interests and hobbies outside work; money can't buy you happiness; it is usually relationships, interests or helping people that creates happiness if your main sense of self-worth comes from your activities outside work.

**NO** – if your goal is to build a successful career in your organisation; if you need money to accomplish things that are important to you, such as buying a home, retiring early, starting your own business, or travelling; in Hong Kong working long hours is unavoidable in most organisations, so if you want to succeed, you must fit in and work long hours.

## Individual response: sample answers

### 1. Do you think your teachers have a good work-life balance?

Some teachers do. At least I think they do. They seem to go home at 4 pm each day and they don't seem to carry much work home with them. I know that some of them have hobbies and other activities they are very interested in.

But I think it depends on the subject. Most teachers have a very poor work-life balance. They spend long hours in the staff room after school marking, and they take work home with them every evening and weekend. They have so much marking and lesson planning to do, along with meetings and extra-curricular activities to supervise, that I doubt they have a chance to develop outside interests.

I think this is unhealthy for them, their families and their students. It must be stressful and that can be bad for their health. It can also affect their relationship with their family members and students, which would result in more stress. But I don't blame those teachers. They usually have no choice. If they want to be teachers in Hong Kong, this is what they have to do. The Education Bureau and their principals require them to do a lot of administrative work in addition to their regular teaching duties. It would be better for everyone if teachers' workload could be reduced a bit. Thank you.

### 2. Why do you think Hong Kong people work so hard?

I think Hong Kong people have no choice but to work hard. Hong Kong has basically no natural resources. The workforce in many other places is just as well educated. So what do we have to offer but hard work? If we work hard, our productivity increases and this helps make up for lower wages in other places.

Another reason is that hard work and long hours are what is expected by almost all companies in the private sector. If you aren't willing to do that in Hong Kong, I don't think many employers will want you, unless you are very efficient. Even staff in many government departments are often required to work overtime. My mother, for example works for the government and often has to work overtime, almost every day at certain times of the year.

Also, we are trained to work hard from primary school, preparing for tests and exams, and doing hours of homework every day. So we are used to it and expect to work hard in our careers.

So part of it is training, part of it is expectations and part of it is having to compete in this era of globalisation. Thank you.

**Task 88: Exam practice 18****Part A: Group Discussion** (Prep:10 mins; Discussion: 8 minutes per group of 4)**Cycling in Hong Kong's country parks**

At present mountain bikes are allowed on only 11 designated trails in our country parks, while over 1,000 hiking trails are available. But biking enthusiasts argue that more should be done to accommodate their growing number, with over 1,000 bikers using the trails every weekend. Hong Kong's world-class mountain bikers had to prepare for the Olympics on the mainland because of the lack of facilities and trails in Hong Kong.

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department's (AFCD) main concern is for the safety of hikers, given the fast, and sometimes very aggressive, nature of mountain biking, and therefore has limited contact between bikers and hikers. The AFCD is also concerned about opening up new areas to mountain biking because of the damage to flora and fauna that can result.

Bikers argue that with relatively few exceptions, their members are responsible stewards of the environment, often repairing trails themselves to make sure they help make country park activities sustainable for all.

To cycle in Hong Kong's country parks you must follow the AFCD's code of practice for mountain biking, which requires that you get a permit, which is free, wear a safety helmet, colourful jersey and suitable shoes, have a safe bike with good brakes, a bell or horn and tires at least 4.5cm wide, and stop your bicycle and give way to hikers on steep or narrow trails.

To accommodate the growing number of mountain bikers and to encourage more people to get involved in cycling for health reasons, the government is examining the possibility of opening more biking trails in country parks, while minimising the harm to the environment and avoiding conflict with hikers. Discuss whether it makes sense to open more dedicated mountain biking trails and how this might be done in the best way. You may want to talk about:

- the dangers of mountain biking
- the benefits of mountain biking
- how to make minimise the effect on the environment and hikers
- anything else you think is important

**Part B Individual Response** (one minute per candidate)

1. Would you like to try mountain biking?
2. Should cyclists be allowed to use walking trails in the country parks at non-peak times?
3. Do you think cycling is a good form of exercise?
4. Should there be an inter-school cycling competition?
5. Do you think mountain biking is a dangerous sport?
6. Do you ever visit any of the country parks? Why? / Why not?
7. Can you think of ways to get more people to enjoy the country parks?
8. Would you rather walk or ride a bike in a country park?
9. Would you like to watch a mountain bike race?
10. What is the best way to protect hikers from cyclists?

21. They are the most energy efficient form of transportation ever invented.
22. They provide the healthiest, cleanest, most economical and most sustainable form of transportation.
23. They have only a tiny impact on the environment in their production and maintenance, and can last for decades.
24. They reduce the demand for new roads and parking lots, reducing the amount of land paved over (1 car takes the same road space as 6 bikes and the same parking space as 20 bikes)
25. They reduce deforestation for the planting of rubber plantations, because they use very little rubber compared to cars.

#### **Pollution**

26. They reduce noise pollution.
27. They reduce air pollution/are completely non-polluting.
28. They reduce water pollution since unlike cars, they don't drip poisonous fluids that reach water sources.

#### **Mobility/Affordability**

29. Bikes save travel and parking money.
30. Bikes are a flexible means of transportation.
31. Bikes are faster than walking, and often faster than public transit or motor vehicles.
32. Bikes increase mobility for those who can't drive, can't afford to drive or don't want to drive.

#### **27. Road accident statistics**

- 2005 – 8 fatalities, 194 serious injuries  
 2006 – 9 fatalities, 184 serious injuries  
 2007 – 12 fatalities, 195 serious injuries  
 2008 – 10 fatalities, 178 serious injuries  
 2009 – 10 fatalities, 202 serious injuries  
 2010 – 10 fatalities, 217 serious injuries

#### **Physical limitations**

28. Hong Kong hills
29. No room for bicycle lanes in tunnels and on most Hong Kong roads
30. Limited space for bike parking in the urban area
31. Hong Kong buses and the MTR cannot accommodate bicycles.

#### **Problems the HK government faces**

32. Promoting cycling requires restraining autos to some extent.
33. Conflicts between the needs of cyclists and pedestrians
34. Conflicts between the needs of cyclists and motorists
35. The infrastructure already favours autos.
36. Hong Kong no longer has a bicycle culture after so many years of having a road transport system designed only for vehicles.
37. No coordination between government departments to encourage cycling

#### **Solutions**

38. Make bike lanes obligatory on new roads, especially in flat areas.
39. Educate drivers and cyclists about each other's rights.
40. Require all ferries and the MTR to accept bikes at non-peak times.
41. Provide more and safer parking facilities for bicycles at malls, housing estates and transport interchanges.
42. Build harbourfront cycle paths on both sides of the harbour.
43. Make it cheap and easy for bicycle rental companies to set up in Hong Kong, as in some large European cities.