

**Tapescript EPT 3.5 Listening Exam 1**

- Principal Well, I've called this meeting so we can start getting the arrangements for the school picnic underway.
- Mr. Luk Before we start can I just say that I don't really think that we should have a picnic. A few years ago life was very different - and many students only saw the beach or countryside if we took them on a picnic. It was a big exciting event. Now the students regularly go on their own camping trips - they're used to Ocean Park with all its attractions - many have been to wonderful theme parks in Singapore, Japan - or Disney World in the States. They aren't interested in going to Lantau yet again!
- Principal I can see your point — certainly today's children are far harder to please, but I still think the picnic has a role to play in school life. I think we'd all agree that there needs to be a bit more to school-life than just lessons and tests. The school picnic gives us a chance to socialise, and for teachers to relax with the students and get to know them personally.
- Perhaps one day we'll think of new ways of achieving this, and then we'll change. Anyhow we've already put this year's picnic in the activities list for the year, so I don't think we can change it. If you want, we can always discuss whether or not to hold a picnic next year later on.
- Mr. Luk Yes, Principal — I didn't really think you'd agree.
- Principal Well, then, what about the date? We just put November in the handbook. I think a Friday is best, so we don't have lessons the next day. What about Friday 21st?
- Mr. Luk It's the obvious date — and that's the problem — three-quarters of HK's schools will be out having their picnic on Friday 21st. Everywhere will be crowded, and transport will be impossible. Maybe 28th will be a little better - though really I think October would be better.
- Principal No, we've already said November, and 28th is too close to Speech Day. The 14th is possible — but I don't think it will make much difference, so let's stick to 21st. Any objections? No, good. So where shall we go?
- Mrs. Lee I can't say I was very happy with last year's arrangement of everyone going to the same place. It was so crowded - and I think many of the older students resented being with the younger ones. And just remember those huge queues at the couple of toilets. I think it would be better if each class had its own destination.

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- Principal We did say last year's arrangement was only an experiment. I thought it was rather fun, but I know there were some problems about having so many people in one place. Perhaps 30 or more places for separate classes would be rather a headache — and the great benefit of large groups is that people can help look after each other. We can cope with emergencies far more effectively.
- Mr. Luk Couldn't some parents come along and help us?
- Principal That's a good idea. It's certainly school policy to get parents more involved in the life of the school. I'll make sure we talk to the PTA about it, but I don't really think it solves our problem. Parents can, of course, be very helpful, but the legal responsibility belongs to us, and it's for teachers to exercise the school's authority. No, I'd be much more comfortable with all the classes of one form going together.
- Mr. Luk So that's decided. Now we need 7 destinations.
- Mrs. Lee Seven? Can't lower and upper sixth go together? Actually, wasn't there some talk last year of Form 7 not going? They complained a lot that they couldn't spare the time with A Level approaching.
- Principal What a lot of nonsense! A Level isn't that close — and they can't possibly be studying all day every day. And in addition it's always dangerous making exceptions. This year you excuse Form 7; then next year Form 5 will say they also have exams, and so on. I prefer us to treat all students in the school in the same way. However, I don't mind being a little more flexible with 6 and 7. Shall we leave it to them and their form teachers to make arrangements? The students are old enough to have their own ideas. We'll tell them, though, they must make their own travel arrangements; we won't book any coaches, etc., for them. That will save some trouble. So the form-teachers must tell us what their plans are — let's say by the end of this month. There must be one teacher for every 15-20 students, and preferably one male and one female, at least, with every group. That should be OK. And if Form 7 are crazy enough, they can go and sit in Repulse Bay with their textbooks.
- Mrs. Lee I've suddenly remembered that a lot of lower sixth are class prefects. Shouldn't they go with their classes? It would be a great help to the teachers, and would make closer ties between the class and its prefect.

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- Principal Yes, you can now see some more of the advantages of the whole school going together; then the class prefects can spend some time being prefects, and some time having fun with their classmates. I certainly don't think that we should expect a prefect to spend all day with Form One children, and not see his own class. I'm afraid the teachers will just have to manage one on their own. Now, then, we now need 5 good destinations.
- Mr. Luk What about Ocean Park for one form? There's lots to do.
- Principal Sorry, but I can see 2 objections. Number one, cost. Not everyone may wish to spend quite so much, and number 2, everything is so scattered around; the kids would all wander off on their own, and we really can't allow that.
- Mr. Luk Well, what about Lantau — say for Form 4?
- Mrs. Lee There's certainly lots of space — even if a few other schools go, there'll still be room for all. And I think the fourth formers would enjoy a barbecue.
- Principal Well, I don't mind as long as travel arrangements can be made. Mr. Luk, will you contact the ferry company and see if we can book in advance. You'd probably be best to go somewhere near the ferry pier, or else you'll need coaches. Anyway, I'll leave that to you. In principle, Form 4 will go to Lantau.
- Mr. Luk While I'm organising that, perhaps I could see if Form 5 could go to Lamma or Cheung Chau?
- Principal Yes, thank you. Cheung Chau's very interesting, but it's a bit built up nowadays. I think you'd find there's more space on Lamma.
- Mr. Luk OK, I'll make inquiries. Is there any budget limit?
- Principal I suppose what we'll do is work out the total for each form and then divide the cost between the six classes. I wouldn't have thought ferry fares would be very much - certainly nothing like Ocean Park. I don't think we'll have anything to worry about.
- Mrs. Lee I think the place we took the whole school to last year would be suitable for Form One. Most of them weren't here, so it's novel to them.
- Principal Yes, it was a nice site just outside Saikung. OK, we'll just need to book some coaches for that. So that leaves Forms 2 and 3.
- Mrs. Lee Form 3 could go to Victoria Park.

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- Principal Victoria Park, really? Mrs. Lee, that's not a very imaginative suggestion. There's not much fresh air in the middle of Causeway Bay!
- Mrs. Lee The Peak?
- Principal A little better, but not much. There's not much to do there. What about Stanley Beach.
- Mr. Luk Yes, there're lots of barbecue pits, and transport isn't too bad. Let's send Form 3 there.
- Principal Yes, fine with me. So we'll need some coaches again. I'll get the school office to organise coaches. I think Mr. Wong will try a new company. We weren't very happy with the attitude of some of the drivers with the Winner Company last year. They weren't at all cooperative or polite. So any ideas for Form 2?
- Mr. Lai Yes, I think it's time I contributed something. I was in Aberdeen Country Park last weekend. It seemed quite pleasant to me.
- Principal Mmm, OK. It's not very exciting, but, at least, it's fairly safe. Some of these New Territories destinations worry me. Help isn't close at hand if you need it, and it's all very mountainous. We've never had an accident with our picnics, so let's be careful and keep it that way. I don't think we even need coaches for Aberdeen Country Park. We can just meet there. That will save time and money.
- Mr. Lai Of course, when everything's fixed, we'll inform the police of our students' whereabouts. And I think we should ensure that every form has a mobile phone available so that they can keep in touch with the school.
- Principal Splendid, should be no problem about that. I'll make a note to see it's done.
- Mr. Lai What about times?
- Mr. Luk Yes, I was going to ask about that. I suppose we ought to try to avoid the rush hour. It's better to go at 8 or 10 than 9 - and we should be back before 5.
- Principal Well, let's aim for school hours - start at about 8 or return at about 3. So we'll get the coaches for Forms 1 and 3 then. 4 and 5 will depend a bit more on the ferry companies. I think, since Form 2 will travel on their own, we'll say meet at 10. 6 and 7 can make their own plans, as long as they are not too unreasonable: they must spend at least a few hours somewhere.

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- Mrs. Lee      And arrangements for food?
- Principal      I think that can be arranged at class level. Classes that want to have a barbecue can do so, buying their own food, utensils, etc., otherwise, the students can bring sandwiches. Perhaps we should remind them to be a bit more moderate than last year. There seemed to be masses of waste food. I'm surprised more people weren't ill. Which reminds me — can someone organise first-aid kits?
- Mr. Lai        Yes, I'll do that. One for each form-teacher?
- Principal      Sounds reasonable. And one more thing, can you organise letters to parents, Mrs. Lee, once we've settled the precise details?
- Mrs. Lee      Yes, of course. We also need to think of teacher allocation. Perhaps we could say form teachers will go with their classes, and other teachers can choose?
- Principal      No, I don't think that would work at all well. You could end up with 30 teachers going to Aberdeen, and 2 to Lantau. I've no objection to teachers going with their friends, but we must put the students first. Non-form teachers must go with classes they teach. Student-teacher socialising outside the classroom is, after all, one of our prime objectives. Perhaps Mr. Lai could work it out — making sure we have equal numbers for each form, a mix of male and female, and some consideration of who teaches which class.
- Mr. Lai        Maybe we should actually allocate teachers to classes, so they know exactly where they should be.
- Principal      That's not such a bad idea. Last year I noticed there was one group of teachers who all sat together in one corner all day. I'm sure they had a very pleasant time, but they didn't exactly contribute much to the overall success of the picnic.

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There will now be a short break for you to tidy up your answers.

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The School Picnic Committee will now resume its meeting.

Mr. Luk I suppose now we must decide on the rules we want for this year's picnic. I think we were too strict last year. We banned almost everything the students enjoy, and then still expected them to enjoy themselves. Let's be liberal this year.

Principal I really don't think our rules were so unreasonable - but anyway let's look at them on a case by case basis, and see if they can be improved. For uniform we said sports-shoes, jeans and a school T-shirt. Well, I'm sure they'd all wear jeans and sports-shoes anyway, and the school T-shirt makes it much easier for us to identify our own students. So I don't think we need to change anything there. Then there were a few things we prohibited them from bringing.

Mr. Luk This is the part I mean — the list was for too long. Look I've got it here — no reading materials, no music, radios, walkmans or whatever, no games. That doesn't leave much, does it?

Mrs. Lee Well, we did discuss it carefully. We felt that as the picnic was for socialising we should encourage students to organise and take part in social activities, not solitary occupations like reading. They should be playing in groups, and most of all, talking.

Principal There's also the point about the problems in making exceptions. If you say 'no reading materials', it's straight forward. I don't really object to newspapers and some magazines, but I don't think a school function should allow silly comic books and undesirable gossip magazines. To save teachers the trouble of having to check up on what the children brought, I thought it simpler to issue a blanket prohibition. But if Mr. Luk feels very strongly about it, we might allow newspapers.

Mr. Lai But if we do, I think we'll have to specify which ones. Some are full of nothing but scandal, not at all suitable for young people. And we must remember that our school image might be affected by what members of the public see of our students.

Mr. Luk I don't suppose many would be very interested in bringing newspapers. It's comic books that are an important part of youth culture and that's what they want to share.

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- Principal Well, that's up to them and their parents, but I'm not having it in school time. Music's also a problem. I don't want each student shut in a private world in their headphones. Nor can we allow lots of giant cassette-players destroying the peace. Maybe we could allow each class one player — to be played at a reasonable volume — to give a little background music to the barbecue.
- Mr. Luk Well, yes, that would be an improvement on last year. And what about games?
- Principal Well, again, the problem is defining what is allowed and what isn't. I didn't want computer type games — they aren't social — and they are rather expensive and we might have a problem with lost or stolen gameboys. I don't want cards. I know they can be innocent, but they often lead to gambling, and I certainly don't want Form 4 sitting on a ferry playing Poker! I suppose there's nothing wrong with chess or any simple cheap games of that nature. And, of course, they are welcome to take balls and frisbees to run around with.
- I don't really think I want to change the rules much, but perhaps I could explain at the briefing meeting that they should be enforced fairly flexibly. I can only give guidelines; teachers must use their common sense. Now is there anything else?
- Mrs. Lee Yes, I'm a bit ashamed of the amount of litter we created last year. I think we should do more to prevent this. Perhaps a senior teacher could inspect each site and not allow anyone to leave until all the rubbish has been disposed of properly.
- Principal I couldn't agree more. Mr. Lai, perhaps you could remember that when you allocate duties? Now, we've settled time, place, teachers, arrangements, police, first aid, letters to parents, rules, money and litter. Good. We'll meet again in a fortnight to see that we've all done what we promised. Thank you very much.