

# User guide to iNKY online resources



iNKY's Demo Site

## Native speaker reads aloud

Get students used to listening to native English speakers to give them confidence when taking listening exams.

## Multimedia

Get extra information about the related subject through YouTube, international media, etc.

### iNKY Feature Story

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## Easing the e-waste woes

Waste is a by-product of affluent societies, and a particularly worrying kind is e-waste, coming from electronic and digital products. But this waste is also a veritable goldmine of recyclable value.

E-WASTE is growing fast – by two million tonnes a year. The Global E-waste Statistics Partnership (GESP) said 53.6 million tonnes of e-waste was produced worldwide in 2019. This has grown to 57 million tonnes in 2021 – heavier than the Great Wall of China.

By 2030, it will grow to 74 million tonnes a year. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called the e-waste problem a "mounting tsunami", and it is not an exaggeration. Even changing the volume, e-waste is dangerous, as it contains toxic substances that will contaminate the soil and water when it is dumped into landfills, and jeopardise the health of workers that extract useful materials from them.

#### What is e-waste?

The international community calls e-waste "WEEE" – Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment – which includes items such as mobile phones, fridges, kettles, televisions, electric toys and sports equipment.

Hong Kong's Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has a more detailed list that also includes air conditioners, washing machines, computers, printers, scanners, monitors, and other video or audio equipment.

WEEE also encompasses smaller household appliances like fans, rice cookers, microwave ovens,

appliances, as well as power tools, electronic dictionaries, portable vacuum cleaners, game consoles and rechargeable batteries.

"WEEE contains harmful materials such as lead, mercury and greenhouse gases, which may cause harm to the environment and human health if not properly treated or disposed of," warned the EPD.

We, the consumers, are partly to blame for the rise in e-waste, due to our insatiable demand for newer and better electronics.

Makers of these products are also culpable. Pascal Leroy, director general of the expert group the WEEE Forum, said, since they make products with shorter lifespans and limited repair options.

#### Poor recycling rate

REDUCING, reusing and recycling are ways to deal with the ever-growing waste problem; recycling is particularly relevant in regard to e-waste.

e-Waste has a low recycling rate. The GESP said that of the 53.6 million tonnes produced worldwide in 2019, only 17.4 percent was recycled. The WEEE Forum estimated that the recycling rate in 2021 was 20 percent.

One particular aspect of the e-waste problem is mobile phones. Most people use one phone, but keep

their old models, for sentimental value or otherwise, and are usually not worth much. The WEEE predicted that 5.3 billion mobile phones would have become waste in 2022 due to being unused. Currently, one-third of the 16 billion mobile phones worldwide lie idle.

#### Sitting on a gold mine

NOT only are mobile phones kept from being recycled, other e-products are too.

Surveys by Material Focus showed that in the UK, over 20 million unused but working electrical items are stuffed away in homes, totalling 5.6 billion 08553 billion in value. If each UK family sold their excess appliances, it would net them 200 08551 0822.

"These devices offer many important resources that can be used in the production of new electronic devices or other equipment, such as metal frames, electric cell batteries or solar panels... all crucial for the green, digital transition to low-carbon societies," said WEEE's Magdalena Chydzinska.

The problem with not recycling is that while we mine new materials to make new products, we let precious resources lay locked up in old items, even as some are in short supply.

Smartphones, for example, contain 30 different elements, and some might run out in the next century;

These include americium and silver, as well as the more obscure indium, yttrium and tantalum, which are used in implants, electrodes for neon lights, hearing aids and pacemakers.

#### Mine e-waste, not Earth

THE British Royal Society of Chemistry has called for a global effort to mine e-waste instead of the planet.

Elizabeth Ratcliffe of the organisation said, "Manufacturers and retailers need to take more responsibility. Like take-back schemes, ensuring people can return their electronics to a retailer and be assured they will be recycled securely."

"All this volatility in supply chains really just reinforces the fact that we need a circular economy for these materials. At the moment, we're just mining them out of the ground constantly."



A recycling worker removing parts from used electronic devices. (Photo Reuters)

#### E-waste in Hong Kong

HONG Kong produces about 70,000 tonnes of WEEE every year. For a long time, we have been exporting this waste to other places to let them handle the reuse or recovery of valuable material. But we will not be able to rely on this method in the long run due to falling demand and tightening controls in foreign markets.

As such, the government implemented the Producer Responsibility Scheme on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WPEEE) in 2018. Under this scheme, users and consumers of regulated electrical equipment (REE) – air-conditioners, refrigerators, washing machines, televisions, computers, printers, scanners and monitors – are provided with convenient recycling channels.

The scheme requires REE to be directed to licensed recycling facilities for proper treatment and recycling, turning waste into resources.

#### Learning English

VALUABLE is an adjective that means "worth a lot of money", eg. "The gold necklace your grandparents gave you is valuable, so is a diamond ring."

Valuable also means very useful or important, like the experience you gain while working at an intern, or tips given to the police that help solve a crime.

The prefix "in-" means "not", "opposite, or without." So incompent means "not competent", incomprehensible means "not understandable", and incomplete means "not complete". However, the word "invaluable" does not mean "not valuable". On the contrary, "invaluable" means "extremely valuable". The advice given to you by your parents

and teachers are invaluable, as is the knowledge you acquire from a university education.

A related word is "priceless". The adjective suffix "-less" means "without". Hence "homeless" means having no home, and "childless" means having no children. But "priceless" does not mean "not worth anything". Instead, it means "extremely valuable or important". A collection of ancient coins can be priceless, or an old family portrait.

If something is of no value, we say it is "valueless". If hoarders amass many things at home, but these are mostly valueless items, the word "hoarding" has the similar meaning of "having no practical or financial value".

Things that are worth a lot of money are called valuables. If you leave your valuables in plain view in a car, you would likely find it stolen when you return.

"Face value" is the value of a stamp, coin, ticket, etc., written on it. The commemorative stamp for the Year of the Rabbit, for example, has a face value of HK\$50. But over time that stamp could become more valuable and be worth many times its face value to collectors.

"To take something at face value" is an idiom that means to believe that something is what it appears to be, without questioning it. So as a critical thinker, we should never take something at face value.

#### What we can do

EVERYONE can help tackle the e-waste problem by returning old and unwanted devices for recycling.

Look around the house to see if you have any old mobile phones and unused electrical or electronic equipment like computers or printers. You may then contact the sellers of the REE to arrange for a free removal service, which they are required by law to provide. You may also use the Government's free collection service by calling the recycling hotline at 2676 1000.

Ratcliffe said, "The thing we always say is reduce, reuse and recycle. So perhaps keep a phone for longer and maybe sell an old phone or give it to a relative. It will need everyone working together to scale up these processes and put the infrastructure in place, so we can all recycle our devices."

Remember, e-waste is, in fact, highly valuable. "A ton of discarded mobile phones is richer in gold than a ton of gold ore," noted Rüdiger Rühle, director of the UN's Sustainable Cycles programme.

#### Multimedia

Turning waste into resources



Video: Wasted – 60 million tonnes of e-waste every year



#### iNKY instant exercise



#### Listening comprehension



Scan the QR code to listen to a summary of the part of this article about the rise in e-waste.



Download the PDF at [only3kg.com](http://only3kg.com) to complete the listening comprehension exercise based on this audio.

## Instant online exercise

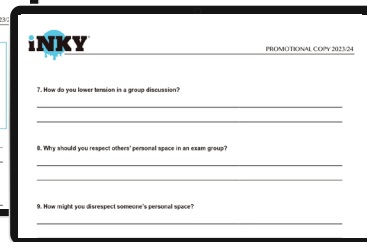
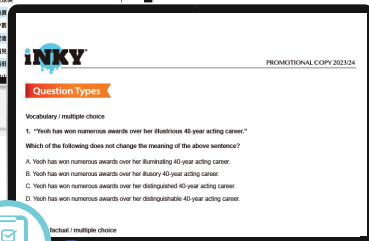
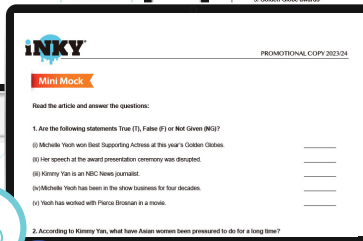
Multiple-choice questions that test readers' understanding of the cover and feature stories.

## Listening Comprehension

Students practise listening skills for the HKDSE exam by listening to a summary of the feature story and then answer some questions to test their understanding.  
(Will be provided in the first issue of each month.)



## Downloadable Complete Exercises at a glance



### Vocabularies and Glossary Lists

Definitions of words and example sentences to widen students' vocabulary range.



### Mini Mock

Downloadable, comprehensive PDF worksheets (3 to 5 pages, based on the newest format of the HKEAA question-writing style).



### Question Types

Introduce different question types to students.



### Answer Key

Answer Key is exclusive to teacher's account.