

# 2

## Street performers in Hong Kong

Level: 



Let's think!

1. Do you like watching street performances? Why or why not?
2. If you are a street performer, what kind of performance would you give?

PLAYLIST



READ ALONG



How do you feel about busking?

### Text 1

**1** In many different pedestrian zones of the city, we might encounter people playing musical instruments, singing, dancing or even doing magic. Known as busking, these street performances have been going on from antiquity to the present. Nowadays, big cities like Seoul and Dublin are the world's busking hotspots. In Hong Kong, busking has become a way for amateur performers to hone their craft in front of the audience. It is a great way for wannabe artists to gain a following too. What do people think of busking? Read on to find out.

**2** 'I don't mind them. It is a good way to add spice to street culture. I always give these budding musicians some loose change as encouragement.'

**Mrs Choi, 46, housewife, Mong Kok**



**4** 'I often stop by and watch these buskers performing when I see them on the streets. It's a good chance to enjoy music up close and personal. Some of the street musicians are regulars in this area. As time goes by, I feel they are like my friends. It feels as if we have been supporting each other all the way.'

**Jenny Chu, 22, university student, Tai Koo**



**3** 'A lot of them cause nuisance. I don't know why they can be seen as art. I play the bass guitar so I can tell real talents from fakers. You can see onlookers covering their ears when hearing the ear-splitting shouts from those tone-deaf vocalists. It's buskers' obligation to practise their arts and maintain the quality of street entertainment. Also, the crowds that gather around them block the pavements.'

**Tyson Williams, 50, amateur bass guitar player, Wan Chai**



**5** 'I think singer-songwriters are cool. I wish I could write and sing my own songs like they do. I especially admire the ones who tell stories through music. I appreciate eager amateurs stepping onto the public stage to pursue their dreams by showcasing their talents.'

**Lai Man, 15, S3 student, Tsing Yi**



6 'Busking is nothing new. When I was young, I often saw street singers in Sheung Wan and Temple Street performing Cantonese opera. The line between buskers and beggars has always been blurred. There are people who make money by playing the erhu. To me, buskers are not beggars. Their performances add vibrancy to our streets. The late Cantopop diva Anita Mui Yim-fong first performed in Temple Street. She then became a superstar after these outdoor



gigs. That's why I'd say busking is a powerful culture reflecting the current tastes of people.'

**Chau Chung, 74, retired teacher, Yau Ma Tei**

7 'In other countries, busking is very common and can be seen at many street corners. In Hong Kong, there are some places that allow buskers, like Times Square and the Star Ferry Pier. Yet, in places like MTR premises, the police would issue tickets to them. I think that's strange. I have busker friends who have been playing gigs for years in subway stations in New York.

What's the problem with giving free entertainment to the public?'

**Katy Ma, 37, event planner, Repulse Bay**



~530 words

## Text 2

### The voice of a Hong Kong busker

1 On the street corner I stand,  
I'm just a one-man band.  
Pouring my heart out with my song,  
I can keep going all night long.

4 Yet on a night such as this,  
Loneliness can turn to bliss.  
Because my songs can touch others' heart.  
At this moment our lives are not apart.

2 Be it in cold wind or pouring rain,  
I'll do my best to entertain.  
Strumming my guitar,  
I go from near to far.

5 Music can bring people together,  
And make everything better.  
If one day you see me on the streets,  
I hope you'll hum along to my beats.

3 So many strangers pass me by.  
They give me weird glances—I ask myself why.  
I'm just following my passion.  
I don't care whether it's high or low fashion.



~140 words

## Looking into Grammar

We use the **present perfect continuous tense** to talk about an action that began in the past and is still going on. We form the present perfect continuous tense with **have / has been + -ing form of the verb**.

✓ Known as busking, these street performances **have been going on** (✗ was going on ✗ went on) **from antiquity to the present**.

? Circle TWO verbs in the vox pop in which the present perfect continuous tense is used.

Read Text 1 and answer questions 1–6. For multiple-choice questions, choose the best answer and blacken ONE circle only. (14 marks)

1. According to paragraph 1, which of the following is TRUE about busking?
- I. Busking has existed for a long time.
  - II. Busking originated in Asian countries.
  - III. Busking provides an opportunity for anyone who wants to become famous.
  - IV. Busking enables hobbyists to practise and gain experience.
- A. I, II and III                      C. II, III and IV                      A      B      C      D  
 B. I, III and IV                      D. all of the above                      ○      ○      ○      ○
2. What does Mrs Choi give buskers as a reward in paragraph 2?
- A. love                      C. coins                      A      B      C      D  
 B. cheers                      D. flowers                      ○      ○      ○      ○
3. Which of the following is NOT a reason for Tyson Williams to dislike buskers in paragraph 3?
- A. Many of them are lousy performers.
  - B. Many of them lack the talents and skills to sing well.
  - C. Many of their songs are incomprehensible and noisy.
  - D. Many of them cause traffic jams.
- A      B      C      D  
 ○      ○      ○      ○

4. Look at the following pronouns and answer who or what they refer to in the vox pop.
- (i) 'they' (para. 3) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (ii) 'we' (para. 4) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (iii) 'ones' (para. 5) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Match each of the following speech bubbles with one of the interviewees in the vox pop. Write the appropriate name under each speech bubble.

Their performances make public spaces more energetic.

(i) \_\_\_\_\_

I respect them as they are bold. Some of them even sing songs they compose themselves.

(ii) \_\_\_\_\_

Only quality buskers who go through a mandatory audition should be granted permission to perform on the streets.

(iii) \_\_\_\_\_

It's common to see people performing in railway stations in other countries. Buskers in Hong Kong should be allowed to do the same.

(iv) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Look for words in the text to match the following definitions.
- (i) \_\_\_\_\_ (para. 1) (*adj.*) trying to become famous, usually unsuccessfully
- (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ (para. 5) (*v.*) showing the best qualities of something
- (iii) \_\_\_\_\_ (para. 6) (*adj.*) difficult to separate clearly
- (iv) \_\_\_\_\_ (para. 7) (*n.*) modern or pop music performances

**Read Text 2 and answer questions 7–12. For multiple-choice questions, choose the best answer and blacken ONE circle only. (8 marks)**

7. How many stanzas are there in this poem?

A. two	C. four	A	B	C	D
B. three	D. five	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. Find a phrase in stanza 1 that shows the busker has no help from others.

\_\_\_\_\_

9. (i) Identify two pairs of rhymes in stanza 2. (2 marks)

Rhyming pair 1: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Rhyming pair 2: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

- (ii) Based on the above question, what is the rhyming scheme of this poem?

A. ABAB  
B. AABB  
C. AAAB  
D. ABBA

**9** A rhyming scheme refers to the pattern of rhyming words placed at the end of the lines in a poem.

A	B	C	D
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>


10. What does it mean when the busker says 'At this moment our lives are not apart' in stanza 4?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Which of the following best describes the busker's mood change in stanzas 3–4 of the poem?

A. from embarrassed to confident	C	D
B. from puzzled to satisfied	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C. from upset to calm	A	B
D. from helpless to relieved	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

-  12. In stanza 5, 'beats' refers to \_\_\_\_\_.

A. the heartbeats	C	D
B. the music	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C. togetherness	A	B
D. the feeling of excitement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Vocabulary

GLOSSARY



A. Complete the crossword puzzle below with the given words. Make sure your answers are grammatically correct.

amateur (adj.)

budding (adj.)

busk (v.)

hotspot (n.)

nuisance (n.)

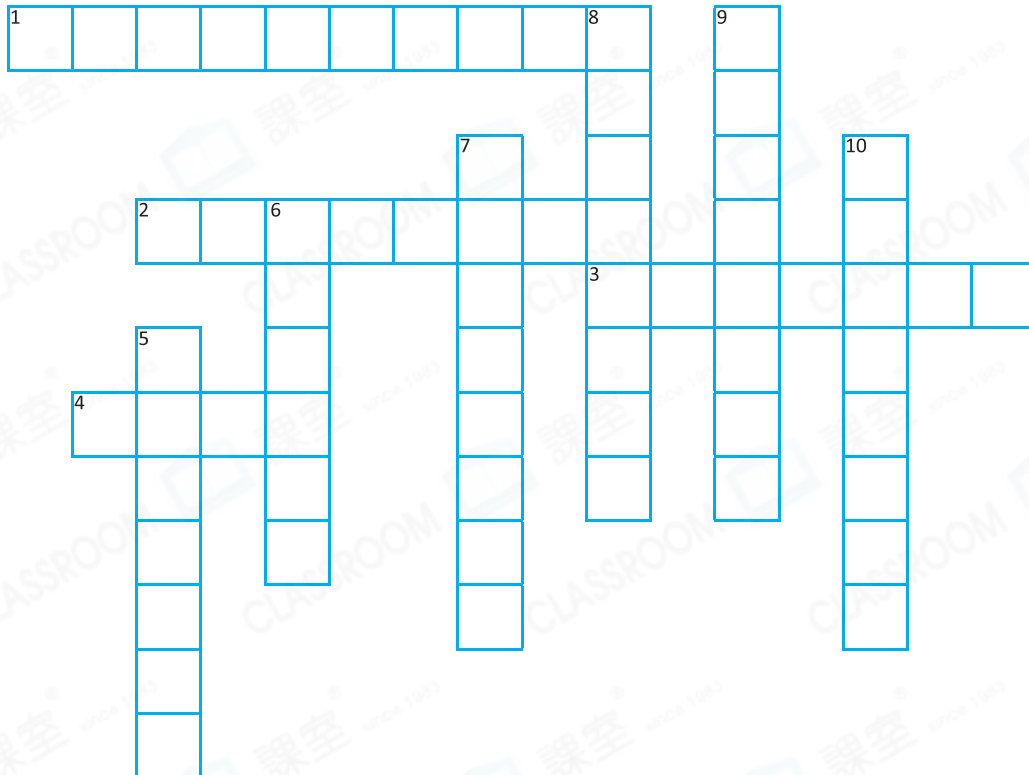
obligation (n.)

premises (n.)

ticket (n.)

vibrancy (n.)

vocalist (n.)



**Across:**

- It is the audience's \_\_\_\_\_ to put their phones on silent mode during the show.
- This street is one of the \_\_\_\_\_ for buskers to perform.
- Many \_\_\_\_\_ singers see this contest as a great platform to showcase their talents.
- This singer used to \_\_\_\_\_ on the streets before he became famous.

**Down:**

- The winner of the singing contest became a / an \_\_\_\_\_ artist in showbiz.
- A man was issued a / an \_\_\_\_\_ for illegal hawking.
- This band's \_\_\_\_\_ has a beautiful voice.
- The music is too loud! It is such a / an \_\_\_\_\_!
- Street performances add \_\_\_\_\_ to our city.
- Busking is prohibited on MTR \_\_\_\_\_.

B. Look at the pictures. Write the correct names in the spaces provided.

**Types of street performers**

acrobat

flash mob

juggler

living statue

magician

mime artist

puppeteer

street painter



1. \_\_\_\_\_



2. \_\_\_\_\_



3. \_\_\_\_\_



4. \_\_\_\_\_



5. \_\_\_\_\_



6. \_\_\_\_\_



7. \_\_\_\_\_



8. \_\_\_\_\_

**Writing**

Should buskers perform on the streets?

Write an article to express your views in about 200 words.