

# Reading Made Easy

**Targeted reading skill:**  
Making inferences +  
Identifying writer's attitude

Teaching  
video



## A Quick Grasp

1. **Views and attitudes** are the writer's general feelings and opinions about a subject, which can be **explicitly stated** or left unstated but **implied**.
2. When the writer's point of view is **not delivered directly**, readers can **make guesses** and **gather factual information to draw conclusions**.
3. The use of **adjectives** may reveal whether he or she has a **positive**, **negative** or **neutral** attitude towards the subject.

The adjective 'disappointing' shows the writer's discontent with the cooking show mentioned, hence confirming this a letter of complaint.

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am writing to you regarding the cooking show 'Beauties by the Stove', which was aired on Sundays from 8 pm to 10 pm.

I am a fan of many of your cooking shows but this one is **really disappointing** to me. Female celebrities who barely know how to cook were invited to the show, and they were asked to cook complicated dishes. How they handled the ingredients was no different from committing acts of cruelty to animals and wasting food.

The adjectives 'nasty' and 'inappropriate' are expressions to show explicitly that the writer considers what was done in *Beauties by the Stove* unacceptable.

The episode on 25<sup>th</sup> July 20XX (Sunday) was a **nasty** comedy. Actress Janice Woo was asked to slaughter a tiger grouper, but out of fear, she tossed it on the floor. Later, she threw it alive into a hot saucepan, causing it extreme pain that could have been avoided. I'm not a vegetarian, but I also find it **inappropriate** to playfully slaughter animals just for attention or entertainment.

It can be inferred that there is more than one thing in the cooking show that the writer finds problematic.

The writer describes the female celebrities' clothing as 'revealing', the judging panel's remarks as 'rude' and the scenes as 'disturbing'. This reveals her negative views on various aspects of the cooking show.

*What also concerns me is that the judging panel called most of the dishes 'disgusting' or 'trash' and had them thrown right away into rubbish bins. There was a lot of food wasted due to the inappropriate treatment of ingredients and the large amount of undercooked or overcooked food.*

*Besides, the clothing of the female celebrities was too revealing and the language used throughout the show was inappropriate. The judging panel even made sexist jokes and rude remarks about the female celebrities. I expected wholesome family entertainment on a weekend night. Ratings should not be an excuse for broadcasting a show with disturbing scenes to children and adolescents.*

*There have been similar comments on social networking sites that criticised much of the content of 'Beauties by the Stove' as unacceptable. Many netizens even switched to other channels during the two hours to boycott your cooking show. I sincerely hope that prompt actions will be taken to ensure that the upcoming series, if any, would not contain the undesirable content mentioned.*

*I look forward to hearing from you.*

*Yours faithfully,*

**Cecilia Fong**

*Cecilia Fong*

It can be inferred that the writer has expected wholesome programmes on a weekend night, but *Beauties by the Stove* failed to meet her expectation.

The writer regards 'ratings' as an 'excuse' for broadcasting a show with disturbing scenes. This disapproval helps the writer reiterate her stance.

Verbs like 'criticised' and 'boycott' reveal the netizens' negative view on the cooking show.

It can be inferred that the writer expects a letter of reply to address the concerns she has raised.

## Targeted reading skill:

Distinguishing facts from opinions +  
Identifying tone and mood



Teaching  
video



### A Quick Grasp

1. **Facts** are pieces of information that are **true**. They are usually supported by or based on **reliable sources**, such as **studies**, **research** and **observations**.
2. **Opinions** are a particular person's or group's judgements on a subject, which can be **true** or **false**. They are usually based on **personal feelings**, **unexamined beliefs** or **faulty generalisations from experiences**.
3. **Tone**, which is the writer's feelings towards an issue, can be revealed from words that express **positive** or **negative** feelings.

## MUSIC FOR PASSION

Mason Yim

### Origin and Features of Rap

Rap as a music genre began in New York in the early 1970s, when DJs looped instrumental beats at parties to keep the crowd excited, and MCs interacted with the crowd with jokes and rhymed speech that were in sync with the repetitive rhythmic beats. As time went by, rap became a part of the hip-hop culture.

The first rapper was signed by a major record company in 1979. The records he released hit the Billboard charts instantly. In the 1980s, more MCs made their lyrics a reflection of their personal experiences or a form of protest; the most common topics were about the dark side of human society: social injustice, political unsettlement,

Paragraphs 1 and 2 are factual information about rap, including its origin, features, development and impression on the public, based on observations of its evolution.

These negative adjectives show laymen's disapproval of rappers and the content they rapped. They were opinions or misconceptions held by some outsiders in the 1980s, not the writer. The writer reports others' opinions in a neutral tone.

and more controversial subjects like crime and alcohol were often mentioned. Outsiders often jumped to the conclusion that rappers were blunt, violent, obscene or boastful individuals simply because of the coarse language in the songs they rapped.

### Rise to Popularity

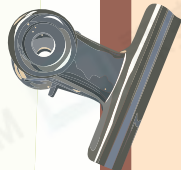
Rappers gained widespread recognition from the 2000s onwards, thanks to social media. A typical example is MC Jin, who is acclaimed for his freestyle rap. He received the title 'world champion' in battle rapping (a kind of competition between two or more rappers live on the air) in the US in 2002. 15 years later, he competed in the Chinese rap contest 'The Rap of China' using the stage name 'Hip-Hop Man'. By participating in the contest, he made a big leap of fame in mainland China. Due to social media and live streaming, more collaborations between rappers and artists of other genres have been made possible and become much commoner. As they featured one another in their own albums, rap became the most popular music genre together with R&B in 2017, and its popularity has never declined ever since.

### Women Power in Rap

Traditionally, men dominated the world of rap and hip-hop. But now, more and more women are able to achieve mainstream success. Some notable female rappers include Nicki Minaj, Missy Elliott, Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion, with Nicki Minaj being the wealthiest among them. Her net worth is about 100 million dollars.

Words like 'recognition' and 'acclaimed', which carry positive connotations, are used to talk about rappers' rise in status. Other expressions are factual descriptions of MC Jin's achievements and of rap becoming one of the most popular music genres in a neutral tone. The writer does not express any personal opinion about rap.

The last paragraph is some factual information about female rappers, including the recognition they receive as compared to their male counterparts, and a list of some prominent representatives of female rappers.



## Targeted reading skill: Distinguishing facts from opinions



Teaching  
video



### A Quick Grasp

1. **Facts** are pieces of information that are **true**. **Objective** and **universally true** for everyone, they are stated with **unbiased words**.
2. **Opinions** are a particular person's or group's judgements on a subject, which can be **true** or **false**. **Subjective** and **differing from person to person**, they are usually stated with **biased words**.

This rhetorical question not only informs readers about the topic that follows but also serves as an implication of the writer's opinion on paparazzi.

'Extreme' and 'outrageous' are biased words that reveal the writer's disapproval of the practices of the paparazzi.


The death of Princess Diana in 1997 is concrete proof that the paparazzi would invade the privacy of public figures.

### Paparazzi—licensed privacy invaders?

Celebrities are constantly the targets of paparazzi—photojournalists who chase celebs at any cost to get a photo shocking enough for newspapers or magazines. One **extreme** incident is **the death of Princess Diana in a car crash in 1997**, in which she died trying to flee from the paparazzi's chase. Yet, **most paparazzi have never seemed to feel any guilt** about their 'unlawful killing', and continue to invade the privacy of different public figures.

Many gossip magazines feature the private lives of famous people, for example, their love lives. To attract publicity, they stalk them and snap photos of them wherever they go, trying to dig up dirt on them. In worse cases, some would even go through the rubbish thrown out of their houses or install recording devices in hotel rooms. **What they have been doing is really crossing the line.** Other **outrageous** practices

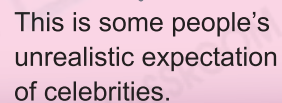
It is the writer's subjective belief that the paparazzi are never sorry for what they have done, which he or she considers unacceptable, as revealed from 'has really crossed the line'.



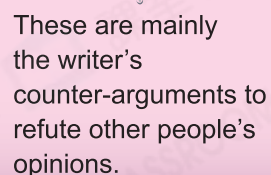
of some paparazzi include leaking nude photos of female celebrities. Some may argue that celebrities should have prepared themselves for attention, even unwanted attention, and therefore expect them to entertain the public as they are supposedly 'entertainers'. However, in my opinion, celebrities have the right to privacy just like every one of us. They should not be treated as if they were caged animals. The paparazzi should be condemned for not respecting their privacy.

Some celebrities sued the paparazzi who took photos of even their family members or children, but only a few attempts they made to warn the paparazzi ended well. There have also been protests initiated by artists against their unethical conduct. The spokesperson of the Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA) once urged the public not to confuse paparazzi with most journalists, who are dedicated to professional reporting.

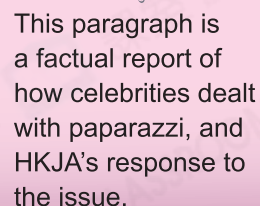
All in all, privacy is not something exclusive to those who do not work in the entertainment industry. The paparazzi should be considerate enough to at least give celebrities the respect that any human being deserves. Meanwhile, I think all readers of these newspapers or magazines should consider whether to continue subscribing to them, who always use 'public interest' as an excuse for their serious invasions of celebrities' private lives.



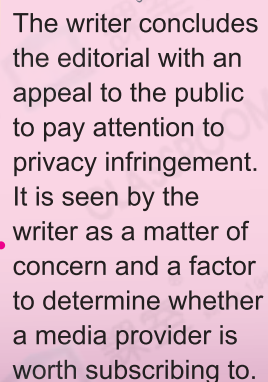
This is some people's unrealistic expectation of celebrities.



These are mainly the writer's counter-arguments to refute other people's opinions.



This paragraph is a factual report of how celebrities dealt with paparazzi, and HKJA's response to the issue.



The writer concludes the editorial with an appeal to the public to pay attention to privacy infringement. It is seen by the writer as a matter of concern and a factor to determine whether a media provider is worth subscribing to.

## Targeted reading skill: Pronoun referencing



### A Quick Grasp

1. To find out what **a pronoun** (whether personal, like *he/we*; demonstrative, like *this/those/that*; or other pronouns, like *one*) **refers to**, look for it in the **previous sentence** or in what **comes before** the pronoun in the **same sentence**.
2. The word which the pronoun refers to is not necessarily **a noun**. It can also be **a gerund**, **a phrase** or **a clause**.

'Them' refers to the elderly citizens reported living in poverty.

This paragraph is about the old age allowances which aim to subsidise the living of senior citizens. 'This' refers to the first mentioned allowance, that is the 'Old Age Allowance' in the previous sentence.

### Poverty among the Elderly

In Hong Kong, one in three elderly citizens lives in poverty. According to the Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report for 2019, 32 per cent of citizens aged 65 or above lived in poverty, and there was an increasing number of **them** living alone with limited assistance.

To subsidise the living expenses of senior citizens aged 70 or above, there is the Old Age Allowance, commonly known as 'fruit money', which offers them a monthly cash subsidy of \$1,475. Other than **this**, there is the Old Age Living Allowance, which is designed for the needy, providing them with a subsidy from \$2,845 to \$3,815. However, a survey of 500 senior citizens aged above 60, who lived in Hong Kong's poorest districts, revealed that the average monthly expense of a poor, elderly person would be \$4,000, indicating that the old age allowances are yet to cover basic expenses, let alone some unexpected medical expenses.

This paragraph reports on the survey of 680 people aged 50 or above. Therefore, 'them' refers to the 680 interviewed people, of which 52 per cent were still anxious about retirement though they had savings for it, and 46 per cent thought that 1 million was barely enough for retirement.

In a survey of 680 people aged 50 or above, 52 per cent of **them** expressed anxiety despite having savings for retirement. For fear of extra expenses due to declining health, 46 per cent of **them** considered that a saving of at least 1 million was the bare minimum for retirement. As for the elderly people who could afford a better retirement life, 44 per cent of **them** were still worried about life after retirement, hence cutting down on expenses by means of reducing the use of lights and air-conditioners, having lighter meals, etc. 40 per cent of **them** reported to have declined social gatherings and avoided going to the dentist or the doctor. Some were reluctant to go out despite the \$2 public transport fare concession scheme.

Many older workers dare not even think about retirement. Leung, 68 years old, has no choice but to continue to work 10 hours a day, 30 days a month, to earn a low wage of less than HK\$10,000 a month so that **she** can afford the medication for **her** heart disease. Wong, resistant to receiving the government's allowances, lies about **his** age to get hired because **he** needs the income to afford the rent for **his** cage home. Chung, 71 years old, who only retired after suffering a stroke, lives a difficult life with the fruit money and **his** savings, skipping breakfast and combining lunch with dinner.

In the next three decades, the ageing population in Hong Kong is expected to grow rapidly. To lift the elderly people out of poverty, many plead for a universal retirement protection scheme. In the meantime, the government needs to ensure that **its** limited resources will be properly distributed.


Referring to what comes before the pronoun in the same sentence, 'them' refers to 'the elderly people who could afford a better retirement life', probably those who had saved at least 1 million for retirement.

This paragraph regards the stories of elder workers who cannot afford to retire due to different reasons. As a result, 'she' refers to 'Leung', who relies on the monthly salary for the medication of her condition.

'He' refers to 'Wong', who lies about his age as he needs the income to afford the rent for his home.

'His' refers to 'Chung's'. Chung's savings and the fruit money are what he lives on ever since his retirement after a stroke.

Referring to what comes before the pronoun in the same sentence, 'its' refers to 'the government's'.



## Targeted reading skill:

Identifying the main ideas and supporting details of paragraphs




Teaching  
video




### A Quick Grasp

1. The **key ideas** in a paragraph are captured in the **topic sentence**, which generally appears at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of the paragraph.
2. **Supporting details** are supposed to be additional information, such as **comparisons**, **reasons**, **descriptions** and **statistics**. They help illustrate, define, develop or prove the key ideas in the paragraph.
3. In cases where a topic sentence is **absent**, readers have to figure out the main ideas of the paragraph by **understanding what is implied** through the supporting details.



State the motion of the debate and the stance taken by the team.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. The topic for our debate today is that cosmetic surgery should be banned. We, the affirmative team, believe the motion is true.



This opening sentence is the topic sentence of this paragraph. It is the first argument for the motion. In other words, the team supports the motion that 'cosmetic surgery should be banned', not 'cosmetic surgery'. Joan Rivers' experience is an example that illustrates how addictive cosmetic surgery is. The ending sentence summarises the main idea of this paragraph.

To begin with, cosmetic surgery can be addictive. After a person has gone under the knife for the first time and then seen the expected improvements, he or she will be driven by the desire for perfection, and go for another round of cosmetic surgery. Joan Rivers, a late American comedian best known for her face, had a total of 348 cosmetic operations throughout her life. According to her daughter, Rivers was never satisfied with her look. From Rivers' case, we can see how one can be addicted to cosmetic surgery.



Second, the results of a cosmetic procedure are usually irreversible but no surgeon can guarantee that the surgery will be flawless. Once a change is made to a facial feature, the change usually cannot be undone. In other words, that facial feature mostly cannot go back to how it originally was. For this reason, disappointed patients have only two options to choose from: to regret their decisions or to make another appointment with the cosmetic surgeon. In a study published last year, it was revealed that about one-third of patients who had undergone facelift surgery, an operation to reduce facial signs of ageing, were let down by the surgery's results. Due to the desire for perfection, many would therefore be driven in to a vicious cycle of repeated operations.

Moreover, cosmetic surgery is not cheap and always involves risks. There are many complications resulting from cosmetic surgery, including blood loss, nerve damage, organ damage and infection. In addition, awful pain may follow immediately after the surgical operations. Most of these potential dangers are not thought through by people wanting to change their appearance through cosmetic surgery...

The opening sentence is the topic sentence of this paragraph. It is another argument for the motion. The debater describes some complications and pain resulting from cosmetic surgery to illustrate the risks and dangers that cosmetic surgery can bring forth.

This opening sentence is the topic sentence of this paragraph. It is the second argument for the motion. In other words, the team thinks that cosmetic surgery should be banned as its results are irreversible.

After describing how a change to a facial feature cannot usually be undone, the debater explains what disappointed patients can resort to. The two alternatives serve as a supporting detail to prove that undergoing cosmetic surgery is a vicious cycle, as mentioned in the ending sentence.

Statistics in the study are presented as a supporting detail to prove that cosmetic surgery's results might not meet people's expectations.

## Targeted reading skill:

Working out the meaning of unknown words



Teaching  
video



### A Quick Grasp

To find out the meaning of unknown words,

1. look for **contextual clues**.
2. read the sentences or lines that come before and after the unknown word, then **replace** the **unknown word** with each option to see which one can **keep the meaning logical and intact**.
3. **break down** the words into parts, look for **prefixes** and **suffixes**, and decide if the word is **positive**, **negative** or **neutral**.

'Acupuncture', the topic of the article, may be an unfamiliar word to readers. Its definition is provided later on.

'Alternative' means 'another'. Here, the writer points out that acupuncture, aside from western medicine, is another treatment practised in the West.

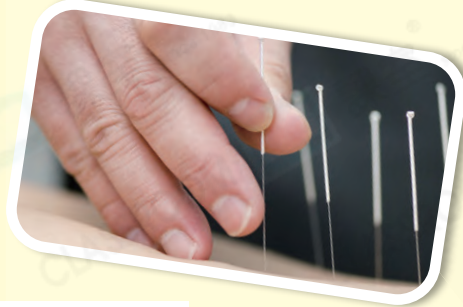
An explanation of 'chi' is given in the appositive clause.

## What is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is a form of traditional Chinese medicine in which fine, slender needles are inserted into skin. It originated in China over 5,000 years ago. Today, it is a common practice in Asia, and has also become an acceptable form of alternative treatment in the West. It has even been recognised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as an effective way to treat common health problems.

## How does it work?

According to the philosophy behind Chinese medicine, there is 'chi', the life-giving energy that flows through every organ in the body. Any problem occurring within the body might mean that the energy is not flowing smoothly or something has blocked it. If the energy is not balanced, the body experiences pain. Thus, the



doctor must fix the problem by inserting needles at various 'acupoints' (pressure points), which are linked to different internal organs and are also the channels for chi to flow through. In other words, inserting needles at a particular acupoint is to open up the channel for chi and enable it to flow smoothly again.

While western medicine stresses curing illnesses, acupuncture stresses maintaining and restoring the balanced state of the body. In fact, Chinese medicine emphasises prevention more than cure. It is more important to stay healthy by maintaining the flow of chi on a daily basis, rather than looking for a cure when we fall sick. This idea is largely supported by people in both the East and the West.

### What does it treat?

The treatment can be used to treat a variety of health problems from aches and pains to emotional and digestive problems. For many people, acupuncture is what to turn to when western medicine fails them. In fact, it has become so popular that there are now veterinarians using acupuncture to treat pets.

Similarly, an explanation of 'acupoints' is given in the non-defining relative clause.

'Turn to' is a phrasal verb which means 'to start to do or use something new as a way of solving a problem'. Here, the writer sees acupuncture as a new way to treat health problems when western medicine is ineffective.

'Fail', when used as a transitive verb, means 'cannot help when one is expected to'.

The suffix '-ian' usually suggests that the word refers to a person. Here, 'veterinarians' refers to people who take up the occupation of treating pets.



## Targeted reading skill: Locating specific information



### A Quick Grasp

To locate information, pay attention to:

1. **headings and subheadings**, i.e. brief summaries of the paragraphs, which give us a sense of what they are about in general.
2. **exact wording** or **synonyms** that are relevant to the keyword(s) in the questions or options.
3. detailed information including **amounts, statistic figures, years, dates and time**, and **quotes** that give clues about one's opinion on a topic.

As suggested by its name, NYOB Youth Centre targets its service towards the youth, in other words, children, teenagers and young adults mentioned in the first paragraph.

We use the 'to-infinitive' to talk about someone's intention. The opportunities offered to young people allow them to achieve certain goals.

Instances of unfamiliar territories and programmes are listed, respectively.

'Flexibility' is exemplified in programmes of varied lengths.

These adjectives are used to show the participants' growth or transformation into confident individuals.

## NYOB Youth Centre

### Foreword by founder Martin Atkinson

In this age of knowledge and technology, it is fair to say that the majority of **children, teenagers and young adults** typically spend a great amount of their time in high-pressure environments and on social networking sites. Stress and difficulties from different aspects of life pose obstacles to self-growth and self-confidence. Having been a confused teenager, I know well how it feels to be lost and unsure about the future, and I am glad that I am part of this community dedicating ourselves to inspiring the young.

Our mission is to **offer young people from all walks of life unmatched opportunities to grow, to break through their personal limitations and to develop their potential to the fullest**. To ensure that those who come to us can benefit from our Outward Bound programmes to the greatest extent, we customise every one of them with our highly qualified instructors. We are always thrilled to see the moment when our participants succeed in something which they used to consider impossible.

Our **programmes** take participants to **unfamiliar territories in the wild**, challenging them to believe in themselves and develop **skills on the ocean, inside a cave, up a mountain or in a forest**. In such settings, participants will be **canoeing, rock climbing, backpacking, sailing, mountaineering, etc.** safely under the strict supervision of our experienced instructors. Knowing that different individuals have needs and wants of their own, we give our programmes **enormous flexibility**. That is why they vary in length, **ranging from two-day expeditions to month-long journeys**. We want to help as many young minds as possible.

Over the past 50 years, we have witnessed **numerous nervous, self-doubting** youngsters transform into **confident, optimistic** believers of themselves. If there is anything I have learnt from my service and experience, it is that unexpected situations are the best teachers of all time.