

## **Despite occasional problems, Hong Kong's MTR is second to none**

*SCMP Editorial* 27 January, 2015

1. If Hong Kong were to do an inventory of what it can showcase to the world, the Mass Transit Railway would definitely be high on the list. Most visitors would be impressed when being whisked along a transport system that is relatively cheap, efficient and reliable. It is as much an engineering marvel as a testimony to our sophistication and development.
2. Unfortunately, the MTR is often taken for granted by the millions of passengers who benefit from the system every day. Most only realise how efficient it normally is when they are stranded on the platform. Recently, the company's image has been further marred by project delays and cost overruns.
3. There were 12 major service disruptions last year, up from seven in 2013. Although the total duration of the delays was actually shorter than before, punctuality fell from 99.94 per cent to 99.91 per cent, the lowest since 2008. A difference of 0.03 percentage points is arguably insignificant. But those who were caught in the ensuing mayhem would probably think otherwise.
4. The frequent delays are hardly good news for a world-class rail operator that prides itself on functioning with clockwork precision. When it announced special fare concessions for the Lunar New Year holiday to mark the opening of the West Island Line, they were taken as compensation gestures.
5. It should be noted that with such high levels of punctuality, the MTR is still the envy of the world. No mechanical system can be fault proof. That the decades-old system is still running smoothly most of the time owes much to the dedication and professionalism of those working behind the scenes.
6. The task is becoming even more challenging as more passengers are expected to pass through the turnstiles in the coming years. It is good that a HK\$3 billion contract has been awarded to upgrade the signalling system and to enhance capacity. That would translate into a 10 per cent reduction in delays and an extra 100 million passengers a year. This will, hopefully, further improve the service and perception towards what is essentially a world-class infrastructure showpiece.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: S \_\_\_\_ ( ) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Read the passage and complete the exercise using information from the text unless otherwise stated. Give complete sentences for questions marked with \*. ONE mark for each answer unless otherwise stated.

1. How would you describe the tone of this article? (*Blacken the box of your choice.*)

- A.  Appreciative
- B.  Critical
- C.  Sarcastic
- D.  Uncompromising

\*2. The title neatly sums up this editorial. In about 20 words, explain how this is done. (2 marks: 1 mark for content/ 1 mark for language)

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3. "Unfortunately" used to start Paragraph 2 is to imply that \_\_\_\_\_. (*Blacken the box of your choice.*)

- A.  the number of passengers has exceeded the capacity MTR can take.
- B.  MTR passengers assume service must be efficient.
- C.  MTR passengers are very arrogant.
- D.  the project delays are because of bad luck.

\*4. The writer makes clever use of adverbs such as the use of "unfortunately" mentioned in Question 2. Choose four of the following adverbs to make sentences of your own that can bring out the meaning of these adverbs. (12 marks) (For each sentence: 2 marks for content/ 1 mark for language)

Relatively (paragraph 1)	arguably (paragraph 3)
probably (paragraph 3)	hardly (paragraph 4)
hopefully (paragraph 6)	essentially (paragraph 6)

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

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(2) \_\_\_\_\_

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(3) \_\_\_\_\_

(4) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Read the following statements and decide whether they are true (T), false (F) or the information is not given (NG) in the passage. (*Blacken the box of your choice.*)

	<b>T</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>NG</b>
(1) MTR service is getting seriously unreliable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(2) Not many railway lines in the world are as punctual as the Hong Kong MTR.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3) Passengers were grateful to the MTR for the special fare concessions during the Chinese New Year.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(4) MTR has awarded the project of upgrading the signalling system to a company based in the Mainland.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(5) We should be very proud of our MTR because it is a great engineering project.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(6) MTR pays high salaries to the staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. In recent months, MTR has been troubled by two problems. What are they?

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Complete the following paragraph with ONE word for each blank.

Dear editor,

I write to \_\_\_\_\_ my gratitude to our very efficient MTR service. I was at the Kowloon Tong station this morning when I got stuck. I \_\_\_\_\_ my octopus card as usual but the \_\_\_\_\_ just did not move. I felt so embarrassed because it was eight in the morning and everybody was rushing to work. Almost immediately, a \_\_\_\_\_ rushed up to me and \_\_\_\_\_ me to the customers' service counter to sort out my card. The whole \_\_\_\_\_ took \_\_\_\_\_ than five minutes. I was so grateful!

I understand there are \_\_\_\_\_ that trains are \_\_\_\_\_ and we are caught in the \_\_\_\_\_ feeling frustrated but after all trains are \_\_\_\_\_ and so there are bound to be \_\_\_\_\_. We have to know ours is already the \_\_\_\_\_ system in the world. We ought to be \_\_\_\_\_ to all those good people who work \_\_\_\_\_ the clock to make sure we always arrive at our destinations \_\_\_\_\_ and punctually.

8. \*Extended task

Aside from the MTR, what would be high on your list if Hong Kong were to do an inventory of what it can showcase to the world? Explain in about 100 words your choice supporting it with at least three reasons. (10 marks: 6 for the 3 reasons / 4 marks for language)