

Meridian Junior College
JC2 General Paper Preliminary Examinations 2014
Paper 2 Answers

- 1 Explain what the author means by referring to the need to defend the English language today as 'sentimental archaism' in line 5. [2]

Lifted	Accepted Answers
<p>"It follows that any struggle against the abuse of language is a sentimental..." (l.5)</p> <p>"...archaism..." (l.5)</p>	<p>This need to defend the English language is due to an emotional attachment to the past/ a feeling of nostalgia for [1]</p> <p>*No marks for emotion alone. Must link to past.</p> <p>something outdated/ old-fashioned/ obsolete/ no longer relevant today. [1]</p> <p>*(BOD) Backward</p>

- 2 In paragraph 2, why does the author raise the example of a man taking to drink? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2]

Lifted	Accepted Answers
<p>"A man may take to drink because he feels himself to be a failure, and then fail all the more completely because he drinks." (l. 11-12)</p> <p>"Yet he can solve his predicament if he just stopped drinking." (l. 12-13)</p> <p>"The point is that the process is reversible." (l. 16)</p>	<p>Inferred: It is to show that the decline of the English language is a vicious cycle... [1] *Must have the context of language. *(BOD) Marker's discretion: Accept explanations that convey a cycle.</p> <p>Paraphrased: ...and is a problem that can be fixed/ cured/ resolved. [1]</p>

- 3 In lines 20–21, why does the author believe that 'the fight against bad English is not frivolous'? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2]

Lifted	Accepted Answers
<p>"If one gets rid of these habits one can think more clearly..." (l. 18-19)</p> <p>"...and to think clearly is a necessary first step toward political regeneration..." (l. 19-20)</p> <p>"...which ultimately benefits the common man" (l. 20)</p> <p>"...the fight against bad English... is not the exclusive concern of professional writers" (l. 20-21)</p>	<p>It allows someone to reflect on their thoughts with more clarity/ reason out more logically</p> <p>and is important for a better/ improved/ rejuvenated government/ political system. *Has to capture political system and not language *Do not accept 'revolution' or 'change' unless there is a positive change</p> <p>It should be advantageous for everyone/ everybody. *Accept ordinary/ average person</p> <p>(3 points for 2 marks, 1-2 points for 1 mark)</p>

- 4 In line 29, why does the author liken English phrases to 'sections of a prefabricated house'? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2]

Lifted	Accepted Answers
<p>"...and more and more of <i>phrases</i> tacked together like the sections of a prefabricated house." (l. 28-29)</p> <p>"staleness of imagery; the other is lack of precision" (l. 22-23)</p> <p>"...prose consists less and less of <i>words</i> chosen for the sake of their meaning..." (l. 27-28)</p>	<p>English phrases are put together/ assembled [1] *Must have negative connotation</p> <p>without originality/ lacks accuracy/ sounds incoherent/ without making much sense [1] *Do not accept purposeless or haphazardly</p>

- 5 In paragraph 5, what are the similarities and differences between how people treat the words 'fascism' and 'democracy'? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2]

Lifted	Accepted Answers
<p>"The word <i>fascism</i> has now no clear meaning... In the case of a word like <i>democracy</i>, not only is there no agreed meaning..." (l. 31-33)</p> <p>"words that have lost their original meaning" (l. 30)</p> <p>"...fascism... except in so far as it signifies something not desirable." (l. 31-32)</p> <p>"It is almost universally felt that when we call a country democratic we are praising it..." (l. 33-34)</p>	<p>Similarity: Both have vague/ unclear/ murky definitions/ interpretations/ explanations. [1] OR Both have deviated from their initial definitions. [1]</p> <p>Difference: While fascism is seen as unsavoury/ distasteful/ unwelcomed/ unwanted/ disliked, democracy is something that is commended. [1] *Accept positive/ negative connotations, but both qualities needed to get the mark</p>

- 6 Why does the author describe a speaker's spectacles as 'blank discs which seem to have no eyes behind them' in lines 45–46? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2]

Lifted	Accepted Answers
<p>"not a party line" (l. 42)</p> <p>"some kind of puppet" (l. 44)</p> <p>"blank discs which seem to have no eyes behind them" (l. 45-46)</p> <p>"gone some distance toward turning himself into a machine" (l. 46-47)</p> <p>"his brain is not involved as it would be if he were choosing his words for himself" (l. 48-49)</p> <p>"If the speech he is making is one that he is accustomed to make over and over again, he may be almost unconscious of what he is saying..." (l. 49-50)</p>	<p>Politicians are only doing what they are told/ reading what has been prepared for them/ just rhetoric [1] *Accept controlled/ manipulated *(BOD) politically correct</p> <p>having no views of their own/ unthinking/ unaware [1] *Accept blindly/ mindlessly *Do not accept robot/automaton without explanation of its qualities</p>

7 'One becomes a cuttlefish spurting out ink.'

Explain the author's use of this metaphor in paragraph 8. [1]

Lifted	Accepted Answers
<p>"One becomes a cuttlefish spurting out ink." (l. 65-66)</p> <p>"When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms. (l. 64-65)</p>	<p>Just like how a cuttlefish spurts out ink to hide/mask its escape from predators,</p> <p>politicians use euphemisms/ political writing to mask their true intentions/ to distract their audience</p> <p>*Must have similar qualities for both parts</p> <p>ANY LOGICAL EXPLANATION (marker's discretion)</p> <p>(need to compare both to get the mark)</p>

8 In paragraph 9, identify **three** explanations that the author offers for the spread of bad usage of language even among people who should know better. **Use your own words as far as possible.** [3]

Lifted	Accepted Answers
<p>"...by tradition and imitation..." (l. 70)</p> <p>"The debased language... is in some ways very convenient." (l. 70-71)</p> <p>"Phrases... are a continuous temptation..." (l. 71-73)</p> <p>"This invasion of one's mind by ready-made phrases can only be prevented if one is constantly on guard against them," (l. 75-76)</p> <p>"and every such phrase anaesthetizes a portion of one's brain." (l. 76-77)</p>	<p>Through norms/ convention and following/ mimicry/ copying</p> <p>Bad language can be easy to use/ very handy/ requires little effort to use</p> <p>with phrases that are difficult to resist using/ a constant enticement</p> <p>difficult to defend against/ requires one to be perpetually alert/ on the look out for such phrases</p> <p>as we have become desensitised to it/ it is so familiar/ over-used that we are no longer aware of it.</p> <p>(Any 3 points for 3 marks)</p>

9 In line 86, why does the author put the words 'Achilles' heel, hotbed, melting pot, acid test' in italics? [1]

Lifted	Accepted Answers
<p>"send some worn-out and useless phrase -- some <i>Achilles' heel, hotbed, melting pot, acid test</i>, or other lump of verbal refuse -- into the dustbin, where it belongs." (l. 86-87)</p>	<p>He does so to show that he is merely providing some examples out of the possible phrases that might be used in political speech or writing.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>These are examples of words that are used to sway or deceive as they lack clarity/ they are not understood by their denotative meaning.</p> <p>Must capture for both example + explanation/context</p>

- 10 Using material from paragraphs 5–7 only, summarise what the author has to say about how the English language is abused in political writing and the problems associated with it.
Write your summary in no more than 120 words, not counting the opening words which are printed below. **UYOWAFAP.** [8]

Political writing today...

N	Lifted	Paraphrased
1	words that have lost their original meaning (l. 30)	causes words to abandon their real definitions
2	...becoming a catch-all (l. 31)	and turns a word into one that encompasses every meaning/ too many interpretations/ many meanings.
3	no clear meaning (l. 31) no agreed meaning (l. 33) ...if it were tied down to any one meaning... (l. 36)	It causes words to have confusing definitions/ vague definitions/ ambiguity/ uncertainty
4	...but the attempt to make one (a definition)... (l. 33)	Yet the effort to have one/ trying to do so (context of clear meaning must be present)
5	is resisted from all sides. (l. 33)	is contested/ challenged/ opposed by all.
6	... fear that they might have to stop using that word (l. 35-36)	People are scared/ afraid that they are no longer able to use certain words.
7	Words of this kind are often used in a consciously dishonest way. (l. 36-37)	Furthermore, some words are utilised to intentionally mislead/ lie/ untruthful/ deceive
8	...but allows his hearer to think he means something quite different (l. 38) ...the person who uses them has his own private definition (l. 37-38)	or to allow people to employ their own individual/ personalised interpretations/ that others do not know about/ misunderstandings
9	leading to many blunders (l. 38-39)	and cause many errors/ mistakes/ mix-ups/ gaffes. Not accepted - problems
10	Some kind of rebel... expressing his private opinions (l. 41) (reversed point)	Personal thoughts are stifled/ People may not be able to state their own views/ ideas OR Those who have their own views are seen as deviants
11	Where it is not true... not a "party line." (l. 40-42) (reversed point) favourable to political conformity (l. 51-52)	forcing politicians to echo/ follow/ regurgitate the party's views
12	machine... (l. 47) his brain is not involved as it would be if he were choosing his words for himself (l. 48-49)	unthinkingly/ without independent thought/ unaware. *Do not accept robot/ automaton
13	political speech and writing are largely the defence of indefensible acts (l. 53)	Political speech is often used to excuse/ justify/ argue for/ what is normally inexcusable/ unjustifiable
14	...by disguising arguments (l. 55-56) ... camouflaging actions... (l. 56)	by hiding behind/ covering up actions
15	which are too brutal for most people to face, (l. 56)	otherwise barbarous/ inhuman/ merciless/ ruthless arguments that most people cannot stomach (Need context)
16	which do not match the professed aims of the political parties. (l. 56-57)	which are not aligned/ are not the stated views of/ discrepancies/ departures from the stated goals of the political parties. (Need context)
17	Thus political language has to consist largely of euphemism... (l. 57-58)	Thus political language contains mostly of nice/ polite/ sensitive way of saying something/ sugar-coating
18	... question-begging ... (l. 58)	circular reasoning OR evading/ avoiding answering the question
19	In essence, this becomes a way to manipulate public opinion. (l. 61-62)	Basically, this becomes a method of shaping/ controlling/ influencing/ engineering the people's views. *Accept affect/ change

Points	1-2	3-4	5-6	7	8-9	10-11	12-13	>14
Marks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

11 In this article, George Orwell discusses the state of modern English and how it is used politically. How far would you agree with his observations? Relate your opinions to your own society. [10]

QUOTE	AGREE	DISAGREE
<p>“It follows that any struggle against the abuse of language is a sentimental archaism... Underneath this lies the half-conscious belief that language is a natural growth and not an instrument which we shape for our own purposes.” (l. 4-7)</p>	<p>Language has an organic development because the way that it is used or changed depends on its very speakers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singlish is argued to be the English-based creole language of some Singaporeans • Developed as a common, simplified language among different groups and races, where there was none • Its influences are from many different local languages, and which are picked up or left out are somewhat random 	<p>Language is used as a tool, one that is wrought and perfected, to meet the goals that we have in mind.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak Good English Movement • Use of Singlish discouraged in schools and media (i.e. the criticism surrounding Phua Chu Kang)
<p>“... the decline of a language must ultimately have political and economic causes... (l. 8-10)</p>	<p>The decline in attention over the vernacular languages in Singapore such as Malay & Tamil can be attributed to state decisions to push forth for English education (as a means to attain international reputation and business opportunities).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the past, languages such as Latin lost their significance as the lingua franca due to the prominence of the British Empire as well as other influences in the western world especially in terms of science, philosophy and burgeoning trade. • Due to globalisation, the dominant languages of world commerce such as English, Mandarin, Spanish and French have caused other languages to lose in prominence. 	<p>However, the evolution of language can be a natural (i.e. socio-cultural phenomenon) development. Also, speakers of that language can migrate or diminish in numbers suddenly due to natural causes. When language change in form or diversify, it can be of natural causes too.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The loss of ancient languages such as Old English and Prakrit is due to their evolution into other languages such as Middle English and Modern English, and the Hindustani languages respectively, which are especially due to migration to other parts of the world. • In 2014, Boa Sr., an Indian Great Andamese elder died and took to the grave with her the language of the Great Andamese language family. In the past, populations of the Great Andamese of the Great Andaman archipelago went into sharp decline due to diseases spread by foreign migrants, conflict and relocation.
<p>“It becomes ugly and inaccurate because our thoughts are foolish, but the sloppiness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts. The point is that the process is reversible.” (l. 14-16)</p>	<p>It can be argued that one who is poor in language is less sensitive to the intricacies of language, and making them more vulnerable to thinking in an illogical or unreasonable fashion. They may be less capable in fashioning complex ideas and arguments due to poor ability in language, and once they are more proficient, they will become more articulate.</p> <p>Eg. Singapore's emphasis on English Language ability in key examinations</p>	<p>Yet, poor language ability should not be equated to poor intellectual capability: not being able to express oneself does not mean that one does not have complex thoughts or ideas.</p> <p>Possible to have other ways to express our thoughts (music?)</p>

<p>“Modern English, especially written English, is full of bad habits which spread by imitation and which can be avoided if one is willing to take the necessary trouble.” (l. 17-18)</p>	<p>With the prevalence of social media and the ubiquity of internet speak or TV, unless one makes a conscious effort, it is too easy to just repeat what one has seen online and accept these irregular speech traits as part of one’s idiolect.</p> <p>At the same time, it can also be argued that the ability to code-switch is this conscious effort to avoid, or at least, acknowledge such bad habits.</p> <p>(Eg. Phua Chu Kang)</p>	<p>In contrast, today’s bad habits can be the new norm for the future. Words such as ‘twerk’ and ‘trending’ have been accepted in the Oxford and other English dictionaries as official or formal words. Perhaps, there is no need to make a ‘conscious effort’ to change bad habits after all.</p>
<p>“Many political words are abused, resulting in words that have lost their original meaning or becoming a catch-all.” (l. 30-31)</p>	<p>This is true especially when certain political or economic agendas need to be met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of euphemisms such as ‘integrated resorts’ to reflect the opposition by the society against gambling • For some Singaporeans, even ‘Workfare’ is a political deflection for not allowing the poorest in Singapore to earn minimum wage, instead “encouraging Singaporean workers to attend training and improve their skills” without guaranteed investment returns. • For others, the 3Ms ‘Medisave, Medishield, Medifund’ in our healthcare system is another diversion from answering difficult queries such as the elevated costs of our healthcare especially for the middle classes. 	<p>In some ways, the use of certain political words is to diffuse tension and prevent the negative connotations, as well as the assumed meanings by association especially when used by other countries.</p>
<p>“Words of this kind are often used in a consciously dishonest way. That is, the person who uses them has his own private definition, but allows his hearer to think he means something quite different.” (l. 36-38)</p>	<p>Doublespeak has two instances: one, euphemisms, and the other, ambiguity. Ambiguity has its benefits especially for a political speaker not only to disguise the truth, but also to allow the listener to believe in his/her own beliefs or interpretations. This ensures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In politics, communications about war (i.e. “servicing the target” instead of bombing) and economic recessions (i.e. “economic slowdown”) are often hidden under euphemism. • In advertising, the rule of parity allows the consumer to believe which product s/he believes is better/best. 	<p>Perhaps, it can be argued that there are no clear ways to answer questions or relay decisions about sensitive issues such as war and recession but through euphemisms and ambiguity.</p> <p>After all, there are many causes for a recession and it is difficult, even unfair, for a politician to pinpoint it to one thing or another. Furthermore, though war and conflict is unpopular, it would lead to a lot of delays and problems if every opinion of the public is to be addressed, analysed and responded to, before an action can be done, resulting in a lot of loss of lives and irreparable consequences.</p>
<p>In our time it is broadly true that political writing is bad writing. Where it is not true, it will generally be found that the writer is some kind of rebel, expressing his</p>	<p>This is true as political leaders within a party are expected to toe the same party line and echo the same sentiments to appear cohesive and united.</p> <p>Often, after major policies are announced, other politicians/MPs are expected to repeat the same at the grassroots level and explain the policies further.</p>	<p>While there is an expectation to conform with the main party’s ideas, individual politicians have room to voice their opinions.</p> <p>Eg. Inderjit Singh’s recent commentary about the income gap that has emerged</p>

private opinions and not a "party line." (l. 40-42)		
<p>"In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible." (l. 52)</p>	<p>Many political speeches are based on rhetoric to paint a more palatable picture when galvanising public opinion. This helps to provide justification and makes it easier to rationalise actions/inactions</p> <p>E.g. use of the 'axis of evil' by US President George W. Bush or words like 'liberating the oppressed' to describe acts of war</p> <p>Political speech provides a platform to discuss issues that people might normally flinch away from. By using language to soften some of the more graphic elements of an issue, it makes it easier for the public to focus on debating on the issue rather than being distracted by their queasiness.</p> <p>E.g. labelling of 'pro-life' vs 'pro-choice' in the abortion issue helps to lead the discussion towards away from a fixation on images of aborted fetuses.</p>	<p>Not true, as some politicians and many NGOs use increasingly graphic and brutally honest photographs and language to drive home their arguments.</p> <p>E.g. photos of war casualties to galvanise public opinion to provide military intervention</p>
<p>"A bad usage can spread by tradition and imitation even among people who should and do know better." (l.69-70)</p>	<p>Language is acquired through exposure and usage, so inevitably, even those who have good language, when exposed constantly to poor language, will eventually and unconsciously pick up bad habits.</p> <p>Given the amount of messaging shorthand, internet memes, and increasing decline of grammatical structures in common language use, it is difficult for people to maintain good English.</p> <p>Furthermore, there is little impetus to do so as communication tends to be increasingly concise through platforms that support limited characters e.g. SMS, twitter</p>	
<p>"...one can probably bring about some improvement by starting at the verbal end." (l.81)</p>	<p>Possible to bring about change through small gestures. Just by reminding ourselves and to speak properly and correct our mistakes, we will gradually improve our language over time.</p> <p>E.g. Speak Good English campaign to encourage correction of simple, everyday language errors/misconceptions</p>	<p>Ingrained habits are hard to change. Given that language and implicitly, bad language, is often acquired at a young age, it takes tremendous effort and determination to undo some of the foundational problems.</p> <p>This is evident even among students/classmates who struggle with language from primary school all the way to JC. Some of them speak well, but when it comes to the written form, they still make numerous grammatical errors and fall back on clichéd phrases. While they may be able to recognise the rules of the English language and what</p>

		might be considered good English, being able to absorb and apply it is a different matter altogether.
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Paper 2 Marking Rubrics
Application Question (10 marks)

Marks	Descriptors
Band 1 8 – 10	1 REQUIREMENTS: Systematic reference to the requirements of the question with evidence of a balanced treatment. 2 EXPLANATION: Shows a good or very good understanding of terms and issues. 3 EVALUATION: Makes very convincing evaluation by making judgements and decisions and by developing arguments to logical conclusions, and includes elaboration and support through personal insight and apt illustration. 4 COHERENCE: Very clear shape and paragraph organisation and cogent argument.
Band 2 4 – 7	1 REQUIREMENTS: Covers requirements of the question adequately but not necessarily a balanced treatment. 2 EXPLANATION: Shows an adequate level of understanding of terms and issues (which may include minor distortion). 3 EVALUATION: Evaluation is attempted but is not always convincing, and tends to be superficial with limited development of ideas, and is not as thorough in support. 4 COHERENCE: Paragraphing is sometimes helpful and there is a recognisable over-all shape to the answer; arguments are generally cogent.
Band 3 1 – 3	1 REQUIREMENTS: An incomplete and/or unbalanced treatment of the requirements. 2 EXPLANATION: Shows very limited degree of understanding and a higher incidence of misinterpretation. 3 EVALUATION: Tends to be a mere summary of restatement of the text with a few simple and undeveloped judgements, with very thin support. 4 COHERENCE: Paragraphing and organisation are haphazard; arguments inconsistent or illogical.
0	Nothing in the answer meets any of the criteria.

Use of English (15 marks)

- Assessment must be based on the individual candidate's performance across the whole paper.
- Generally, look for sentence length, the range and variety of vocabulary, and the incidence, range and severity of the following types of error: spelling, vocabulary, tense, number, sentence construction.
- Apply the 'best fit' principle when not all the descriptors of a single band are found within a script.

Marks	Descriptors
Band 1 12 – 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very good to excellent linguistic ability: very few serious errors; only a few slips or minor errors. • Assured command of language: it is clear, fluent, effective and appropriate throughout. • Answers are cogent, concise and well organised. A wide variety of apt vocabulary is used and sentence structure is inventive, developed and appropriate. • There is a sustained attempt to rephrase the text language for all the answers.
Band 2 8 – 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good to very good linguistic ability: a number of errors of various kinds but they do not seriously impede the flow of the writing. • Competent command of language: the Candidate usually writes in convincing and idiomatic English, with some positive merits. • Vocabulary and sentence structures are varied and appropriate but not necessarily outstanding. • There is a noticeable attempt to avoid the text language for all the answers.
Band 3 4 – 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfactory / mediocre linguistic ability: errors of various kinds are frequent but the English is for the most part intelligible. • Moderate command of language: the English is at times halting, repetitive and generally insecure. • Misuse of vocabulary and/or breakdown of syntax or grammar. Only simple statements attempted successfully. • There are recognisable but limited attempts to rephrase the text language in the answers.
Band 4 1 – 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak linguistic ability: frequent and serious errors of various kinds, rendering the English muddled or unintelligible at times. • Very poor command of language. • Widespread misuse of vocabulary; sentence linking is inappropriate or haphazard. • Answers mostly comprise wholesale copying of the text language. Any attempts to use own language are limited to single word expressions.

Application Question (Trial Marking)

A	Marks: 5 marks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Script could improve in the ways some ideas were expressed • Some good evaluation and insights were raised. • Example of “opposition party” appropriate. 	Language marks: 8 marks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of grammatical errors but not so gross that it is a lower mark
B	Marks: 3 marks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, points were simple and not well-developed. • First point not fully developed • 2nd point vaguely expressed • 3rd point has poor relevance 	Language marks: 8 marks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifting • Largely clean script and simple language used
C	Marks: 7 marks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, evaluations and examples were attempted consistently • First point has some evaluations • 2nd point slightly superficial, and insight is not very strong • 3rd point not very coherent 	Language marks: 11 marks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No lifting • Variety of vocabulary • Little to no errors • Strong language ability

*Minimum language marks is 6.