



JURONG JUNIOR COLLEGE

JC 2 Preliminary Examination 2014

CANDIDATE'S NAME

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GENERAL PAPER

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Paper 2

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INSERT

1 hour 30 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This insert contains the passage for Paper 2.

This document consists of **3** printed pages and **1** blank page.

Bruno Bettelheim writes about the importance of games to the process of socialisation¹.

- 1 Most adults find it easier to involve themselves directly in complex, adult games, such as chess and baseball, than in play on simpler levels, such as stacking blocks or riding a hobbyhorse or a toy car. Although the words *play* and *game* may seem synonymous, they in fact refer to broadly distinguishable stages of development, with *play* relating to an earlier stage and *game* to a more mature one. Generally speaking, *play* refers to the young child's activities characterised by freedom from all but personally imposed rules (which are changed at will), and by the absence of any goals outside the activity itself. *Games*, however, are usually competitive and are characterised by agreed-upon, often externally imposed, rules, and frequently by a goal or purpose outside the activity, such as winning the game. 5

- 2 Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist and philosopher known for his research on children, stresses how important learning the rules of the game is in the process of socialisation; a child must become able to control himself in order to do so, controlling most of all, his tendency to act aggressively to reach his goals. Only then can he enjoy the continuous interaction with others that is involved in playing games with friends who are also opponents. But obeying the rules and controlling one's selfish and aggressive tendencies is not something that can be learned overnight. When he begins playing games, a child tries to behave as he could in his earlier play. He changes the rules to suit himself, but that results in the game breaking down. Consequently, he comes to believe that the rules are unalterable. Often, it is not until he has become a teenager – sometimes even later than that – can he comprehend that rules are voluntarily agreed upon for the sake of playing the game and have no other validity, and that they can be freely altered as long as all participants agree to such changes. The concept of 'democracy', where we have a freely negotiated consensus that is binding only after it has been formulated and accepted, is a very late achievement in human development, even in game-playing. 10 15 20

- 3 When children are free to do as they like in games not supervised by adults, children may require hours of fruitful deliberation before they agree on the rules and related issues, such as who should begin the game and what role each child is to have in it. And this is how it ought to be, if playing games is to socialise children. Only by pondering at great length the advantages and disadvantages of various possible games, their relative appropriateness to the conditions at hand and what rules should apply and why, will children develop their abilities to reason, to judge what is appropriate and what is not, to weigh arguments, to learn how consensus can be reached and how important such consensus is to the society. Learning all this is infinitely more significant for the child's development as a social human being than is mastering whatever skills are involved in playing the game itself. Yet none of these socialising skills will be learned if adults attempt to control which games are played, or if they prevent experimentation with rules (out of fear that this may lead to chaos), or if they impatiently push for the game to get started without further delay. 25 30 35

- 4 Some adults, unfortunately, may be too eager to see children behave maturely before they are ready to do so. We must remember that for a child, a game is not 'just a game' that he plays for the fun of it, or a distraction from more serious matters. For him, playing a game can be, and more often than not is, a serious undertaking: on its outcome rest his feelings of self-esteem and competence. To put it in adult terms, playing a game is a child's true reality; this takes it far beyond the boundaries of its meaning for adults. Losing, for example, is not just a part of playing the game, as it is for adults (at least most of the time), but something that puts 40

¹ Socialisation: the process whereby an individual learns to adjust to a group (or society) and behave in a manner approved by the group (or society).

the child's sense of his own competence in question and often undermines it. Since game- 45
 playing is for the child a real-life experience, he behaves accordingly: when feeling relatively
 strong and secure, he can accept defeat in a game without falling apart, but when insecure,
 he cannot. Because a child's inability to accept defeat in a game is a sign that at that moment
 he is quite insecure, it becomes even more important that we do not add to this feeling by
 criticising him. 50

- 5 Some children – and most children at some stages in their lives – simply cannot afford to lose.
 So they correct their fortune in order to win – asking for an extra turn (as opposed to making a
 move while an opponent is out of the room). It is then wrong to hold them to the rules of the
 game, because they may give up playing altogether and become utterly dejected, deeply 55
 disappointed in themselves. If, instead of objecting to their insisting on changing the rules, we
 silently accept it and in this way make it possible for them to win, they will enjoy the game and
 continue playing it. As a child continues to play – and to cheat in this way – he slowly
 becomes more experienced in playing the game and needs to cheat less often, and in a less
 outrageous manner. This is why it is important for adults, especially parents, to play games 60
 with the child, because others are not so ready to let him change the rules at will without at
 least remarking on it. Improving the child's chances of winning may be necessary if he is to
 play often enough to become sufficiently expert to win playing by the rules. Winning makes
 him more and more secure about his ability to hold his own in the game, and soon he will give
 up changing the rules altogether, although he will by no means win every time. The ability to 65
 win fair and square will provide him with enough security in playing the game that an
 occasional loss will no longer be experienced as such a severe defeat that he must avoid the
 game altogether. This may be instrumental in helping the child cope with challenges in future
 as an adult. And the parent's pleasure in playing will increase with the child's.

Adapted from Play, Games and Rules by Bruno Bettelheim.

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