

**Meridian Junior College**  
**2017 J2 Prelims GP Paper 2 Answers**

1. What is the author suggesting in describing the quest to define beauty as being like “asking whether one’s vision of “red” is the same as someone else’s” (line 5)? [2m]

<b>Lifted</b>	<b>Inferred</b>
Scientists are still on a quest to define what makes things and people beautiful. In some ways, it is like asking whether one’s vision of “red” the same as someone else’s	He suggests that the definition of beauty is <b>relative</b> / people have differing views of beauty/ what is beautiful. [1m]
Scientists are still on a quest to define...  - there is just no way to know for sure.	And therefore the <b>difficulty</b> of defining beauty / impossible to define beauty. [1m] OR Which cannot be verified with each other.  * Missing context (not mentioning beauty) = 0m

2. In line 7, the author claims that people’s preferences for body shapes differ over “time” and “space”. Give one example of each and explain how the examples illustrate his claim. Use your own words as far as possible. [2m]

<b>Lifted</b>	<b>Paraphrased</b>
<p><b>Space</b> In the West, people may prize longer legs in women while preferring less “lanky men”, yet the nomadic Himba society in Namibia have the opposite tastes.</p>	<p><u>Example:</u> The author gives the example of how people prefer <b>women with long legs and men who are not tall and thin/gangly/spindly/gawky</b> in the West, and have <b>contrasting tastes</b> in Namibia.</p> <p>Note – ‘lanky’ means ‘tall and thin’, not ‘skinny’</p> <p><u>Link:</u> Which illustrates how people’s preferences for body shapes differ across different countries/cultures/societies/ regions.</p> <p>*Both women and men should be discussed</p>
<p><b>Time</b> Botticelli’s Venus – once the Western ideal of beauty – has shorter legs, compared to her body, than the desired shape for models today. OR As plus-sized comedian Dawn French once quipped, “If I had been around when Botticelli was painting The Birth of Venus, I would have been revered as a fabulous model, and supermodels like Kate Moss, would have been the paintbrush.”</p>	<p><u>Example:</u> The author gives the example of how the <b>Western*</b> notion of beauty has shifted from one with <b>shorter legs relative/in relation to her body</b> hundreds of years ago to one with <b>longer legs</b> today</p> <p>OR</p> <p><u>Example:</u> The author gives the example of how <b>Western*</b> notions of beauty used to celebrate <b>plump</b> women but today celebrate <b>skinny</b> women.</p> <p><u>Link:</u> Showing how preferences for body shapes have changed from the past to present/ over time</p> <p>*‘Western’ should be included, part of the context</p>

\*Clear signposting to match example to each characteristic required.

3. According to the author in paragraph 3, what explains the preference for symmetry in both humans' and animals' choice of mates? Use your own words as far as possible. [2m]

Lifted	Paraphrased
The rationale behind symmetry preference in both humans and animals is that symmetric individuals are seen as more <b>prolific</b> mates.	Both humans and animals prefer symmetry in their partners because...  Those who exhibit symmetrical physical traits are perceived to be more <b>fertile</b>  * Ideal/better partners = 0m
Further, scientists believe that this symmetry is equated with a <b>strong immune system</b> .	They are more likely to be healthy / in good health / physically fit / good physical condition
Thus, beauty is indicative of <b>more robust</b> genes, improving the likelihood that an individual's <b>offspring</b> will <b>survive</b> .	Have stronger/better genes or DNA, increasing the chances that their future children will remain alive / thrive

3 for 2m, 1-2 for 1m

4. Explain the author's use of the word 'even' in 'even babies respond more positively to attractive, symmetrical faces.' (Line 25) [2m]

Lifted	Inferred
In fact, even babies respond more positively to attractive, symmetrical faces.	A young infant, who has <u>not been socially conditioned to notions of beauty/does not understand concepts of beauty</u> , [Inferred] also responds favourably to symmetry. [1m]  * Characteristic of the young infant must be linked to beauty So answers like 'babies are still young/immature' = 0m But answers like 'babies are too young <i>to understand notions of beauty</i> ' = 1m
	This highlights that the preference for symmetry is <u>deeply ingrained/innate</u> in human nature OR The great extent to which symmetry is preferred by humans [1m]

5. Using your own words as far as possible, explain the irony found in line 32. [2m]

Lifted	Paraphrased / Inferred
morphing a lot of faces together typically produces an end product that is highly attractive. The reasoning goes that this blending gets closer to the face "prototype" that may underline attractiveness – the ultimate idea of an attractive face is ironically the most average one.	It is expected that attractive/beautiful faces <b>stand out</b> / are <b>more remarkable</b> / <b>exceptional</b> than others  However what makes such faces appealing to others is because they are actually a composite of the <b>most commonplace / mainstream / commonly found / familiar faces</b> and nothing outstanding in particular.  * Attractive faces are good-looking. Actually they are ordinary-looking = 1m ** Need to explain that what is considered attractive contradicts what one believes about attractiveness. Thus the expectation needs to be about 'attractive faces', not about 'common faces'.

6. Give three differences between beauty and attractiveness that the author suggests in lines 37 – 42. Use your own words as far as possible. [3m]

Lifted	Paraphrased
Rigid,static vs fluid,variable	Beauty is seen to be inflexible and unchanging / objective definition VS Attractiveness can change/shift in how it is viewed / subjective definition  Volatile = 0m
Physical image vs psychological experience	Beauty is tied to a tangible / concrete / visible picture / outward appearance VS Attractiveness is a state of mind / what one goes through in one's mind
Youth oriented vs ageless	Beauty celebrates / is tied to youthfulness / being young VS Attractiveness can take place at any age / regardless of one's age / is timeless
Photoshopped or surgically attained vs develops naturally	Beauty can be artificially attained VS Attractiveness grows from within
Women <b>pursue</b> physical features associated with beauty vs one can simply <b>feel attractive about oneself</b> .	Women seek / go after features deemed by others as beautiful VS Attractiveness can come from one's own perception of oneself

Any 3 pairs for 3 marks. Marker's discretion.

7. What does 'cradle-to-grave' (line 48) suggest about the consumers of beauty products? [1m]

Lifted	Inferred
women and girls will become <b>cradle-to-grave</b> consumers of beauty products, cosmetic surgery and diet programs	Consumers of beauty products / Women and girls start using beauty products and services  from a very young age all the way till old age OR Throughout their lives / their whole lives / life-long obsession  <b>* Time element needed</b> Both the old and young are consuming beauty products = 0m Consumers will not cease using them = 0m Consumers cannot live without/obsessed with beauty products = 0m

8. What does the author mean when he says “being vain may not be such a vain endeavour after all” (lines 81 – 82)? [1m]

Lifted	Paraphrased
Thus, being vain	An <u>obsession</u> / <b>excessive</b> concern with one's own beauty/ looks  Merely 'pursuit of good looks' / 'caring about one's appearance' = 0m
may not be such a vain endeavour after all.	is not actually futile/pointless / actually has benefits.  * Both halves needed to get 1m.

9. In the light of the final paragraph, why do researchers say that “a beautiful cover prompts a closer reading” (line 87)? Use your own words as far as possible. [2m]

Lifted	Paraphrased / Inferred
attractiveness actually invites people to <b>learn what one is made of</b> ... because it draws others to go beyond the initial impression, in other respects than just genetic fitness...	People are attracted / enticed / keen to find out <b>more</b> about attractive people / invites a deeper look / beyond their physical features.
attractive people are actually judged more <b>accurately</b> —at least, closer to a subject's own self-assessments—than are the less attractive	This allows for a <b>more</b> correct appraisal / evaluation of attractive people

1 for 1m

10. Using material from paragraphs 7 to 9 (lines 50 – 79), summarise what the author has to say about the negative effects of the obsession with beauty and how attractive people are viewed. Use your own words as far as possible. Opening words: An obsession with beauty...

Lifted		Paraphrased
<b>Negative effects of the obsession with beauty</b>		
1	<b>never-ending treadmill</b> of unrealistic beauty attainment ...are never <b>satisfied</b> with the <b>outcomes</b> .	Is a futile/non-stop attempt to look good OR one is never satisfied with one's looks.
2	Through chronic and <b>unhealthy</b> dieting	One eats <b>too little</b> / unbalanced diets * 'Dieting/diets' can be lifted Bad eating habits(Vague) / Poor diets (more for poverty) = 0m
3	taking <b>unnecessary risks</b> during cosmetic surgical procedures	<b>Needlessly</b> jeopardises one's health in surgery * 'Risk' CANNOT be lifted
4	absorbing <b>unsafe chemicals</b> through cosmetics	Consumes/exposes oneself to <b>dangerous/harmful ingredients</b> in cosmetics/beauty products,
5	women are placing themselves in <b>precarious</b> health situations	endangering one's wellbeing * 'Health' can be lifted
6	Women and girls are at risk for <b>lifelong</b> health problems and the problems <b>start at an early age</b>	This results in long term illnesses OR Illnesses begin from a young age
7	obsession over a particular aspect of one's appearance has a <b>psychiatric diagnosis</b>	And even mental illnesses
8	far-reaching <b>implications</b> for women's <b>economic well-being</b> ... women <b>spending</b> much of their money on cosmetics	Such obsessions take a financial toll on women / cause women to spend excessively / overspend on beauty products
9	" <b>Lookism</b> ", or the <b>prejudice</b> based on physical appearance and attractiveness is an increasing problem... <b>discrimination</b> against overweight people in the workplace is a widespread practice	Less attractive people face workplace bias.
<b>How attractive people are viewed</b>		
10	employers believe that <b>good looks contribute to the success of their companies</b>	Companies believe that attractive people add more value to the organisation,
11	Yet, studies have shown that people who are perceived as being more attractive also <b>appear more competent and successful</b>	seeming more capable/proficient/qualified/outstanding * receive higher salaries = 0m (not perception)
12	It may be that there is a societal view that attractive people <b>are less likely to commit crimes</b> than unattractive people,	Society views attractive people as less inclined to break the law,
13	attractive people also seem to be more <b>intelligent</b> ,	more clever/bright/brainy,
14	<b>better adjusted</b>	emotionally stable / mature * flexible/adaptable = 0m
15	and more <b>popular</b>	and well-liked/socially adept
16	Attractive people are perceived to have <b>more occupational success</b>	Attractive people are seen to do better in their careers,
17	and <b>more dating experience</b> than their unattractive counterparts	be <u>more</u> eligible as romantic partners
18	in which an attractive person's <b>confident</b> self-perception	And see themselves as self-assured

Points 10- 18 must be phrased as perceptions using words like 'seen', 'perceived', 'viewed', 'appear to be', 'it is thought that' etc

14+ = 8m, 12 – 13 = 7m, 10 – 11 = 6m, 9 = 5m, 7 – 8 = 4m, 5 – 6 = 3m, 3 – 4 = 2m, 1 – 2 = 1m

11. Eric Land considers how beauty is viewed and its impacts on those obsessed with it. How far would you agree with his observations, relating your arguments to your own society?

From the passage	Agree / Disagree
<p>Para 1: Scientists are still on a quest to define what makes things and people beautiful. In some ways, it is like asking whether one's vision of "red" the same as someone else's - there is just no way to know for sure.</p>	<p><b>Agree</b> Apart from body shape, beauty is indeed culture-specific, especially when it intersects with race/religion (eg. In Middle-eastern countries with conservative dress codes, women's beauty is largely defined by the beauty of their eyes. Whereas in Korea, having double eyelids and a V-line shaped jaw is key to being truly beautiful. In India, meanwhile, having long and soft hair is what defines a true Indian beauty). The reaction by some people in recent years against oppressive/often unattainable Western and Korean beauty ideals is testament to the relativity of beauty standards.</p> <p><b>Disagree</b> Due to the forces of cultural globalisation and media influence, there seems to have been a general convergence towards universally-accepted/desired beauty standards—defined by the stick-thin ideal, double eyelids, straight hair, fair skin, anglicised features (small nose, thin lips, less prominent curves). A saying goes that the type of black model the beauty/fashion industry looks for has to "be a white girl dipped in chocolate." Deviance from this norm is subject to exotification, fetishization and sexualisation. In SG, a country assailed by the forces of cultural globalisation, many young girls aspire towards looking like their stick-thin, double eyelid, small face K-Pop idols.</p>
<p>Para 2: ...preferences for body shapes differ over time and space.</p>	<p><b>Agree</b> Not surprising. Perceptions of beauty partly arise from functional and pragmatic concerns. Nomadic societies may favour men with long legs given the need for men to walk long distances to seek out new pastures. Similarly, perceptions of beauty in the past celebrated more fat because it was a sign of status and prosperity. The wealthy ate in excess, assuring themselves "good health", while the poor starved. Socially dominant groups with better access to food and thus heavier were believed to have better health.</p> <p>Furthermore, perceptions of beauty are very much shaped by cultural norms, for eg the long-necked women of the Kayan Lahwi tribe in Thailand and Myanmar. In Singapore, which is highly susceptible to media influences from the West, perceptions of beauty are largely tied to those of the West – fair skin, pronounced features, large eyes, slender body shapes, or more recently, from K-pop influences.</p>
<p>Para 4: The ultimate idea of an attractive face is ironically the most average one.</p>	<p><b>Agree</b> Nothing ironic about considering the most attractive face to be the most average one. It is natural to subscribe to what is seen as conventional and 'normal' and embrace it as being more attractive than looks. Consider how many go for plastic surgery to attain the same features of public celebrities and the ubiquitous results of South Korean women who have undergone cosmetic surgery.</p> <p><b>Disagree</b> Modern perceptions of beauty are more varied today and society has become more accepting of alternative forms of attractiveness, eg plus-sized models like Ashley Graham have appeared on the cover of fashion magazines like Vogue. Transgender, androgenous, elderly,</p>

	<p>heavily tattooed, mentally and physically disabled models have also all broken into the fashion world. Furthermore, perceptions of beauty still vary greatly in different societies, from Western to Eastern. The big-eyed anime look popularised in South Korea and Japan is vastly different from the Western model but nevertheless tremendously popular in Asia.</p>
<p>Para 5: Beauty and attractiveness are often confused to be one and the same...beauty drives women toward the pursuit of the physical features associated with the word.</p>	<p>Agree: Can't blame people for subscribing to fixed notions of beauty rather than feeling attractive. This is especially since what is portrayed in the mass media are standard notions of 'beauty' by only showcasing supermodel-types who are typically thin, tall, fair, and young.</p> <p>Furthermore, while one feels 'attractive', the definition of 'attractive' features is frequently tied to what is commonly seen as 'beautiful' features (eg. big defined eyes, youthful skin), all dictated by cultural norms and the media.</p>
<p>Para 6: Be it beauty or attractiveness, people too often tie their self-worth to their physical appearance...many women and girls cannot escape feeling judged on the basis of their appearance.</p>	<p>Agree: The beauty/fashion industry is widely seen as oppressing women by casting them primarily as nothing more than objects of beauty for male admiration, often defined by the thin ideal. For eg, a few years ago, Abercrombie &amp; Fitch was under fire for refusing to make clothes for large women, Chanel designer Karl Lagerfeld is known for lashing out at fat people who he deems ugly. A 2017 meta-analysis study from the University of South Australia has established that such oppression does indeed exist.</p> <p>Disagree: The beauty/fashion industry is evolving in many major fashion capitals (New York, Milan, etc)—away from the oppressive beauty association with thinness, including SG's. They are hailing plus-sized models &amp; beginning to promote the idea that a woman's worth is more than skin-deep. Eg. In 2017 France banned super skinny models. Many beauty/fashion magazines also talk of this shift in the Fashion/Beauty industry (eg. international and SG-versions of V Mag, Velvet D'Amour, FFFWeek, Beth Ditto, Melissa McCarthy, Evans, Plus North, Frazier, Big Love, Curvy Girls, Elle Quebec, Vogue Italia).</p> <p>A 2013 Dove internet survey of 300 SG women revealed that while only 2 percent thought that they were beautiful, the majority were reasonably confident about their attractiveness.</p>
<p>Para 7: The health implications that impact women on the never-ending treadmill of unrealistic beauty attainment are substantial...women are placing themselves in precarious health situations...Women and girls are at risk for lifelong health problems – and the problems start at an early age.</p>	<p>Applicable to SG: The widespread access to, and use of social networking sites in SG is responsible for internalisation among women of the oppressive thin ideal (among other unattainable ideals). The latest skinny fads usually come on the heels of viral social media trends. A couple of years ago, there was the "bikini bridge", which is the space between a woman's hip bones that showed how flat her tummy is; and the "thigh gap" that apparently proves one has ultra-slim legs. Then in 2016, there was the A4 waist challenge, where women compete to be as thin as an A4 piece of paper (portrait, not landscape!).</p> <p>This obsession over thinness has led to increased concern over the negative health implications of these beauty ideals on women. Eg. documented in 2012 report "Seeking Thinspiration" / SGH reported a 3-fold increase in beauty/fashion-related eating disorders in 2012 / Many SG hospitals report a rising trend of such patients—a 2016 study by the KK Women's and Children's Hospital revealed that beauty-related</p>

	<p>eating disorders from as young as 9 or 10 years old has increased by a significant 10 per cent a year since 2008 when such patients were treated there</p>
<p>Para 8: Furthermore, the burden of unattainable beauty has far-reaching implications for women's economic well-being...expectations of physical beauty even impacts women economically through their workplaces. "Lookism," or the prejudice based on physical appearance and attractiveness, is an increasing problem.</p>	<p>Agree: According to renowned author Daniel Hamermesh, there are at least 3 reasons for the increasing problem of looks-based discrimination at the workplace. First, in service and sales industries, physical attractiveness could actually increase sales for the company because beautiful people are seen as more persuasive. A related reason is that customers prefer dealing with better-looking sales people. Finally, more attractive people tend to have more desirable personality traits, such as self-confidence and self-esteem—and this appeals to both employers and customers. The beauty premium appears to be pervasive in almost every occupation and industry, though it is higher in some than in others. In SG, this is especially applicable for younger women. A 2011 ST report affirms the presence of this traditional gender stereotype/trend in SG. Unlike their male counterparts, younger SG women are found to be valued especially for their looks/dressing, particularly in the finance, F&amp;B and retail sector.</p> <p>Certain companies may have dress codes, which is acceptable given the nature of the job or the industry (eg banking, corporate sales), or simply the need to look professional to impress clients. However, there are also companies who have a 'look policy', such as Abercrombie and Fitch, who in the 2000s was criticised for dictating everything from fingernail length to hair colour. It was also an open secret that the company hired salespeople, called "models", who were stylish, conventionally attractive, and often scantily clad. Male employees were hired specifically to work shirtless! In 2015, after much criticism, A &amp; F has since overhauled its look policy (no more shirtless men amongst other changes).</p> <p>Disagree: Given that SG society does value talent/experience over looks to some degree, this is more applicable to younger women, who may need to rely on their physical looks to climb the social/corporate ladder. Older women are less affected by lookism. Eg. the success stories of hotelier Ms Jennie Chua, Ms Olivia Lum of Hyflux, Ms Ho Ching of Temasek Holdings.</p> <p>Also, no one can be blamed for pursuing beauty especially when employers prize attractiveness highly. For example, the most popular aesthetic procedure globally is blepharoplasty, or double eyelid surgery as it helps them look less 'sleepy' and 'tired', which supports the popular view that bigger eyes equals more attractiveness. In a highly competitive society like South Korea, such aesthetic procedures are a matter of pragmatism, where attractiveness is a competitive advantage in the job market. The assumption employers make is that if you look like you can take care of yourself, then you can take care of your job. Cosmetic procedures are akin to getting a haircut.</p>



## Application Question Band Descriptors

<b>Band 1</b>  <b>8 – 10</b>	<b>1 REQUIREMENTS:</b> Systematic reference to the requirements of the question with evidence of a balanced treatment.
	<b>2 EXPLANATION:</b> Shows a good or very good understanding of terms and issues.
	<b>3 EVALUATION:</b> 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.
	<b>4 COHERENCE:</b> Very clear shape and paragraph organisation and cogent argument.
<b>Band 2</b>  <b>4 – 7</b>	<b>1 REQUIREMENTS:</b> Covers requirements of the question adequately but not necessarily a balanced treatment.
	<b>2 EXPLANATION:</b> Shows an adequate level of understanding of terms and issues (which may include minor distortion).
	<b>3 EVALUATION:</b> 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.
	<b>4 COHERENCE:</b> Paragraphing is sometimes helpful and there is a recognisable over-all shape to the answer; arguments are generally cogent.
<b>Band 3</b>  <b>1 – 3</b>	<b>1 REQUIREMENTS:</b> An incomplete and/or unbalanced treatment of the requirements.
	<b>2 EXPLANATION:</b> Shows very limited degree of understanding and a higher incidence of misinterpretation.
	<b>3 EVALUATION:</b> Tends to be a mere summary of restatement of the text with a few simple and undeveloped judgements, with very thin support.
	<b>4 COHERENCE:</b> Paragraphing and organisation are haphazard; arguments inconsistent or illogical.
<b>0</b>	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
<b>Band 1</b>  <b>12 – 15</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good to excellent linguistic ability: very few serious errors; only a few slips or minor errors.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Assured command of language: it is clear, fluent, effective and appropriate throughout.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Answers are cogent, concise and well organised. A wide variety of apt vocabulary is used and sentence structure is inventive, developed and appropriate.
	<input type="checkbox"/> There is a sustained attempt to rephrase the text language for all the answers.
<b>Band 2</b>  <b>8 – 11</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Good to very good linguistic ability: a number of errors of various kinds but they do not seriously impede the flow of the writing.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Competent command of language: the Candidate usually writes in convincing and idiomatic English, with some positive merits.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary and sentence structures are varied and appropriate but not necessarily outstanding.
	<input type="checkbox"/> There is a noticeable attempt to avoid the text language for all the answers.
<b>Band 3</b>  <b>4 – 7</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory / mediocre linguistic ability: errors of various kinds are frequent but the English is for the most part intelligible.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate command of language: the English is at times halting, repetitive and generally insecure.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Misuse of vocabulary and/or breakdown of syntax or grammar. Only simple statements attempted successfully.
	<input type="checkbox"/> There are recognisable but limited attempts to rephrase the text language in the answers.
<b>Band 4</b>  <b>1 – 3</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Weak linguistic ability: frequent and serious errors of various kinds, rendering the English muddled or unintelligible at times.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Very poor command of language.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Widespread misuse of vocabulary; sentence linking is inappropriate or haphazard.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Answers mostly comprise wholesale copying of the text language. Any attempts to use own language are limited to single word expressions.