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SERANGOON JUNIOR COLLEGE
JC2 Preliminary Examination 2017

GENERAL PAPER
Paper 2
INSERT

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28 August 2017
1 hour 30 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Insert contains the passage for Paper 2.

Write your **name** and **CG** in the spaces at the top of this page.

Submit the insert together with your answer booklet at the end of the examination.

Joel Stein considers the best and the worst traits of Millennials.

- 1 It is tempting to think of the millennials as lazy, entitled, selfish and shallow. Certainly, there have been complaints about the high incidence of narcissistic behaviour among them. Millennials received so many participation trophies growing up that a recent study showed that 40% believe they should be promoted every two years, regardless of performance. They are so convinced of their own greatness that they are disappointed when the world refuses to affirm how “great” they know they are. 5
- 2 Millennials consist of people born between 1980 and 2000. To put it more simply for them, the group is made up mostly of teens and 20-somethings. Each country's millennials are different, but because of globalisation, social media, the exporting of Western culture and the speed of change, millennials worldwide are more similar to one another than to older generations within their nations. Even in China, a generation as overconfident and self-involved as the Western one has been created. 10
- 3 The idea of the teenager started in the 1920s, where most of their social interactions were with adults in their family or in the workplace. Now that smartphones allow millennials to socialise at every hour – an average of 88 texts are sent a day – they are living under the constant influence of their friends. Never before in history have people been able to grow up and reach the early twenties so dominated by peers. To develop intellectually, an individual has to relate to older people and older things. It is no wonder that millennials are stunted. 15
- 4 In spite of their perceived immaturity, this is the most threatening and exciting generation not because they are trying to take over the Establishment, but because they are growing up without one. This is why millennials do not need us. While the Industrial Revolution has made baby boomers powerful – they could move to a city, start a business, and form organisations, the Information Revolution has further empowered millennials by handing them the technology to compete against huge organisations: hackers versus corporations, bloggers versus newspapers, YouTubers versus studios. 20
- 5 Millennials are interacting all day but almost entirely through a screen. They can be seen sitting next to one another and texting. They might look calm, but they are deeply anxious about missing out on something better. Seventy percent of them check their phones every hour, and many experience phantom pocket-vibration syndrome. That constant search for a hit of dopamine (when someone likes their status update or approves of their selfies from the dressing room) reduces creativity. Both a lack of face-to-face time and higher degrees of narcissism have similarly reduced empathy. Millennials are apathetic: they have less civic engagement and lower political participation than any previous group. Not only do they lack the kind of empathy that allows them to feel concerned for others, but they also have trouble even intellectually understanding others' points of view. 25 30
- 6 What they do understand is how to turn themselves into brands, with “friend” and “follower” tallies that serve as sales figures. As with most sales, positivity and confidence work best. According to W. Keith Campbell, a psychology professor at the University of Georgia, “People are inflating themselves like balloons on Facebook. If you do this well enough on Instagram, YouTube and Twitter, you can become a microcelebrity.” It is no wonder millennials are so fame-obsessed. 35
- 7 While it may be easy to write them off, this generation’s greatness should not be undermined by their shortcomings, but determined by how they react to the challenges that befall them. The millennials are passionate, inquisitive and challenging, and want to leave their mark on the world. On top of this, many of them are aware that they will be entering a changed world, one where their ideas, skills and talent will be valued from the start. 40
- 8 They are technologically adept, first of all. The millennials are technologically precocious, growing up with a rattle in one hand and a computer mouse in the other. They may have the least seniority but claim the most authority when it comes to technical support. They welcome change. Millennials are by nature well-suited for the unpredictable workplace of the future. They do not know enough to be prudent, and therefore attempt the impossible. They have less baggage – they get married later, and have children even later in life – and can therefore afford to take risks. 45
- 9 They think differently, unencumbered by years of education and experience which were once necessary to succeed, but are now increasingly seen as irrelevant, even a liability. Young companies, born on the

- right side of the digital divide, are running circles around their older, richer, slower rivals. For a company to think outside the box, why not learn by working with people who do not know there is a box? 50
- 10 They are independent. One of the most pervasive business trends of the past decade has been the rise of the free agent, caused both by the breakdown of the social contract between companies and employees, and by the growing share in the workforce of knowledge workers with portable skills. The millennials came of age as that social contract was dissolving. They have never expected loyalty from a company, nor have they expected to give it. They define themselves by their skills, not the firm they work for. The overwhelming majority of graduates see their career at graduation not as a straight line of advancement in one company but as a zigzag path from company to company, job to job, skill to skill. 55
- 11 They are entrepreneurial. With a booming economy, capital for the taking and an unprecedented technological opportunity, it is no surprise that more have been striking out on their own. This is not just the bravado of callow youth: by the time they enter university, most teenagers already know far more about the business world than their parents ever did. The signs of this business precociousness are everywhere. Universities used to tell students to go out and get experience in the workplace, learning at someone's expense, before thinking about starting their own firms. Now they run on-campus Incubators for the shrinking number of students that have postponed entrepreneurship long enough to go to college at all. The oracle of trend-spotting, Vanity Fair, has had to coin a new word to capture the phenomenon: "Enfantpreneurs". 60 65
- 12 We are in the middle of a changing of the guard. The millennials are moving from the shadows to the spotlight in the workplace, thanks to a convergence of forces that play to their strength – from technology to the pace of change to the tearing down of the traditional corporate order. Indeed, they are our future. They are pragmatic idealists, tinkerers more than dreamers, life hackers. They are everything that is good as well as bad about the world. They are our own children, yet they are also the little-understood enemy. They are super-predators and they are lost lambs. They are the problem – and the solution. They will, for better or worse, inherit the earth. 70

Adapted from "Millennials: The Me Me Me Generation" and "Bright Young Things"

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