

2017 GP Prelims P2 Suggested Answer Scheme

1. According to the author, why will adults who practise the exhortation “Never Lie!” (line 2) be “labelled a misfit” (line 4)? *Use your own words as far as possible. (2m)*

Lift	Paraphrase
While the “Never Lie!” exhortation may be an ideal that well-meaning adults feel obligated to endorse, especially in the presence of children, anyone who attempts to practise it today will be immediately labelled a misfit. The truth of the matter is that honesty no longer paves the way to a brilliant career or a purposeful life . Instead, lying has become the new norm because it gets people to places and brings societies the quick successes they crave . (lines 2 – 7)	<p>Such adults are labelled a misfit because it</p> <p>i) contradicts / clashes with / is the opposite of the workings of the modern world (do not accept ‘fit’)</p> <p>ii) telling the truth does not enable one to excel in one’s vocation...</p> <p>iii) ...or live a meaningful life</p> <p>iv) dishonesty is the latest trend</p> <p>v) that allows / facilitates / satisfies people’s ambition / aspiration/ yearning / craving for higher social status / stations on life and</p> <p>vi) the swift / rapid accomplishment of goals / achievement / triumph / victory that countries yearn / long for.</p> <p><i>Note: ½ m per point; any 4 for 2 m. Allow the lifting of ‘social’</i></p>

2. “Welcome to the twenty-first century – a world where strands of truth and deceit are ridiculously spun to cloak inadequacies, camouflage intentions and shield their weavers from responsibilities and repercussions!” (lines 7 – 9).

What is the author’s tone in the above statement? Identify two words from the statement to explain his tone. (2m)

Welcome to the twenty-first century – a world where strands of truth and deceit are ridiculously spun to cloak inadequacies, camouflage intentions and shield their weavers from responsibilities and repercussions! (lines 7 – 9)	<p>Tone: Caustic / sarcastic / scathing / derisive / sardonic / scornful / highly critical / mocking / sardonic (1m)</p> <p>Identification of two words to explain his tone: The author uses the word ‘welcome’ to what is otherwise a world filled with deceit (1/2) and ‘ridiculously’ spun to indicate the absurdity / ludicrousness of the extent of lying in the world today. (1/2)</p>
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	<p>OR</p> <p>The use of the terms 'cloak', 'camouflage' and 'shield' indicate the author's criticism against the deliberate weaving of material / garment to cover one's imperfections / flaws. This is similar to how lies are weaved to disguise shortfalls, real objectives/agenda and protect the perpetrators of lies.</p> <p>Note: Students need to choose any 2 of 5 words and briefly explain how <u>each of the words</u> chosen convey the author's tone.</p>
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3. Using material from paragraphs 2 and 3 only, summarise the author's observations about the pervasiveness of lies in the political and business arenas. Write your summary in no more than 120 words, not counting the opening words which are printed below. *Use your own words as far as possible.* (8m)

Lying has become a norm in modern society because...

s/n	Point from passage	Paraphrased
1	not only are most politicians well-versed in the art of weaving truths ,	not only are most politicians adept/competent/masterful in the art (allow lift) skill/technique of fabricating lies/falsehood/distorting facts
2	politics has mutated into a showdown of wit	politics has been modified/altered into a battle/confrontation/conflict of repartee/drollery/facetiousness
3	and rhetoric	and eloquence/oratory
4	Unscrupulous politicians could not care less about the truth	Dishonest/Unprincipled politicians are not concerned about/focused on/ paying heed/attention to the truth (allow lift)/ veracity/authenticity/accuracy of facts
5	They churn out a mix of titillating insinuations	They produce/create/make (at a fast rate) a mix (allow lift) combination/blend of rousing/exciting/provocative allegations/accusations
6	and incredulous speculations	and dubious/ unconvincing conjectures/ guesswork/suppositions
7	and reinforce them with arresting visuals	and fortify/strengthen/ them with eye-catching/striking visuals (allow lift)
8	to keep audiences spellbound	to keep the public/masses riveted/enthralled mesmerized

9	and attract the highest votes	and garner the most number of votes (allow lift)
10	Elected to office, the best ‘spin doctors’	After being voted in, the most outstanding/leading propagandists/marketing experts/ publicists
11	rely even more heavily on their public relations machinery	depend on/count on even more heavily (allow lift) self-promotion tactics/ploys/manipulation
12	Styling themselves after larger-than-life pop stars and magicians, they stage grand appearances where they crow about spectacular economic rebounds and the imminent abolition of poverty and environmental woes	The politicians have over-promised what they can do in solving the world’s intractable/ troublesome problems/challenges the moment they are voted in (inferred)
13	As facts continue to play second fiddle	The truth remains in a subordinate role/does not really matter,
14	good governance slips deeper into the realm of the sensible citizen’s imagination	good governance (allow life) gradually becomes elusive /difficult to discern (inferred)
15	Branding is now the heart of any business	Branding is currently the center/core/crux/quintessence of any business
16	and skillful marketing built upon evocative narratives	and ingenious/adroit/competent marketing dependent on/reliant on vivid/powerful narratives (allow lift) / accounts
17	and glowing reviews	and complimentary/laudatory/favourable appraisals / assessment /evaluation (reward either point 29 or this)
18	is the invisible hand that sends products flying from manufacturing plants into consumers’ homes . Given its ability to drive phenomenal sales ,	that entail free market forces that drive consumption/purchase of goods OR Given its potential/capability/propensity to impel precipitate remarkable/ astonishing sales
19	story-telling has become an indispensable tool	untruthfulness, dishonesty/ deceit has become essential/ necessary/crucial/vital
20	and valued more highly than product development in the business playbook.	and more prized/cherished than improving on the quality of products (allow lift)
21	To see how it works, we just need to study the globalised obsession with smart devices	This is evidently displayed in the worldwide mania/craze with smart devices (allow lift)
22	Seemingly innocuous seconds-long advertisements	Supposedly/ superficially harmless messages
23	implant in our subconscious mind	are inserted/put into our subliminal/unconscious
24	a fervent desire to own not just any smart phone, tablet or watch, but the latest version	to possess/own the most advanced gadgets (inferred)

25	Given such allegiance ,				Given such loyalty/ fidelity ,										
26	is it surprising that businesses built on deceit are commonplace				It is expected that businesses built on duplicity / deception / fraud are everywhere										
27	and thriving ?				and flourishing/growing/proliferating										
28	As long as businesses package their narratives prettily				As long as businesses package their narratives (allow lift)/ sales pitches/marketing campaigns attractively/ captivatingly/ in a beguiling/bewitching manner										
29	and sidestep complaints daintily ,				and avoid/evade/dodge customers' grievances/ accusations smoothly/adroitly/skillfully										
30	gullible consumers will continue to mire themselves				credulous /overly trusting/naïve consumers will remain enmeshed /embroiled in/tangled up										
31	in a ruinous cycle of purchases and loans				in a disastrous/catastrophic cycle of consumption and borrowing/debt										
1 - 2 points					1	3- 4 points		2	5 - 6 points		3	7 - 8 points		4	
9 -11 points					5	12 - 14 points		6	15 - 17 points		7	18 + points		8	

4. According to the author in paragraph 4, how has the role of statistics changed? Use your own words as far as possible. (2m)

Lift	Paraphrase
In their hands, statistics is no longer a tool for honest analysis or social progress but a mere numbers game to “prove” their assertions. (lines 43 – 45)	<p>i) it used to be / Instead of being an instrument for the proper and truthful investigation / survey of society,</p> <p>ii) statistics are now manipulated / wielded by the authorities / those with influence / capability</p> <p>iii) to create / give suspicious / unreliable / disputable support for their questionable claims / references.</p> <p>Note: 1 – 2 points = 1m; all 3 points = 2m</p>

5. “The disillusioned even declare their hairdressers and the man-in-the-street to be twice as trustworthy as any government official or business leader.” (lines 36 – 38)

Explain the irony in the above statement. *Use your own words as far as possible.* (2m)

Ans: Most people would be **expected to** put their trust in government and societal leaders as they are deemed to be more educated / better equipped to deal with global and domestic issues than the layman. **However, in this case, some people actually believe** what the layman (i.e. someone who is clearly without relevant knowledge on global and domestic issues) says to be true. This speaks volumes about their utter lack of faith in these governmental and societal leaders.

6. Why does the author liken the online hunt for truth to “the proverbial search for a needle in a haystack” (lines 57 – 58)? *Use your own words as far as possible.* (2m)

Lifted	Inference
The online hunt for truth is similar to the proverbial search for a needle in a haystack. (lines 57 – 58)	<p><u>Explain the metaphor</u></p> <p>To search for a needle in a haystack refers to the arduous and almost impossible task of locating something miniscule among a huge quantity of items. (1m)</p> <p>AND</p> <p><u>Explain the writer’s intention(must have context)</u></p> <p>The writer compares the online search for truth to the search for a needle in the haystack to illustrate/show/emphasize/highlight the near impossibility/futility of the task due to the glut/vast amounts of information in cyberspace (1m).</p>

7. According to the author, what is the role of “conscientious journalists who make up the Fourth Estate” (lines 59 – 60)? *Use your own words as far as possible.* (2m)

Lifted	Paraphrase
There is a silver lining amidst the dark clouds: conscientious journalists who make up the Fourth Estate and continue the crusade. They are our bulwark against encroaching falsehood , the bastion of truth for whom accuracy and objectivity are not mere mantras to be chanted. (lines 59 – 62)	<p>i) They are our defence / cover / protection / shield / safeguard against lies / deceit sneaking / impinging / intruding / invading us</p> <p>ii) They are the stronghold / mainstay / support of truth</p> <p>iii) They practise and not just preach veracity / exactitude and neutrality / neutralism / non-partisanship in information management</p> <p>Note: 1 – 2 points = 1m ; all 3 points = 2m</p>

8. The author repeats the word “every” three times in lines 62 – 63. What is the purpose of the repetition? (1m)

Lifted	Inference
Every news idea is grounded in extensive research, every lead verified through rigorous interviews and every morsel of information scrupulously corroborated to distil partiality from facts. (lines 62 – 64)	The repetition of the word ‘every’ is for emphasis ; it is to highlight how the author believes and holds the Press and the reporters in high regard for their exacting standards in news reporting, and inadvertently showing us his unquestioning trust in the Press.

9. Identify and explain one metaphor used in Paragraph 7. Use your own words as far as possible. (2m)

Lifted	Inference
Truth is important in and of itself: it is gold that has been painstakingly panned from the sediments of time and experience by generations. (lines 70 – 71)	Truth is compared to gold . (1m) Similar to gold panning which is a laborious/tedious process taken to extract gold from alluvial deposit by gently agitating the deposit in water and allowing the gold to sink to the bottom of the pan for later collection, the distillation / panning of truth is an equally tedious / arduous process. Hence, truth is as valuable as gold as it is also extracted/distilled with great effort . (1m)
Today, we sorely need the scrupulous to shine a beacon through the apocalyptic fog of manipulation, lies and deceit, and light our way to this forgotten trove (lines 73 – 75)	Truth is compared to a beacon . (1m) Similar to how a beacon illuminates the darkness/ignorance, truth makes it possible for people to have knowledge of clear facts through the web of cataclysmic exploitative manoeuvring falsehood / deception / falsification / misrepresentation. (1m) OR The environment of falsehood/lies/deceit is compared to the fog . (1m) Just as how a fog obscures vision, falsehood/lies/deceit would act as a veil to prevent us from seeing the truth.(1m)
“Truth is the property of no individual but is the treasure of all men.”	Truth is compared to treasure . (1m) Similar to how treasure is valuable or is seen as valued property, honesty or truth should be an equally cherished virtue in this world. (1m)

10. Explain what the author means by “falsehood flies, and truth comes limping after it.” (line 77) Use your own words as far as possible. (2m)

Lifted	Inferred
Falsehood flies, and truth comes limping after it.	Lies/fake news spreads at great speed (1m) while facts are disseminated at a much slower speed and fail to catch on. (1m) OR Lies/fake news is often more interesting than the truth(1m)and people would be more attracted to lies/fake news than facts/objective information. (1m) OR Falsehood becomes viral (1m) and truth is dealt a heavy blow/crippled by mistruths. (1m)

Application Question

11. Hans Affleck shares his worries about the pervasiveness of lies in the world today. How far would you agree with his observations?

Refer to specific material from the passage as well as your own observations of your society to illustrate and justify your points. (10m)

Question Requirements

R1: How far would you agree with his observations?

- Candidates need to identify the main arguments and concerns in the article, evaluate them, and decide the extent to which they are agreeable with.
- As prompted by the phrasing of the question, candidates should not completely agree or disagree with the writer's points. The candidate's position must be presented in a clear and qualified thesis in the introduction, while assessing the writer's views holistically.
- In the content paragraphs, candidates have to refer to specific material from the passage. The candidate can consider some of these appropriate areas for evaluation:
 - a) the writer's **thesis**, especially the understanding of the term *pervasiveness* as an unwelcome influence or physical effect that is widespread throughout an area or a group of people;
 - b) **specific ideas** associated to the thesis;
 - c) **credibility** of the **substantiation** used to support the writer's claims.
- The candidates should explain the reasons for agreeing/disagreeing with the specific point. Students are encouraged to logically consider the following: the assumptions made by Hans Affleck, the adequacy of the evidence he provided, the conclusions drawn from his claims and so forth.

R2: Refer to specific material from the passage as well as your own observations of your society to illustrate and justify your points.

- If the candidate believes that the writer's perspective reflects what is happening in his/her society, proper justification has to be provided and supplemented by relevant examples.
- If the candidate believes that the writer's point is not reflective of his/her society, reasons have to be produced to defend this opinion. Candidates should also be mindful that even if they are unable to perceive the trend of pervasive lying through their personal experiences, that does not preclude the idea that Singaporeans, in general, welcome a culture of lying as a quick means of success. This does not mean that Singapore is a haven for liars either, but candidates have to make a reasoned case based on what they observe in society. Students have to be aware of checking their "blind spots".
- While applying the writer's arguments to the candidate's society, he/she could consider:
 - i) Is the pervasiveness of lying observable in your society or the incidences are more sporadic in nature?
 - ii) What are the similarities and differences identified in Affleck's version of society and the candidate's observations?
 - iii) Could Affleck's views be only partly reflective of the candidate's society?

Text references	<u>Evaluation and Explanation</u> <i>I would agree with Affleck's observations on the pervasiveness of lies in the world today to a large extent as they are reflective of the situation and experiences in my society</i>	<u>Evaluation and Explanation</u> <i>I would disagree with Affleck's observations on the pervasiveness of lies in the world today as they are largely unfounded / not reflective of the situation and experiences in my society</i>
<p><u>Paragraph 1</u></p> <p>Honesty is the best policy, or so claims the universal adage that every school-going child has been taught to chant and uphold. Instead, lying has become the new norm because it gets people to places, and brings societies the quick successes they crave. ... a world where strands of truth and deceit are ridiculously spun to cloak inadequacies, camouflage intentions and shield their weavers from responsibilities and repercussions!</p>	<p>There is a creeping trend of high-profile leaders using deceit and misinformation to attain quick success. A sizeable premium is placed on expediency (as enabled by lies), rather than working honestly and patiently to raise funds and build trust. For instance, religious leaders are entrusted by their devotees to serve the organization in the best interests for all. Yet, deceit is indeed employed for material gain and to fulfill vested interests at times.</p>	<p>Deceit may play an increasingly important role to build up one's career in a very competitive environment, but Singapore has a zero-tolerance policy for this form of unethical manipulation. Three top scientists in Singapore were found to have committed research fraud in 2011 and 2012 (Lin, 2016). While it was undetected, their research was hailed as a breakthrough in the fight against diseases such as obesity and diabetes. Eventually, their posts were terminated by the local universities and one PhD was revoked. The heavy punishment reflects the honest research culture that the government is at pains to nurture in Singapore to keep attracting the best and the brightest in research talent.</p>
<p><u>Paragraph 2</u></p> <p>There is no better evidence of this phenomenon than what is happening in the political realm: not only are most politicians well-versed in the art of weaving truths, politics has mutated into a showdown of wit and rhetoric.</p>	<p>It is increasingly observable in the political realm that more leaders have mastered the art of persuasion to some extent. They are willing to tell the people what they want to hear to secure their votes. Edelman found that a high percentage (48 percent) will support politicians they trust to make things better for the respondent and the respondent's family, even if these politicians exaggerate (Goh, 2017). Hence, the general public can be partial towards arguments favouring them, even if the truth is "weaved" to a degree.</p>	<p>In general, politics is not seen as a mere exercise in rhetoric. Singapore's rapid transformation from a third-world to a first-world country was buttressed by a government that worked tirelessly to bring substantive benefit to its people. Lee Kuan Yew bequeathed an admirable legacy of an ethical and incorruptible leadership within the PAP (Mahbubani, 2016). Mr Lee firmly believed in "a public opinion which censures and condemns corrupt persons" and urged his government to live up to his high standards.</p>
<p><u>Paragraph 3</u></p> <p>Branding is now the heart of any business, and skilful marketing built upon evocative narratives and glowing reviews is the invisible hand that sends products flying from</p>	<p>Modern branding is highly successful in tempting consumers to open up their wallets and make purchases of items and services that they may not necessarily be able to afford. More people are found to be having difficulties in paying off their debts (Chong, 2015). In 2015, 85,352 people had missed two or</p>	<p>Truthfulness in branding remains a highly-valued asset in Singapore. The Singapore Prestige Brand Award (SPBA), jointly organized by the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises and the Lianhe Zaobao, is an acknowledgement of local businesses' honest efforts to deliver quality products and services. The SPBA's</p>

<p>manufacturing plants into consumers' homes. As long as they package their narratives prettily and sidestep complaints daintily, gullible consumers will continue to mire themselves in a ruinous cycle of purchases and loans.</p>	<p>more months of payment on their credit facilities in June. This was a rise in 10 per cent on the same period in 2014. These debts were accumulated from the facilities of credit cards, overdrafts and personal loans. "As Singaporeans get more affluent, they have few qualms over borrowing money to spend, and the interest-free instalment plans on higher-value purchases (using credit cards) give them the feeling that it's not borrowing," said Mr Christopher Tan, chief executive of fee-based financial advisory firm Provident.</p>	<p>evaluation process let nominated companies learn from industry practitioners and experts, perpetuating a virtuous culture. "Heritage brands" are honoured for building trust across generations. "Evocative narratives" are insufficient in building customer loyalty if faith in its quality is not cultivated. In Singapore, business truthfulness and integrity is taken seriously.</p>
<p><u>Paragraph 4</u></p> <p>The perpetuation of lies is made possible by two threats to modern society: a distrust of the very leaders and institutions who have been entrusted with its care and a sea change in the way information is disseminated to the public.</p> <p>In their hands, statistics is no longer a tool for honest analysis or social progress but a mere numbers game to "prove" their assertions.</p>	<p>Among informed members of the public, Singapore is the fifth most trusted nation as measured by the 2017 Edelman Trust Barometer Index (Goh, 2017). Yet, there was a noticeable decline in the trust in government (69 percent and 5-point drop from the previous year) and local media (54 percent and 6-point drop). It was observed that the local public was perceptibly feeling that their concerns were not met and consequently, there is a lack of faith in the government and media's credibility. Caught in the global wave, Singapore is not immune to the impact of populism. The top three issues concerning Singapore respondents are immigration, globalization and pace of innovation. These are underpinned by a protectionist or nationalist mindset, as a significant proportion believes that there is a need to prioritize the interests of the country over the rest of the world.</p>	<p>A culture of honesty remains the most credible defence against populist tendencies. Over time, the government can build up trust to take on unpopular, yet essential initiatives to meet new challenges. Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Tharman Shanmugaratnam noted that the 2016 populist upsets were driven by an anti-globalization wave, which subsequently dampened the enthusiasm for global cooperation (Yong, 2017). Mr Tharman offered a correction and argued that we should not unduly attribute the fault to globalization, but focus on accurate and effective domestic policy responses.</p>
<p><u>Paragraph 5</u></p> <p>Society would not be so easily enmeshed in the web of deceit if not for accomplices such as the Internet and the services it spawns.</p> <p>Even though Facebook and other forms of social media profess to filter news according to user sensibilities, they are poor moderators of</p>	<p>Accessing the Internet has become a daily ritual to the vast majority of Singaporeans. This leaves us prone to the incursion of misinformation and malicious fake news planted to lead the gullible user astray. Singapore has witnessed a disturbingly rising trend in this form of "warfare". The Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. K. Shanmugam, accused the socio-political website, The Online Citizen, of publishing a series of inflammatory reports in 2016 that alleged police misconduct while investigating a minor, Benjamin Lim (Ng</p>	<p>There is hope that Singapore is or will be less vulnerable to the attacks by fake news. The Media Literacy Council works with schools to train critical thinkers, drive positive and responsible behavior on new media platforms and spearhead projects to influence their peers and the community. The Council advises the government on recent trends and make appropriate policy recommendations. It develops public awareness programmes to sensitise the public towards the threat of fake news.</p>

<p>what is genuine or malicious.</p>	<p>& Foo, 2016). There was an assumption made by the news website that the police lied about their behaviour, they intimidated the student and pressured him to confess to a crime that he did not commit. These actions were direct actions that led to Benjamin's suicide. If the falsified reports went unchallenged, they would have sullied the reputation of our local law enforcement agencies.</p>	
<p><u>Paragraph 6</u> There is a silver lining amidst the dark clouds: conscientious journalists who make up the fourth estate. They are our bulwark against encroaching falsehood, the bastion of truth for whom accuracy and objectivity are not mere mantras to be chanted.</p>	<p>There is discernible support in research conducted by independent research companies and the government to assess the trustworthiness of the Press in terms of public consciousness. Over the past six years, it has been found that for the general population in Singapore, search engines and traditional media remain the channels of choice to find information (Goh, 2017). Readers have reacted positively to traditional media like The Straits Times and the New Paper in terms of their editorial leadership, editorial style and format. This has been contrasted to a decline in trust for online or social media.</p>	<p>There are serious constraints that the local online and offline media outlets face in Singapore to creditably serve as a “bulwark” or a “bastion”. It may be an ideal but it is not one that works well in Singapore. For example, we have the Newspaper and Printing Presses Act, the Defamation Act, the Internal Security Act (ISA) and the Sedition Act are legal tools to curb the publication of materials that the government deems objection.</p>
<p><u>Paragraph 7</u> Truth is important in and of itself: it is gold that has been painstakingly panned from the sediments of time and experience by generations. Its extrinsic value is clearly integral in modern human societies, be it in justice, trade, ethics or government.</p>	<p>The pervasiveness of lying is a demonstrable menace in Singapore and there is an urgency in the fight to ensure truthfulness in public discourse. New laws to regulate Singapore’s online space and tackle the spread of fake news are expected to be introduced in 2018. The government’s goal is “to achieve working with technological platforms to delegitimise fake news, to help people identify what is fake news.” The government identifies that misinformation is more serious now than before, and is an “easy and effective” way to advance alternative and possibly malicious agendas.</p>	

<p><u>Paragraph 8</u></p> <p>Factual integrity is the most valuable legacy we can leave to our future generations in today's world where falsehood flies, and truth comes limping after it.</p>	<p>The Singapore government runs the Factually webpage to clarify falsehoods that have attracted enough public interest (Lee, 2017). In early 2017, the website put out two articles to clarify why a goods and services tax is applied to the water conservation tax, while the other explained why the Housing Board had restricted lift company Sigma from tendering for new projects in 2015. The government makes strenuous efforts to ensure that honest communication of the rationale and implementation of its policies takes place.</p>	
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