

VJC 2017 PRELIM GP Paper 2

Suggested Answer Scheme

From Passage 1

1. What is implied about millennials by the phrase 'somebody should write a biography of me'? [1]

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
'somebody should write a biography of me'	<p>The implication is that millennials <u>seem to think their actions/deeds/lives are of great significance to the point that they should be recorded</u> in a book/biography. OR</p> <p>They think the story of their lives/they are so important that <u>other people will want to read</u> or know about them.</p> <p>Answer should clearly demonstrate an understanding of the significance of biographies. Answers that mention 'worth listening to' or recognition are not enough.</p>

Markers' Comments:

Many students did not realise they needed to link their answer to the significance of biographies. They gave generic answers about how millennials had over-inflated egos, were arrogant etc.

2. Explain the significance of the word 'too' in line 6.

[1]

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
They are materialistic, too.	<p>To show that millennials have many faults/flaws in addition to what was listed in the preceding paragraph/not just materialistic.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>To show that materialism is just one of their many flaws.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>To show that on top of narcissism, they are also materialistic, which is like a nail in the coffin. (1m)</p>

Markers' Comments:

Most students were able to get the correct answer.

3. Why would Ms Twenge fret about the millennials (line 10)? Use your own words as far as possible.

[2m]

From the passage	Suggested Answer
The millennials expectations of life are so out of kilter with reality that 'they will probably get less of what they want than any previous generation,' frets Ms Twenge.	<p>She frets about the millennials because:</p> <p>(a) what they want out of life/goals in life</p> <p>(b) are so out of touch with reality/unrealistic/unrealistically ambitious</p> <p>(c) that she thinks they might eventually actually</p>

	achieve/obtain/gather less (d) than preceding/earlier generations. 1-2 pts 1 m, 3-4 pts 2m.
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Markers' Comments:

There was a tendency for some students to paraphrase irrelevant characteristics of millennials or try to link their answer to how millennials lacked morals and were willing to do anything for the sake of materialism.

4. What does the phrase 'a number made pilgrimages to the store to take defiant selfies outside' (line 15) tell you about the reaction of young Beijingers to the officials? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2]

From the passage	Suggested Answer
'a number made pilgrimages to the store to take defiant selfies outside'	<p>Answer must address the implication about the <u>reaction</u> of young Beijingers towards the officials.</p> <p>(a) Young Beijingers went out of their way/were willing to inconvenience themselves/took the trouble to journey to the store (1m)</p> <p>(b) to mock/challenge/oppose/antagonise/thumb their noses at the authorities/express a rebellious attitude (1m)</p> <p>Note: The explanation of 'pilgrimage' needs to be in context. It is not about religion per se.</p> <p>Defiant must be paraphrased correctly. 'Treated it like a joke' is too vague, 'making fun of the authorities' will not be accepted. Mock is accepted because one of the definitions of mock is to defy.</p>

Markers' Comments:

Many students got the mark for paraphrasing defiant but most did not get the second mark which necessitated explaining pilgrimages in context. The students tended to give generic answers about making trips or tried to explain how the trips were religious or akin to religious trips. The correct paraphrase hinges on how the young Beijingers were willing to go out of their way/take the trouble to make such trips (just as going on a pilgrimage takes a special effort of will)

5. In paragraph 4, the author describes how millennials are adapting to the 'circumstances of a changing world' (line 17). Give **two** examples of how millennials are doing this and why. **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2]

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
They flit from job to job not because they are fickle but because job security is a thing of the past .	They move from job to job/change jobs often to cope with their understanding that jobs these days might not last forever/employment insecurity.
They demand flexible work hours and work-life balance because they know they don't have to be in the office to be productive.	They lobby/actively word towards more alternatives to regular working schedules for work-life harmony because they know that the best/most meaningful

<p>Their enthusiasm for new ideas (and lack of spare cash) has kick-started money-saving technologies from Uber to Whatsapp.</p> <p>They take longer to settle down and have children, but so what? They will also be working far later in life than their parents did.</p>	<p>work might no longer be done in the confines of the office.</p> <p>Millennials have less money, so they come up with/develop money-saving technology</p> <p>They marry and have children later/prolong the time they take to start families because they know that they will retire later/are aware that their working years will definitely be extended.</p> <p>Any 2, 2m Markers will accept only the first two examples if more are given. For those who conflate 2 or 3 points into 1, it will be taken as 1 point not 2.</p> <p><i>Note: Examples must clearly reflect the circumstances of a changing world for the mark to be awarded. 'They spend 6 hours a day online because that is how they work, and also how they relax' is not a relevant answer because this material does not fully address the circumstances of a changing world well.</i></p>
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Markers' Comments:

Students were usually able to identify the points but ended up corrupting many of them when paraphrasing. One example would be how the issue of lack of job security was paraphrased as job security/stability being unimportant or being unfashionable. Several students who identified the point about money-saving apps were not able to link it to millennials lacking money (which was the impetus for creating such apps).

6. Explain the reason for beginning paragraph 5 with the question "What will the world be like when today's young people are in charge?" [1]

From the passage	Suggested Answer
What will the world be like when today's young people are in charge?	<p>To acknowledge that there are differing views about young people's ability to lead. OR To get readers to think about the possibilities of a reality in the future governed by young leaders. OR To set the tone and introduce the topic of millennial leadership for the rest of the paragraph.</p> <p><i>Accept any sensible answer that has adequate elaboration and explanation, but it must have the context of the future or millennials. (1m)</i></p>

Markers' Comments:

Most students were able to answer this question correctly.

7. Why has the author placed the sentence 'he denies wrongdoing' (lines 30-31) in brackets? [1]

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
the current prime minister has given a confusing explanation of why nearly 700 million U.S. dollars was found in his bank accounts (he denies wrongdoing) lines 29-31	<p>The writer wants to clarify/to make clear what the "confusing explanation" means.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>It is the writer's retort regarding the denial made by the prime minister. He finds it implausible/does not believe in the prime minister's explanation.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>He is implying that the PM's denial is suspicious.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>It is a tongue-in-cheek jibe at the PM's claim that he is innocent.</p>

Markers' Comments:

There was a tendency for many students to mechanically repeat the answer to the 2012 A-level Compre question on brackets (i.e. claiming the author does so to include a piece of information that was not relevant to the main argument) Students need to understand that there is no standard template for answering questions on language/punctuation use and they have to explain their answers in context.

8. Explain why oversensitivity is 'vastly preferable to the segregation of yesteryear' (lines 39-40)? [1]

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
	<p>Oversensitivity is seen to be the lesser of two evils/less harmful/ is better than the racial divide in the past. (1)</p> <p>Answer must show a comparison of present-past behaviour.</p>

Markers' Comments:

The question only required students to explain that while oversensitivity was bad in a mild sort of way (i.e. annoying, inconvenient, etc), it was still much better than the overt racism or harm to society caused by segregation. Many students ended up paraphrasing oversensitivity and segregation wrongly as well as attributing all sorts of irrelevant motives and explanations to both issues (e.g. oversensitivity aims to build an inclusive society, segregation results in some people not talking to others)

From Passage 2

9. Using material from paragraphs 2 to 4 only (lines 4-29), summarise what the author has to say about the millennials' attitudes towards work and their reasons for holding such attitudes. 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.**

	From the Passage	Suggested Answer
a	lukewarm work ethic (line 9)	They have an unenthusiastic/indifferent attitude
b	ambitious aspirations (line 9)	Millennials have lofty goals/set their sights high
c	much of Gen Y has been persuaded – (line 9)	Millennials have been convinced
d	first by overprotective parents, then by grade inflation and the unrealistic promises from universities (line 10)	by various/different sources
e	that their high expectations would eventually translate into actual achievements (line 11)	That their hopes/dreams would finally be realised/come to fruition.
f	no surprise that millennials are less interested in working hard to achieve them (line 12)	Millennials dislike excessive work/shy away from work (Note the subtle difference to point "a" about being lukewarm)
g	millennials have bought into the idea that the cause of success is high self-belief ; (lines 13)	Millennials are convinced that confidence in themselves will get them results/get the job done
h	not discipline (lines 13-14)	They do not prize/value self-control
i	self-knowledge (line 14)	(They do not prize) self-reflexivity/understanding of the self
j	Humility (line 14)	(They do not prize) modesty
k	This keeps their hopes in their (self-perceived) talents intact , (line 14)	Millennials remain deluded,
l	as if sooner or later their exceptional potential will be discovered, (line 15)	Thinking someone will realise their immense/great talents
m	even if they don't devote much time to harness it (16)	Even though they do not bother to develop themselves/polish their abilities
n	millennials are seen as hard to motivate ,	It seems difficult to inspire millennials

	(line 16)	
o	but more passionate about their work (line 16)	But they are more enthusiastic about their work/they are more driven
p	The answer is that Gen Y sees work as less central to their lives (line 19)	They do not see work as critical/vital to their existence
q	they value work-life- balance more than other generations do (line 20)	They think it is important to have an equilibrium between work and their personal time
R	this makes millennials' demands and standards lower (line 21)	Millennials do not expect/desire much
s	when you see work as "just making a living " (line 21)	They think work is simply/nothing but a way to earn money/make ends meet
T	you expect to find meaning in other areas of life (line 22)	Millennials look for fulfilment in various other sectors
u	such as education , (line 22)	such as studying/learning
v	relationships (line 22)	personal connections/bonding with others
w	or hobbies (line 22)	pastimes/leisure activities
x	Millennials believe in fun rather than work (line 23)	Millennials prize enjoyment over work
y	and, accordingly, they expect to have fun at work (line 23)	They want to enjoy themselves/have a good time while working
z	Even among millennials, only a minority of people are fully engaged at work (line 26)	(inferred) Millennials do not concentrate on their work

N.B. The first point of the summary should be an attitude so that it matches the opening words.

1-2pts=1m, 3-4=2m, 5-6=3m, 7-8=4m, 9-10=5m, 11-12=6m, 13-14=7m, 15 and more=8m

Markers' Comments:

- There was a tendency for students to combine points and hence lose the essence of one or more points
- Point 'a' and point 'f' need to be sufficiently differentiated.
Point 'a' is about work ethic/attitude. Point 'b' is about not wanting to work to achieve one's goals.
- For point 'L', many students did not have the context of talents being discovered/recognised.
- For point 'o', passion was often wrongly paraphrased as 'interested in work'
- For point 'q', 'balance' was frequently lifted.
- For points 'x' and 'y', 'fun' was not paraphrased.

10. Explain the contradiction in the phrase 'disposable friends' (line 34).

[2]

From the passage	Suggested Answer
<p>Their main ambition is to broadcast themselves, even if it requires collecting disposable friends</p>	<p>The contradiction in the phrase arises from the millennials view of friends as being expedient/ expendable instead of people whom they can have an enduring/sustained bond.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>They do not see permanence in their friendship, once their friends are of no more use for them, they are discarded.</p> <p>The contradiction must be addressed and shown explicitly. E.g. The students should show that the idea of friendship is directly contradicted by or at odds with 'disposable'.</p> <p>No marks will be awarded for simply defining both terms. 'Insignificant' is not accepted as a paraphrase for disposable.</p>

Markers' Comments:

Some students merely listed the definition of friends followed by the definition of disposable. Students need to explicitly state that the notion of friendship is at odds with the notion of being disposable and that it is a contradiction because one does not expect that friendship is something easily cast aside.

11. What does the author mean when he calls narcissism "exhibitionism and attention seeking, but camouflaged as sociability" (lines 40-41). Use your own words as far as possible.

[2]

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
<p>narcissism...is the main explanation for the apparent extraversion of millennials – it is exhibitionism and attention-seeking, but camouflaged as sociability lines 40-41</p>	<p>When the author describes millennial as narcissists, he wants to make clear to his readers that their gregarious/friendly behaviour is nothing more than a cover/a facade (1) for their desire to be noticed/seen by people. (1)</p> <p>Students need to paraphrase 'camouflaged' correctly. Facade, false front, disguise, etc. are accepted. If students merely state that they seem or appear to be sociable, that is not acceptable.</p>

Markers' Comments:

Some students did not paraphrase 'camouflage' properly and instead merely mentioned that narcissists 'appear' or 'seem' friendly. Answers need to touch on the connotation of how the exhibitionism is disguised, a façade or a cover.

12. Explain what the author finds problematic about narcissism in paragraph 7. Give any **two** reasons for this, **Use your own words as far as possible** [2]

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
<p>Narcissists struggle to form intimate relationships (line 43)</p> <p>They take credit for others accomplishments (line 43)</p> <p>Behave aggressively when confronted with negative feedback or rejection (line 44)</p> <p>Impulsive and driven mainly by instant gratification lines (44-45)</p>	<p>What is problematic about narcissism is that:</p> <p>Those who are narcissistic find it difficult to become close to/ bond with or have close ties with other people</p> <p>And they are prepared to accept recognition or allow people to believe that they have done something praiseworthy, whether or not they have actually done it</p> <p>Are hostile/antagonistic/belligerent when they do not receive positive affirmation relating to their work</p> <p>Do not think through their actions and are largely motivated by immediate fulfilment of their desires/do not believe in deferment of pleasure</p> <p>Any 2, 2m Again, as with Q5, only the first two examples will be accepted.</p>

Markers' Comments:

- Taking credit for others accomplishments was often paraphrased oddly. For example 'stealing other people's limelight' or 'accept rewards for other people's work' which did not quite fit the bill.
- Not all students were able to paraphrase aggressive and some left it out of their answer which made it too generic (e.g. cannot accept criticism, cannot take bad comments).
- For the point about impulsiveness and instant gratification, many students left one or the other out.

13. The Economist article presents a largely positive view of the millennials, whilst Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic has a less flattering one. How far would you agree with their observations, relating your arguments to your own experiences and that of your society?
[10]

- Students need to pick out the positive ideas from the Economist article and the less flattering views from the second article.
- Millennials: Demographers and researchers typically use the early 1980s as starting birth years and the mid-1990s to early 2000s as ending birth years.

Main Arguments & Explanations	Evidence / examples
<p>Band 1</p> <p>8 - 10marks</p>	<p>REQUIREMENTS: systematic reference to the requirements of the question with evidence of a balanced treatment.</p> <p>EXPLANATION: shows a good or very good understanding of terms and issues.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>COHERENCE: very clear shape and paragraph organisation and cogent argument.</p>
<p>Passage 1</p> <p>Para 4</p> <p>“the young are adapting quite well to the circumstances of a changing world.” (lines 16-17)</p>	<p>Possible arguments for why you agree or disagree largely/somewhat with the arguments raised</p> <p><u>Largely positive views about the millennials</u></p> <p>This is largely true in the Singaporean context. It was reported in the Today paper that 3 in 4 millennials in Singapore plan to be their own boss with 30 percent starting their businesses while still in school. The government has emphasised the increasingly volatility of the economic sector in the past decade. This has led to the business community and even educational institutes like SMU paying special attention to the area of nurturing entrepreneurship, For examples, there is an Institute of Innovation & Entrepreneurship at SMU. Millennials are also using their technological expertise to help themselves do business, especially online. They are reaching a global market instead of being confined to local customers. Examples of companies started by local entrepreneurs include Love Bonito and Style Lease, which deal with fashion.</p>
<p>Para 4</p> <p>“enthusiasm for new ideas” (line 20)</p>	<p>Millennials in Singapore are able to adapt to new circumstances as they have shown the ability to come up with refreshing concepts that enable them to have a niche market in the world. This could be partly attributed to the education system which gives them exposure to the arts, sciences and other areas. Internet access also allows them to be aware of global trends and to adapt accordingly. Examples of companies are Travel Clef, a music company which moves around to teach music to different organisations and groups, and Virtuoso, a local company that deals with cardistry.</p>
<p>Para 5</p> <p>“millennials grab opportunities where they can.” (line 27)</p>	<p>There has been criticism of Singapore youth that they are too laidback and not driven enough, especially when compared to their foreign counterparts. This could be attributed in part to the relatively comfortable and secure lives they have been leading. Brought up without having to worry about food and shelter, and even having access to some luxury, they do not seem to be very concerned about staying competitive. However, the opposite could be true as well, that as global competition heats up, the millennials are slowly awakening to the realisation that they need to fight for what they want, or languish in a fast-paced economy. This is evident in the numbers that apply for internships and</p>

	<p>scholarships annually in schools. Competition is very keen and the students ensure that they have impeccable grades and CCA records so as to get ahead. They, too, are grabbing opportunities wherever they can.</p>
<p>“the world may also be greener.” (line 31)</p>	<p>Millennials in Singapore seem to be more environmentally aware. They are more likely to recycle and adopt practices which are environmentally-friendly. This could be due to the numerous campaigns they have been exposed to: Clean and Green Singapore, Saving Gaia, etc. They are also considerably better-educated than the older generation, and may be more aware about the direct impact their actions can have on the environment. They would have grown up with recycling bins in their housing estates and neighbourhoods, and are likely to have a greener lifestyle. Also, it is deemed fashionable to be environmentally-friendly with the introduction of global events like Earth Hour every year.</p> <p>Of course, it remains to be seen how much the millennials are willing to sacrifice to ensure that the world is greener. While they may not mind occasionally recycling and saving water, this generation tends to have consumerist tendencies. They purchase a lot of unnecessary items because they can afford to, and then these are disposed just as readily to make way for the next big trend. Also, they treat their handphones and electronic devices as lifelines and cannot be without them. This contributes greatly to the use of electricity, very often for entertainment and non-essential usage. In fact, a study found that Singaporeans spend over 12 hours a day on their gadgets daily. The millennials, being a core group of users, are surely just as guilty of this. (http://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/12hr-42min-connected-for-hours)</p>
<p>Para 6</p> <p>“The young are less racist than the old”. (line 34)</p> <p>Para 7</p> <p>“Tolerance is unlikely to erode as the millennials grow older.” (line 41)</p> <p>“they will not suddenly take against their friends who look different or love differently.” (line 44)</p>	<p>Indeed, more young people in Singapore seem to be less racist than the old, with more accepting inter-racial marriages. Having grown up in an era which emphasised racial harmony, they may be less inclined to treat people differently because of race. Also, there was a deliberate policy by the government to build on school culture. This must have helped to unite students of different races together to work for the glory of the school. With English as the lingua franca of schools and workplaces, communication has been facilitated between the races. With the improvement in communication naturally comes better understanding and acceptance of each other, regardless of race, and thus, the millennials are less likely to be racist than the old.</p> <p>With the rise of the Internet, millennials are exposed to the more liberal views from beyond our shores. There is greater acceptance of LGBT relationships, as can be seen from the increasing numbers which attend Pink Dot rallies annually. When surveyed, young people seem to be less conservative and willing to accept non-traditional relationships.</p>

<p>Passage 2</p> <p>Para 2</p> <p>“ambitious but lazy” (lines 7-8)</p> <p>“the discrepancy between their ambitious aspirations and their lukewarm work ethics.” (lines 8-9)</p>	<p><u>A less flattering view</u></p> <p>There are definitely Singaporean millennials who are ambitious but lazy. Employers have noticed that millennials seem to want to advance very quickly but are unable or unwilling to do the work required to get there. They are branded the strawberry generation, which refers to a group of people who are delicate and bruise easily when face with challenges. They also seem less willing to travel overseas for work, as they prefer to stay in comfortable, convenient Singapore.</p> <p>One wonders if this is a fair comment to make, though, as many Singaporean millennials have shown that they are willing to work long hours and deliver what is required by their bosses. 50 percent of the millennials surveyed said they intended to stay with their current employer for the next few years or longer. This corroborates the results of a 2015 survey which found that 59 percent of Singaporeans believed in job loyalty and intended to stay in their jobs more than five years. (http://www.herworldplus.com/lifestyle/work/are-you-part-strawberry-generation-these-3-attitudes-towards-work) Of course, they will not stay in a company they are unhappy with, but most seem prepared, or resigned, to working past the retirement age. It is questionable, therefore, to consider them lazy and possessing lukewarm work ethics.</p>
<p>Para 3</p> <p>“they value work-life balance more... Ironically, this makes millennials’ demands and standards lower.” (lines 20-21)</p> <p>“you see work as “just making a living”, you expect to find meaning in other areas of life such as education, relationships or hobbies.” (lines 21-22)</p>	<p>While millennials may value work-life balance more, this may not correspond to lowered standards and demands. Singaporeans have long been told that no one owes us a living. Given this message and the current wave of retrenchment exercises in many companies both locally and globally, there is likely the realisation that they have to work very hard to keep their jobs. Their continued employment at MNCs is evidence of this. Also, as they like the finer things in life, like frequent vacations, they realise that they need to maintain standards in order to be competitive in the global economy. So, while some may see work as just making a living, they may still do well at it so that they are able to indulge in other areas of their lives where they find meaning.</p> <p>Interesting, more millennials are finding that their hobbies actually can be transformed into viable careers. Unlike the previous generation, millennials are bold enough to make major career switches and become yoga teachers, personal trainers, life coaches and music teachers. The proliferation of gyms and yoga centres in Singapore is evidence of the viability of these careers. Of course, one crucial factor is that Singapore is fairly prosperous and can afford to support these modes of employment. In short, they have a customer base for the activities offered.</p>
<p>Para 5</p> <p>“they are hyper-connected, but self-obsessed.” (line 30)</p>	<p>With Internet access readily available in Singapore, the millennials who are not connected via Facebook, Instagram or Twitter are definitely in the minority. Many seem to need to post every event in their lives on social media, from the food they eat to the places they visit. While some have many followers, it is questionable as to how much people actually pay attention to the views or posts or others, or whether they are merely concerned about garnering ‘likes’ for themselves.</p>

Band 2 4-7 marks	<p>REQUIREMENTS: covers requirements of the question adequately but not necessarily a balanced treatment</p> <p>EXPLANATION: shows an adequate level of understanding of terms and issues (which may include minor distortion) when applied to Singapore society.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>COHERENCE: paragraphing is sometimes helpful and there is recognisable over-all shape to the answer; arguments are generally cogent.</p>
Band 3 1-3 marks	<p>REQUIREMENTS: an incomplete and/or unbalanced treatment of the requirements.</p> <p>EXPLANATION: shows very limited degree of understanding and a higher incidence of misinterpretation of the author's views.</p> <p>EVALUATION: tends to be mere summary or restatement of the text with a few simple and undeveloped judgements, with very thin support (no examples and evidence from Singapore society).</p> <p>COHERENCE: paragraphing and organisation are haphazard.</p>
0	Nothing in the answer meets any of the criteria

Markers' Comments:

- Many students latched on to top-down government policies such as Racial Harmony Day and Skillsfuture as evidence that millennials were not racist or were adapting to their circumstances. Students need to realise that the existence of such policies does not automatically mean millennials acquire traits like tolerance or adaptability. More unpacking and substantiation is needed.
- Students tended to give multiple anecdotal examples and did not link them to larger social trends which resulted in narrow and forced arguments (e.g. about how their older family members were racist).
- Some students also gave trivial examples like MRT breakdowns to justify that millennials lacked resilience.
- Overall there was a serious problem with a lack of unpacking. Many students were content to list examples and adopt a touch-and-go approach.