



**VICTORIA JUNIOR COLLEGE  
JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2024  
HIGHER 1**

**GENERAL PAPER**

**8881/02**

**Paper 2  
Insert**

**1 hour 30 mins**

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**READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST**

Write your C.T. group, index number and name on all the work you hand in.  
Write in dark blue or black pen.  
Do not use staples, paper clips, glue or correction fluid.

Answer **all** questions.

Note that up to **15** marks out of **50** will be awarded for your use of language.

The number of marks is given in brackets [ ] at the end of each question or part question.

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This document consists of **10** printed pages and **1** blank page.

[Turn over]

## Passage 1

*The writer writes about the possible benefits of hobbies.*

- 1 At some point in our collective experience, the term ‘hobby’ became nearly interchangeable with ‘coping mechanism’. Whether it was the myriad of pandemic hobbies adopted to distract us from an unprecedented global crisis or binge-watching Netflix to find solace from the political upheavals of contemporary society, hobbies have always been around. 5
- 2 Historically, hobbies have indeed evolved from the past, where it used to be the exclusive domain of the aristocracy who had much wealth and leisure at their beck and call, to being part and parcel of the lives of the bourgeoisie due to their growing wealth. The rise of capitalism further accelerated this trend of extending the reach of hobbies into the lives of the everyday man. This was due to how businesses are quick to leverage the emergence of new trends and markets and entice people into taking up unbeknownst activities in the name of leisure. Crass commercialism aside, the undeniable fact remains that hobbies continue to offer something more to individuals. 10
- 3 The benefits of hobbies are derived not from particular types of hobbies but from what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi theorised as ‘flow’, a cognitive state where one is completely immersed in an activity. Hobbies cause the brain to release feel-good chemicals that provide instant gratification. Additionally, hobbies can alleviate the stresses of daily responsibilities, even when time and energy for recreation seem scarce. For example, a study examining the relationship between long working hours, depression, and well-being found that while excessive work negatively impacts mental health, hobbies help mitigate these adverse effects. 15 20
- 4 Investing in hobbies is also a long-term investment in oneself. A 2023 meta-analysis of data from over 93,000 older adults revealed that those with hobbies—defined as activities done for pleasure during leisure time—reported higher levels of health, happiness, and overall life satisfaction. Conversely, individuals exhibiting signs of depression were less likely to engage in hobbies. In other words, hobbies bring about psychological benefits that include both immediate mood improvements and long-term enhancements to resilience and self-perception. Social benefits from hobbies can combat social alienation and hone social skills, while behavioural benefits can help establish healthy routines and habits. Unsurprisingly, empirical evidence aligns with intuition: humans require recreational time. 25 30
- 5 Even those who do not currently have a hobby they thoroughly enjoy can benefit from the pursuit of finding one. Trying new activities is associated with increased happiness. Therefore, it is worthwhile to explore new interests—everyone deserves a hobby they love, simply for the joy it brings. 35
- 6 One final note on the benefits of hobbies: avoid forcing them. A review of four related studies indicated that attitudes towards leisure significantly affect enjoyment. Viewing leisure as a waste of time can create a self-fulfilling prophecy, ultimately diminishing the pleasure derived from hobbies. 40

## Passage 2

*The writer highlights the difficulties that hobbies can bring.*

- 1 “What are your hobbies?” Many people can easily rattle off answers to this question — crocheting, pottery, fishing, gardening, birdwatching or whatever entices them. But for others, no acceptable responses seem to come to mind.
- 2 A lot of times, labels like the word ‘hobby’ can have the propensity to evoke anxiety in people. In actuality, contrary to popular belief, it is normal for one to feel like one does not have any hobbies or that one’s personal interests do not qualify as actual hobbies. Moreover, in this age of stress and burnout, the idea of having any free time to pursue passions can seem like a distant fantasy even though hobbies are often touted as panacea for stress. 5
- 3 Regardless of what one’s exact quibbles might be, a hobby at its core is an activity that one enjoys in their spare time. By definition, hobbies do not have to be ‘productive’ or involve specific benchmarks of improvement or progress - even though it is perfectly fine if someone else’s do. In our work-oriented ‘hustle culture’, the last thing one should feel compelled to is to turn his hobby into a ‘side hustle’, like selling the sweaters one knits on Etsy. Rather than feel the pressure to foster a suitable hobby in the eyes of others, it is more productive to think about the activities that bring about enjoyment. 10 15
- 4 When people talk about having a hobby, it is traditionally associated with something that is relaxing, can be readily picked up and that we always have the resources for. However, key to this being actually true are the assumptions that we always have the physical space, spare time and financial means to do so – assumptions that are not necessarily correct, especially in this day and age of rising property prices, extremely long working hours and stagnating wages. Viewed from such a perspective, the previous perceptions of hobbies become an archaic one, where hobbies are yet another indulgence for those who are well-off to pursue. The rest of us will continue to toil away on the daily grind, with the most respite we have being passive digital distractions, with some spiralling into addictions. 20 25
- 5 We live in a society that is obsessed with constantly squaring people against each other; and in turn, it makes people feel angst that their lives are ‘not enough’. Just as we cannot help but hold up our clothes, bodies, homes and parenting experiences to what we see on Instagram, the things we do for pleasure have also become fodder for comparison. From impressive crafts to sumptuous baked goods to wild rock-climbing feats, there are countless images of people showing off their hobbies and denigrating people without hobbies. 30 35
- 6 The key lesson amongst all of this is not to dive into a hobby just for the sake of it. At the end of the day, we need to take advantage of the opportunity to do things that feel good for us; our guiding light should always be our internal compass and reflective insight.

### Passage 3

*The writer presents the various views on hobbies.*

- 1 People often worry that being too obsessed with having hobbies can lead to stress, shallow interests, and feeling left out. But looking closer, there are actually a lot of benefits to diving into hobbies, even with full enthusiasm, for hobbies give you a break from the daily grind.
- 2 The idea that being super into hobbies leads to shallow involvement is not really true. When you're passionate about something, you often get really good at it and appreciate it more. For example, if you spend a lot of time learning a musical instrument or a craft, you end up mastering it and gaining a deeper understanding. This intense focus can actually help you grow as a person and feel accomplished. So, rather than being shallow, a strong interest in hobbies can really enrich your life. 5
- 3 Focusing on hobbies can also help you live a more balanced and fulfilling life. It pushes you to try out different activities and find what you genuinely enjoy. This exploration can make you a more well-rounded person, help you make new friends, and boost your happiness. In a world that's all about being productive, hobbies remind us to take a break and enjoy life, promoting a healthier work-life balance. Sure, not everyone has the same resources for hobbies, but the internet has resulted in the democratisation of hobbies. This inclusivity can bring people together and create a sense of community. 10
- 4 In the end, while being obsessed with hobbies might have some downsides, the benefits for mental health, personal growth, and social connections are way more significant. Embracing hobbies with enthusiasm can lead to a richer, more balanced life, full of joy and connections. 20

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_ (      )

Content	/35
Language	/15
<b>Total</b>	<b>/50</b>

Answer **all** questions

Your answers should be:

- written **in your own words as far as possible**. Where you select the appropriate material from the passage for your answer, you must still use your own words to express it.
- written in **continuous prose**.

### From Passage 1

1. How does the author illustrate the ability of hobbies to serve as a 'coping mechanism' (line 2)? [2]

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2. From lines 7 to 9, in what ways were hobbies 'exclusive'? [2]

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3. What does 'quick to leverage' (line 11) suggest about how businesses respond to new trends? [1]

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4. Explain what the author means by the phrase 'long-term investment in oneself' (line 23). [2]

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5. What does the author mean by 'empirical evidence aligns with intuition' (line 32)? [2]

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6. Explain how 'Viewing leisure as a waste of time can create a self-fulfilling prophecy.' (line 40). [2]

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### From Passage 2

7. Summarise the problems associated with hobbies and how we should approach hobbies instead.

Write your summary in **no more than 120 words**.

[8]

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( words)

**From all the passages**

8. Passage 1 states that ‘hobbies can alleviate the stresses of daily responsibilities’ (lines 18-19). Identify **one** specific idea from Passage 3 that **supports** this statement. Justify your answer. [2]

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9. Passage 2 states that hobbies are a form of ‘indulgence for those who are well-off to pursue’ (lines 25-26).

Identify **one** specific idea from Passage 3 that **undermines** this statement. Justify your answer.

[2]

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Support your answer with reference to:

- [illegible]

[illegible]

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