

Eunoia Junior College English Department
2023 JC1 GP Promotional Examination
Suggested Answer Scheme

HIGHLIGHTED WORDS: KEY TERMS THAT NEED TO BE PARAPHRASED FOR THE ANSWER TO BE CREDITED.

UNDERLINED WORDS: WORDS THAT SET THE CONTEXT; THEY DO NOT NEED TO BE PARAPHRASED BUT WILL NEED TO BE INCLUDED WITHIN THE ANSWER FOR CREDIT TO BE GIVEN.

From Passage 1

1. Explain the author's use of the phrase 'dispiriting descent' (line 1). [1]

From the passage	Suggested Answer	Mark
In trying to explain the dispiriting descent of <u>American politics</u> into pervasive paralysis, conflict, and sheer mediocrity, it is hard not to wonder if many of the ills result from intrinsic shortcomings of the democratic model itself.	The author uses the phrase to signal that the fall / decline of <u>American politics</u> into a state of dysfunction is disheartening . <u>NOTE:</u> <i>Both words need to be addressed to gain the one mark.</i>	1

2. According to the author in lines 10–15, what happens when politicians take office after receiving funding from 'wealthy individuals and corporations'? [3]

From the passage	Suggested Answer	Mark
There is then little surprise that politicians who go on to take office make policies that manifestly reflect the interests of the <u>wealthy</u> ,	(a) The politicians <u>craft policies</u> that clearly/obviously/blatantly favour the <u>rich</u> BOD: significantly/greatly for 'manifestly'	1m each for a maximum of 3 marks
often at a cost to the populace .	(b) and that are frequently at the expense of ordinary/ the majority of citizens . <i>'Population' is a lift.</i>	
Politicians also introduce rules and <u>practices</u> that make it easy for <u>lobbyists</u> to excessively influence policies.	(c) <u>Politicians introduce rules and practices</u> that facilitate the manipulation/pressuring of <u>politicians</u> by <u>lobbyists</u> . OR <u>Politicians introduce rules and practices</u> that facilitate lobbyists having too much say in policies.	
Examples of such policies include tax breaks that have contributed to the rapid expansion of a class of superrich citizens in recent years.	(d) This has given rise to the alarmingly quick growth of a group of enormously wealthy citizens.	

3. Explain how lines 18–21 support the author's assertion about democratic politicians being 'averse to imposing near-term pain for long-term gain' (lines 16–17). [2]

From the passage	Suggested Answer	Mark
For example, quite a few politicians speak at length about the <u>urgent need</u> to <u>restrain government spending</u> in order to ensure <u>future sustainability</u> . When nearing an election, however, most are unable to refrain from signing off on even more spending on the infrastructure and services the electorate expects.	<p>The author gives the example of how</p> <p>(a) politicians who are standing for elections feel compelled to approve funding for things that <u>satisfy voters</u> <i>(instead of encouraging frugality/austerity at present)</i></p> <p><i>[red] explicit link to near-term pain</i></p> <p>(b) even though they are aware of the pressing <u>need</u> for <u>financial discipline</u> to safeguard the nation's future/ for the good of the nation in time to come.</p> <p><i>[blue] explicit link to long-term gain</i></p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p>
<p>NOTE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates need to make a clear connection to 'near-term pain' and 'long-term gain'. • Candidates' entire response should also demonstrate understanding of 'averse' (strongly disliking or opposed to). This can mainly be achieved through capturing how politicians are 'unable to refrain' from signing off on even more spending. 		

4. Using paragraph 4, identify **three** ways in which democracy divides society. [3]

From the passage	Paraphrased	Mark
<p>Yet another flaw is division and conflict. <u>Competitive elections</u> foment and sometimes intensity divisions in society. This undercuts a strong sense of <u>national unity</u> and purpose; it even generates conflict.</p> <p><u>Competing parties</u> tend to accentuate differences between them <u>rather than</u> to emphasise common ground in their quest to win.</p> <p>They also often caricature and even demonise their <u>opponents</u> and tend to appeal <u>more</u> to emotion than reason in their quest <u>for votes</u>.</p>	<p>(a) <u>Competitive elections</u> weaken/damage/undermine a strong sense of commonality/solidarity <u>among the people</u> which may even give rise to disagreement/discord.</p> <p>(b) <u>Political parties vying for victory at elections</u> highlight/ draw attention to what sets them apart/distinguishes them <u>instead of</u> where they align/ what they agree on.</p> <p>(c) They also mock/ emphasise the worst in <u>other parties</u> OR make their <u>competitors</u> seem silly and evil</p> <p>(d) and pander to voters' feelings <u>rather than logic</u> to <u>win them over</u>.</p>	<p>1 mark for each correctly identified example, to a max of 3 marks.</p>

5. From lines 36–39, explain **two** ways in which the author uses language to criticise voting as a way of ‘choosing the leaders a society needs most’. [2]

From the passage	Suggested Answer	Mark
This suggests that, <u>rather than</u> exercising independent <u>thought on issues</u> to determine policy preferences, voters end up <u>jumping on the bandwagon</u> of voting based on their <u>attachment</u> to a <u>political party</u> .	(a) The author <u>likens</u> voters’ behaviour to ‘ <u>jumping on the bandwagon</u> ’ thus criticising how voters unthinkingly follow the <u>prevailing/popular practice</u> of voting based on partisan identity/ party allegiance rather than evaluating policies on their own to determine their vote.	1
Voting is thus <u>a blunt tool</u> for choosing the leaders a society needs most.	(b) The author <u>compared/likened</u> voting to a ‘ <u>blunt tool</u> ’ to criticise how it is an imprecise / ineffective way/method of <u>selecting the right leaders for society</u> .	1

From Passage 2

6. Summarise the reasons why democracy is important.

Write your summary in **no more than 120 words**. [8]

Pt	Main Idea	From the Passage	Suggested Answer
a.	Leads to superior outcomes	The initial delay of democracies to react paid off in the long run with much better and more humane <u>measures</u> (l.4-5)	Democratic decision-making is slower (than authoritarian regimes) but gives rise to <u>superior</u> and <u>more compassionate / kinder policies</u> .
b.	Creates access to information	but, as a result, <u>knowledge</u> and <u>data</u> are made available to them (l.7-8)	Democracies ensure that people have access to <u>information</u> ...
c.	Transparency	and are <u>not</u> hidden by cumbersome rules and processes (l.8)	...which is <u>not</u> obscured / buried in bureaucracy // transparent .
d.	Enables people to respond to policies/ decisions	This knowledge is essential for people to understand or challenge <u>decisions made</u> . (l.8-9)	Democracies provide people with the information they need to respond to <u>choices/policies made</u> . OR This information is vital for civic participation . OR This information is crucial for them to appreciate/comprehend , or contest <u>choices/policies made</u> .
e.	Allows the discussion of diverse views that leads to the joint development of better policies	In fact, it is precisely the vigorous, open debates that arise from a pluralism of opinions that is a strength of democracy as <u>this leads to</u> the co-creation of better <u>policies</u> . (l.10-11) OR No autocracy in this world can keep up with the many and complex challenges: what is crucial is not so much the decision-taking capacity but establishing a continuous co-creation process. (l.22-24)	Robust discussion of diverse views/ideas <u>gives rise to</u> the joint development of superior policies. BOD: effective, good policies for 'better policies'

Pt	Main Idea	From the Passage	Suggested Answer
f.	Especially suited for dealing with crises	(The need for democracy and co-creation of policies) is <u>much higher</u> during crises such as those our societies are confronted with <u>now</u> . (l.12-13)	Democracy is <u>especially</u> crucial to <u>cope with/amidst</u> the emergencies of today. <i>Inferred point: award only if students frame it as being crucial to cope with emergencies. Merely citing the context of emergencies today will not earn credit as it does not ATQ.</i>
g.	Offers comprehensive approaches	No party on its own can offer adequate and holistic solutions. (l.14-15)	<u>Collaboration</u> across parties enables the development of comprehensive approaches to tackle problems... OR <u>Collaboration</u> across parties enables the development of sufficient and complete approaches to tackle problems. <i>Students can also capture 'adequate' and 'holistic' separately.</i>
h.	Encourages buy-in / arrives at decisions that are well received	Coalitions offer a way to arrive at widely accepted <u>decisions</u> in crisis times.	and come up with <u>approaches/policies</u> that are well received by the public // have public buy-in during crises.
i.	Predictability	Democracy is valuable because it is about much more than the process of regular elections alone (l.16-17)	Democracy offers predictability . <i>Inferred point: award only if students infer from 'regular elections' that democracy offers predictability.</i>
j.	Offers adaptability that is needed for societies to flourish	Democracy gives rise to a political system that adapts to <u>changing conditions</u> in society, thus helping <u>societies</u> thrive . (l. 17-18)	Democracy is important as it engenders a system that adjusts/responds to <u>shifting circumstances</u> enabling <u>societies</u> to flourish/succeed/do very well .
k.	Promotes the rise of new movements	Democratic processes <u>foster the emergence</u> of <u>new</u> movements (l.18-19)	Democracy <u>encourages</u> the <u>creation / rise</u> of <u>novel groups</u> / drives / campaigns ...

Pt	Main Idea	From the Passage	Suggested Answer
l.	Encourages new ideas to deal with future emergencies	...and <u>introduce</u> innovation which <u>sets up societies to</u> face <u>crises</u> that are <u>to come</u> . (l.19-20) <i>'To come' - needed to distinguish context from h</i>	...and novel ideas / ingenuity that <u>position societies to</u> <u>cope</u> with <u>impending emergencies</u> .
m.	Sole way to a promising future	The world has entered a turbulent new phase in which the <u>democratic system</u> is the <u>only</u> guarantee for a successful <u>transition</u> to a <u>new bright era</u> . (l.21-22)	<u>Democracy</u> is the <u>sole</u> way to ensure societies can effectively <u>move into / change/adapt</u> for a <u>promising future</u> ...
n.	Crucial to deal with intractable problems	No autocracy in this world can keep up with the <u>many and complex</u> challenges (l.22-23)	...and cope / deal with the <u>multiple / sheer volume of complicated / intractable / wicked</u> problems that they face.

Total of 14 points

Points	1–2	3–4	5	6	7	8	9	≥10
Marks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

From all the passages

7. Passage 1 states that 'There is reason to be sceptical of voters' ability to vote well as they are in the dark about many facts' (lines 31–32).

Identify **one** specific idea from Passage 3 which can be used to undermine this statement. Justify your answer. [2]

Specific Idea from Passage 3	(a) Suggested Paraphrasing of the Idea	(b) Suggested Justification	Mark
We are actually highly capable of <u>voting responsibly</u> as we have ready <u>access to news sources</u> and also discuss contentious <u>issues</u> everywhere from our classrooms to our living rooms. (l.4-6)	The writer of passage 3 asserts that young people are very able/ well-positioned to <u>vote thoughtfully</u> as they have easy access to <u>news publications / press outlets</u> and talk about / debate controversial issues in school and at home.	This undermines the idea in Passage 1, as it suggests voters are actually well-informed and <u>can thus properly evaluate candidates' suitability for office / proposed ideas</u> to vote responsibly.	1m for idea, 1m for a linked logical justification
...we have ready <u>access to news sources</u> and also discuss contentious <u>issues</u> everywhere from our classrooms to our living rooms. (l.4-6)	The writer of passage 3 asserts that young people have easy access to <u>news publications / press outlets</u> and talk about / debate controversial issues in school and at home.	This undermines the idea in Passage 1 as it shows that the <u>basis for the author's doubt/cynicism</u> about their ability to vote well is misplaced/wrong as voters, particularly the young, are well-informed.	1m for idea, 1m for a linked logical justification

8. Passage 2 states that 'Democracy gives rise to a political system that adapts to changing conditions in society, thus helping societies thrive.' (lines 17–18)

Identify **one** specific idea from Passage 3 which can be used to support this statement. Justify your answer. [2]

Specific Idea from Passage 3	(a) Suggested Paraphrasing of the Idea	(b) Suggested Justification	Mark
Our votes signal what <u>matters</u> to us, and <u>voting</u> is the only way that <u>governments</u> will modify <u>policies</u> to <u>better meet</u> <u>our current needs</u> . (l.10-11)	<p>Voting sends a message about what is significant and the way that <u>those in power</u> will change / adjust / develop <u>processes/ systems</u> that are <u>more suitable for</u> <u>what young people require</u> <u>now</u>.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Voting is the way young voters can tell the <u>government</u> to change/adjust <u>policies</u> to <u>better suit their present needs</u>.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Democracy creates a system that is responsive to the <u>changing needs of the electorate/people</u>.</p>	<p>This supports the idea in Passage 2 as <u>democratic governments that adapt policies to cater to voters' needs contribute to society's flourishing</u>.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>This supports the idea in Passage 2 as governments that <u>desire to stay in power</u> are <u>more incentivised to be attentive</u> to people's evolving needs, and as such, the well-being of society is maintained.</p> <p><i>Candidates should convey why governments are incentivised to respond to voter's needs.</i></p>	1m for idea, 1m for a linked logical justification

Application Question

9. The reading passages cover a range of views about democracy.

How far do you agree that democracy is valuable today?

Support your answer with reference to:

- the ideas and opinions from **at least** one of the reading passages
- examples drawn from your own experience and that of your society. [12]

(a) **Requirements.** Students should:

- Explain the extent to which democracy is important to themselves and their society in general.
- Support their views with reasoned arguments.
- Show understanding of the ideas and attitudes in the passages.
- Explain the extent of their agreement with them.

(b) **Explanation.** Students should show understanding of some of the following issues:

- How important/useful/beneficial is the democratic process today?
- To what extent has the democratic system's value changed given the context of the modern world?
- Has the democratic process in your society divide more than unite the people?
- Has democracy, as practiced in your society, lead to policies that privileges the rich and influential at the expense of the masses?
- In your society, is voting a blunt tool for leadership selection and renewal?
- Does your society have an informed and/or engaged electorate?
- Has democracy led to easy/convenient access to information and/or debates on controversial issues?
- Is it valid to argue that democracy has given people access to all information? Is there specific information that remains hidden from the electorate – why?
- Do you agree that the initial delay of democracies to react has paid off with much better and humane measures, especially in times of crisis?

Students may also link other relevant arguments such as:

- Should society do more to encourage/discourage participation in democracy?
- The extent to which democracy impacts societies' ability to respond to problems.
- For conceptual understanding, students can discuss the similarities and/or differences in how Singapore and other societies view democracy [connections].

(c) **Evaluation.** Students should:

- Question/show reasons for approving of these views.
- Give examples from their own and their society's experience in support of their view.
- Examples regarding the democratic process in other countries can also be provided as a comparison and evaluation of its importance in Singapore.
- Put forward original ideas on the significance of democracy in society.

Possible text reference from the passages	Possible application and evaluation to SG
<p>From Passage 1</p> <p>In paragraph 3, Carothers raises the concern about how democracy means politicians eager to secure re-election are averse to implementing policies that are good for the nation but inflict short-term pain on voters.</p>	<p>This is a valid concern about the democratic process, and one that I do agree is evident in more robust democracies, where election contests are tight, and political office holders are aware their seats are insecure. However, I disagree that this is a necessary state of affairs in a democracy, and so, I do not think this undermines the value of democracy. In Singapore's political scene, parliamentary seats are less hotly contested than in many democratic countries around the world. The small (albeit growing) number of opposition political parties and the Group Representative Constituency (GRC) system which requires between three to five candidates to stand for election in the majority of constituencies means that the ruling People's Action Party has, since, independence, had relatively little threat of losing power at general elections. This has meant the ability to, when economically necessary, impose policies like Goods and Services Tax (GST) raises without fear of losing power. Indeed, the opposition party Members of Parliament who also make up the government of the day have supported tough measures such as public transport fare rises and minimum recycling standards at the industrial level that posed a challenge for small businesses. It suggests that the efforts made by the government here to communicate the rationale for the policies and, importantly, to provide assistance such as vouchers and rebates that are often means-tested work, and that democracy is not incompatible with responsible, future-oriented governance. It certainly is easier to avoid the trap of election myopia in a one-party dominant political scene like Singapore, but it may be possible elsewhere as well with greater trust in the ability of increasingly educated electorates to grasp the trade-off between near-term pain and long-term gain for the nation.</p>
<p>From Passage 2</p> <p>Kourti argues that democracy is valuable because of the free and robust exchange of diverse opinions, as this results in the collaborative creation of superior policies.</p>	<p>I largely agree that this makes democracy valuable, and especially so today. Singapore is often criticized by organisations like Freedom House and left-leaning publications like the New York Times for being an 'illiberal democracy', primarily due to its one-party dominant political system that has governed Singapore since its independence. However, this dominance of the ruling People's Action Party does not necessarily mean a lack of robust debate in parliament, and such debate has, in fact contributed to policies that have worked. Each bill that parliament seeks to pass has to be debated, and these debates allow all members of parliament (MPs) as well as nominated members of parliament (an unusual aspect of Singapore's democracy, designed to inject more diverse views into parliament debates) can freely air their views. Even MPs affiliated with the ruling party can raise concerns about proposed policies, so that this can contribute to revisions or additional support if</p>

	<p>necessary. In a recent parliament debate about the ferrying of construction workers on the cargo deck of lorries, the exchange between the Minister of State for Transport, who argued the perspective of construction companies, and PAP MP Louis Ng, who appealed to reason and empathy for the safety of these workers, prompted Singaporeans to consider the tension between pragmatism and morality that is often at play in issues of governance. The exchange is still ongoing, and has attracted commentary online and in local publications like Rice Media that shed greater light on how construction workers, an often unheard segment of Singapore society, feel about riding on the back of lorries, and prompting petitions and calls for change. Such appeals for special consideration were also evident in the response to the Covid-19 Pandemic, where MPs in parliament highlighted the concerns of their constituents, especially those who were in the hawker and food and beverage industry. This meant the implementation of assistance measures like rent rebates and payouts – a rare feature in Singapore which guards against an overreliance on welfare. The current political scene may not be as robust as advocates of liberal democracy may like, but it is far more open to diverse views and joint-policy making than the more authoritarian style of leadership that founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew implemented. That style worked for the challenges that Singapore faced in the 1960s and 1970s – it meant pushing through policies that forced citizens to change where they lived and the languages they spoke, but it helped the nation overcome the relatively less complex problems that faced a small, resource-insecure nation that had only basic housing, education, and healthcare infrastructure. The problems of today, as Kourti highlights, are far more complex, and the government considering different perspectives of MPs regardless of party affiliation has been valuable to help formulate policies that have greater buy-in and more effectively meet Singapore’s needs.</p> <p>Alternatively: can consider Forward SG national consultation – 4G’s leadership collaboration with citizens to shape SG’s path forward.</p>
<p>The author of passage 3 argues that young voters today are especially well-informed about local and global issues and can thus vote responsibly at elections.</p>	<p>I agree that an informed electorate that is able to vote responsibly is important for democracy to be valuable – the absence of this raises the spectre of veering into populism and politicians excessively focused on holding on to power and pandering to voters’ demands rather than governing for the good of the nation. In Singapore, however, I have reservations about just how important a well-informed electorate really is for democracy to remain valuable. I do acknowledge that young Singaporeans are much more aware of current affairs. We attend dialogue sessions with political office holders and top-ranking civil servants to understand challenges facing Singapore and how global concerns affect us. Our smartphones vibrate to alert us about breaking news and headlines on Channel NewsAsia, The Straits Times, and</p>

	<p>popular, free global applications like the BBC and The Guardian. These alerts often get discussed at home, as our parents are more likely than in previous generations, to have completed school and university, and hence also trained to analyse and consider how issues the world faces may shape Singapore and thus the policies required – even if these are unpopular. The reason, however, I feel that being well-informed is not especially valuable in Singapore, is because our political parties are fairly centrist, and elections have been about the proportion of opposition voices in parliament rather than a change of government and a suite of new policies. In contrast with more polarized democracies like the United States of America, where the choice between Democrat and Republican means a significant shift in healthcare, education, fiscal, and immigration policies, in Singapore, the choice voters are faced with at General Elections (if they even have to vote, as some seats go uncontested) is far less drastic. This is primarily because, given the dominance of the PAP in parliament, the policies they propose have, to date, been the ones that get implemented (though subject to revision based on feedback in parliamentary debates). Thus, in Singapore, the value of an informed electorate to democracy may be less evident in voting responsibly once every five years; instead, its value may be more evident in the active participation in civic and political discourse throughout each electoral term. The Singapore government has become more consultative over the last 20 years, evident in movements like Our Singapore Conversation in 2012 and the Forward SG dialogues around the nation that are going on now. These seek to understand the views of Singaporeans of all ages to chart a path forward that we all have a stake in. These discussions shape the policy-making of the government of the day, and this, for democracy to be truly valuable in Singapore’s political context, it may be this ongoing participation in the political process rather than merely responsible voting alone that matters.</p>
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