

**Yishun Innova Junior College**  
**2023 Preliminary Examination**  
**General Paper**  
**Paper 2 Answer Scheme**

**Passage 1**

1. What is the purpose of the author's opening question (line 1)? [2]

<b>From the Passage</b>	<b>Suggested Answer</b>
<p><b>Do you remember when you first learned about the concept of the white lie?</b> It might have been when you were a child and an adult fudged the truth to keep you from being upset or sad, or someone might have promised you a reward for a particular behaviour, but the 'reward' really did not exist. If you are a parent yourself, you might use white lies to keep your child from knowing that a beloved toy was lost or a favourite piece of clothing was no longer wearable... (Relax, most people consider it socially acceptable and culturally congruent for parents to use white lies with their children).</p>	<p><b>[Function / Technique]</b></p> <p>The author wants to</p> <p>(a) introduce the subject matter of the passage  <b>OR</b>  refresh his readers' memory  <b>OR</b>  invoke self-reflection in the reader [1]</p>
	<p><b>[Context / Application]</b></p> <p>(b) about lying to be polite  <b>OR</b>  about lying to stop someone from being upset by the truth  <b>OR</b>  about the idea that lying can be harmless / well-intentioned / acceptable / understandable (optional: under certain conditions / circumstances)  <b>OR</b>  by evoking the personal memory of the reader // asking a personal / relatable question about white lies. [1]</p> <p><i>Note: Accept all possible permutations of function and context, provided they make sense (some functions may match some contexts better).</i></p> <p><i>Context of the <u>impact / intention</u> of <u>white</u> lies needs to be mentioned in (b) to get the point credited.</i></p>

2. Why has the author placed brackets around the comment in lines 8–9? [2]

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
<p>If you are a parent yourself, you might use white lies to keep your child from knowing that a beloved toy was lost or a favourite piece of clothing was no longer wearable. It might be to distract your son or daughter from something that was beyond your means. “No one really has fun at Disney, it’s just too crowded! Let’s have our own fun down at the neighbourhood park!” (Relax, most people consider it <b>socially acceptable</b> and <b>culturally congruent</b> for parents to <u>use white lies with their children</u>).</p>	<p><b>[Function]</b></p> <p>(a) The author is making a <b>side comment / inserting his opinion</b> [1]</p>
	<p><b>[Context]</b></p> <p>(b) to <b>calm / assure</b> parents that they need <b>not be concerned / worried / embarrassed / guilty</b> about the <u>white lies they tell their children</u></p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>to <b>respond to / address</b> the <b>displeasure / accusations / adverse comments</b> he <b>pre-empts / expects</b> from parents to his sharing of the <u>white lies they tell their children</u></p> <p>(c) as such white lies used by parents are <b>not frowned upon</b> by / <b>common</b> in the <b>community // compatible</b> with / <b>consistent</b> with / <b>correspond</b> to the <b>practices / way of life of the community</b>.</p> <p>(b)+(c) = 1m</p>

3. Using material from paragraphs 2–4 only (lines 10–39), summarise what the author has to say about why lying is understandable (R1) and acceptable (R2).

Write your answer in **no more than 120 words**, not counting the opening words which are printed below. **Use your own words as far as possible.** [8]

Lying is understandable because...

Pt	Req	From the Passage	Suggested Answer
1	R1	it is understandable why it can be <b>instinctive</b> to lie (l.10–11)	we have a <b>natural inclination / tendency</b> to lie // have an <b>innate / inborn</b> quality to lie // lie <b>without much consideration</b> .
2	R1	we use white lies to <b>protect</b> ourselves from <b>punishment</b> (l.12)	Harmless lies can <b>shield / guard</b> ourselves from <b>disciplinary action / penalty / chiding / scolding</b> / being <b>reprimanded</b> .
3	R2	we really just need a <b>mental health day</b> (l.13–14)	We need to lie for a <b>break / rest</b> // <b>time</b> to <b>recharge / rejuvenate</b> to look after our well-being
4	R1	The purpose of the lie or its intent could primarily be for <u>self-preservation</u> . While this is self-serving, it is a <b>survival</b> instinct that kicks in as a third option, in addition to fight or flight... (l.14–16)	or mainly to <b>protect</b> <u>ourselves</u> from <b>harm / threat</b>
5	R1	... when one's <b>back is against the wall</b> (l.16)	to escape a <b>dilemma / conundrum / difficult situation</b> .
6	R2	Lying can also be necessary and praised when it is for <b>altruistic</b> reasons. (l.17)  Just remember that lies are most beneficial when they are <b>not selfish</b> (l.30–31)	Lying is also needed and well-regarded if it is done to <b>help / benefit others</b> // for the <b>good of others</b> / for the <b>greater good</b> .
7	R2	Lies meant to <b>protect</b> <u>others</u> ... under <u>specific circumstances</u> . (l.17–19)	Lying can <b>safeguard / prevent / shield</b> <u>others</u> from <b>harm</b> <u>sometimes / when done judiciously / in certain situations</u> .
8	R2	... or <b>ease</b> their <b>burdens</b> are lies that are generally considered to be acceptable under <u>specific circumstances</u> . (l.18–19)	It can also <b>lessen / assuage</b> the <b>worries / troubles / problems</b> of <u>others</u> // make the <b>worries / troubles / problems</b> of <u>others</u> <b>more bearable</b> <u>sometimes/when done judiciously/in certain situations</u>  <i>Note: Penalise only once for omission of context for points 7 and 8</i>

9	R2	Reassuring a child that "grandma does not feel well right now" might be considered a <b>kinder</b> choice (l.19–20)  OR  you have a well-developed sense of <b>empathy</b> . (l.21–22)	Lying is permissible when it is done out of <b>compassion</b> // as a <b>less hurtful / painful / harsh</b> option  OR  When one has a good understanding of <b>others' feelings / pain</b>
10	R2	If you are lying to <b>spare</b> <u>others</u> <b>harm</b> or <b>pain</b> (l.20–21)	It is also a way to <b>refrain</b> from / <b>avoid</b> / <b>stop</b> causing <b>hurt</b> to <u>others</u> .
11	R2	<b>Softening feedback</b> (l.23)	Lying helps to <b>cushion</b> the <b>blow</b> of // <b>dilute / lessen</b> the <b>impact</b> of <b>comments / opinions / judgements</b>
12	R2	can make it <b>easier</b> to <b>provide</b> ... [ <u>constructive criticism</u> ] (l.23–24)	so that it is <b>less challenging / less difficult</b> to <b>give / offer / proffer</b> <u>critique / evaluation / judgement / negative opinions</u>
13	R2	and [easier to] <b>accept</b> <u>constructive criticism</u> . (l.23–24)	and so that the recipient <b>receives / internalises / comes to terms with</b> the <u>critique</u> more readily.  <i>Note: Penalise only once for the omission of context for points 12 and 13.</i>
14	R2	It also <b>protects</b> the <b>long-term relationship</b> between the giver and the receiver. (l.24–25)	This also <b>safeguards / defends</b> the <b>lasting bond</b> // <b>bond over an extended period / into the future</b> between the parties
15	R2	It is even <u>more</u> acceptable to lie when it is an <b>acquaintance</b> (l.25)	It is even more acceptable to lie in your feedback to someone you <b>just met</b> // you are <b>not familiar with / close to</b>
16	R2	because it takes a certain level of <b>closeness</b> to deliver and accept the <u>truth</u> . (l.25–26)	because it requires some <b>familiarity / bond / friendship / relationship</b> to give / provide / convey and receive / handle <u>candid</u> feedback // it is difficult to give / provide / convey and receive / handle <u>candid</u> feedback without some <b>familiarity / bond / friendship</b> .

17	R2	Also, telling a quick white lie in a situation where the person has <b>no time to react</b> such as praising someone's outfit even though it is not flattering right before a person goes on stage for a performance is acceptable (I.26–28)	It also acceptable to lie to a person if he <u>cannot</u> address/the honest feedback <b>immediately/ in the moment</b>
18	R2	because there is <b>nothing</b> the person can do to <b>improve</b> or <b>change</b> <u>the moment</u> . (I.28–29)	and it is <b>impossible</b> for the person to make the <u>immediate situation</u> <b>better</b> // <b>remediate / take action on / modify</b> the immediate situation.
19	R2	Lying to <b>boost</b> the <u>receiver's self-esteem</u> (I.29–30)	Lying can also <b>improve / increase / enhance</b> the <u>recipient's / the other person's confidence / self-regard</u>  <i>BOD: 'one' as context</i>
20	R2	is a <b>tactful</b> and <b>logical</b> way to approach the situation. (I.30)	and it could also be a <b>diplomatic / sensitive</b> and <b>rational / valid / sensible / reasonable / sound</b> way to manage a sensitive issue.
21	R1	It is an oft-repeated phrase that lying will be <b>punished</b> . Perhaps. But <b>not as often</b> as <u>truth-telling</u> . (I.32–33)	Liars are not held <b>accountable</b> // do not <b>face negative repercussions / disciplinary actions</b> as frequently / <b>regularly</b> as being <u>honest</u> <i>(Inferred point)</i>
22	R1	Lying <b>effectively</b> in many situations is generally <b>superior</b> <u>to telling the truth</u> , because often we have to search our minds for the truth, (I.33–34)	Lying <b>skilfully / successfully / competently</b> is seen as a more <b>commendable</b> // <b>better strategy</b> than being <u>honest</u>
23	R1	whereas a <u>good</u> lie can be <b>easier</b> to <b>produce</b> (though of course caution is indicated if the lie can be easily unmasked). (I.34–35)	as it is <b>simpler / more manageable / less difficult</b> to lie <u>well</u> / <b>create/come up with</b> a <u>good</u> lie.

<b>1-2</b>	<b>3-4</b>	<b>5-6</b>	<b>7-8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10-11</b>	<b>12-13</b>	<b>≥14</b>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Lying is understandable because...

it is natural<sup>1</sup> to guard against reprimands<sup>2</sup>, aids in psychological rejuvenation<sup>3</sup> and escape dilemmas<sup>5</sup>. Done in specific situations, lying protects others<sup>6</sup> and self from harm<sup>4,7</sup>; makes problems more bearable<sup>8</sup>; and when used compassionately<sup>9</sup>, protects others' emotions<sup>10</sup>. Lying makes it less difficult to proffer judgements<sup>12</sup>, dilutes their impact<sup>11</sup>, makes them more palatable for the recipient<sup>13</sup> and safeguards future bonds<sup>14</sup>. Lying is acceptable when used on unfamiliar people<sup>15</sup>; when people cannot respond to<sup>17</sup> or take remediation action immediately<sup>18</sup>. Lying can improve others' self-regard<sup>19</sup> and is a diplomatic and rational way to manage sensitivities<sup>20</sup>. Liars are less likely to face repercussions than honest people<sup>21</sup> as lying skillfully is perceived as being better than honesty<sup>22</sup> as it is simpler to create a good lie<sup>23</sup>.

118 Words, 22 points (excluding point 16)

4. Explain what the author means by saying that 'honesty is not necessarily the best policy' (line 43). [2]

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
However, everybody does lie, and sometimes, <b>honesty</b> is <u>not</u> <b>necessarily</b> the <b>best policy</b> .	The author means that  (a) <b>speaking the truth</b> / not <b>lying</b> is <u>not</u> in <b>all situations</b> / <b>definitely</b> / <b>unquestionably</b> / as a <b>matter of course</b> / <b>without doubt</b> [1]  (b) the <b>most apt</b> / <b>suitable</b> / <b>appropriate</b> / <b>desirable way</b> / <b>method of doing things</b> // <b>course of action</b> / <b>approach</b> / <b>guiding principle</b> . [1]

## Passage 2

5. In lines 8–11, explain **two** ways in which the author uses language to convey her ‘dramatic and apocalyptic’ view regarding habitual lying. [2]

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
Habitual lying can develop into a <b>deep</b> <u>character flaw</u> that <b>compromises</b> one’s <u>moral values</u> . If there are no consequences to it, <u>principles</u> will <b>cease to matter</b> and that could be the <b>death</b> of <u>morality</u> , if we want to be dramatic and apocalyptic about it.	<p>The author conveys her dramatic and apocalyptic view regarding habitual lying by</p> <p>(a1) <b>[technique]</b> using the word ‘deep’            (a2) <b>[application]</b> to exaggerate how habitual lying can bring about a <u>character flaw</u> that is so <b>entrenched / rooted</b> in a person that it <b>impairs / jeopardises / endangers</b> their <u>principles</u>. [1]</p> <p>(b1) <b>[technique]</b> using the phrase ‘cease to matter’            (b2) <b>[application]</b> to emphasise that if there are no consequences to habitual lying, <u>principles</u> will <b>no longer be / stop being important / essential / vital</b>. [1]</p> <p>(c1) <b>[technique]</b> using the word ‘death’            (c2) <b>[application]</b> to point out that if there are no consequences to habitual lying, <u>morality</u> will <b>stop existing</b> // the <b>demise</b> of <u>morality</u> will happen // there will be <b>no more</b> <u>morality</u>. [1]</p> <p>(a1)+(a2) = 1m            (b1)+(b2) = 1m            (c1)+(c2) = 1m</p> <p>Any 2 points (eg. (a1)+(a2) and (b1)+(b2)) up to a maximum of 2 marks.</p> <p><i>Note: Students need to convey the <u>inflated or disastrous consequences of habitual lying</u>.</i></p>

6. Explain how lines 20–24 support the claim that there is 'a strong correlation between technology and deception' in line 17. **Use your own words as far as possible.** [3]

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
<p>Since 2004, it has been discovered that there is a strong correlation between technology and deception. In this digitally connected world, we are surrounded by webs of lies that we are also guilty of spinning and this is a worrying world indeed. This is not to be confused with exaggerating marketing tactics rampant in the today. This is about intentional and direct dishonesty. Being <u>catfished on an online dating application</u> is embarrassing and while it can cause some emotional heartbreak and slight embarrassment, when <b>amplified</b>, online lies can <b>escalate</b> to <b>malicious</b> scams and other cybercrimes. Technology <b>fuels</b> the <b>frequency</b> and <b>intensity</b> of lies as it gives those with <u>ill intentions and dangerously skilled in deceit</u> the <b>tools</b> to <b>bait innocent, trusting</b> victims.</p>	<p><b>[Method]</b></p> <p>(a) The author uses an <b>example</b> of how we can be <u>swindled / deceived online / in online dating</u> which can lead to <b>more / increasingly harmful / adverse // worse</b> consequences. [1]</p> <p><i>Note: must capture increased negativity</i></p>
	<p><b>[Application]</b></p> <p>(b) This is to show that technology <b>drives</b> the <b>number / prevalence</b> and level of <b>seriousness</b> of lies [1]</p> <p>(c) because it gives those who have <u>evil thoughts and are competent in deception</u> the <b>means / ability / instrument</b> to <b>lure / deceive</b> people who are <b>gullible / naïve</b>. [1]</p>



7. How has research shown that lying is a 'vicious cycle' (line 26)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [3]

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
Research has shown that <u>individuals</u> are <b>more likely</b> to lie if <u>they live in a country with high levels of institutional corruption and fraud...</u>	<p>(a) Research has shown that <u>people</u> have an <b>increasing / a greater chance</b> of lying // <b>propensity</b> to lie [1]</p> <p>(b) if the <b>organisations</b> in <u>the country they live in</u> also have a <b>lot of / great number</b> of <b>bribery / graft / deceit</b>. [1]</p> <p>(c) This will encourage / embolden lying (optional: by people and /or organisations) that continues / goes on / repeats itself. [1] (<i>inferred</i>)</p>

8. What is the author's purpose in describing dishonesty as an 'infectious poison' (line 38)? [2]

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
Dishonesty, particularly by people with power, is ... also an <b>infectious poison</b> that <b>taints</b> the <u>morality of those they have power over</u> .	<p><b>[Technique]</b> (a) The author uses an analogy / a comparison to show that / to help the reader understand / visualise that</p> <p><b>[Literal]</b> (b) just as an infectious poison <b>spreads</b> to <u>other</u> parts of the body / <u>other</u> people and <b>harms / kills</b> them as well,</p> <p><b>[Context]</b> (c) <u>similarly</u>, dishonesty <b>corrupts / stains</b> / leads to the <b>death</b> of the <u>morality</u> of <u>others</u>.</p> <p>Note: (c) needs to capture the idea of dishonesty <u>spreading to others</u> in society.</p> <p>1-2 pts = 1m 3 pts = 2m</p>

9. What is the author suggesting when she uses 'of course' in line 39? [1]

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
Of course, <u>these</u> are <b>extreme</b> cases of dishonesty that do not negate the necessity of well-intentioned white lies or harmless lies spewed for convenience.	<p>The author is</p> <p>(a) <b>acknowledging / conceding / admitting / recognising</b> that</p> <p>(b) the <u>earlier</u> examples of lying are <b>drastic / exceptional / severe</b>.</p> <p>(a)+(b) = 1m</p>

10. Errol Morris thinks that lying is understandable and even acceptable, while Laurel Hamers warns about its dangers.

How far do you agree or disagree with the views expressed in the **two** passages? Illustrate your answer with examples of how you and your society regard lying.

### Introduction

Singapore has earned a worldwide reputation for its clean and honest government. The Transparency International (TI) Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2022 ranked Singapore the world's fifth least corrupt state. This reverberates across various levels in society, where lying is scorned as unethical and simply unacceptable. Nevertheless, this perception may well be excessively rigid and needs to be considered vis-à-vis the different circumstances in which lying arises. To be sure, Hamers has some reason to claim that deceptiveness among elites is not only problematic for the state, but also poisons society. Even so, Morris' argument that lies are intended to shield and relieve others is more convincing. Accordingly, overall, notwithstanding its real dangers, lying can be excused, even justified, under specific conditions.

### Supporting Viewpoint

In passage 1, Morris claims that 'Lies meant to protect others or ease their burdens are lies that are generally considered to be acceptable under specific circumstances' (lines 17–19). He means that there are certain situations where lying is largely condoned as it is done to shield others from harm or to reduce the impact of the truth to make them feel better. This is likewise true in my society, Singapore. As a society that has risen from the nightmare of its troubled past of racial conflicts, it prides itself on its success in promoting equality among its citizens (regardless of race, language or religion) that is enshrined in its constitution and honoured in its pledge. This has contributed to its tendency to frown upon discrimination of all forms. In fact, Singapore's sensitivity to discrimination is so pronounced that it would obscure truths or even mislead the populace to protect certain groups in society from possible discrimination. A significant example is the outbreak of monkeypox in Singapore in 2022. The World Health Organization has stated that since the current global monkeypox outbreak emerged in Europe, the majority of cases have been found in

men who have sex with men, and in particular those who have multiple and often anonymous partners. However, the truth of this direct link between monkeypox and gay men has been obscured or as good as erased in Singapore. Interestingly, whenever Singapore's main news outlet, The Straits Times reports about the outbreak, it chooses to focus on technical issues by broadcasting statistical facts – the number of cases based on time periods, as well as the ongoing changes in the Ministry of Health guidelines on quarantine and recovery venues, rather than the relation between gay sex and the outbreak of monkeypox. This is akin to a white lie as the full truth has been watered down. This lie is acceptable in this situation as this approach is likely taken to reduce the spotlight on homosexuals to protect them from possible discrimination. Similarly, white lies are condoned in Singapore when they are made with the intention of reducing the impact of the truth to make people feel better about the situation. A prominent case in point is the common rhetoric people use when talking about transportation in Singapore. It is a common argument, not just among people in private conversations, but also in the media that it is not a necessity to own a car in Singapore due to the convenience of public transport in our well-connected city. The usual explanation is that developments in the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) network have complemented the bus routes that have enabled people to reach their destinations faster. However, the oft-unspoken truth is that cars are so expensive in Singapore with the ever-rising Certificate of Entitlement (COE) premiums that not many people can reasonably afford a car. Still, this white lie is acceptable as it reassures people that transportation in Singapore is still affordable and convenient. More than that, this simple white lie enables people to feel better about not being able to afford a car as giving the afore-mentioned excuse avoids embarrassment to them, particularly in a status-conscious society such as Singapore. This is especially so in our financial hub where the possession of a car is one of the five 'C's (cash, credit card, car, condominium and country club), which together, establish the status symbol in our society. So, white lies are acceptable in certain situations as they not only shield others from harm, but they also help people save face in my society.

### **Opposing Viewpoint with Balance**

Nonetheless, Hamers posits that 'Dishonesty, particularly by people with power, is a toxic evil that not only harms countries but also an infectious poison that taints the morality of those they have power over' (passage 2, lines 36–38). This suggests that mendacity, especially among leaders, is detrimental to the nation. Moreover, it pollutes the ethics of the people whom they possess authority over. To be sure, I agree as a general proposition that elite dishonesty undermines national interests. This is particularly so given our government's outsize role in running and representing the country. Even so, there is less danger of our leaders' dishonesty corroding the people's values, owing to our society's strong ethical compass. Singapore has long embraced the elitist model of democracy. The citizenry's role in running the state is largely limited to periodic elections. Outside election seasons, leaders largely dominate national decision-making processes, even if they do consult the people to get a fuller picture of the situation. Consequently, dishonesty among our leaders is especially liable to damage the national interest. A case in point is the scandals that rocked our senior political leadership in July 2023. Recently, Transport Minister S Iswaran was arrested

on corruption charges. These stemmed from his shady dealings with billionaire hotelier Ong Beng Seng. Furthermore, Speaker of Parliament Tan Chuan-Jin and fellow People's Action Party (PAP) Member of Parliament Cheng Li Hui resigned over an affair. Such inappropriately intimate relations with a lawmaker from the same party undermined Tan's fitness for his role, which is supposed to be impartial. When our leaders pride themselves on being 'whiter than white', the fallout from such scandals is especially devastating owing to their perceived hypocrisy. The international media, which often praises Singapore's lack of corruption, was also quick to highlight these isolated failures. That said, in a traditionalist and law-abiding society like Singapore, such dishonesty drew widespread popular condemnation, and the punishments suffered were seen as appropriate. Thus, far from influencing the people, these incidents underscored the importance of maintaining integrity, especially among elites. As such, in an elitist society, deceptiveness among our leaders is especially baneful to the country's concerns. Conversely, the people's strong ethical foundation renders them less vulnerable to being swayed by elite dishonesty.

### **Conclusion**

On balance, our sensitivity inclines us towards using white lies for others' benefit. Be that as it may, Hamers' concern that elite deceptiveness harms the common weal does have some foundation in our elitist democracy. Still, the Singaporean people, with their firm moral grounding, are more apt to condemn than to follow our leaders when they stray. After all, the Iswaran and Tan scandals were sensational precisely because they were the exception, not the norm.