

**2023 C2 Preliminary Examination**  
**Paper 2 “The value of Serendipity” Answer Key**

**Passage 1**

1. In Paragraph 1, what distinction does the writer make between modern researchers and scientists like Newton and Archimedes? **Use your own words as far as possible. [2]**

Text	
<p>Sir Isaac Newton, <b>blessed by an apple</b> when formulating his laws of gravity, enjoys a reputation as one of mankind's greatest minds but was one of the most <b>difficult to work with</b>. In the same vein, Greek polymath Archimedes figured out his principle of buoyancy in a <b>'Eureka!' moment</b>. Indeed, the list of serendipitous discoveries in science is long, but modern scientists researchers used to <b>precise methods and collaborating</b>, look at serendipity with jaundiced eyes. In their experience, those who spot an abnormality under controlled conditions are the ones who make meaningful revelations.</p>	<p>Unlike modern researchers who made discoveries in a <b>systematic</b> manner, the discoveries made were done in an <b>unstructured</b> manner.</p> <p>Modern researchers prefer to <b>work in partnership</b>/together but scientists like Newton and Archimedes were <b>not team players</b></p> <p>The discoveries that modern researchers make are <b>done through design</b>/are intentional whereas the discoveries of Newton and Archimedes were a result of serendipity/were <b>unplanned</b>.</p> <p>Any 1 set for 2 marks  Note: 2 marks or 0 mark</p>

2. Explain what 'with jaundiced eyes' (line 5) reveals about modern researchers' opinion of serendipity's impact on 'meaningful revelations' (line 6). **Use your own words as far as possible [2]**

Text	
<p>... modern researchers used to precise methods and collaborating, look at serendipity with jaundiced eyes. In their experience, those who spot an abnormality under controlled conditions are the ones who make meaningful revelations.</p>	<p>a) Modern researchers are <b>sceptical/ cynical</b> of serendipity [1]</p> <p>b) This means the <b>scientific discoveries made may not be deemed as useful / valuable</b>.</p>

3. How does the use of language in lines 7-9 paint those who do not leverage serendipity in a negative light? **[2]**

Text	
<p>Fervent supporters of serendipity dismiss those who mistrust serendipity as <b>incapable</b> of latching onto the opportunities serendipity offers in the achievement of their goals and claim flagging faith in serendipity <b>has blunted the competitive edge</b> which helped mankind survive crises.</p>	<p>a) Those who do not leverage on serendipity are termed 'incapable' – implying that they are <b>incompetent / inept</b></p> <p>and</p> <p>b) Those who do not leverage serendipity “have blunted the competitive edge that helped mankind survive crises” implies they have <b>dulled the ability to overcome calamities</b> / catastrophes</p>

4. In paragraph 3, how does our routine use of search engines substantiate the writer's belief that serendipity no longer plays any real part in our lives? **Use your own words as far as possible. [2]**

Text	
Thankfully, we have replaced unproductive chance with purposeful design. Take for example our use of search engines where we can locate whatever we want in minutes. We do not want to waste time trawling through the internet to discover what else we could be interested in, not when artificial intelligence allows us to delight in tailored experiences all of the time.	Utilising search engines , a) we live efficiently/we can engage in labour saving activities [1]  yet  c) continue to have customised/ personalised events [1]

5. Explain how lines 19-21 support the writer's assertion in the first sentence of paragraph 4. Use own words as far as possible. **[2]**

Text	
There are other reasons why a reliance on serendipitous encounters is no longer popular. ....  Our desire for immediate gratification has dampened our willingness to engage in chance-taking in our relationships since <u>digital tools enable us to acquire social circles with little effort</u>	We no longer feel that serendipity has relevance as a) serendipity cannot satisfy our want for instant answers/ solutions [1] and b) technology has offered us the ability to make friends without much struggle/ work [1]

6. From paragraph 5, explain three criticisms the writer has of 'those who place their faith in serendipity' (line 26). Use your own words as far as possible **[3]**

Text	
Furthermore, those who place their faith in serendipity <b>are not as cheery</b> as they make themselves out to be. Participants in a research project 'Do the Happy Go Lucky?' who profess a belief in serendipity indulged in habits like ' <b>awfulising</b> ' - a tendency to <b>overestimate the seriousness</b> of events. Encouraged by TikTok videos like the 'Lucky Girl Syndrome' which promote the life-changing power of projecting positive thought, they also <b>dodge stressful situations</b> . They <b>believe</b> that with serendipity by their side, <b>everything will turn out well</b> . Yet, which major global problems have ever been solved so simplistically?	The writer criticises those who place their faith in serendipity as a) <u>not</u> as upbeat/ optimistic OR are gloomy/ pessimistic.  She claims they b) tend to be fearful/ overly anxious  c) tend to avoid/evade obstacles/difficulties  d) are <u>too</u> optimistic/hopeful  Any 3 points out of 4

7. Identify one way in which the final paragraph provides an effective ending to the writer's argument. **[1]**

Text	
While there is something attractive about depending on serendipity, we would be exaggerating the merits of the <i>Eureka</i> moment and over-estimating the frequency of bungling discovery. Though the thought of being rewarded	The final paragraph refers back to the opening hook about the advantages/usefulness of that <i>Eureka</i> moment which helped us to solve problems/ make helpful discoveries quickly.

for unintentional discoveries is alluring, to leave life solely to serendipity is inadvisable in an ambiguous world.	
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## **Passage 2**

**8.** How does the writer support his assertion that ‘serendipity is the provider of opportunities to achieve greatness’ (line 1)? **[2]**

Text	
Billionaire Bill Gates might well have led a very different life had the Mother’s Club in his primary school not furnished a rudimentary processor or paid for expensive computer time using garage sale proceeds before computers became commonplace. Gates was introduced to the micro-computer, wrote his first software program on that basic terminal and the rest, as they say, is history.	a) He cites the example of Bill Gates who was able to achieve great success as b) he was just in the right place at the right time OR c) he was fortunately/providentially given the means for success

**9.** According to the writer in lines 7-10, how does the Ovarian Lottery demonstrate that serendipity should not be underestimated? **Use your own words as far as possible [1]**

Text	
The disproportionate numbers of the world’s wealthiest people comprising those born in affluent nations vis-à-vis developing ones, lend credence to the Ovarian Lottery, a concept financial wizard Warren Buffett alluded to when asked for his thoughts on success.	There is an unequal /uneven population of richer people begin their lives / are found in wealthier / more prosperous countries/states compared with less well-off ones. [1]

## **Summary Question**

**10.** From paragraphs 3-5 only, summarise what the author offers as reasons for the decline in the belief in serendipity and what the negative consequences are. **[8]**

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.**

***Fewer people believe in serendipity as ...***

1) Unfortunately, society appears intent on <b>downplaying the value</b> of serendipitous encounters.	the <b>importance of serendipity has been disparaged/decried.</b>
2) Instead, <b>diligence has taken centre-stage.</b>	<b>Our focus</b> is on <b>being industrious/ assiduousness.</b>
3)The loss of enthusiasm for serendipity is fuelled by the perception that not only <b>is it at odds with problem-solving</b>	Serendipity is <b>antagonistic to/ conflicts rational/ logical thinking,</b>
4) but it also <b>weakens our ability to use time well</b>	<b>deemed inefficient/unproductive,</b>

5) and <b>contradicts</b> the commonly held belief that we are <b>directors of our own destinies</b> .	<b>which subverts/ challenges</b> the idea that we <b>are in control</b>
6)... we have lost our appetite for serendipitous discovery which <b>once powered profitable pursuits</b>	We <b>lose the drive to generate meaningful/ valuable endeavours</b>
7) and <b>alleviated monotony</b> in our lives.	and <b>fills us with dreariness/tedium</b> .
8) Modern society's rejection of serendipity is unfortunate as <b>our preference for the predictable</b>	Our <b>favouring of/ fancy for the conventional/ expected</b>
9) <b>is crippling our abilities to cope</b> in a shifting world.	<b>hinders/ handicaps</b> how we <b>handle/ manage ambiguity</b>
10) Fearing the limiting effects of remote work, executive officers demand their employees return to the office as they <b>seek to regain the advantages that serendipity once provided</b> . Remote work might have increased business efficiency, but	and we <b>lose our edge/ upper hand</b>
11) <b>random encounters... have become rare</b>	<b>With much reduced/ infrequent spontaneous/ unplanned meetings</b> at work,
12) necessary to <b>ignite ingenuity in formulating ideas</b>	<b>to generate/ inspire innovative/ creative concepts</b>
13) and <b>resolving problems</b> at the water-cooler or photocopier	and <b>develop solutions/ answers</b> ,
14) With the reduction of successfully engineered workplace encounters, corporations will <b>no longer reap the award-winning fruits</b> of serendipitous engagement.	which has <b>stopped/ halted</b> the development of <b>iconic/ outstanding products and services</b> .
15) In addition, for those who turn their noses up at serendipity, their <b>loathing for themselves increases</b> when they stumble	Their <b>self-contempt/ self-blame intensifies/ deepens</b>
16) ..[athletes] who deny serendipity are <b>unable to accept setbacks</b> in competitions as <b>temporary lapses</b> .	and they <b>see failures as permanent/ perpetual</b>
17) By not believing in the magic of serendipity and <b>expecting only bad things to happen</b> ,.	Beset by a <b>pessimistic/ glum outlook</b> towards life,
18) they <b>squander the opportunity for personal development</b>	we <b>waste/misuse the chance to improve/ progress</b> ,
19) ...the possibility of <b>transformation</b>	<b>for radical change/ reformation</b>
20) that can help them <b>achieve their aspirations</b>	and <b>realise their goals/ dreams</b> .

Pts	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14	15+
Marks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8