

**VJC 2024 General Paper JC2 Prelim Examination
Answer Scheme**

From Passage 1

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

From the Text	Possible paraphrase
Whether it was the myriad of pandemic hobbies adopted to distract us from an unprecedented <u>global crisis</u> or binge-watching Netflix to find solace from the <u>political upheavals</u> of contemporary society.	Hobbies were used as a means to divert our attention from an unparalleled <u>international calamity</u> in the form of the Covid-19 pandemic [1m] as well as a source of comfort from the <u>political turbulences</u> of modern society. [1m]
Markers' comments: Students should pay attention to the specific contexts in which hobbies can serve as a form of ‘coping mechanism’. While the context does not have to be paraphrased, the correct context must be included. For the first mark, there is a need to relate to the idea of a global crisis, i.e. lockdown, COVID-19, global emergency. For the second mark, there is a need to relate to the specific idea of political problems.	

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

From the Text	Possible paraphrase
...used to be the exclusive domain of the aristocracy who had much wealth and leisure at their beck and call	In the past, only those who were very rich / affluent and had plenty of free time [1m] at their disposal/readily available [1m] could afford to indulge in hobbies.
Markers' comments: Most students were able to get the first mark. However, quite a number of students did not paraphrase the idea of ‘beck and call’, highlighting the need for students to pay closer attention to what needs to be paraphrased in the passage. To demonstrate an understanding of the phrase ‘at their beck and call’, it is not enough to merely have the idea of ‘a lot’ but it is necessary to have the idea of ‘being readily available’ to be awarded the second mark.	

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

From the Text	Possible paraphrase
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.	Businesses react very fast to new trends in order to earn profits [1m].
<u>Markers' comments:</u> This is an inference question. Students are expected to move beyond just paraphrasing the phrase 'quick to leverage' and think about what such an ability says about these businesses. To get the full mark, the answer needs to demonstrate inference by showing how the speed in which businesses react to new trends is reflective of their nature, in this case, being profit-driven.	

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

From the Text	Possible paraphrase
Investing in hobbies is also a long-term investment in oneself .	Just as how investments necessitate some effort/resource in order to gain something in the future, spending/setting aside time to engage in hobbies [1m] results in benefits for the person over time . [1m]
<u>Markers' comments:</u> For the first mark, the context of how hobbies can be seen as an investment where time is deliberately set aside needs to be identified. For the second mark, students need to incorporate the idea of how setting aside time for hobbies is beneficial for the individual in the longer run.	

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

From the Text	Possible paraphrase
Unsurprisingly, empirical evidence aligns with intuition : humans require recreational time.	Hard data/statistics or scientific findings support [1m] what we know instinctively , [1m] that <u>hobbies are good for us</u> .
<u>Markers' comments:</u> This is a vocabulary question. For students who do not know the meaning of 'empirical', they can use the context at the start of Paragraph 4 (description of the meta-analysis of data) to infer the meaning. Attempts to paraphrase 'intuition' as logical thinking or reasoning were inaccurate.	

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

From the Text	Possible paraphrase
Viewing leisure as a waste of time can create a self-fulfilling prophecy , ultimately <u>diminishing the pleasure derived from hobbies</u> .	When one has the perception of leisure as a chore or of little value [1m], he will not engage in the hobby meaningfully. As a result, he will derive/enjoy little value/benefit from leisure [1m].
<p><u>Markers' comments:</u> To get the first mark, answers need to refer to the perception that people have of leisure as a waste of time. Some students erroneously assume that hobbies are factually 'a waste of time'.</p> <p>To get the second mark, answers need to refer to how having such a perception led to a particular outcome in reality. The use of appropriate signposting such as 'as a result', 'hence', and 'actual' will be helpful.</p>	

From Passage 2

7. Summarise the problems associated with hobbies and how we should approach hobbies instead. [8]

No	From the passage	Suggested Answer
1	propensity to evoke anxiety (lines 4-5)	Tendency to arouse feelings of worry
2	In actuality, contrary to popular belief , it is normal for one to feel like <u>one does not have any hobbies</u> (lines 5-6)	As one may be made to feel atypical/an aberration/ an abnormality if <u>one does not have any hobby</u>
3	own's personal interests do not count as actual hobbies (lines 6-7)	or dismiss one's personal interests as not being legitimate/recognised
<p><u>Markers' Comments:</u> To be given credit, Points (2) and (3) need to be phrased as either as problems associated with hobbies or how we should approach hobbies instead.</p>		
4	having any free time to pursue passions can seem like a distant fantasy even though hobbies are often touted as panacea for stress. (lines 8-9)	Being able to afford time can be seen as a remote dream/unattainable wish
5	Hobbies do not have to be 'productive' or involve specific benchmarks of improvement or progress (lines 11-12)	Hobbies do not require results/upgrading ourselves
6	the last thing one should feel compelled to is to turn his hobby into a ' side hustle ' (lines 14-15)	Coerced into monetising one's hobby/make it profitable/earn additional income from one's hobby/ turn one's hobby into a gig

7	feel the pressure to foster a suitable hobby <u>in the eyes of others</u> (lines 15-16)	Need to conform to <u>others' expectations/social norms</u>
8	assumptions that we always have the physical space , (line 21)	Not everyone has room/the venue
9	spare time (line 21)	leisure
10	and financial means to do so (line 21)	money/privilege
11	passive <u>digital distractions</u> (line 27)	sedentary/mindless <u>digital/online activities</u>

Markers' Comments:

Very few scripts had Point (11) as there was a lack of sensitivity to the key idea of 'passive' (a problem associated with these digital hobbies).

12	Addictions (line 28)	Compulsive activities, obsessions
13	fodder for comparison (line 33)	Reinforces/fuels the need to measure up to others OR Becomes yet another benchmark for others to judge us/for competition
14	From impressive crafts to sumptuous baked goods to wild rock-climbing feats, there are countless images of people showing off their hobbies (lines 33-35)	boasting about their hobbies
15	denigrating people without hobbies (line 35)	disparage/belittle people without hobbies
16	not to dive into a hobby just for the sake of it (line 36)	We should not plunge into a hobby/ take up a hobby impulsively/without much thought
17	we need to take advantage of the opportunity to do things that feel good for us (lines 37-38)	Seize the chance to do what we enjoy
18	our guiding light should always be our internal compass and reflective insight (lines 38-39)	Our morality/ethos/value system should guide our hobbies

No. of points	1-2	3-4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
Marks allocated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

General Comments on the Summary

Students should plan and organise their points clearly into 'problems' and 'approaches' before writing. Some scripts lacked clear flow of ideas when the points were disparate and not coherently strung together.

Most students were able to paraphrase the key ideas, though some words/phrases like 'comparison' and 'do not count' were more often lifted.

Some paraphrases resulted in inaccuracies and distortions of the author's points. For example, to not to feel 'compelled to turn a hobby into a side hustle' is not the same as 'one should not turn one's hobby into a money-making venture'. The key idea is not to be coerced, rather than this is something that one should or cannot do. **Precision and accuracy of meaning is critical in scoring for the summary.**

Use formal language. Avoid colloquial and informal expressions such as 'flexing', and 'showboating'.

The summary response should be written in continuous prose, in 1 paragraph. Quite a number of students omitted words like the definite article, 'the', as well as other words, making their sentences ungrammatical. Remember that language marks are awarded based on the summary and AQ answers.

Students should pay attention to the word limit of 120 words. Any additional words beyond the word limit will not be awarded any marks. Some script flagrantly exceeded the word-limit by 20 words or more!

Summary: Student Sample

Hobbies are problematic as they can cause severe unease in people, appearing as a far-fetched dream, despite being promoted as a cure for mental fatigue. Hobbies are often measured by their utility, or levels of improvement. We should ignore the expectation to have a hobby that others find appropriate as it is more useful to have hobbies that bring joy. Hobbies require available area, leisure time, and monetary resources which some lack, resulting in inequity where only the rich can afford it. Hobbies are used as a means for comparison, where people flaunt their hobbies and mock those without. Hence, we should not engage in hobbies frivolously, and should choose one based on our internal values and knowledge of self.

Markers' Comments:

11 points; 8 marks; 120 words.

Coherent response with precise and accurate paraphrases. Overall, the response demonstrated mastery of language and a clear link back to both elements of the summary question (the problems and the approach).

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]

Valid ideas from Passage 3	Possible paraphrase [1 mark]	Justification [1 mark]
Hobbies give you a break from the daily grind . (lines 3-4)	Hobbies are good for our mental well-being as they make us take some time off from our day-to-day/routine work or duties .	Taking some time off work will help people take their minds from their work and hence feel less stressed by their work . Or This is good for mental health because humans are not robots and cannot be working all the time or they will suffer from burnout .
<p><u>Markers' comments:</u></p> <p>To be awarded the first mark, answers need to paraphrase BOTH ideas of ‘break’ and ‘daily’.</p> <p>To be awarded the second mark, answers need to explain why or how taking a break from everyday tasks alleviates stress. The reason for this is any logical inference based on the valid ideas from Passage 3.</p>		

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]

Valid ideas from Passage 3	Possible paraphrase [1 mark]	Justification [1 mark]
the internet has resulted in the democratisation of hobbies (lines 17-18)	The internet has made it easier for people to access/engage in hobbies. OR The internet has made it possible for everyone/the masses to engage in hobbies.	The internet has made it easier to access/find/ the knowledge/ materials necessary for specific hobbies. OR The internet has made it more affordable for people to access/find the materials needed for specific hobbies.
<p><u>Markers' comments:</u></p> <p>Quite a number of students incorrectly paraphrased or explained the idea of “democratisation” of hobbies as there being more hobbies being created with the Internet.</p> <p>To be awarded the second mark, answers need to explain why or how the internet makes it easier for the masses to access or engage in hobbies. The reason for this is any logical inference based on the valid ideas from Passage 3.</p>		

10. The reading passages discuss the benefits of hobbies and some problems associated with them. How far do you agree with the views presented?

Support your answer with reference to:

- the ideas and opinions from at least one of the reading passages
- examples drawn from your experience and that of your society

[12]

Possible points for discussion

From passage 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Hobbies cause the brain to release feel-good chemicals that provide instant gratification.' (lines 17-18) • 'Additionally, hobbies can alleviate the stresses of daily responsibilities, even when time and energy for recreation seem scarce' (lines 18-20) • 'hobbies bring about psychological benefits that include both immediate mood improvements and long-term enhancements to resilience and self-perception' (lines 28-30) • 'Social benefits from hobbies can combat loneliness and sharpen social skills, while behavioral benefits can help establish healthy routines and habits' (lines 30-32)
From passage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'the word 'hobby' can have the propensity to evoke anxiety in people' (lines 4-5). • 'the idea of having any free time to pursue passions can seem like a distant fantasy' (lines 7-8) • 'some spiralling into addictions' (lines 27-28) • 'become fodder for comparison' (line 33) • 'countless images of people showing off their hobbies and denigrating people without hobbies' (lines 34-35)
From passage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'for hobbies give you a break from the daily grind' (lines 3-4) • 'Focusing on hobbies can also help you live a more balanced and fulfilling life' (line 12) • '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' (lines 12-15) • 'the internet has resulted in the democratization of hobbies. This inclusivity can bring people together and create a sense of community' (lines 18-19)

Suggested approach:

<p><u>Introduction:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefly introduce the topic in the context of your society by making references to a few broad relevant characteristics that will be further unpacked later in the body paragraphs. • Explicitly state your stand in relation to the question.
<p><u>Body Paragraphs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid merely rehashing material from the passages. • For a thorough evaluation, use TIP to evaluate the selected point. For instance, in the following sample paragraph, you will see how various stakeholders (government, ground-up initiatives and interest groups) enhance the social benefits of hobbies for specific groups (the elderly, hobbyists) in various ways (infrastructure, programmes and platforms such as Telegram).

- Another way to demonstrate thorough evaluation is to evaluate the effectiveness of measures meant to promote hobbies.

Text Reference	Explanation and Evaluation
'Social benefits from hobbies can combat social alienation' (Passage 1, line 30)	<p>In an ageing society like Singapore, these benefits hobbies can bring to the elderly are very important in helping our society mitigate the common downsides of an ageing society such as ill-health and strain on the healthcare system. Hence, senior activity centres, such as the Telok Blangah SCEC Active Mind Club, provide the elderly with the space and equipment to engage in hobbies together, such as playing mahjong. The government also encourages the elderly to engage in hobbies by improving the existing infrastructure to make it easier for the elderly to pursue their hobbies. These improvements include the installation of exercise equipment suitable for the elderly at fitness corners and setting up of Silver Zones in residential areas with high proportion of seniors such as Bukit Merah View to make it safer for them to access the various facilities within their neighbourhoods with the imposition of a lowered speed limits for vehicles. Apart from infrastructural improvements, the government also encourages ground-up initiatives that engage the elderly in hobbies regularly. For instance, 'Lao Peng You Pa Pa Zao' (PPZ) is a ground-up initiative by local director Jack Neo that attracted many of the elderly to take part in mass walks and was endorsed by ministers like Health Minister Ong Ye Kung.</p> <p>Even for hobbies that are usually done in solitude, there are many ground-up interest groups in Singapore that help to facilitate a sense of camaraderie. For instance, there are many interest groups on Facebook or Telegram for hobbies such as the Singapore Fishing Community on Facebook. Apart from fostering camaraderie, these groups also make it easier for individuals to engage in these hobbies regularly through the regular meetups they organise.</p>

Conclusion:

- Briefly highlight the most significant trends relating to hobbies in your society.
- Briefly discuss what could be done next.

Markers' comments:

Most students were able to demonstrate the reasons why hobbies were needed in the context of Singapore and supported their reasoning with valid examples. To improve, students need to deepen the quality of the evaluation either by using TIP to demonstrate conceptual understanding or elaborating further on the characteristics of Singapore that resulted in them taking a particular stand. For instance, evaluation can be achieved by considering different stakeholders and social groups in Singapore and how they engage with and perceive hobbies. Students can also critically evaluate the effectiveness of the measures aimed at promoting hobbies among Singaporeans, instead of merely describing these measures. Effective evaluation is absent in many scripts with most merely repeating what was already mentioned in the passages.

When characteristics of Singapore society were used, they tend to be repetitive across different points, for example 'fast-paced', 'competitive', and 'meritocratic'. These traits are valid, but they should be explained in a way that is relevant to the specific point and example about hobbies. A number of scripts described how there was a general shift in societal mindset to prioritise rest and leisure time. However, it would be better to not just describe the trend but explain why this shift in mindset came about and how this relates to hobbies.

The quality of examples can be improved by selecting apt examples of notable or common hobbies that are pursued. These should be supported with specific details that help demonstrate the significance of the argument selected. Some students had very general and vague examples which did not meaningfully support the points. Students should also note that not all hobbies require the same amount of time and resources.

Students should rely on examples of measures that are clearly intended to encourage hobbies. For instance, Home-Based Learning (HBL) Days and Skillsfuture are not meant to encourage people to pursue hobbies. There were a number of students who erroneously thought that the policy intention of HBL days was for students to pursue hobbies. Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs) were often cited and while this could potentially be relevant, the explicit link to hobbies was not always clear. CCAs are not in and of themselves meant as hobbies. Some CCAs are clearly not (e.g. uniformed groups). The chance to engage in, and enjoy these activities and skills in one's spare time and even after one has left the educational institution would show a clearer link between hobbies and CCAs.

Some students did not have a concluding paragraph for the AQ response which affected the overall coherence of the response, which comes under the language mark. While many students had an introductory paragraph, students ought to be cautioned against introductions that were far too lengthy as that limited the time they would have for a thorough evaluation in the body paragraphs later on.

Application Question: Student Sample

As you read the sample, identify possible questions the candidate might have asked to develop **thorough** evaluation.

Sample Student Response	Comments
<p>In the fast-paced lives of Singaporeans, stress is undoubtedly a common and universal feeling that we have all have to deal with. For many, the most obvious solution to escaping from the constant burden of stress is to take up a hobby. In my opinion, hobbies are generally beneficial to Singapore's population as hobbies have the capability to reduce stress and lead to a more balanced and fulfilling life. Hence, I disagree with the author's claim in Passage 2 and agreed with the claim in Passage 3.</p> <p>In Passage 3, the author claims that the idea of having any free time to pursue passions can seems like a distant fantasy, a claim that I disagree with. Instead, I would argue that today, it is more possible than ever to set aside time to be dedicated to our hobbies, a reality that is true in Singapore's context. Naysayers would object, saying that with the average Singaporean's lifestyle there is practically no room for leisure. The complaint that the life of a Singaporean is always focused on work is true to some extent. Singapore, being a pragmatic society, places heavy emphasis on economic progress and meritocracy, which leaves virtually no time for recreation. However, this mindset is not applicable to all. Within the younger generations, there is an increasing trend in younger office workers choosing to prioritise a healthy work-life balance over working overtime. More and more people are making the active decision to value their mental health and recognise the value of hobbies and leisure time. In response, there has been an increase in small businesses and companies trying to cater to their growing need for hobbies that readily accessible. For example, nested in the heart of the Central Business District are a line of small shops such as pottery studios, painting studios and gym pods which cater to the population of office workers who want to indulge in their hobbies after a long</p>	

day of work. The close proximity to their workplaces makes it very accessible for workers to pop in and engage in their hobbies during their lunch breaks or on the way home from work. Hence, it has become increasingly accessible to pursue hobbies.

In Passage 3, the author claims that focusing on hobbies can help people to live a more balanced and fulfilling life, an opinion that I agree with. Hobbies have been proven to release stress and act as a source of motivation for some. However, besides the benefits individuals reap, one's hobby can indirectly benefit others. For example, a large proportion of people in Singapore enjoy long-distance running in Singapore. In addition to the physical and mental benefits one reaps from running, there are also numerous charity runs that people can participate in. For example, the proceeds from CIMB's local 5-kilometre race go to raising funds for cancer research. Engaging in hobbies that benefit the community as well, brings about a sense of fulfilment that even while engaging in hobbies, they have the ability to make an impact in their community. This can be said for other hobbies as well, such as crocheters who sell the crocheted stuffed animals they make in order to raise funds for the SPCA. Being able to serve the community leads to a more balanced life due to the satisfaction one gains. Although some hobbies may not lead to one being able to positively impact other communities, hobbies make up a part of our identity. Hobbies can serve as a common identity allowing us to connect with others online, by bonding over a common interest. For example, in Singapore, there is a small community of people who dub themselves as 'train otakus' and are fascinated with the way the railway system in Singapore works. Although this may seem bizarre and unusual to most, these people have found kindred spirits with the same unique interest. Hobbies connect people from all walks of life. Being able to meet different types of people leads to a more balanced and fulfilling life.

In conclusion, hobbies are greatly beneficial to use and are extremely important to Singaporeans who greatly need a form of escapism from what would otherwise be a dreary and monotonous life.

Markers' Comments:

11marks.

Overall, the response is rich in evaluation in terms of the reasoning and contextualising the arguments in the Singapore context. The response also demonstrated conceptual understanding of the experiences of the younger generation and how hobbies provide a sense of identity. There is a range of examples with relevant details provided and these examples are adapted to clearly support the arguments made.