



# **ANDERSON SERANGOON JUNIOR COLLEGE**

## **JC2 Preliminary Examination 2024**

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**GENERAL PAPER**

**8881/02**

**PAPER 2**

**27 August 2024**

**INSERT**

**1 hour 30 minutes**

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### **READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST**

This Insert contains the passages for comprehension.

**Passage 1.** *An author writes about the benefits of idealism.*

- 1 In a world dominated by cynicism and practicality, being an idealist emerges as both a rebellion against short-sightedness and an affirmation of hope. Idealists dare to envision a better world as a tangible reality that can ultimately be achieved through the power of belief and human effort. The belief that one's ideals can be achieved, while frequently dismissed as naive or impractical, holds an intrinsic value that propels societies toward greater heights of justice and innovation. It is the idealists among us—those who dream of what might be—who often drive the wheel of progress, challenging the status quo and inspiring change. 5
- 2 While most people quibble over practical concerns, idealists, like a compass pointing to the north, guide public discourse and actions towards the moral principles that really matter. By adhering to their convictions without wavering, without compromise and without fail, idealists challenge others to prioritise what is right over what is convenient. Idealists not only dream of lofty moral principles but actively endeavour to construct a world governed by such principles, influencing both policy and personal behaviour towards greater ethical standards. 10 15
- 3 As a result of their convictions, idealists are often at the forefront of the fight for rights and justice. From the rarefied heights of their idealism, they enjoy a panorama of humanity's promise. Their vision of a fairer world compels them to challenge entrenched injustices and advocate for the marginalised. Their belief in human dignity and equality fuels relentless campaigns against oppression and discrimination. Take Malala Yousafzai, for example. A solitary lighthouse in Taliban-run Pakistan, she bravely spoke out for her right and the right of all girls to attend school. 20
- 4 Whether pushing for civil rights or championing gender equality, idealists inspire and mobilise others to join their cause, catalysing societal changes that might otherwise seem impossible. Nelson Mandela's civil resistance during apartheid-era South Africa was a symbol of hope. The anti-apartheid movement, fuelled by the collective idealism of millions, pressured international communities to impose sanctions and ultimately led to the dismantling of the apartheid regime in 1994. 25
- 5 Cynics may argue that great societal transformation can only be achieved by a select few trailblazers. Yet, must idealism revolutionise the world for us to see its value? Even for the everyman, holding firm to these lofty goals may be a way to encourage continued personal development. For realists, stark acceptance of the status quo may force them to mutely accept their own limits, but for idealists, an unwavering belief in their potential or the nobility of their goals can drive them relentlessly forward even in the face of rejection. 30
- 6 Being an idealist also carries profound emotional benefits. Idealists engage with life more joyfully, live with purpose, and tend to be more emotionally stable. Besides emotional benefits, idealists also enjoy being part of a community as they connect with like-minded individuals who share their aspirations. 35
- 7 On the face of it, being an idealist is often dismissed as daydreaming. However, it is anything but. It is a vital force that drives humanity forward, challenging us to rise above the status quo. Like how Martin Luther King Jr. spoke of his dream of equality and freedom, let us all be brave enough to dream and strive towards a future that aligns with our highest ideals. 40

**Passage 2.** *An author writes about the advantages of pragmatism.*

- 1 Pragmatists are no strangers to unsolicited criticisms – this is encountered as a natural consequence of their practical approach which often opposes idealistic or theoretical perspectives. Yet, the reality that pragmatism helps to address issues we face in nearly every facet of our lives validates this approach.
- 2 Unlike idealism which focuses on chasing a flawless solution akin to an elusive unicorn, pragmatism thrives on delivering tangible results. Unlike idealism which can get lost in theoretical perfection, pragmatism advocates the attainment of goals through achievable steps. This creates a sense of accomplishment and motivates further action. In the business world, a pragmatic entrepreneur might aim to establish a small but loyal customer base and achieve steady growth rather than pursue the untenable goal of becoming a billion-dollar company within a year. 5 10
- 3 The real world rarely aligns perfectly with our plans, but pragmatists are effective at using the resources available to them and generating creative solutions. An example of this can be seen in Kibera, a large slum in Nairobi, Kenya. Faced with limited resources and infrastructure, residents have adopted pragmatic solutions. They have built schools from recycled materials and created small businesses with minimal investment. Pragmatism is also key on the international stage, helping countries maintain amiable relations essential to securing their trade benefits. 15
- 4 Simultaneously, the upside of pragmatism is the consideration of diverse perspectives of stakeholders. This fosters the creation of solutions that are not only palatable but also more likely to be implemented. The Paris Agreement on climate change, for one, has seen its share of success because it considers the diverse economic and developmental needs of participating countries, allowing each nation to set its own realistic targets for reducing carbon emissions rather than imposing uniform standards. Negotiators rarely achieve perfect outcomes but, by considering the concerns of all parties involved, they can prevent conflict. 20 25
- 5 Ultimately, a healthy dose of pragmatism brings about a host of benefits. Without a pragmatic approach, our lofty ideals remain just that – ideals.

**Passage 3.** *An author considers why we need idealism now more than ever.*

- 1 From climate change to social inequality, the world faces a daunting array of challenges that can all too easily crush our spirits with a sense of defeatism. There are those amongst us who, claiming that they are just being realistic, have accepted that things are just the way they are.
- 2 Yet it is precisely in these times that idealism becomes even more crucial. While pragmatists fretfully agonise over the state of our world and argue about how to go about solving problems, idealists are already out there taking action. The history of humankind is replete with stories of inspirational figures who remind us that we are not in fact doomed and that we can fight against the seemingly overwhelming odds threatening our futures. Consider Fridays for Future, the climate movement involving students all over the world going on school strikes. This global environmental movement has forced governments to take action against exploitative corporations. 5  
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- 3 It is disconcerting that we often assume that the idealist and the pragmatist are at odds with each other when in fact, collectively, they work hand-in-hand to initiate change. One needs to look no further than the development of sustainable urban planning initiatives, where visionary goals for green spaces are realised through practical regulations and infrastructure projects. On a larger scale, problems in the world often involve complex, interconnected factors that span across various social, economic, and environmental realms, making simple solutions ineffective and grandiose visions impracticable. But when people embrace both idealism and pragmatism, they dream big and work incrementally, recognising that lasting progress is often made through a series of small victories and actionable goals. 15  
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- 4 In a world that can feel increasingly cynical, idealism is a precious commodity. It is the fuel that ignites our passions. It is the belief that a better world is possible. It is the seed that sows hope. 25