Answer scheme for 2022 J2 Prelim Paper 2 (difficulty of obtaining satisfaction)

1. Identify and explain the 'greatest paradox' (line 4) of human life. **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2]

From the passage	Suggested Answer
Satisfaction is the greatest paradox of human life. We crave it, we believe we can get it, we glimpse it and maybe even experience it for a brief moment, and then it vanishes, and we are left feeling… unsatisfied.	The greatest paradox in life is the **nature** of satisfaction (1m). Achieving our goal should make us feel happy or contented but it does not (1m).

Examiners' comments:

2. Why does the author quote the lyrics in line 7? [1]

From the passage	Suggested Answer
"I try, and I try, and I try, and I try," Jagger sings.	He quotes the lyrics to **illustrate/emphasise** the **repetitive/endless** nature of trying to achieve satisfaction (1m). OR to illustrate our **persistence** in trying to achieve satisfaction (1m).

Examiners' comments:

3. Why does the author use the phrase 'core "macronutrients"' to describe satisfaction (lines 8-9)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2]

From the passage	Suggested Answer
Satisfaction is one of the **core "macronutrients"** of happiness, required in large amounts for everyday life.	<u>Just as</u> macronutrients are essential nutrients the body needs in great/substantial quantities to remain healthy, satisfaction is **essential/vital** (1m) and we need **huge** amounts (1m) of it to be happy.

Examiners' comments:

4. What is the author suggesting in his use of the three dots (…) in line 12? [2]

From the passage	Suggested Answer
But dreams are liars. When they come true, it is … fine, for a while.	The three dots are typically used to **represent a pause in speech,** particularly when one is **hesitant/underwhelmed** (1m). The author is trying to convey his **hesitancy towards agreeing that things are indeed "fine" when dreams come true** (1m).

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Examiners' comments:

5. According to the author in lines 21-23, why is it 'impossible to get the first feeling back'? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2]

From the passage	Suggested Answer
While that first dose of a new recreational substance might give us great pleasure, our previously naive brain quickly learns to **sense an assault on its equilibrium** and **fights back by neutralizing** the effect of the entering drug, making it impossible to get the first feeling back.	Our previously naive brain quickly learns to **identify an attack on its state of stability/ balance (1m)** OR **that something is not normal / unusual (1m)** and **resists/rebels by offsetting / counteracting** the effect of the entering drug (1m).

Examiners' comments:

6. Using material from paragraphs 4 - 6 only (lines 24-44), summarise the author's views on why happiness is difficult to achieve.

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**.

 Happiness is difficult to achieve because…..

	From the passage	**Possible paraphrase**
a	When we get an emotional **shock**—good or bad—	When we receive an emotional **jolt**,
b	our brain wants to **re-equilibrate**,	our brain wants to **regain stability/ balance**
c	making it **hard** to **stay on the high or low** for very long.	Making it **difficult** to **maintain any intense feeling/sentiment** for very long.
d	This is **especially true** when it **comes** to **positive emotions.**	This is **particularly** so for **favorable feelings** (Context needed but egs of positive emotions acceptable)
e	It is why, when we achieve **conventional, acquisitive** success, we can never get enough.	Hence, when we achieve the **usual/mainstream/traditional material** success, we can never get enough.
f	If we only **measure** our happiness based on success—money, power, prestige—	If our happiness is **benchmarked** based on **material triumph,**
g	we will **run from victory to victory**,	we will **endlessly chase accolades**
h	initially to keep feeling **good,**	first to keep feeling **joyful**.

i	and then to avoid feeling **awful.**	and then to avoid feeling **despair**.
j	Scholars argue over whether our happiness has an **immutable set point**,	There is **no consensus /** Intellectuals **debate** over whether happiness has a **fixed and immovable target/goal**
k	or if it might **move around a little** over the **course of our life** due to general circumstances.	Or whether it might **shift during our existence** as our situation changes
l	But no one has ever found that **immediate bliss** from a major victory or achievement will **endure.**	No one has ever found that the **present elation/happiness** from a major victory will **persist**
m	As for money, more of it helps **up to a point**—it can buy things and services that relieve the problems of poverty,	More money will work up to a **certain level,**
n	which **make** us *less unhappy.*	it can purchase items and utilities that **offset the pain** of being poor, which **reduces** the levels of our **sadness**
o	But **forever chasing money/** **OR treadmill…**	But **endlessly pursuing** money as a means
p	**enduring satisfaction** simply does not **work.**	of **long-lasting happiness** is not **viable**.
q	to seek **new levels of stimulation**	We search for **greater heights/ peaks of sensation**
r	merely to **maintain old levels** of subjective pleasure.	purely to **retain previous amounts** of impressionistic enjoyment.
s	Yet even if we recognize all this, **getting off the treadmill is hard.**	Even if we realise this situation, **breaking out of the cycle** is **difficult**
t	It feels **dangerous** and we feel like **we are lagging behind.**	It feels **risky** and we feel like **we are not keeping up**
u	Our **urge** for *more* is **quite powerful,**	Our **desire for** more is **rather strong**
v	but **stronger still** is our **resistance** to *less.*	but **even greater** is our **aversion** to less.
w	**The wealthy keep accumulating** far beyond anything they could possibly spend,	**Rich people hoard** more money/possessions than they could ever use
x	and sometimes **more** than they want to **bequeath to their children**.	And even **greater amounts** than they wish to leave as an **inheritance to their descendants**

<u>24</u> possible points for the summary.

1-2pts: 1m, 3-4pts:2m, 5-6pts:3m, 7-8pts:4m, 9-10pts:5m, 11-12pts: 6m, 13 pts: 7m, 14pts and above: 8m

7. In lines 45-46, what have scholars shown about our 'acquisitive tendencies'? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2]

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From the passage	Suggested Answer
Scholars have shown that our acquisitive tendencies **persist** amid **plenty** and **regularly exceed our needs.**	We **still want more even though we already have a lot/** Our acquisitive tendencies **endure/ continue** amid **abundance** (1m) even though it is **often/usually more** than what we **require** (1m)**.**

Examiners' comments:

8. Explain the author's use of the phrase 'cardboard cutouts' in line 63. [2]

From the passage	Suggested Answer
You become a heartless taskmaster to yourself, seeing yourself as nothing more than Homo economicus. **Love and fun are sacrificed** for another day of work, in search of a positive internal answer to the question Am I successful yet? We become **cardboard cutouts** of real people.	"Cardboard cutouts" are: (i) Lifeless / soulless (stationary) (ii) Flimsy / lacking in foundations / strength, or (iii) Uniform / having no difference or distinguishing factors from other people *(1m for any reasonable answer on how cardboard cutouts are without character)* the result of **giving up/ forgoing passion and pleasure/enjoyment** (1m)**.**

Examiners' comments:

9. In paragraph 9, explain why the author cites the example of the Dalai Lama. [1]

From the passage	Suggested Answer
Even the Dalai Lama, arguably the world's most enlightened man, admits to it. "I really love to see supermarkets, because I can see so many beautiful things. So, when I look at all these different articles, I develop a feeling of desire, and my initial impulse might be, 'Oh, I want this; I want that.'"	This is to show that even the world's wisest man who is supposed to rise above the material, **is fallible/not exempt from the temptations of satisfaction/experiences difficulty in controlling urges/desires/wants** (1m).

Examiners' comments:

10. What does the phrase 'chip away the detritus' (line 74) imply about the process of downsizing our lives? [2]

From the passage	Suggested Answer
Lately, there has been an explosion of books on minimalism, which all recommend	It implies that the process is **a slow, gradual one** (1m) as there are **huge**

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downsizing your life to get happier—**to chip away the detritus** of your life.	**amounts of waste / unwanted items/ material** in our lives (1m).

Examiners' comments:

11. In what way is the final paragraph an effective conclusion? [1]

From the passage	Suggested answer
	It reiterates key points/stand from the passage, that satisfaction is elusive, and we should try to stop chasing after it even if it might be counterintuitive. OR It is a call to action, that one will continue to feel dissatisfaction if nothing is done. *(1m for any one of the above or any reasonable answers/inferences.)*

Examiners' comments:

12. Brooks writes about why it is difficult to remain satisfied and suggests how we can lead more satisfied lives. How far do you agree with his views, relating your arguments to your own experience and that of your society? [10]

Why it is difficult to remain satisfied:

a. Yet time and time again, we have fallen into the trap of believing that success and its accompaniments would fulfill us. (Para 2)
b. …when we achieve conventional, acquisitive success, we can never get enough. If we base our sense of self-worth on success – money, power, prestige – we will run from victory to victory, initially to keep feeling good, and then to avoid feeling awful. (Para 4)
c. As for money, more of it helps up to a point – it can buy things and services that relieve the problems of poverty, which are sources of unhappiness. (Para 5)
d. Professional self-objectification… you become a heartless taskmaster to yourself, seeing yourself as nothing more than *Home economicus.* Love and fun are sacrificed for another day of work, in search of a positive internal answer to the question *Am I successful yet*? (Para 8)
e. We become cardboard cutouts of real people (in our quest for success). (Para 8)

How we can lead more satisfied lives:
f. … managing what we want instead of what we have… it is not just about having less things to weigh you down. (Para 9)
g. We can, in fact, find immense fullness when we pay attention to smaller and smaller things ("being fully present for an ordinary occurrence"). (Para 9)

Answer scheme for 2022 J2 Prelim Paper 2 (difficulty of obtaining satisfaction)

Why it is difficult to remain satisfied	Explanation and Evaluation
a. Yet time and time again, we have **fallen into the** <u>trap of believing that</u> **success and its accompaniments would fulfill us**. ……when we achieve **conventional, acquisitive success**, we can never get enough. *(Has Singapore / SG-eans indeed fallen into such a trap, that causes them to perennially remain unsatisfied? Why?)*	<u>**Agree**</u> The <u>5 'C's</u> (cash, car, credit card, condominium and country club) have <u>long been ingrained</u> as the "Singaporean dream" – benchmarks of material success in Singapore, grounded in practicality and pragmatism. The dogged pursuit of these benchmarks has hence been a perennial part of the Singaporean narrative since her humble nation-building years, from students striving to achieve stellar exam grades to enrol into their university of choice, to the competitive job market with young graduates vying for high-paying jobs. The prevalence and enduring nature of these 5 'C's – even in <u>today's</u> context – can also be seen in Singapore's currently <u>high car ownership rate</u>, despite the high taxation on the import/ownership of cars, and the infamously costly "Certificate of Entitlements". This materialism can also be seen in younger Singaporeans. While these conventional 5 'C's may not currently be in their sights, <u>"Hypebeast" culture</u> is another common phenomenon in Singaporean adolescents and young adults today. As the notion of social media influencers becomes increasingly prevalent today, many youths can usually be seen dressed in expensive and branded apparel (such as shoes, bags, jackets and outfits), in alignment with the latest fashion trends. Given the temporary and transient nature of such trends, current trends inevitably fade into irrelevance, thus leaving Singaporeans <u>"trapped" in a constant cycle of buying new "trendy" items and finding ways to sell/discard their old items</u> (e.g. as evidenced by a booming market for second-hand items in mint condition, and overwhelmed donation drop-off points like the Salvation Army) Many Singaporean working adults also find themselves <u>trapped in lifestyle inflation</u> – as their salaries increase, their spending increases too. In Singapore, this is often due to a range of contextual factors, such as wanting to "keep up with the Joneses", or having too hectic a lifestyle that results in workers being careless with their spending, for the sake of convenience. As a result, no matter how much these Singaporeans earn, or how much progress they make in their careers, they ultimately grow no closer to financial health or stability, and are constantly mired in a state of unsatisfaction and disgruntlement towards "rising costs of living". Given <u>young Singaporeans' high usage of social media</u>, they are particularly prone to <u>unhealthy social comparisons of achievements and prestige</u>, where they compare their own lives against the "highlight reels" of their peers, and feel perennially unsatisfied as a result – no matter how accomplished or successful their own lives are. Finally, despite being an increasingly affluent and materially-satisfied nation, many Singaporeans can still be characterised as <u>"complain kings and queens"</u>. In an interview with Chinese daily newspaper Lianhe Zaobao, veteran Hong Kong actor Benz Hui observed that

	Singaporeans have grown "too pampered and fortunate", such that they complain as long as they receive "anything less".
	Disagree
	However, despite their prominence in the Singaporean narrative, most of these aspirational goals no longer resonate with younger Singaporeans today. There have recently been <u>shifts towards re-definitions of the 5 'C's</u>, and what it means to be truly successful in Singapore, with <u>less emphasis on material success</u>. While "cash" undeniably remained king, <u>other new intangible markers of success</u> – such as **culture, credibility, career and convenience**, among others – have emerged since the 2010s, among Singaporean white-collar workers.
	This deemphasis on materialism can similarly be observed in the job market. More Singaporeans are <u>bucking conventional employment trends</u> to choose jobs they are passionate in, with the intention to "make a difference" or drive social change. In turn, more employees have broken free of the "shackles" of their high-paying but unfulfilling jobs.
	Rather than "falling into a success trap", our society has also collectively begun to encourage and embrace a diversity of pathways to "success", beyond the conventional "rat race". The Singapore education system has been promoting holistic education with a focus on core competencies and soft skills, beyond conventional "tried and tested" models of achieving good grades as the pathway to success.
b. If we **base our happiness** on success **– money, power, prestige** – we will **run from victory to victory**, initially to keep feeling good, and then to avoid feeling awful. *(Do Singaporeans indeed base their sense of self-worth on success/achievements, so much that it causes them to perennially remain unsatisfied? Why?)*	**Agree** Singapore is a <u>meritocratic</u> society, and it has always been a <u>part of the Singaporean social psyche to strive to be the best</u>. As a result, many Singaporeans take great pride in their successes, and show it in various forms (e.g. status symbols like luxury cars, proud proclamatory posts on social media about their latest milestones / travel exploits, etc). Singaporeans are also most likely to receive praise for their achievements and successes as well, from family members and relatives, to prominent headlines celebrating the success of remarkable Singaporeans. On the flipside, however, Singaporeans are also <u>immensely afraid of failure</u>, and of losing out to the people around them. This deeply-rooted sense of conservatism and risk-aversion has long been described as being "kiasu", and many have argued that Singaporeans strive as hard as they do to avoid failure, rather than achieve true excellence. In the same vein, many Singaporeans take setbacks and failures personally, or react to them with sadness or stress. **Disagree** There has also been a growing awareness and societal consciousness in recent years, of the <u>importance of achieving success beyond the "conventional rat race"</u>.

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<td>In today's context, students and prospective employees in Singapore have <u>fewer reasons than before to base their self-worth on conventional markers of success</u>. Beyond good grades, organisations in recent years have expanded their hiring criteria to include skills learnt outside school, internships and community involvement. Universities and higher education institutions are also moving away from largely grade-based admissions schemes, to assess students more broadly using aptitude-based admissions. E.g. Nanyang Technological University, have committed to extending aptitude-based admissions to 50% of each intake.

E.g. Ministry of Education introduced a series of reforms to the education system over the past two decades, with the intention of de-emphasising the primacy of academic grades and placing more emphasis on other goals such as character development, development of 21st century competencies, fostering joy of learning and encouraging lifelong learning. It has also been helping students appreciate that there are multiple pathways and opportunities to pursue their passions and interests, and that academic performance alone does not define their self-worth or prospects in life.</td>
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<td>*c.*</td>
<td>As for **money**, more of it <u>helps up to a point</u> – it can **buy things and services that relieve the problems of poverty**, which are sources of unhappiness

(i.e. "less unhappy", rather than "more happy")</td>
<td>**<u>Agree</u>**

The <u>rising popularity of minimalism and de-cluttering</u> in Singapore shows that most Singaporeans recognise the limitations of wealth as the sole source of happiness. Rather than blindly accumulating wealth or leading highly materialistic lifestyles, more are learning to reap the benefits of "living with less".

More Singaporeans are <u>turning down high-paying jobs in favour of more fulfilling / less demanding jobs that command a lower salary.</u> This shows that instead of leading materialistic lifestyles, many Singaporeans recognise that "money cannot buy happiness" and are in pursuit of the more intangible aspects of personal fulfilment and satisfaction.

<u>Disagree</u>

However, it would be too simplistic / idealistic to gloss over the <u>realities of not being able to afford the high costs of living, or providing for a family</u> in Singapore. This might be particularly applicable to Singaporeans who belong in the <u>lower / lower-middle income groups,</u> which typically lack the ability to achieve the loftier, intangible aspirations of the higher-income group.

Moreover, given many Singaporeans' long-standing values of <u>frugality and prudence</u> ingrained in them through their upbringing, they would think twice before simply turning down high-paying jobs. Those who do, usually ensure they have enough savings to tide them through their decision. <u>In this sense, money</u> – and the promise of financial security – <u>might actually be the very thing that helps Singaporeans "choose happiness" in the first place.</u>

Also, given that many Singaporeans are unhappy about being pressed for time, most Singaporeans <u>can indeed afford to "use</u></td>
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<td>money to buy happiness" by paying a premium for ride-hailing or food delivery services.

Finally, this argument may overlook the duality that comes with most Singaporean aspirations. Growing one's wealth still remains a top aspirational goal amongst pragmatic Singaporeans who wish to achieve the best of both worlds. Also, rather than committing themselves to the polar extremes of being thrifty or being spendthrifts, <u>most Singaporeans tend to live in moderation</u> – a middle ground that balances prudence / frugality with some healthy indulgence in life's little luxuries.</td>
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<td>d.</td>
<td>Professional self-objectification… we become a heartless taskmaster to ourselves, seeing ourselves as nothing more than *Homo economicus.* Love and fun are sacrificed for another day of work, in search of a positive internal answer to the question *Am I successful yet*?</td>
<td><u>**Agree**</u>

Singapore has long been cited as <u>one of the most over-worked and stressed-out nations</u> in the world, with high rates of employee burnout and increasingly loud demands to prioritise work-life balance. Yet, paradoxically, this has been exacerbated by a <u>high incidence of workaholism</u> amongst Singaporeans across different age groups. Besides being highly concerned about their performance at work, many Singaporeans seem to have internalised a compulsive need to work excessively, despite the detrimental impacts this has on their personal health and wellbeing. In a <u>meritocratic society with a deeply-rooted hard-working culture</u>, workers tend to shy away from knocking off earlier than their superiors, and are usually reluctant to say no when additional duties are assigned at odd hours.

Our society's high cost of living has also led to <u>rising levels of financial literacy and cost-consciousness</u> among Singaporeans. Coupled with the rising importance of growing one's wealth and saving for retirement, today's Singaporeans are now likelier than ever to *willingly* trade their leisure time for more work. This is usually done with the aim to further maximise their income or create multiple streams of income.

One such trade-off is the prevalence of "hustle culture" in Singapore (where hobbies are often monetised or repurposed into <u>"side-hustles"</u>, in addition to one's main occupation). Another is the (mostly) younger generation's hot pursuit of the <u>"Financial Independence, Retire Early" (F.I.R.E.)</u> lifestyle, where Singaporeans commit to extremely frugal/minimalistic lifestyles to achieve financial independence – even at the expense of a healthy social life, indulging in small luxuries, or having children.

<u>**Disagree**</u>

More Singaporeans have recently grown more conscious and vocal about <u>work-life balance</u> and <u>prioritising one's mental health</u>. This can be due to the Covid-19 pandemic leading people to re-evaluate their priorities.

They have been demanding more from employers, with regards to concrete measures or corporate policies to protect workers' mental well-being and work-life balance. According to human resources solutions agency Randstand, "Some 41 per cent of the Singapore</td>
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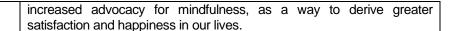|	
	workers polled said they would rather be unemployed than feel unhappy in their jobs, and slightly over half the respondents, or 52 per cent, said they would quit if their jobs prevented them from enjoying life."
	In tandem, employers are also increasingly adjusting to these new trends, to be more supportive of their employees' well-being. In <u>2020, the Tripartite Advisory on Mental Well-Being at Workplaces was released by the Ministry of Manpower</u>. The Advisory included concrete recommendations to prevent work stress from compromising well-being and productivity. These included the need for companies to establish after-hours policies for work-related communications, and return-to-work policies to support employees who are recovering from mental health conditions.
	Also, while it is not uncommon to see Singaporeans reduce themselves to "homo economicuses", it is hardly due to our inherent lack of contentment, or a single-minded pursuit of success as the author suggests. Many Singaporeans cite <u>external pressures/circumstances</u> as what drives their "obsessive" work ethic – a high cost of living, and deeply-ingrained societal/corporate expectations that revolve around maximising productivity and efficiency.
e. We become cardboard cutouts of real people (in our quest for success).	**<u>Agree</u>** <u>Singaporean students</u>, known for their academic excellence, experience <u>high levels of stress, burnout and sleep deprivation.</u> This is the outcome of them internalising the belief that exam results can dramatically affect the rest of their lives in a meritocratic society, leading to much of their free time away from school typically spent studying or attending tuition classes. Singaporean employees, according to SG's Public Service Division, are amongst the world's most fatigued workers. A study conducted by technology provider Ceridian showed that <u>more than 9 in 10 employees in Singapore are suffering from burnout</u>, with 36% of the respondents experiencing high levels of this syndrome." Since burnout leads to the "loss of interest in activities people previously enjoyed, lower productivity and motivation", it is safe to argue that those who are worn out by the strive for success have become a shadow of their former shelves. This perpetual collective fatigue might also explain why many Singaporeans spend most of their leisure time on passive hobbies, such as scrolling through social media or watching shows on streaming platforms like Netflix and Disney+, Furthermore, many Singaporeans have developed a poor risk appetite in a nation where the failure to succeed can lead to very costly consequences. Hence, they <u>tend to stick with pragmatic "tried and tested" ways to go about living life</u>, and are generally reluctant to stray from these conventional, "cookie-cutter" pathways. E.g. There is still a high prevalence of JC students taking "pragmatic" subject combinations that "allow them to score well", rather than pursue subjects out of interest.

	E.g. Similarly, <u>online "listicles", forum threads, or "guides and tips from experts"</u> are highly popular among Singaporeans, reflecting our reliance on such resources (rather than their own) when it comes to making big decisions (e.g. buying a car, renovating one's home, making financial investments). **<u>Disagree</u>** *(Students can make reference to earlier points on SG's concerted efforts to prioritise mental well-being / achieve greater work-life balance / update workplace practices etc., to show how Singaporeans are <u>not</u> allowing themselves to become "cardboard cutouts" of real people, despite being on a quest for success)* To combat the effect of burnout and restore work-life balance, <u>many Singaporeans now actively pursue recreational hobbies</u> after work, such as learning new languages, going outdoors, or even volunteering. Some establishments, such as "Ritual Gym" (the 30-minute gym) have even tailored their services to attract / better suit the busy lifestyles of their clientele.
How we can lead more satisfied lives	**Explanation and Evaluation**
f. … <u>managing what we want</u> instead of what we have… g. it is not just about <u>having less things to weigh us down</u>.	**<u>Agree</u>** Minimalists argue that <u>consumerism has made us competitive and anxious</u>, and we forget that human relationships are the things that really matter. They contend that we can be happier if we buy things we truly need, and borrow or rent things we need temporarily. This saves us from <u>"stuff-ocation"</u> (a term coined by James Wallman in his book of the same name), which occurs when we own too many things that we do not need. Our time, energy and spaces are being sapped by our possessions, which we are required to use, store, and maintain. E.g: Facebook group 'Minimalism in Singapore', which has a growing community of 3000 members, advocates that having and using less allows minimalists to be free of "physical, emotional and financial clutter". More than three-quarters of the members are in their 20s and 30s. Most of these young people experience satisfaction from prioritising and retaining the few things that truly bring value to their lives, instead of being distracted by numerous possessions amassed through excessive consumerism. **<u>Disagree</u>** This argument is largely applicable to the privileged groups of people in society, who have had the fortune of being able to amass so many possessions, that they now have to declutter from their stash of belongings.
h. We can, in fact, find immense fullness when we pay attention to smaller and smaller things ("being fully present for an ordinary occurrence").	**<u>Agree</u>** In Singapore, the steady rise of the wellness industry, self-help guides in mainstream and social media are some examples that demonstrate

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increased advocacy for mindfulness, as a way to derive greater satisfaction and happiness in our lives.

E.g. Meditation classes and camps (such as Sarimbun Scout Camp), promoted as means to living happier and healthier lives, have become more accessible and are increasingly popular.

E.g. (VJC students can share about their civics lessons, where they are encouraged to think of things to be thankful for. There is also more awareness of mental health practices like deep breathing, which are meant to help students relieve their stress.)

Disagree

It remains to be seen, whether the increasing practice of mindfulness is just a fad that is monetised, or truly effective in helping us find more satisfaction in life. This is especially due to many big demands of work and studies pulling us in all directions, which make it less feasible for us to cultivate the habit of consistently being mindful and focused on the smaller things in our ordinary lives.

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Answer scheme for 2022 J2 Prelim Paper 2 (difficulty of obtaining satisfaction)

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<u>**for AQ Feedback – Improving the Evaluation**</u>

1. Identify the band that the Evaluation in the original AQ response is likely to fall under.
2. Use the guiding questions to improve the Evaluation in the original version.

Original version	Guiding Questions	Improved version

3. Now, come up with your own guiding questions to improve the Evaluation in your own AQ response.
Tip: You can refer to the 'Strategies to Evaluate the Author's Points Effectively' on page 63 of your GP Skills Book to help you come up with these questions.

Guiding Questions	Improved version

Answer scheme for 2022 J2 Prelim Paper 2 (difficulty of obtaining satisfaction)

<u>**Activity for AQ Feedback – Improving the Evaluation Teachers' Copy**</u>

1. Identify the band that the Evaluation in the original AQ response is likely to fall under. *Likely to be in Low Band 2. Will need to remind students that the AQ mark is a holistic one; based on the entire response, not just one para.*
2. Use the guiding questions to improve the Evaluation in the original version. *The students do not have the enhanced version in their copies. It is meant to show how the enhanced version might look like if one were to consider all the guiding questions. In the exam, it'd be unrealistic to consider and address every guiding question.*

Original version	Guiding Questions	Improved version
According to Brenner, being alone allows individuals to drop their "social guard," giving them the freedom to be introspective and to think for themselves. For example, when I was choosing the subject combination to take, I was overwhelmed by the differing opinions of my friends and parents. It was only when I could have time alone to carefully consider my strengths and weaknesses before I could make a decision that I did not regret till this day. Hence, I agree with Brenner that it is important to be alone.	*Why is the choosing of subject combination an important decision for students in Singapore to make?* *Other than the choosing of subject combination, what other important decisions do students have to make for their education? How realistic is it to give the student space to be alone to make decisions at these various junctures? Why?* *Why are parents and friends often heavily involved in this decision-making process, hence leaving the individual student with little space to think for themselves?* *What evidence is there to illustrate that students often do not think for themselves when making such choices?* *What is the broader significance of this situation for Singapore?*	*[Suggested response to address all the guiding questions]* *According to Brenner, being alone allows individuals to drop their "social guard," giving them the freedom to be introspective and to think for themselves. ==In Singapore, students are often expected to make important decisions from a young age. Be it choosing a secondary school at the age of 12, or the subject combination to take at the age of 14, and which school to go to at the age of 16, these are important decisions in meritocratic Singapore, where education and career decisions are deemed as key to achieving social mobility and success.== Because of the high stakes that are often associated with these decisions, students are hardly given any space to be alone and think for themselves. This could be due to ==paternalistic parenting that is common in Singapore==. Parents often feel that it is important for them to do what it takes to ensure their children make the 'right decision'. ==While this might be necessary for younger children who lack the maturity, it is important to progressively give students more space to be alone to be introspective as they grow older==. Moreover, given the ==prevalent use of social media among youths, students are often bombarded with the opinions of their peers==. As a result, it is ==not uncommon for students to choose conventional educational pathways== because this is what everyone else is choosing. This is a significant issue in Singapore where our only natural resource is our people and it is important that we are clear about our strengths and weaknesses*

Answer scheme for 2022 J2 Prelim Paper 2 (difficulty of obtaining satisfaction)

	What has been done to improve the situation? How effective are such efforts?	*and choose pathways that develop us holistically, and opportunities that we can meaningfully contribute to. Fortunately, there have been* ==efforts to provide students with some space to engage in introspection when making education and career choices.== *For instance, schools now set aside time during* ==Civics lessons for students to consider their strengths and weaknesses and the pathway they can choose==*. Schools now also have an* ==ECG counsellor== *whom students can approach to clarify their thought processes. However, it is important to ensure that these efforts do not end up crowding out the space students need to be alone and engage in introspection.*