

**VJC JC2 2010 Prelim Paper 2**  
**Answer Scheme**

1) How has 'the mass availability of consumer goods' (line 3-4) had an impact on the way of life in industrial society? Use your own words as far as possible. [2]

From the Text	Paraphrase
<b>no aspect</b> of everyday life has been <b>untouched</b> (l. 4)	all-pervasive effects felt/ all areas of life affected [1/2]
... <b>profound</b> and <b>fundamental change</b> ..the way we <b>organise our very means of existence</b> (l. 9)	Deep/significant [1/2] and at the most foundational level [1/2] transformed the ways we live [1/2]

***Examiners' comments: Most students attempted to paraphrase all the examples from l. 5 – 7 instead of identifying the topic sentence in l. 4 and paraphrasing that. Their answers stopped after their list of examples.***

2) From paragraph 2, show how the arrival of the consumer society changed the way people perceive themselves. Use your own words as far as possible. [2]

From the Text	Paraphrase
their <b>material needs</b> ...very <b>different framework of expectations</b> (l. 13-16)	Same things deemed as necessary [1/2] now measured against new/higher yardsticks [1/2]
...the forms through which we <b>view</b> the world and our <b>position</b> within it (l.17-18)	changed how we see [1/2] the world and our role/place [1/2] in it.

***Examiners' comments: Few students really understood the author's point about 'different expectations' and there were clumsy attempts to paraphrase the second part of the answer.***

3) What does the word 'managed' (l. 48) suggest about the way consumption is handled? [1]

From the Text	Interpretation
	Manipulated/ carefully controlled with an agenda in mind

**Examiners' Comments:** A small number of students actually thought that consumption needed to be reduced/reined in, which is the opposite of what is suggested!

4) In what way is 20<sup>th</sup> Century capitalism 'therapeutic' (line 57) and why does the author put inverted commas round this word? Use your own words as far as possible in your answer. [2]

From the Text	Paraphrase/Interpretation
... <b>emotional satisfactions</b> ... (l.56) <b>self-realisation</b> through the <b>intense experiences</b> brought about through <b>buying products</b> (l. 58-59)	self-awareness attained via the strong feelings of gratification [1/2] encountered from purchasing desired goods [1/2]
<i>Answer to be inferred</i>	The author wants to show he is skeptical about whether people can attain self-awareness/ self-fulfilment through purchasing commodities

**Examiners' comments:** While most students understood the question, their answers 'dropped' details or lacked accuracy. The sense of gratification comes from purchasing goods, not merely consuming them. Author's intent should be made clear for the second question.

5) Which two words in paragraph 8 suggest that 20<sup>th</sup> Century capitalism is like a religion? [1]

From the Text	Answer
	preached (l. 57), doctrine (l. 57) [1/2 each]

**Examiners' comments:** There were all kinds of strange answers offered that have nothing to do with religion specifically – 'ethics' (which can be secular), 'self-realisation', even 'sensuality'! 'Victorian Protestant' in the passage refers to the 19<sup>th</sup> C, not 20<sup>th</sup> C capitalism.

6) How does 'stylistic obsolescence' (line 67) work in the fashion industry? What is its role in 'the organised creation of dissatisfaction' (line 70)? Use your own words as far as possible. [3]

From the Text	Paraphrase
... <b>annual models</b> introduce <b>new</b>	latest trends/fads brought in [1/2]

season's fashions (l.68-69)	render the older versions outdated [1/2]
the way to maintain a constant demand (l.69)	results in a non-stop/continuous/sustained craving/desire[1/2] for the newest/latest [1/2]
through... the organised creation of dissatisfaction (l.70)	by a systematic/deliberate/calculated way [1/2] to induce a sense of discontent [1/2]

**Examiners' comment:** Many students explained the previous point – that clothes styles should show that 'the owner does not need to work for a living' (l. 66-67), when the explanation of 'stylistic obsolescence' actually came after the sentence beginning with "from the 1920s onwards..."

**Note:** the word 'obsolete' comes from the noun 'obsolescence'! That itself is a clue!

**Strong scripts** showed a very clear and well-explained link between 'stylistic obsolescence' and 'organised creation of dissatisfaction'

8) Why is the American Dream described as an 'economic perpetual motion machine' (line 75)? How does the Singer Sewing Machine advertisement illustrate this dream? Use your own words as far as possible. [3] [+1 bonus]

From the Text	Paraphrase/Explanation
<b>economic perpetual motion machine</b> (l.75) which <b>made everyone appear equally prosperous</b> (l. 75-76)	Wealth constantly created [1/2] resulting in everybody as rich as another [1/2]
<b>...skyscraper...derby hats...gold watch chains... silks and satins</b> (l.79-80)... <b>everyone was rich</b> (l.81)	Picture paints an image of wealth and luxury attained by all [1]
<b>...proud</b> Americans... <b>proud</b> faces like queens ... (l. 79-80)	Everyone enjoys sense of superiority because of high social status attained [1]
<b>Fantastic</b> vision...everyone <b>appears</b> equally prosperous (l.75-76)	Picture creates an illusion and is an unrealistic portrayal, hence 'Dream' [bonus mark]

**Examiners' comment:** Each part of the answer needs to be carefully explained in students' own words. There was much lifting of words like 'equally prosperous' and 'everyone was rich'. There was also too much description of what the people in the ad were wearing instead of explaining what they represent. Few got the bonus point, nor picked up the point about the 'proud' people (significant enough for the author to repeat the word).

## 9) Vocabulary

Word	1m	½m	0m
'...the very <b>structure</b> of daily time...'	organisation; arrangement; configuration	form; system	framework; layout; model
'...adults have <b>berated</b> their children...' (line 27)	scolded; rebuked; chided; reprimanded	criticised; complained about	condemned
' <b>culminating</b> in the ...' (line 43)	reaching a high point;	resulting; concluding	accumulating
'It encouraged an <b>ethic</b> ...' (line 54)	value system; code of principles; moral code	value; moral conduct	culture
'...would <b>afford</b> its purchaser...' (line 56)	give; bestow; grant; confer; provide	Benefit; reward	can pay for; access; permit

7) In the passage, the author explains how the concept of leisure has changed over time and the characteristics it has taken. Using materials from paragraphs 3 to 6, summarise his views in no more than 120 words, not counting the opening words printed below. Use your own words as far as possible. [8]

	From the text	Possible paraphrase
a.	The <b>buying</b> and <b>selling</b> of time is the <b>central activity</b> of the leisure industry in a capitalist economy.	[The author claims that] the business of leisure <u>principally</u> involves the <u>trading</u> of time.
b.	Football [...] by 1900 had become a <b>professional</b> sport. The players <b>earned their living</b> by the game, and their <b>spectators paid for</b> the pleasure of <b>watching</b> .	This would explain how sport became a <u>full-time job</u> for some, <u>funded</u> by ticket <u>sales</u> for <u>viewing</u> the matches.
c.	Throughout the present century, adults have berated their children for preferring to <b>buy</b> the products of <b>popular</b> culture rather than " <b>make</b> their own <b>entertainment</b> ". This offers a clear distinction between <b>folk</b> culture and <b>popular</b> culture: <b>folk</b> culture is something you <b>make</b> ; <b>popular</b> culture is something you <b>buy</b> .	<u>Traditional</u> forms of leisure involve personal <u>effort</u> / active <u>engagement</u> / <u>creation</u> / <u>construction</u> / is more <u>hands-on</u> whereas the <u>contemporary</u> forms can just be <u>purchased</u> .
d.	Among the many fundamental social changes brought by the Industrial	The Industrial Revolution caused leisure to become clearly

	Revolution was the way in which leisure was <b>systematised</b> . The factory system <b>regulated</b> time in a new way, making time-at-work <b>different</b> from time-not-working.	<u>demarcated</u> and <u>designated</u> time / time <u>set aside</u> for a <u>specified</u> / <u>particular purpose</u>
e.	In a sense that had not been true in preindustrial culture, time-not working <b>became</b> an <b>empty</b> period that <b>needed</b> to be <b>occupied</b>	From then on, when one was not at work, one <u>had to fill</u> the <u>void</u> / <u>use</u> the <u>free</u> time by engaging in leisure.
f.	For much of the 19th century, leisure, which can be defined as the <b>non-productive use</b> of time, remained the <b>prerogative</b> of the <b>propertied classes</b> . But by the early 20th century, the <b>notion</b> of leisure <b>spread down</b> through the <b>social system</b>	Industrialisation meant that the <u>common people</u> had such time <u>away from work</u> . OR The concept of leisure was therefore <u>democratised</u> / no longer <u>restricted</u> to the <u>upper echelons</u> of <u>society</u> in the 1900s
g.	<b>new activities came into existence</b> to <b>occupy</b> leisure time	<u>Novel ways</u> to engage in leisure were <u>developed</u> / <u>appeared</u>
h.	The city <b>amusements</b> of the late 19th century were <b>prototypes</b> for <b>ephemeral consumption</b> : saloons, [...] and <b>cheap</b> seats in the theatres and concert halls.	Some took the form of <u>affordable</u> and <u>fleeting</u> opportunities for people to <u>spend</u> their <u>money</u> .
i.	Most <b>spectacular</b> of all were the <b>great exhibitions</b> of the second half of the 19th century [...]. These <b>architectural extravagances</b> , thrown up for a summer to <b>display</b> the new <b>wonders</b> of the worlds of industry and commerce, were <b>available</b> to <b>anyone who could pay</b> .	<u>Money was all one needed</u> to enjoy viewing the <u>monuments</u> that celebrate mass production, trade and excess in the late 1800s.

(Maximum 9 points)

**Examiners' comments:** *The need to paraphrase continues to be a problem for a large number of students, with much lifting of keywords or inaccurate or clumsy attempts at using own words. The same problem with paraphrasing examples came up, especially when it for Paragraph 6; instead of listing the examples, students need to identify what the author wants to say about these examples – they provided fleeting enjoyment; required people to spend money, but were affordable for the masses; they represented the showy excesses of urban entertainment.*

10) The author examines the various effects of consumerism on society. To what extent is your society reflective of the consumer culture as outlined in the passage? Do you think there is cause for concern? Refer to some of the ideas raised in the passage as well as your own knowledge and experiences. [8]

Mark Range	Descriptor
<b>A 6-8</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students must make reference to the author's views</li> <li>2. They must evaluate ideas from the passage with evidence of balanced treatment</li> <li>3. They must provide justification in the form of substantive evidence drawn from current society. Justification provided should be sound, directly relevant to the ideas from the passage and demonstrate mature understanding of the various issues and trends with regard to consumer culture in modern society</li> <li>4. Students must take a stand by quantifying the extent of their arguments with regard to the society's experience of consumer culture</li> <li>5. Students demonstrate high degree of coherence and clarity in their arguments</li> </ol> <p><u>Key ideas from the passage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No aspect of everyday life has been left untouched by the arrival of the consumer society. Consumer culture reflects a profound change in the way we organize our very means of existence. It transforms not only our material existence but also our ontology, our very being self.</li> <li>• Folk culture is something you make; popular is something you buy</li> <li>• The notion of leisure spread down the social system and new activities came into existence to occupy leisure time.</li> <li>• The city amusements and the architectural extravagances are constructed for ephemeral consumption</li> <li>• Mass advertising developed out of a need to persuade people to buy, creating a constant demand from consumers. It encouraged an ethic which permitted pleasure and even sensuality.</li> <li>• The conspicuous consumption of valuable goods became the principal means by which members of the Leisure Class demonstrated their social standing to the rest of the society</li> </ul> <p><u>Evaluation of author's arguments</u></p> <p>Application to Singapore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The pervasiveness of consumer culture in our everyday lives in Singapore</b> – the proliferation of consumer goods due to the increasing spending power and demands of local consumers. This social phenomenon is most evidently reflected in the IT and the fashion industries. Eg: the annual Great Singapore Sale (GSS), the various IT exhibitions, the frenzied promotion of the Apple's iPhone</li> </ul>

	<p>series by different mobile phone operators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>How the consumption and possession of consumer goods define our identities and reflect our social standing in society–</b> The types of consumer products that we purchase often go beyond the value of consumption as they also represent our socio-economic status and reveal who we are as consumers. Eg: certain luxury goods are targeted at wealthy consumers in society (high-end fashion labels such as Prada and Gucci), while some are meant for the average consumer. There are also certain products that are targeted at the youth market (eg: trendy IT gadgets), while some are meant for the elderly buyers in society. Contemporary popular culture seems to perpetuate the idea of ostentatious consumption (as evident in the popular saying “If you’ve got it, flaunt it”) as a means of reflecting the extravagant and carefree lifestyles of the rich and famous in society. (Eg: popular Hollywood movies such as “Sex and the City” and “The Devil Wears Prada” etc) </li> <li> <b>The consumption of leisure has become democratised in many societies today, including Singapore–</b> One need not be from the wealthy class to have access to certain forms of leisure in society. Tickets for many arts-related performances and events are made more affordable for the public in Singapore (eg. during the Singapore Arts Festival). The increasing demands of consumers have also lowered the production costs of many consumer goods and services. For instance, in the IT industry, the prices of laptops and mobile phones are also becoming increasingly affordable for the masses during the annual IT exhibitions in Singapore. </li> <li> <b>Some consumer goods are created for the ephemeral consumptions of the buyers–</b> Many fashionable items and trends are simply passing fads among consumers who are driven by the herd mentality to make similar consumer choices. The seasonal and ever-changing trends of styles and designs in the apparel and IT industries are reflective of the fact that many commercial companies seek to capitalise on the ephemeral consumption of the buyers. Eg: the transient nature of fashion styles according to different seasonal trends and the fleeting trends of the different models and designs of mobile phones and technological gadgets in the local IT market. </li> <li> <b>How mass advertising perpetually creates an insatiable desire in every consumer –</b> Advertisements constantly offer a flurry of products and services that remind consumers of what they lack. The marketing gimmicks employed through highly sensational images and videos often seek to titillate the fancy of public consumers. Eg: how the advertisements of a wide range of beauty and counter-aging products tend to evoke a sense of imperfection and insecurity among consumers. The popular idea of “retail </li> </ul>
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	<p>therapy” among many local shoppers is indicative of the fact of some people derive great satisfaction from splurging on consumer goods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>However, one must also acknowledge the fact that while consumerism is prevalent in Singapore, it is not an all-pervasive phenomenon in society.</b> Certainly not every local consumer here pursues an extravagant lifestyle and many individuals even reject the idea of consumerism. Many from low-income families in Singapore still lead a frugal lifestyle. One also cannot deny the fact that the recent financial recession has also been a wakeup call to many as more and more people are now more prudent when it comes to making consumer choices.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>To argue there is cause for concern</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How consumer culture tends to conflict with our traditional values with regard to our patterns of consumption</b> – Traditional values such as the importance of being thrifty and spending within one's means were highly regarded by our forefathers of the previous generations. Consumer culture tends to breed an unhealthy mentality among young consumers that the more they spend, the happier they will be. It encourages an ethic that permits wasteful behavior especially among consumers. The various cases of how young consumers in Singapore have fallen prey to credit card debts suggest that more and more people have apparently spent beyond their means due to their consumerist and extravagant lifestyles.</li> <li>• <b>How unethical advertising has been a grave cause for concern among local consumers</b> – As much as advertisers seek to create an insatiable desire among consumers, many of them have violated ethical guidelines in their attempts to persuade the consumers. Eg: The manipulation and distortion of facts in the advertisements of some cosmetic treatments and spa services in Singapore and how these cases have raised concerns from the Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE).</li> <li>• <b>From the environmental point of view, green activists have constantly lamented that consumerism in modern society leads to excessive wastage of resources-</b> It exacerbates the “throw-away culture” among irresponsible consumers due to their wasteful lifestyles and patterns of consumption. Eg: The “Bring Your Own Bag” campaign at NTUC Fair Price bears testimony to the fact that excessive use of plastic bags among shoppers is indeed a cause for concern in local society as it leads to environmental degradation.</li> </ul>
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	<p><b><u>Not a cause for concern</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Consumerism need not be seen as a negative phenomenon in society.</b> From the economic point of view, our active consumptions are said to have a positive impact on the nation's economy. It is through the vibrant consumer markets and the increasing spending power of buyers that the domestic economy can be further stimulated and sustained.</li> <li>• <b>Tighter regulations have been imposed by the Consumers Association of Singapore to provide checks and balances on the accuracy and reliability of commercial advertisements and products.</b> For instance, Case Trust, the local accreditation arm of the Consumer Association, serves as an important platform to ensure fair trading and transparency in the consumer market. The recent recall of toxic toys in the local market serves as a demonstration of how the Consumers Association is committed to protecting consumer welfare.</li> <li>• <b>The idea of “ethical consumerism” has become more prevalent among consumers in Singapore.</b> Local consumers are becoming more and more educated about the ill effects of consumerism with regard to the various environmental concerns. For example, Body Shop products appeal to the consumers who are against the idea of animal testing in the production of many cosmetic and facial products. *Scape, a new youth-centric shopping mall located next to Cineleisure Orchard, is targeted at young consumers who believe in ethical consumerism. Tenants there possess a strong sense of corporate social responsibility and are involved in raising funds and awareness about various social causes. Besides, there have also been many initiatives implemented to counter the adverse effects of consumerism. (eg: recycling of paper and plastic bags in many shopping areas). The National Environment Agency (NEA) has been working with local partners such as the Singapore Environment Council and the Public Waste Collectors to provide more recycling bins in various shopping places to serve the public.</li> </ul>
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Mark Range	Descriptor
<b>B (3-5)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students refer to the passage, at least in passing</li> <li>2. They identify ideas from the passage, possibly with minor misrepresentation of the points</li> <li>3. They raise issues, but discussion is limited or superficial and not necessarily a balanced treatment given</li> <li>4. Students attempt to evaluate the extent to which the ideas are reflected, but not fully informed or convincing;</li> <li>5. Answer shows an adequate level of understanding of the issues but tends to be less thorough with limited development of ideas</li> </ol>

	6. Students show a fair degree of organisation, coherence and clarity. Some minor logical gaps that do not lead to ambiguity in meaning
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Mark Range	Descriptor
<b>C (1-2)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students fail to address the given requirements of the question</li> <li>2. Fail to discuss ideas from the passage on the extent to which ideas are reflected in society</li> <li>3. Fail to relate evaluation to actual societal phenomena</li> <li>4. Answer tends to be a mere summary or restatement of the text rather than an evaluation of it</li> <li>5. Answer shows very limited knowledge/understanding of the issues and a higher incidence of misinterpretation with very thin support.</li> <li>6. Coherence, organisation and clarity are in question</li> </ol>

***Examiners' comment: Basic requirements were sometimes not met. There were still AQ answers that read like a standalone mini-essay on Consumerism without reference to passage or author's views. A small number did not frame the answer in the context of 'your society' but referred to the situation in a broad and general context of 'today's society'. Yet another major problem is not answering both parts of the question, and it is often the second part ('cause for concern'?) that gets short shrift.***

***Some students misrepresented the author. He does not believe, for example, that everyone will be equally rich due to capitalism. Students are therefore maligning him when they criticise him for being naïve in not seeing the problem of the rich-poor divide in capitalistic societies! Other students included points that were not from the passage such as Americanisation of our lifestyles. If those are part of the students' own knowledge and experiences, that must be clearly indicated so that it does not sound like students are putting words in the author's mouth.***

***Examples are really important as evidence. Some scripts lacked examples which led to many unsubstantiated claims. Others gave inappropriate examples, which became ineffective and did not support the point made. For example, on ads that play on 'emotional satisfaction', an example chosen was 'finger-licking good' fried chicken! This does not capture what the author wants us to understand – the way ads play on our emotional needs and manipulate us psychologically, without giving us any meaningful information about the product itself.***

***The better scripts met the basic requirements, covering a number of key ideas from the passage and used them to apply to their society. They showed how some of the signs of a consumeristic culture and its effects could be seen in their society, with substantive evidence provided. Their evaluation of these effects were well-considered, without sounding too alarmist or dismissive, when they considered whether there was cause for concern.***