

From Passage 1

1. Why does the author use the word 'rusted' (line 3) to describe the dichotomy between optimism and pessimism? (1m)

From the passage	Suggested inference
These circumstances gave rise to the rusted dichotomy of 'optimism' and 'pessimism', which are so much used, and perhaps overused, in our modern culture.	<p>The writer thinks that the dichotomy is redundant / less relevant / on the way to being obsolete / clichéd / less pertinent / outdated</p> <p>Old = 0 Frequency of discussion / overused = 0</p> <p><i>BOD: student needs to capture the idea of decreasing relevance</i></p>

2. How does the author use the example of Heygate Estate to illustrate how we can 'stumble into cruelty' (lines 12-16)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** (2m)

From the passage	Suggested inference
<p>When a 2008 London tower block named Heygate Estate was sold off to foreign investors, its inhabitants were first evicted then offered mindfulness courses to deal with their anxiety,</p> <p>so that they (tenants) were themselves made responsible for their misfortunes.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>If we are each radically in control of our mental states, what reason is there to ask for social justice?</p>	<p>(A) After forcing the tenants to leave their homes, the investors subsequently encouraged the tenants to take up relaxation / therapy / meditation to manage their stress. (nervousness – BOD)</p> <p>(B) (the investors) <u>unintentionally shifted</u> (inference from the word 'stumble')</p> <p>(C) the cause for the tenants' stress onto the tenants themselves.</p> <p>1 – 2 points – 1 mark 3 points – 2 marks</p>

3. Explain two ways in which the author uses language in lines 16 – 18 to criticise social media. (2m)

From the passage	Suggested paraphrase/inference
<p>This is the popular narrative that ‘you are responsible for your own happiness’ and is bolstered by the subtle terror</p>	<p>(A) The author uses the phrase ‘subtle terror’ to describe social media’s influence as menacing / insidious / tacitly causing extreme fear</p> <p>Note that the intensifier is needed as ‘terror’ is a very strong word.</p> <p>Dangerous /Anxiety / terrifying / harmful / haunting = 0 scary (BOD)</p> <p><i>paraphrase of ‘terror’ only without ‘subtle’ = BOD 1 mark [factor this poor language for lang mark]</i></p>
<p>of a social media regime</p> <p><i>(example of ans: He calls social media a ‘regime’ suggesting that it has become too powerful and influential...)</i></p>	<p><i>Focus: attribute of regime</i></p> <p>(B) The author describes social media as a “regime” because of its oppressive force / authoritarian hold / <u>outsized influence / control (negative connotation) / stronghold over people</u></p> <p>Influence without intensifier to show negative connotation = 0</p>
<p>...that pushes us to broadcast <u>our success and happiness to the world.</u></p> <p><i>(example of ans: the author uses the word ‘pushes’ to show that social media is forcing people to show that they are having fun)</i></p>	<p><i>Focus: our consequent action</i></p> <p>(C) Social media is described as something that ‘pushes us’, to explain how it compels us / forces us to project <u>our achievements and contentment to the world</u> (context necessary)</p>

4. How does the author explain his claim that pessimism can be a ‘consoling force’ (line 19)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** (3m)

From the passage	Suggested paraphrase/inference
Sometimes we fail	(A) Sometimes we are defeated / we blunder / meet with disaster / lose everything / do not succeed / do not meet our goals
Sometimes we run up against the hard walls of our own capacities	(B) Sometimes we experience / meet with difficulties that originate from / are caused by our own incapacabilities / incompetencies / limitations
or the world’s boundaries	(C) Sometimes we experience / meet with difficulties that caused by the confines of the world / external conditions / limitations (note: acc to marker’s discretion, if B and C are perceived to be too conflated, only one point will be awarded)
and it can be consoling to be reminded that our suffering, or fragility is not our fault [consoling force]	(D) Therefore, it helps to remember / bear in mind that we are at the mercy of misfortunes / not to be blamed / not responsible/not accountable for/ beyond our control [inference]
pessimism can be closely linked to activism , which is in itself acting in hope for a better future	(E) (inferred) comforted by / assured by the possibility of wanting to improve things in the future <i>1 pts: 1 mark 2-3 pts: 2 marks 4 – 5 pts: 3marks</i>

5. How does the opening line of paragraph 4 support the author's reference to 'life's darkest forces' (lines 25-26)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** (2m)

From the passage	Suggested paraphrase / inference
<p>(Para 3)...harnessed only when life's darkest forces are gathered into the strange alchemy of hope.</p> <p>(Para 4) Indeed,.....</p>	<p>[function]</p> <p>(A1) The author opens paragraph 4 with the use of the word "indeed", which is his way of furthering / strengthening / continuing from / building on the point about 'darkest forces' he made at the end of para 3 (1 mark)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>(A2) The author opens paragraph 4 with the use of the example which is his way of furthering / strengthening / continuing from / building on the point about 'darkest forces' he made at the end of para 3 (1 mark)</p> <p>Parallel to / aligned with / similar to (BOD)</p> <p><i>Do not accept raise, bring up, show, remind, say / emphasise / highlight</i></p>
<p>...this age is marked by ecological depletion and devastation that is taking shape all around us.</p>	<p>[context]</p> <p>(B) That this age is defined by environmental disasters (1 mark)</p> <p>Other accepted answers: characterised by / widespread/ rampant/ everywhere today etc.</p> <p>Idea: Answer needs to capture frequency and / or degree of environmental disasters embodied in the phrase 'marked by'</p>

6. Why does the author place the word 'mere' (line 33) in inverted commas? (1m)

From the passage	Suggested paraphrase/inference
<p>And so they denounce young people's outcries as pessimism, as 'mere' despair.</p>	<p>Approach to answering: Authorial attitude</p> <p>[Function]</p> <p>(A) The author disapproves of / disagrees with of the way that</p> <p>[Context]</p> <p>(B) Young people's clamours / strong protests / indignations are reduced to / seen as nothing more than minor complaints/ trivialised.</p> <p><i>NB: can lift 'outcries'</i></p>
<p>Examples of such answers:</p> <p><i>Young people have every reason to be in despair (B), yet this despair is being dismissed as a minor issue by advocates of progress (A).</i></p> <p><i>It suggests that people always treat the youths' pessimism as insignificant (A), but in fact it is very important (B)</i></p> <p><i>The word mere is to be justified as something that is not deemed to be important (A). However the author was trying to say that pessimism by the younger generation has value as it is a sign of wanting to take further action (B)</i></p>	<p>OR</p> <p>Approach to answering: Real vs perceived situation</p> <p>[Perceived situation]</p> <p>(A) Young people's clamours / strong protests / indignations are reduced to / seen as nothing more than minor complaints/ trivialised.</p> <p>[Real situation]</p> <p>(B) When the actual situation is indeed serious.</p>

7. Explain the author's use of the questions at the end of paragraph 5. (1m)

From the passage	Suggested paraphrase/inference
If brute optimism fails,	<p><u>[function]</u></p> <p>[A1] The author's use of the questions draws our attention to / convinces us of his point</p> <p>OR</p> <p>[A2] the author's use of the questions challenges our prevailing notions of pessimism</p> <p>To consider / to suggest/ to explore = 0 because the author's intention is to persuade, not just ponder.</p>
[B1] could hopeful pessimism do better?	<p><u>[context]</u></p> <p><u>Focus: comparison</u></p> <p>[B1] that hopeful pessimism is the superior alternative to brute optimism</p> <p>Note: 'better than' = 0 because need to explain key ideas in your own words</p> <p>OR</p> <p><u>Focus: value of pessimism</u></p>
[B2] Could it be, in fact, a <i>virtue</i> ?	<p>[B2] to think of pessimism as an admirable / highly positive quality/ a merit / for the greater good</p> <p>BOD (all without intensifiers):</p> <p>helpful and of value (stacking adjectives to convey extent of goodness) / good /Is beneficial / is desirable / is positive / is useful / is helpful</p> <p>Note: 'virtue' = 0 because need to explain key ideas in your own words; as it is, the range of paraphrases for virtue is very broad (as seen above)</p> <p>Teaching point: 'Virtue' connotes moral quality, especially when seen in the context of the rhetorical question, when the writer clearly differentiates it from functionality (could hopeful pessimism do better? Could it, <u>in fact, be a virtue?</u>), and steps up on its intensity. So, the correct answer should translate the degree demanded of the word 'virtue'.</p>

From Passage 2

8. How does the author illustrate that people prefer books on optimism to books on 'embracing life's miserable condition' (lines 3-4)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** (1m)

From text	Explanation
Texts on embracing life's miserable condition do not exactly fly off the shelves.	(A) People do not really buy many books on embracing reality (key: nuance) Note: people do not buy ANY books on pessimism = 0 Note: Not a good practice to lift 'embracing life's miserable condition' i.e. should paraphrase whenever possible.
However , books on how optimism can be learned make millionaires out of their authors.	(B) Whereas / on the other hand / but they spend a lot of money buying self-help books on optimism. <i>Key ideas: speed, revenue, or quantity of sales</i> <i>NB: as long as there's comparison between the 2 genres, accept answer</i>

10) According to the author in paragraph 6, how can we 'have a shot at true fraternity' (line 42)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** (2m)

From the passage	Suggested paraphrase
<p>If, however, we could learn to share in the misery of others</p> <p>rather than stick a Band-Aid on a bullet wound and send them packing,</p> <p>and if they could do the same for us, then we would have a shot at true fraternity.</p>	<p>(A) We should have a deep understanding / empathy for / compassion for the suffering a person</p> <p>(B) Key idea: dismissive ...instead of dealing with it in an inadequate / superficial / temporary way / 'Give weak responses / simple words that are unhelpful' (correct) [do not accept literal paraphrases e.g. 'putting bandage / plaster' or 'cheer people up quickly']</p> <p>(C) And this should be a mutual / reciprocal situation (1m)</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>1–2 pts = 1 mark</i> <i>3 pts = 2 marks</i></p>

11) Suggest why the author wants us to 'resist society's pressure to be a living, breathing smile emoji' **Use your own words as far as possible.** (line 45) (2m)

From text	Suggestion
<p>If we want to love better and seek true happiness and friendship ...</p> <p>to resist society's pressure to be a living, breathing smile emoji.</p>	<p>[A] We will have deeper / more meaningful connections / greater contentment... (1m)</p> <p>[B] ...if we challenge / reject society's expectations of (or just 'stop'?) being joyful all the time... (1m)</p> <p><i>...as this is unrealistic / artificial / unreasonable / impossible</i></p> <p>Note: B needs to capture the idea of 'always' or perpetuity due to the words 'living' / 'breathing'</p>

9) Using materials from paragraphs 3-5, summarise what the author has to say about the negative effects of forced cheerfulness, and why we should pursue honesty instead. (8)

One negative effect of forced cheerfulness is ...

	From passage	Paraphrased / To be inferred
<i>Negative effects of forced cheerfulness</i>		
A	...forcing yourself to smile when you do not feel like it amounts to lying to the people around you Or Deceitful.....	putting up appearances / pretending that one is happy / are dishonest
B	' Fake it till you make it ' has...	(Context) to pretend we are emotionally stable despite difficulties / how dire a situation leads to...
C	brutal consequences when applied to emotions... OR It becomes a form of 'toxic' positivity'...	harmful / destructive / damaging outcomes... (undesirable = 0)
D	– both oppressive [and deceitful] in equal measure.	which are repressive / harsh . (suppressive = BOD)
E	Cheerfulness in this form is far from a virtue; it is a vice	Cheerfulness is then evil / a wrongdoing / immoral / dishonourable act . (bad/ negative / sin = 0)
F	Forced cheerfulness is a denial of life	It is a rejection of human existence / reality / hope / possibility .
G	We might want to lock out certain people from our fragile hearts	We block people from discovering our delicate / frail selves / weaknesses...
H	but it also keeps our loved ones out of reach	and end up distancing / alienating people dear to us . helping = 0
I	Whoever gets our cheery selves does not get our true selves	Those who see our forced cheerfulness do not understand / know who we really are / our genuine identity .

J	Cheerfulness also unwittingly cancels out trust OR It says: you cannot handle the expression of my feelings, and is therefore built on the certainty that others will disappoint	It also undermines our faith in people OR <i>(Inferred)</i> We anticipate that others may let us down
K	When we share about ... we ironically have to steel ourselves for even more hurt	Sharing our source of unhappiness may require us to be prepared against more pain that comes from Harden = 0
L	from the bland responses of others that we must endure OR for what do people offer but feeble platitudes	...weak / meaningless / clichéd / banal / uninspired reactions that we must put up with / tolerate.
<i>Why we should pursue honesty instead</i>		
M	Instead of a smile , we would <u>do better</u> to wear our natural expression	Honesty <u>is better</u> because it allows us to be true to ourselves
N	It would be a sign that we are saying yes instead of no to life's ... among other so-called 'negative' emotions	And embrace undesirable feelings (accept = ok)
O	These affirmations of life's bitterness might just make frowning – or crying – easier	Which become less challenging / simpler to express / accept unhappiness / anger / frustration / despair
P	In turn, these newly sanctioned expressions of negativity might make it easier to honestly discuss hardships	and facilitate more truthful / sincere conversations about our sufferings
Q	Our newly vulnerable selves would get to see the corresponding vulnerabilities of our neighbours OR This exchange of fragility ...	In exposing our weaknesses, we become more sensitive to the weaknesses of others / we foster mutual understanding / we commiserate with each other (focus: interacting with others)
R	And just sit with us OR as sometimes all we want is for someone to acknowledge how awful a situation is	offer comfort through their presence (focus: just being around)
S	If we agreed to <u>stop wasting emotional energy</u> masking our disappointments with cheer	If we cease to pretend we are alright / hiding our despondence... / <u>spend less effort</u> pretending we are alright...

T	...could possibly be the key to empathy OR then we would be free to cue into other people's sadness	...we could express compassion for others' unhappiness. (focus: being active)
U	Expressions of pain exchanged between two people can be the great equaliser of humankind	Honesty can reduce power struggles among people / shows people they have much in common
V	Deeper connections could be made in wreckage than prosperity	and help build more meaningful relationships through suffering more than during good times. (Long-lasting / enduring = 0)

1 pt	2-3 pts	4-5 pts	6-7 pts	8-10 pts	11-13 pts	14-16 pts	≥17 pts
1 mark	2 marks	3 marks	4 marks	5 marks	6 marks	7 marks	8 marks

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