

# Comprehension: Boredom

1. What does the word “forayed” (line 1) imply about the research on boredom? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [1]

From the Passage	Answer
Sandi Mann is <b>one of the few</b> psychologists to have <b>forayed</b> into the mind-numbing territory—of boredom. (lines 1-2)	It implies that boredom is an area that has not yet been thoroughly explored by researchers/ that the research on boredom is relatively new. [1]

2. Why does Sandi Mann call boredom “the Cinderella of psychology” in line 3? [2]

From the Passage	Answer
“It’s the <b>Cinderella of psychology</b> ,” she says. After all, admitting that you study boredom might itself sound a bit, well, boring – <b>but that is far from the truth.</b> (lines 3-4)	<p>a. (i)Just like Cinderella was a character who was neglected but (ii)eventually received the due recognition for her contribution/ enjoyed a happy ending, [1]</p> <p>b. (i)boredom is a state of mind that has been treated as unimportant but (ii)is now gaining the interest of researchers for its influence on our lives. [1]</p> <p><i>(essence of answer focuses on the apparent versus reality; point b is only awarded if point a is present)</i></p>

3. Explain what the author means by ‘Dickens’s study of Lady Deadlock’s suffering – she is “bored to death” by her marriage – would end up pre-empting many of the latest findings’ (lines 9-11). **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2]

From the Passage	Answer
Dickens’s study of Lady Deadlock’s suffering – she is “bored to death” by her marriage –  would <b>end up pre-empting</b> many of the <b>latest findings.</b> (lines 9-11)	<p>a. Dickens’s insights into how marital relations of his fictitious characters can lead to boredom [1]</p> <p>b. Turns out to have accurately reflected/predicted the outcomes of recent research on its effects in reality [1]</p>

4. According to Eastwood, why had scientists “been slow to explore the sensation” (line 12)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2]

From the Passage	Answer
But perhaps because of its <b>prevalence</b> in our lives, scientists had been slow to explore the sensation.	a. Since it was a state of being/emotion so commonly experienced by people, [1]

<p>“When you are swimming in something, maybe you <b>don’t think of it as being noteworthy</b>,” says John Eastwood at York University in Canada, who was one of the first scholars to take an interest. (lines 11-14)</p> <p><i>“swimming in something” : a situation where people are so immersed in the issue/ something is so much a part of us</i></p>	<p>b. scientists did not see the value of researching boredom/believed it was unimportant /insignificant. [1]</p>
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5. How do the two types of personality in paragraph 3 illustrate the misconception that “only boring people get bored” (line 15)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [3]

From the Passage	Answer
<p>One of the most common misconceptions is that “only boring people get bored”. Yet as Eastwood set about exploring the reasons for boredom, he found that there are two distinct types of personality that tend to suffer from ennui, and <b>neither are particularly dull themselves</b>. (lines 15-18)</p> <p>Boredom often goes with a naturally impulsive mindset among people who are <b>constantly looking for new experiences</b>. For these people, the steady path of life just isn’t enough of a rollercoaster to hold their attention. “<b>The world is chronically under-stimulating</b>,” says Eastwood. (lines 18-21)</p> <p>The second kind of bored people have almost exactly the opposite problem; the world is a fearful place, and <b>so they shut themselves away and try not to step outside their comfort zone</b>. “Out of their high-sensitivity to pain, they withdraw.” While this retreat might offer some comfort, they are <b>not always satisfied with the safety it offers – and chronic boredom results</b>. (lines 21-25)</p>	<p>a. People with the two types of personality experience boredom easily even though they are not themselves boring. [1]</p> <p>b. (i)Those with the first personality type are adventure-seeking individuals (ii)who fail to get sufficient/perpetual exposure to excitement. [1]</p> <p>c. The second type of personality is (i)frightened of/averse to risky experiences yet (ii)eventually becomes discontented with the security/lack of challenge in their lives. [1]</p>

6. What does Mann think about how we should respond to boredom when it hits us (line 58)? [1]

From the Passage	Answer
<p>Given this benefit, Mann thinks <b>we should try not to fear boredom</b> when it hits us. “<b>We should embrace it</b>,” she says – a</p>	<p>We should welcome it and believe that we can benefit from it/ need not react negatively. [1]</p>

philosophy that she has now taken into her own life. "Instead of saying I'm bored when I'm stuck in traffic, I'll put music on and allow my mind to wander – knowing that it's good for me. And I let my kids be bored too – because it's good for their creativity."	(Answer should include either a positive or at least neutral response.)
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7. In paragraph 10, Eastwood claims that "we should be cautious about looking for an immediate escape". How does the remainder of the paragraph illustrate his concern? [2]

From the Passage	Answer
For instance, <b>simply looking for instant gratification on a smartphone or tablet may be counter-productive</b> , he thinks. "We live in tech-driven society where we are overly stimulated – we are <b>constantly yanked around by interruptions</b> ," says Eastwood. That puts us on a <b>kind of treadmill</b> , he says – we keep on <b>expecting quicker and easier ways</b> to revive our curiosity. "One possibility is that <b>this actually makes people <u>more</u> bored</b> ." (lines 66-71)	a. Seeking immediate satisfaction via electronic gadgets could distract us and work against our original intention.[1]  b. The metaphor of the treadmill gives the impression that our continued efforts to find faster fixes aggravate the situation/ get us nowhere/ are futile.[1]

8. Explain the author's use of 'superficial' (line 76) and 'deeper' (line 77) in paragraph 11. **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2]

From the Passage	Answer
Although our feelings of tedium during a work meeting or family gathering might seem <b>superficial annoyances</b> ,  they could therefore be a symptom of a <b>deeper existential crisis</b> and  need for fulfilment that extends far beyond immediate circumstances. (line 75-78)	The author aims to highlight the contrast between a. what might appear to be insignificant irritants [1]  b. could in fact be manifestations of crippling, fundamental problems beyond day-to-day concerns. [1] OR c. A requirement for long-term satisfaction that is not being met. [1]  (contextual use of both 'superficial' and 'deeper' must be present in the answer)

9. What, according to the author, is "as good a reason as any to re-evaluate your life" (lines 81-82)? [2]

From the Passage	Answer
<b>"To feel you can have an effect on the world and that things in life make sense,</b>	a. It is fundamentally crucial for us to believe that [1]

**these are inherently important things for human beings** – just like sunlight, fresh air and food,” says Eastwood.  
As we enter the New Year, **that** could be as good a reason as any to re-evaluate your life (lines 79-82)

- b. we are able to make a difference in society  
AND  
c. and have an understanding of the world. [1 mark for BOTH (b) and (c)]

10. Using material from paragraphs 4—8 only (lines 26—57), summarise the drawbacks and benefits of boredom. [8]

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.**

**Boredom is harmful when ...**

S/ No	Points/Ideas from the passage (Essence of the point/idea in bold)	Paraphrased equivalent
<b>DRAWBACKS</b>		
1	<b>push people to harm themselves</b> ; proneness to boredom was linked to a tendency to smoke, drink too much, and take drugs. (lines 27-28)	a. <b>driven to self-destructive behaviours</b>
2	...linked to more mundane but equally <b>unhealthy behaviours</b> , such as comfort- eating your way through tedium. (lines 30-31)	b. and <b>commonplace/ routine/ everyday actions</b> that are just as <b>damaging to their health</b>  (Do not accept 'binge-eating')
3	Boredom at work is propping up the confectionary industry. (lines 31-32)	<i>Boredom leads to</i> c. (inferred) ... <b>unhealthy consumption habits</b>
4	The overall effect of boredom on your <b>life expectancy could be drastic</b> , too. (lines 32-33)	d. ...and <b>a much shorter / substantial/ severe reduction in life span</b> ,
<b>BENEFITS</b>		

S/ No	Points/Ideas from the passage (Essence of the point/idea in bold)	Paraphrased equivalent
5	Lench suspects that it <b>lies behind one of our most important traits – curiosity</b> . (lines 42-43)	e. Boredom <b>spurs/ underpins/ drives/ propels</b> an <b>essential/ a vital inquisitiveness/ need to discover</b>
6	Boredom, she says, <b>stops us ploughing the same old furrow</b> , (lines 41-42)	<i>However, boredom</i> f. <b>overcomes/ puts an end to routine/repetitiveness</b> ,
7	<b>pushes us to try to seek new goals or explore new territories or ideas</b> . (lines 43-44)	g. and <b>challenges us to look for the novel in things or discover/ venture into unknown places and question views and understandings / beliefs</b> .
8	That search for an escape [from boredom] could <b>sometimes push us to take risks that eventually hurt us</b> . (lines 44-45)	<i>Our attempt to overcome boredom could occasionally</i> h. <b>drive us to take chances that are ultimately harmful</b> (drawback)
9	...bored people <b>turn to unhealthy behaviours</b> – but the upside is that it can also <b>increase innovation</b> . (lines 49-50)	<i>Even though boredom can lead individuals to</i> i. <b>make injurious choices</b> , (drawback) j. it can also develop novel applications
10	...when performing mindless tasks boost their creativity – such as finding <b>innovative uses for everyday</b> objects. (lines 51-52)	k. ...and promotes/ enhances/ <b>encourages new applications for commonly used items</b> .
11	...tedium <b>encouraged their minds to wander</b> , which leads to <b>more associative and creative ways of thinking</b> . (lines 52-54)	<i>Boredom actually</i> l. <b>invigorates/ stimulates the brain to explore</b> which further develops <b>deeper connections and inventive methods of the thought processes / inventiveness in thoughts</b> .

S/ No	Points/Ideas from the passage (Essence of the point/idea in bold)	Paraphrased equivalent
12	- going to different places in our minds," she says. "It allows us to <b>make leaps of imagination</b> . We can get out of the box and think in different ways." (lines 54-56)	m. to <b>think in unconventional ways/ to make previously unknown connections/ to unbridle the mind/ to pull out all stops/ to not limit/ constrain our thinking/creativity</b>
13	Without the capacity for boredom, then, we humans <b>may have never achieved</b> our artistic and technological <b>heights</b> . (lines 56-57)	n. accomplishing <b>aesthetic beauty and scientific breakthroughs/ pinnacles/ peaks of excellence/ would be greatly limited in our results / has helped/ enabled us to reach our current level of aesthetic and innovative accomplishments</b> <i>(accept lift for 'artistic' and 'technological')</i>

### Suggested 14-points Mark Table (Revised for JC2 Preliminary Examination)

Range of Points	Marks
12 points and above	8 marks
11	7
10	6
9	5
7-8	4
5-6	3
3-4	2
1-2	1

**Boredom is harmful when** it **a)** encourages self-destructive behaviours and **b)** everyday actions that are just as damaging to one's health. Boredom leads to **c)** unhealthy consumption habits and **d)** a much shorter life span, **h)** driving us to take chances that are ultimately harmful or **i)** injurious. However, **e)** it underpins a vital inquisitiveness to discover. Boredom **f)** puts an end to routine and **g)** challenges us to look for novel in things or venture into unknown places and question views and beliefs.

Our attempt to overcome boredom could occasionally **j)** help develop novel applications and **k)** encourage new applications for commonly used items. Boredom actually **l)** invigorates the brain to explore deeper connections and inventiveness in thoughts; and **m)** to unbridle the mind to **n)** accomplish aesthetic beauty and scientific breakthroughs.

(115 words)

11. David Robson highlights a number of research findings on the effects of boredom and responses to it. How far would you agree with the findings, relating your arguments to your own society? [10]

Points mentioned by the author	Elaboration/ Explanation	Evidence based on your society
<p><b>Boredom can be beneficial...but we need to understand the reason for feeling bored so that we are not too quick to seek an escape from boredom as it could also lead to undesirable side effects.</b></p>		
<p>One benefit is that boredom 'stops us ploughing the same old furrow, and pushes us to try to seek new goals or explore new territories or ideas. That search for an escape could sometimes push us to take risks that hurt us ' (Para 7, line 43)</p>	<p>By this, he meant that it prevents us from remaining in the rut or simply put, always sticking to old set ways of thinking and refusing to change. Instead boredom pushes us to try new things and seek new pastures which might give us new goals in life but might also harm us.</p>	<p><b><u>Response</u></b></p> <p>Whether boredom can be a benefit or a bane really depends on what risk is being taken and the opportunity cost.</p> <p><b><u>Evidence 1</u></b></p> <p>Some old people who feel bored after retirement try new things as a way to pass their time, e.g learning line dances, taking up singing lessons, learning English and even learning to use the computer. Some also sign up for short trips out of Singapore.</p> <p><b><u>Evaluation</u></b></p> <p>In the context Singapore, old people, especially the pioneer generation who grew up during a period of hardship and poverty, their youth and almost their entire life is spent working to raise their children and providing for them. It being the norm for young couples in Singapore to live on their own, the old might feel bored and empty and many do seek ways out of this boredom through registering for Residents Committee activities like learning to sing and going on short shopping trips to factories and JB. These activities enable the elderly who are often rather set in their ways, especially those who have never worked in their lives, to meet new people from different</p>



Points mentioned by the author	Elaboration/ Explanation	Evidence based on your society
		<p>backgrounds and through their interaction with each other, gain new insights and experiences. This is beneficial as it not only makes life less boring, it makes them step out of their comfort zone and make new friends.</p> <p><b><u>Evidence 2</u></b></p> <p>Another category of bored people are those who are bored with doing the same job year in and year out. They pick up their courage to leave their first jobs in search of 'new territories or ideas' and the more fortunate ones do find a second career for themselves, especially if they also end up in jobs for which they have a passion. Examples of mid-life career transitions include switch from desk jobs to housing agent jobs or becoming entrepreneurs. However, not all these mid-life career switches end up happily but they do open up a new experience and new world to the people who make the switch. In that sense it can be regarded as a benefit.</p> <p><b><u>Evaluation:</u></b></p> <p>Singaporeans are quite averse to risks because we live in a highly competitive society with many foreign workers queueing to snap up our jobs and there is also the fear of not being able to adapt to the new job and having to start all over again at a lower income. This is a risk that not all Singaporeans are prepared to take, however bored they are, either because they are afraid to move or because of objections from their spouses or responsibilities to their families. Hence, though some dream of getting out of the rut, many would be hesitant to do so, unless the pull factors are strong enough to push them to take the risk. However, it could be considered as a bane too because in trying to escape boredom and seeking a new job, some end up disillusioned. In a career website, a mid-thirties man who made a switch to a banking job because he was bored with the routine of his first job, confessed that the change went 'horribly wrong' as he recounted how he could not catch up with his much younger colleagues in the field. This could hardly be</p>

Points mentioned by the author	Elaboration/ Explanation	Evidence based on your society
		<p>regarded as a benefit. If he had stuck to his routine job, all he had to face was boredom. Now in a new territory, he faces threats from his younger colleagues and feels insecure, even though he might be picking up new ideas.</p> <p><a href="http://news.efinancialcareers.com/sg-en/122411/my-mid-career-change-into-banking-went-horribly-wrong-dont-make-the-same-mistakes/">http://news.efinancialcareers.com/sg-en/122411/my-mid-career-change-into-banking-went-horribly-wrong-dont-make-the-same-mistakes/</a></p>
<p>'We should be cautious about looking for an immediate escape' and 'we need to listen to the emotion and ask what it is trying to tell us to do' (paragraph 10, line 63)</p> <p>.....looking for instant gratification... may be counter-productive'(line 68)...make us more bored (line</p>	<p>What is meant here is that we should be careful when we are bored and thinking of doing something to relieve the boredom. We need to ask ourselves if the action we are about to take will compromise our security and result in harm to ourselves.</p>	<p><b><u>Response</u></b></p> <p>True, especially if the escape chosen provides only a short-lived escape and lands you in more trouble.</p> <p><b><u>Evidence 1</u></b></p> <p>Boredom causes some people to turn to drugs according to the findings by Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association. (<a href="http://www.healthxchange.com.sg/News/Pages/young-educated-drug-takers-sana.aspx">http://www.healthxchange.com.sg/News/Pages/young-educated-drug-takers-sana.aspx</a>)</p> <p><b><u>Evidence 2</u></b></p> <p>Boredom was also one of the reasons why people start smoking in their adolescent years, according to Dr Kenneth Chan, a consultant at the department of respiratory and critical care medicine at Singapore General Hospital. (<a href="http://www.healthxchange.com.sg/News/Pages/SGH-doctor-on-smoking-addiction.aspx">http://www.healthxchange.com.sg/News/Pages/SGH-doctor-on-smoking-addiction.aspx</a>)</p> <p><b><u>Evidence 3</u></b></p> <p>Daryl Lim Jun Liang, 18, was arrested for beating up smaller foreign workers to practise his martial</p>

Points mentioned by the author	Elaboration/ Explanation	Evidence based on your society
71)		<p>arts skills because he was bored.</p> <p><b><u>Evaluation:</u></b></p> <p>If people do not understand the reasons for their boredom and just think of all ways to escape this feeling, they could only end up hurting themselves as seen in the case of people who choose to experiment with drugs and smoke since they are risking their health. In the case of the aggressive teen, he ended up hurting himself too, besides hurting the foreign workers, as he was detained and ordered to report to a supervision officer every day and remain indoors from 10pm to 6am for a year and to perform 150 hours of community service. Moreover, he would now have a criminal record for life. What these examples prove is exactly what Robinson also tries to highlight that people need to know the reason for their boredom and 'be cautious about looking for an immediate escape'.</p> <p><b><u>Evidence 4</u></b></p> <p>The same can be observed among Singapore kids. Parents eager to keep their children occupied during the holidays so they do not become bored send them for all kinds of coaching classes to prepare them for the next level of education. In the end, after knowing all the content they need to learn, they become bored when the teachers teach them the same content in class.</p> <p><b><u>Evaluation:</u></b></p> <p>In Singapore schools, a strict curriculum is followed and students who have already learnt the content to be taught in class, will still need to sit through them, especially with a class size of 40, teachers cannot afford to customize lessons for individuals. Hence those who have already learnt the content in the holidays because they were bored end up being bored in class.</p>

Points mentioned by the author	Elaboration/ Explanation	Evidence based on your society
Boredom 'allows us to make leaps of imagination' , 'get out of the box and think in different ways'	Meaning boredom makes us think beyond what we would normally do and stretches our imagination to conceive creative ideas.	<p><b><u>Response</u></b></p> <p>This could be true if the energy is directed to the right purposes.</p> <p><b><u>Evidence 1</u></b></p> <p>Derrick Koh's own boredom as a child when learning Math through the electronic learning systems in the late 90s and early 2000s pushed him to think of how to do things differently. Now the owner of an education chain in Singapore, he conceived his interactive Math learning portal out of adapting the Neopets, the virtual pets website and the elements of electronic learning systems. This innovative learning portal has been able to attract many students to enrol at his centre to learn Math in a fun way. His boredom made his mind wander to more fun things like Neopets and eventually led him to integrate it into the conventional learning portals to add fun to learning, resulting in an unconventional approach and platform to learn Math</p> <p><b><u>Evaluation:</u></b></p> <p>Sadly, in the context of Singapore, young people especially, turn to social media to relieve their boredom and whatever creativity that could have been expanded on thinking of innovations are often not tapped on. In fact, the social media and the internet has somewhat killed the creativity in people, not just because they resort to it when bored but also because they do not bother with thinking out of the box since the internet can provide instant answers to many of their queries and being such a highly-connected society only makes it worse. Usually when students come up with innovative ideas, they are not conceived from boredom but a need to do a project.</p>
He also highlights how a psychologist		<p><b><u>Response</u></b></p> <p>It would have to depend on the circumstances and setting/support provided</p>

Points mentioned by the author	Elaboration/ Explanation	Evidence based on your society
argues that boredom is good for the creativity of kids. (paragraph 9)		<p><b><u>Evidence 1</u></b></p> <p>Many students who are bored in class distract others.</p> <p><b><u>Evaluation:</u></b></p> <p>Whether boredom can bring out creativity in a child will have to depend on other factors like environment and support as well. In the case of students feeling bored in class, with class sizes of up to 40 in Singapore, it is hard to imagine how a bored child can be helped to develop his creativity. More likely, without attention, he will end up being a nuisance as he distracts others and disrupts the lesson. However, if parents on their own can afford the time to allow their bored children to discover new things, like providing a scribbling wall for self-expression, then perhaps boredom will work to bring out the creativity in them. However, in land scarce Singapore, this is quite out of the question. Creativity is also stifled by the lack of space to run around and also because many children in Singapore have easy access to the TV, internet and smart phones and often than not, when bored will play electronic games, than think of ways to do things differently or think up new ideas. To bring out creativity in bored kids, there must also be the support of adults in creating the environment and fostering that culture of creativity. Sadly, many Singaporeans used to a very structured way of life, do not think of it this way and they think that by sending their children to art classes and more enrichment classes, their children would become more creative, which is really not the case.</p> <p><b><u>Evidence 2</u></b></p> <p>A research done by NIE and Straits Times report revealed that one of the causes of aggressive behaviour among teens in Singapore is boredom. (The Straits Times, August 3, 1998) (Problem behaviours of Singapore youth, <a href="https://repository.nie.edu.sg/bitstream/10497/15521/1/ERA-AME-">https://repository.nie.edu.sg/bitstream/10497/15521/1/ERA-AME-</a></p>

## 2015 JC2 Prelim Paper 2 Answer Key | 2015

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Points mentioned by the author	Elaboration/ Explanation	Evidence based on your society
		<a href="#">AMIC-2000-461 a.pdf</a>