



VICTORIA JUNIOR COLLEGE
JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2021
HIGHER 1

GENERAL PAPER

8807/02

Paper 2

1 hour 30 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your C.T. group, index number and name on all the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black pen.

Do not use staples, paper clips, glue or correction tape.

Answer **all** questions.

Note that up to **15** marks out of **50** will be awarded for your use of language.

The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.

This document consists of **10** printed pages.

[Turn over

Passage 1. Matt Davis discusses the benefits of humour

- 1 Mark Twain once said that "Humour is the great thing, the saving thing after all. The minute it crops up, all our irritations and resentments flit away, and a sunny spirit takes their place." He is certainly not wrong. Humour may very well be *the* great thing as it touches upon nearly every facet of life. Studies suggest that 90 per cent of men and 81 per cent of women view a sense of humour to be the most important quality in a partner. It is also deemed a crucial quality for leaders, and has even been shown to improve cancer treatments. There is no doubt that humour is a life skill that everybody needs. But how do we define humour and can it be taught? 5
- 2 The best way to kill a joke is to explain it, but psychologists have tried to do so anyway. There are three main theories about what humour is and where it comes from. Relief theory argues that laughter and humour are ways of blowing off psychological steam. That is why jokes told at funerals are often met not with the silence that a sombre occasion like that would merit, but with uproarious laughter instead. Superiority theory explains a specific kind of humour: why we laugh at other's misfortunes. In this theory, humour is a means of declaring one's superiority over others. If you are looking to cultivate a sense of humour to improve your leadership skills, this is not the kind you want to acquire. Incongruity theory argues that humour arises when two contrasting, distinct ideas are merged. Humour often subverts expectations, and punchlines are often the result of an unexpected reversal. The quote by Oscar Wilde, "Work is the curse of the drinking classes" is funny because it both reverses a common phrase, and because it subverts a more conventional way of looking at the world. 10 15
- 3 Being funny is possibly one of the best things you can do for your health. You can almost think of a sense of humour as your body's and mind's immune system. When people who are at risk for depression reframe a negative event in a humorous light, they are less prone to a depressive episode because humour acts as an emotional filter. Furthermore, humour does not just guard against depression, it also improves people's overall quality of life. Researchers have found that people who score highly in certain types of humour have better self-esteem, greater confidence in their own abilities, more control over anxiety, and better performance in social interactions. 20 25
- 4 Aside from improving your health, laughter can be a productivity tool as well. A study from Northeastern University found that volunteers who watched a comedy were markedly better at solving a word association puzzle that relied on creative thinking as compared to control groups that watched horror films or quantum physics lectures. This is because laughter lights the area of the brain that is associated with attention and weighing between options. 30
- 5 The benefits of a good sense of humour are so profound that colleges like Stanford are offering business courses on humour in the workplace. They aim to teach the power and importance of humour to make positive change in the world, and also – surprise – to achieve business objectives, build more effective and innovative organisations, cultivate stronger bonds, and capture more lasting memories. 35
- 6 Every human has an innate sense of humour, of course, but it is also evident that not everybody has a *good* sense of humour. Learning about theories of humour, while interesting and insightful, does not guarantee that one's ability to deliver a punchline will improve to any measurable degree. It would be distressing to learn about humour's many benefits only to discover that it is entirely a product of genetics. 40
- 7 Fortunately, psychologists are divided about whether humour is an innate or learnable trait. There is no such thing as a completely humourless individual since comedy is a fundamental part of human nature. In the past, we believed that only some cultures developed humour, but this belief has changed as no culture has ever been found to be devoid of laughter and comedy. So, if you want to improve your sense of humour, trying to look on the funny side of life would not hurt. The worst-case scenario is that you will laugh a little more. 45

Passage 2. A group of experts argues that negative humour has detrimental consequences.

- 1 You may have enjoyed a good laugh at jokes created at the expense of certain groups. It usually feels good to chuckle and to feel “in on” the joke. But while all comedy has an overt meaning, much of it also delivers a hidden, negative message, one we may not consciously recognise or realise we are sending. Our joking at someone else’s expense, even if they are not present, sends a strong message defining “insiders” and “outsiders” within an organisation. And if we happen to be a member of the group being targeted, such humour can undermine our sense of self-worth, commitment to the organisation, and performance. 5
- 2 This subtle art of intimidation and one-upmanship is prevalent in companies and society at large. Schisms between new hires and “old-timers” are not uncommon in companies and are equally common in large groups. It does not take long for derogatory terms that put down the other group to surface or to use those terms as shorthand to slam others. Over time, polarisation and bitterness can increase, and the two groups often fail to capitalise on any potential synergies that their collaboration may yield. 10
- 3 What are the roots of negative humour? Some might argue that they lie in American-style individualism, which pits one person against the other in a race to be the best, first, fastest, or smartest. Part of the “winning” strategy is to best others by discounting them and their qualities. When we “zing” a group of people based on race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, weight, or other characteristics, we feel superior to them. And when others laugh at our “zingers,” we feel affirmed and justified. 15
- 4 What is the result of this tactic? When we are the targets, we may pay the price in lowered self-esteem, self-doubt, anxiety, and loss of energy. In many instances, the offended person also falls into the double bind of being insulted and then told not to feel insulted. In fact, the retort “Can’t you take a joke?” implies that one is overly sensitive. This puts the labeller in control and the labelled as unworthy of a valid complaint. To make matters worse, after being subjected to such a situation repeatedly, some targets become the next perpetrators of negative humour. 20 25
- 5 And even when we are not the intended victim of a mean-spirited jibe but rather someone on the sidelines listening and observing, we may feel that our personal integrity has been eroded. If we laugh at negative humour, we are tacitly agreeing with the joke teller and are equally responsible for the trash talking. If we do not laugh, we risk being excluded or the butt of the next joke. Although it may seem like harmless fun, negative humour can be emotional bullying or verbal abuse in its most cruel form – even if we are not the targets. Over time, it can strip us of our sensitivity, empathy, and compassion. 30
- 6 It is easy to be a critic; it does not take much talent to find fault with others. Responsible dialogue, on the other hand, takes great skill, energy, intelligence, and insight. We must have the ability to hear meaning beyond the words, to empathise with others, and to move beyond personal positions, biases, and life experiences. To be playful and humorous within the context of respectful dialogue is an art form that reveals the highest sense of character, intelligence, and emotional well-being. It is a goal worthy of all our efforts to attain. 35

Candidate's Name: _____

Candidate's Civics Class: _____

Content	/35
Language	/15
Total	/50

Paper 2 (50 marks)

Read the passages in the insert and then answer **all** the questions which follow. Note that up to fifteen marks will be given for the quality and accuracy of your use of English throughout this Paper.

Note: When a question asks for an answer **IN YOUR OWN WORDS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE** and you select the appropriate material from the passages for your answer, you must still use your own words to express it. Little credit can be given to answers which only copy words or phrases from the passages.

From Passage 1

1 Why does the author start the passage with the quote from Mark Twain (lines 1-2)?

_____ [1]

2 Why did Mark Twain describe humour as 'the saving thing' (line 1)? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

_____ [2]

- 3 In paragraph 2, explain why the author suggests that humour as 'a means of declaring one's superiority' (line 13) is not the kind that leaders want to acquire? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

[2]

- 4 What is the author implying by the use of 'surprise' in line 33?

[2]

- 5 In paragraph 7, why does the author consider it fortunate that 'psychologists are divided about whether humour is an innate or learnable trait' (line 41)? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

[2]

- 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.**

[illegible]

From Passage 2

7 Why have the authors written 'winning' in inverted commas (line 16)?

[1]

8 In paragraph 3, how does negative humour reinforce the feeling of superiority felt by those who engage in such humour? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

[2]

9 In paragraph 4, why do the authors say that a person offended by a joke falls into a 'double bind' (line 22)? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

[2]

10 Explain the irony in the last sentence of paragraph 4.

[2]

11 According to the authors, 'it does not take much talent to find fault with others (line 33).
Suggest a reason why this might be the case.

[1]

12 The author of Passage 1 believes in the benefits of humour while the authors of Passage 2 argue that negative humour has detrimental consequences.

How far do you agree or disagree with the opinions expressed in these **two** passages? Support your answer with examples drawn from your own experience and that of your society.

[illegible]

[illegible]

End of Paper