

NATIONAL JUNIOR COLLEGE
2022 SH2 Preliminary Examination
Paper 2 Answer Scheme (For Sharing)

1. Explain two ways in which the first paragraph provides an effective introduction. (2m)

Suggested answer
<p><u>Technique & outcome/effect</u></p> <p>The author uses...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a personal <u>anecdote</u> to draw <u>readers' attention</u> to• a personal <u>anecdote</u> that readers might find <u>relatable</u> about• an <u>example</u> of a positive interaction with a stranger to <u>introduce the topic / subject / issue</u> of• <u>contrast</u> between the <u>author's</u> negative <u>experience</u> with his <u>child's</u> positive experience of befriending a stranger.• a <u>rhetorical question</u> ('what could I do?') to <u>provoke thought</u> about <p><u>Context</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• strangers / how we relate to / our attitude towards strangers• the effect of technology on our social relations
<p>Learning points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accept any two logical responses that <u>identify and explain</u> an effective use of language / writing• <u>Context</u> must be included to get the full 2 marks, and credit if context is present somewhere in the answer• Answers that present two correct techniques without context - 1m (one technique w/o context - 0m) <p>Note to students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stating that something is "introduced" does not illustrate the way it is introduced!

2. According to the author in paragraph 2, what is the difference between New York a decade ago and New York today? **Use your own words as far as possible.** (2m)

	From the passage	Suggested answer
1	When I lived in <u>New York City a decade ago</u> , I couldn't spend 10 minutes outside without speaking to someone. That's the thing I loved about the place: how New Yorkers will chat and comment and carry on a conversation in line for pizza, on the sidewalk or in the subway; ask for directions or compliment a particularly awesome hat of someone they have never met, without any awkwardness .	People in <u>New York a decade ago</u> would (a) communicate / talk (b) freely with <u>strangers</u> without any hesitation / without feeling uneasy <i>*(a) & (b) are both required for the 1st mark</i> <i>*changes in word form are accepted (eg converse) but not wholesale lifts (eg conversation)</i> <i>*DNA: "normalising" / "a social norm" for the idea of awkwardness in (b)</i>
2	<u>Today</u> , you can spend a week in New York, shopping, traveling, eating and working, and never utter a sound to another human being, or even take your headphones off. (line 14 - 20)	However, people in <u>New York today</u> keep to themselves / do not talk to each other
	Learning points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate discourse markers should be used to show contrast • 'I couldn't spend 10 minutes outside without speaking to someone' should be read in context of the subsequent text, which clarifies that the frequency of stranger interactions is a result of the freeness/openness of communication and not a result of force or inevitability • Answers that mention ignoring strangers being 'extremely rude' are out of the question's context 	

3. Why is "engagement with strangers...at the core of our social contract" (line 21)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** (2m)

	From the passage	Suggested answer
1	<p>If we engaged only with the people we <u>knew</u>, our world would be small.</p> <p>OR</p> <p><u>That leap of faith toward the unknown other</u> is what allows us to grow beyond the family unit, tribe or nation.</p>	<p><u>If we only interacted / communicated with people we are familiar with</u>, our social circle / network would be very limited</p> <p>OR</p> <p><u>Engaging with strangers enables us to develop</u> our social circle / interaction beyond our immediate community / people we are close to</p>
2	<p>Anytime we ignore strangers in our vicinity, whether because of fear, bigotry or the everyday convenience and efficiency of digital technology, we weaken that contract</p>	<p>By disregarding strangers / without interacting with strangers... we <u>diminish / limit the cohesion / stability in society</u> // <u>benefits of being part of a society</u></p> <p>OR</p> <p>Interacting with / welcoming strangers <u>strengthens / benefits society</u> as a whole</p> <p><i>Accept lift for "strangers" and "digital technology"</i> <i>There must be some interpretation of "contract"; do not award answers that merely lift the word "contract".</i> <i>No need to paraphrase "whether because of fear, bigotry or the everyday convenience and efficiency of digital technology"</i></p>
	<p>Learning points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point 1 should include the condition (eg 'if') • Point 2 paraphrases of "social contract" should refer to society as a whole, not individual relationships • Students should realise that "Most religious faiths instruct us to welcome the strangers we encounter, and there's good reason for this." in L21-23 do not offer the reason/answer, but instead signal an upcoming reason. 	

4. Explain why the author refers to strangers as "one of the richest and most important resources" (lines 31-32). **Use your own words as far as possible.** (3m)

	From the passage	Suggested answer
1	...strangers are actually one of the richest and most important resources we have. They connect us to the community, teach us empathy, and build civility.	<p>The author means that strangers are most significant in being able to provide us with / teach us essential social values / how to interact with each other</p> <p><i>Award attempts to paraphrase "community", "empathy", "build civility" individually as long as 2/3 are accurate</i></p>
2	Beyond the predictable, they can be full of surprises , a gateway to wonder ,	<p>They can amaze / astonish / lead to discoveries / pique our curiosity</p> <p><i>DNA: unpredictable</i></p>
3	or at the very least, a reminder of the simple beauty we are surrounded by but so often forget to appreciate.	<p>Strangers also prompt/cue us to admire/ look at the things we take for granted/ we tend to overlook</p>
	<p>Learning points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students need to address the question focus and show understanding of the word "resources" - each of the 3 points they paraphrase need to clearly convey the understanding of strangers being a valuable resource. Clipped answers like "strangers are mysterious" (attempted Point 2) fall short of reflecting this. • Thoroughness is required to capture all ideas / units of meaning & secure 3 marks: for Point 1, it is encouraging to recognise that many students dutifully and closely reflect the meanings of the three qualities (even as the markers allow for a generalised essence of the idea behind the 3 qualities). 	

5. According to paragraph 5, what did Gillian Sandstrom's research find? **Use your own words as far as possible.** (2m)

	From the passage	Suggested answer
1	Gillian Sandstrom...whose research has demonstrated how the small, transactional relationships we create by talking to strangers	Her research found that the purely functional / pragmatic / mercenary / mutually beneficial connections formed by interacting with strangers <i>Accept lift for "relationships"</i> <i>DNA: temporary, artificial, superficial, casual, economic</i>
2	are important pillars of our social and emotional well-being	Are essential / critical / crucial to our social and psychological / mental health <i>Accept lift for "social"</i> <i>Award mark even if "social" is not captured, as long as "emotional well-being" is correctly paraphrased</i>
	Learning points:	

6. Explain the author's use of the word 'despite' in line 42. (2m)

	From the passage	Suggested answer
1	Dr. Sandstrom, who forces herself to speak to strangers every day, despite identifying as an <u>introvert</u> .	<u>Expectation</u> Even though... one would expect an <u>introvert</u> to shy away from / resist OR she is uncomfortable / feels awkward about interacting with strangers,
2		<u>Reality / Contrast</u> <u>Dr. Sandstrom</u> deliberately chooses to / makes it a point to talk to / converse / interact with strangers on a daily basis
<p>Learning points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students should demonstrate understanding of the contrast between the expected and reality• Appropriate discourse markers should be used, and marks can be awarded as long as some form of contrast is acknowledged/referenced• Answers that do not feature Dr. Sandstrom as the subject cannot be awarded full marks.• There is a need for students to recognise that the context – where the word ‘despite’ is located – refers specifically to the example of Dr. Sandstrom so their answers need to reflect this.• DNA: answers drawn from lines 43-45.		

7. Using materials from paragraphs 6 - 8 only (lines 46-71), summarise what the author has to say about how technological advancement has affected the way we view strangers. Write the summary in **no more than 120 words**, not counting the opening words which are printed below. **Use your own words as far as possible.** (8m)

Technological advancement has ...

	From the passage	Suggested answers
1	In some ways, our recent aversion to strangers is a by-product of technological evolution	Technological advancement has ... made us avoid/ dislike strangers nowadays
2	Sure, newspapers and magazines, cassette players and televisions were all potential distractions, but <u>none of them fully normalised ignoring other people in the way that smartphones have</u>	made it acceptable to intentionally disregard / not acknowledge others
3	The smartphone all-too-easily allows us to flit from one function to the next ,	New technology... is filled with distractions/ /rRd has many features/ lets us switch from one application to another
4	consuming attention that could <u>otherwise</u> be opened up to others .	taking/ diverting/ drawing our attention/ focus away from (interacting with) people/ from relating to people // takes up the time and energy that could have been used to interact with strangers <i>*Accept lift of 'attention' as long as the idea of 'consuming' has been captured.</i> <i>To be awarded this point, student may EITHER</i> <i>1. reflect the degree/ intensity of meaning OR</i> <i>2. reflect the opportunity cost that is conveyed in the word 'otherwise'</i> Teaching point: in this context, 'consuming' does not necessarily reflect degree of meaning

5	E-commerce sites and third-party restaurant delivery apps incentivise us <u>against entering stores and restaurants filled with strangers.</u>	(technology) encourages/rewards us for avoiding strangers / makes avoiding strangers more convenient
6	Some digital technology goes further , like the Uber feature that allows you to <u>pre-emptively mute</u> a driver's attempt at friendly conversation.	<i>[inferred]</i> <i>EITHER the key idea of "go[ing] further"</i> and can even make us anti-social / and this trend is getting more extreme <i>OR to understand the essence of the EG</i> and makes it possible to avoid engaging with others <u>when interaction is unavoidable</u>
7	Then came the pandemic...We sought refuge	We look for comfort/ safety
8	in the distance that digital technology <u>allowed us</u> , watching movies, attending exercise classes and having meetings—all without entering a theatre, gym or office.	in technology's ability to give/ afford us more personal space / privacy / isolation in our daily activities / whether at work or leisure
9	The longer we hid inside,	but the more we shy away / avoid society at large
10	the fewer strangers we encountered .	we stop meeting / interacting with strangers
11	Our world grew inward and suspicious ,	causing feelings of anxiety / distrust / wary
12	our fears exacerbated by the <u>latest news about fresh variants and rising crime rates not seen in decades.</u> "Stranger danger," that discredited catchphrase printed on milk-cartons in our unmarked-van kidnapping past, seemed to creep back into our present.	made worse/ aggravated by <u>news and advertisements</u> *allow lift of "news" or "advertisements", but subject is needed
13	<u>Even when they are not</u> physically threatening ,	Even if strangers do no actual harm
14	<u>interactions with strangers</u> are fraught with social risk: you could	interactions with them are filled with potential awkwardness

	<p><u>end up embarrassed or misunderstood.</u></p> <p>Digital technology promises to fill those silences with more hardware and software</p>	<p>OR</p> <p>there is always the possibility of humiliation / conflict</p> <p><i>Context of strangers should be present for point 13 and 14, but do not double-penalise</i></p>
15	<p>to insulate us <u>from those we do not know</u></p>	<p>Technology protects / shields us from strangers</p> <p><i>Context of strangers should be present for point 13 and 14, but do not double-penalise</i></p>
16	<p>But a future where coffee is served by robots is not an improvement on the coffee shop. It ignores a central purpose of the neighbourhood cafe,</p>	<p><i>[inferred]</i></p> <p>but at the expense of a key function/ core fundamentals of our businesses and institutions –</p>
17	<p>a place for hot drinks and human interaction.</p>	<p><i>[inferred]</i></p> <p>socialisation / communication/ human engagement</p>
18	<p>A robot-barista might always operate at peak efficiency</p>	<p>Even though technology may achieve optimum productivity</p> <p><i>Reflect degree of meaning</i></p>
19	<p>and might even remember every component of your last drink,</p>	<p><i>[inferred]</i></p> <p>And even seem to be able to personalise its responses / meet preferences</p>
20	<p>but it can never care about you or your order – you might end up with a hot drink in hand yet walk away feeling cold.</p>	<p><i>[inferred]</i></p> <p>In truth, it is not really concerned about you / does not take care of your emotional needs</p>

Mark	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
No. of Points	1	2 - 3	4 - 5	6 - 7	8 - 9	10 - 11	12 - 13	14+

Notes:

- Many responses mentioned that strangers "carried the potential of death" (L 54-55) without realising that this is irrelevant to the question's focus on technology's effects.

Sample summary (*modified from a student's script*)

Technological advancement has... made it acceptable for us not to acknowledge others. It enables us to quickly navigate between apps, using up energy that could otherwise be spent on interacting with people. It encourages us to avoid spaces with others, and cut off communication with others beforehand. It is a source of comfort as people stayed indoors and did not meet as many new people. People became individualistic and wary. The fear of others was compounded. Technology allows us to avoid awkwardness or being misinterpreted. By eliminating the need for humans to communicate, shared spaces lose their core function. Robots operate at maximum productivity but fail to meet personalized preferences or consider your emotional needs. [112 words]

8. Why does the author use inverted commas in line 77? (1m)

From the passage	Suggested answer
Worse, a stranger-avoidant society makes it harder for one social demographic to 'break in' to another, ensuring that social divisions like class and background become even more entrenched.	<p><u>Function:</u> The author uses the inverted commas to indicate that the phrase 'break in' is not used in its usual context/ is taken out of context</p> <p><u>Context:</u> <i>EITHER</i> <u>is not literally about...</u> accustoming a horse to a bridle / forcing entry into a building / wearing shoes until they fit comfortably ...but about breaking down barriers between the social groups</p> <p><i>OR</i></p> <p>The author uses inverted commas <u>to suggest that</u> social cohesion is unnatural / not intuitive / requires effort / force.</p>
<p>Learning points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student must show understanding of the literal meaning of 'break in' • Answers should cover either what 'break in' is <i>not</i> referring to, or what 'break in' is, with reference to context. Answers that do not feature context: "The inverted commas show that the phrase is a metaphorical one rather than a literal one." [0] 	

9. By using the proverb in lines 78-79, what is the author implying about social interactions? (2m)

	From the passage	Suggested answer
1	But if the old proverb 'birds of a feather flock together' isn't even particularly true of birds, <u>why should we humans stick to the rule?</u>	<p>[Understanding why the author mentions the proverb]</p> <p>The author suggests that since... the <u>proverb's view</u> of social interactions is <u>flawed</u></p> <p>OR</p> <p>the <u>proverb is not even true</u> of the <u>animal kingdom / birds</u> that it speaks of / is about,</p> <p><i>Note: Pls refer to learning points below; no explicit mention of the proverb/birds needed. As long as student infers the significance of the proverb, award the point here.</i></p>
2		<p>[Understanding author's message about the nature of social interactions]</p> <p>social interactions should not be limited to / can go beyond forging bonds only with people we are familiar with.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>social interactions should not involve avoiding those unfamiliar to us.</p>
	<p>Learning points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While there is no need for students to explicitly refer to the proverb (or birds) in their answer, students need to reflect understanding that the proverb is used to present a limited or flawed paradigm. Students need to show understanding that the proverb shows the <i>opposite</i> of how social interactions should <i>be</i>. Students need to respond clearly to the question by focusing on social interactions in their answers. They need to be reminded of good answering practices. There is no need for students to explicitly refer to the proverb (or birds) in their answer. E.g. full marks for this answer: "The author is implying that we should not only stick to our own social circle (Point 1) and instead meet and interact with people who are very different from us (Point 2)". DNA: "People tend to keep to their own social circle that is familiar to them" / "Humans should stick together as all of us are the same" (Neither answer responds to the author's use of the proverb which shows the <i>opposite</i> of how social interactions should <i>be</i>) Wrong answers tended to explain what the proverb implies about humans/all 	

	animals, but this is not the same as the <u>author's implication about what humans should do / how humans should socialise</u>
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10. How is the final sentence an effective conclusion to the author's argument? (1m)

Suggested answer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It points back to the positive/optimistic anecdote in the introduction that establishes the author's view about the importance of establishing connection with strangers. • It reinforces the author's original openness/positivity about strangers • It makes the point that one can still have a meaningful relationship / interaction with a stranger / someone you do not know. • It highlights that positive interactions with strangers can be simple / easy / innocent. <p><i>Accept any reasonable answer.</i></p>
<p>Learning points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students need to read and understand the context of the passage in its entirety, paying close attention to both the opening and closing paragraphs to recognise techniques of authorial craft. • Students need to present contextual understanding in their answers. To simply say "it is effective in conveying the author's message and linking back to the story" without clear mention of context makes for an incomplete answer.

AQ

11. The author presents reasons for why strangers are important in our lives.
How far do you agree or disagree with his observations? Illustrate your arguments with examples drawn from your own experience and that of your society. (10m)

Possible points:

- Not engaging with strangers weakens social contract/ destabilises society
 - “Engagement with strangers is at the core of our social contract. [...] “without such a social contract, without having any obligations to each other, society itself is weakened.” (Para 3)
- Not engaging with strangers narrows our social network/ limits our development
 - “If we engaged only with the people we knew, our world would be small.” (L23)
 - “That leap of faith towards the unknown other is what allows us to grow beyond the family unit, tribe or nation” (L23-25)
 - “Eliminating strangers from our societal structures [...] leaves us in a social and developmental bubble” (L72-74)
 - “We wouldn’t speak or network with people beyond social circles unless forced to do so [...] By that point, however, the interaction is either inorganic or soured” (L74-75)
- Engaging with strangers teaches us important lessons
 - “They connect us to the community, teach us empathy and build civility”
 - “gateway to wonder”
 - “reminder of the simple beauty we are surrounded by but so often forget to appreciate” (Para 4)
- Engaging with strangers adds meaning to our lives/ is good for our social and emotional well-being
 - “they really do add a richness to our life that we miss when we’re not there” (L37)
 - “they form this tapestry that when we’re not there, our life feels kind of empty” (L43)
 - “small, transactional relationships we create by talking to strangers are important pillars of our social and emotional well-being.” (L39-40)
 - “deep meaningful conversations with strangers are not only easier than expected but also leave people feeling better about themselves” (L44-45)

Additional reading:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/26/business/shanghai-volunteers-covid.html>

(Missed opportunity for many students listing China as their society)

Markers’ comments:

The understanding of the concept of ‘strangers’ must be clearly established in your response, in order for subsequent content material to be valid. Making convenient assertions about classmates (for instance, an attempted example featuring children being unable to interact with their classmates) may not make for relevant material, especially without contextualisation.

Conceptual understanding of terms like “melting pot of cultures” needs to be carefully considered, in the light of governmental policies.

Common misunderstanding is observed in students' reference to the local "kampung spirit" → some students tended to link kampung spirit to welcoming strangers. The kampung (village) spirit refers to a sense of community and solidarity. Life in a kampung was mostly harmonious and it was not uncommon for people to readily offer food to their neighbours, apart from help and support. Be cautious in making assumptions that the kampung spirit reflects a welcoming attitude towards strangers.

A significant number of students still don't seem to understand what a reason is; these responses typically cite "because it is applicable" as a reason before going into a description of Singapore society. This almost always limits the degree of insight the student provides and leads towards expository/descriptive essays that contain little analysis of the nature of Singapore, its social context etc in relation to the topic. Some responses do meander their way into an actual reason for their agreement/disagreement, which is fine.