

**2009 RI(JC) JC2 Preliminary Examination  
Answer Scheme & Examiners' Report**

1. What does the author mean when he uses the word “speechless” (line 3) to describe a human being in a state of nature? **Use your own words as far as possible.** (1m)

Answer:

- a) The individual in a state of nature makes no attempt/effort  
OR has no opportunity/ability  
OR sees no need (1/2m)
- b) to converse/communicate/connect/to speak/to talk/to communicate through spoken language with another human being (1/2m).

**Comments:**

Most were able to receive the full mark for their answers. However, some candidates stated that the human being had *no form of language* to communicate with. This was a misinterpretation of the author's argument, which was that when an individual possessed no manners (i.e. a human being in a state of nature), he would not take the trouble to connect with another human being.

Candidates need to note the difference between communicating *with others* versus generalised answers like "not talking" or "only able to make sounds". The latter are errors of misreading.

2. What does the word “seeming” (line 8) reveal about the author's view of the polite person? **Use your own words as far as possible.** (1m)

From the passage	Answer
the polite person is at a seeming <b>disadvantage</b> (l.8)	a) He disagrees with the popular/common perception (1/2m)
He is...a <b>loser</b> (l.11)	b) that the polite person will get the shorter end of the stick/will trail behind others in society (1/2m).  ○ Penalize: “lose out” (-1/2m) ○ Explanation of <i>what</i> the author disagrees with is necessary to obtain the full mark. (a without b = 0) ○ b without a = 1/2m

**Comments:**

This question differentiated the weaker students from the stronger ones--a case of academic rigor being the differentiating factor. Candidates need to remember that for such questions asking for the author's view, there is a necessity first to *state the view of the author*, and then to *explain why the author thinks this way*.

The best answers possible would fulfill both criteria, e.g., "The author is skeptical (1/2m) that the polite person trails behind others in society due to his manners (1/2m)."

A substantial number of candidates were careless, losing marks for failing to paraphrase "disadvantage" and variants of the word "loser".

3. According to the author, why does the argument that we do not need manners look "especially persuasive" (line 14) today? **Use your own words as far as possible.** (1m)

From the passage	Answer
we can obtain so much without the <b>cooperation</b> of others (l.14-15)	a) The argument is especially persuasive today because we are able to accomplish many things/obtain much/get by (1/2m)
Today, this <b>dependency</b> is <b>dwindling</b> (l.16)	b) without the assistance/support of others/without relying on others for help/without having to work with/collaborate with others (1/2m).
	Do not accept: "need to interact"

**Comments:**

Question 3 was generally well done, with most candidates able to paraphrase that "We are able to accomplish many things (1/2m) without needing to rely on others (1/2m).", thereby scoring the full mark.

However, weaker candidates who were imprecise in paraphrasing tended to lose pt (a), on "gaining so much".

4. What does the phrase "artificial mediators" (line 42) refer to? (1m)

Answer: Chopsticks/ cutlery/ eating utensils/ utensils used during meals (general utensils)
Do not accept: Answers that only and specifically mention "spoons", "forks", etc. Only "chopsticks" is accepted as a specific answer.

**Comments:**

Almost all candidates managed to secure the mark for this question. A range of answers were accepted, from the specific answer of "chopsticks", to generalized answers like "eating utensils." Some odd answers of "man-made tools" and "crockery".

5. Using material from paragraphs 4, 5, 6 and 8, summarise the author's arguments for the importance of manners in our society. 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.** (8m)

While it is true that we can survive without manners...

	From the passage	Answer
a	...does not mean that human nature doesn't <b>need</b> them in a <b>deeper</b> way (l.19-20) But all those things are <b>human needs</b> (l.21)	they are vital/indispensable/essential/crucial/fundamental to us in a more profound/complex way.  Note: both ideas necessary for the full mark.
b	we need them for our <b>happiness</b> (l.21) Without them, we are <b>unfulfilled</b> . (l.21-22)	Manners contribute to our sense of well-being/joy/contentment.  Accept: "fruitful life"  Note: Either one idea ("happiness" or "unfulfilled") will get the full mark.
c	In teaching [children] manners, we are putting the finishing touches on <b>potential members of society</b> , (l.25)	Because children will develop into adults in a community/future citizens,
d	there is a deep-seated need to make them <b>lovable</b> (l.24)  ...adding the polish that makes them <b>agreeable</b> . (l.25-26)	they should possess manners so that others will accept them/find them endearing/respect them.  Note: Full mark as long as answer conveys the idea of acceptance.
e	others will <b>fear or dislike</b> [a child without manners] (l.27-28)	A child without manners will be detested/loathed OR People will dread interacting/associating with a child without manners OR Others will have an aversion to a child without manners OR Children without manners will be cut off from the rest/unpopular/ostracised
	Note: For c,d,e, answers must specifically refer to "children", rather than the more generic "people". Deduct 1/2m for	

	inaccurate paraphrase.	
f	... <b>lifts</b> the human form above the level of animal life, so as to become fully human, (l.30-31)	Having manners differentiates man from being a mere beast/primate/other species  Note: accept lifts of “animal” and “human”.
g	<b>sociable</b> (l.31)	and makes him affable/friendly/amiable to others OR enables him to interact/get along well with others  Note: Do not accept “outgoing”/ “extrovert”
h	and self- <b>aware</b> (l.31)	The well-mannered person is also conscious/mindful about his actions/behaviour OR The well-mannered person reflects on/evaluates/judges his own conduct.
i	We <b>nourish...our social relations</b> and therefore our souls (l.32)  Table manners enable us to combine <b>conversation</b> and consumption (l.32-33)  When manners are forgotten, the meal as a <b>social occasion</b> disappears (l.46) (inferred point)	Possessing table manners helps one to interact meaningfully with others during mealtimes  Note: For the full mark, answers must refer to “ <i>interaction</i> ”.
j	Without table manners, eating <b>degenerates</b> into feeding and conversation into snorts and grunts (l.35-36)  Eating has shrunk into a <b>function</b> (line 48)	Without table manners, eating becomes/is reduced to a mere act/simply fulfilling one’s need for food/meeting physical needs.
k	[children without manners] should find it difficult or alien to settle down in any <b>relationship</b> other than a <b>provisional or temporary</b> one (i.49-50)	Children without manners will find it challenging to have any lasting connection/bond/ties/friendship with others.  Note: focus on the transience of the relationships.

- Every point – 1m
- Give allowance of +/- 5 words

- Deduct 1/2m for missing word count, or for misrepresenting word count (when actual word count is anything more than 125)

Note: “Man” should be capitalized.

### Comments:

Generally, the summary was rather well done, with most candidates receiving at least 6 marks. Those who did not do well for the summary usually had difficulty sieving out the relevant ideas from the passage, and often they simply lifted keywords, or they did not paraphrase closely the ideas from the passage. Precision in explanation of relevant ideas is crucial for a well-attempted summary.

For point (a), most students did not get any mark as the word “need” was often lifted and many did not explain the idea that manners were essential to us “in a deeper way”.

Many also lost point (c), not recognizing that the idea was about children growing up to become part of a larger community (“potential members of society”).

Some students erroneously paraphrased point (h) as the individual becoming conscious about his environment or surroundings, when the idea had to do with consciousness of the *self* (“self-awareness”).

The phrases “social relations” and “social occasion” were often lifted as well, so many lost a mark for point (i).

6. What does the word “stampedes” (line 54) suggest about how an individual approaches his sexual target? (1m)

Note:

For the full mark,

- (a) the notion of “stampede” has to be conveyed (1/2m), as well as
- (b) the individual’s disregard of the other’s will (1/2m), as seen in lines 54-55, “stampedes towards his goal without taking “no” or “not yet” for an answer”)

Answer:

The individual is

- (a) aggressive in his approach/self-seeking/impatient for sex/in a rush to make his sexual conquest/ callous/insensitive/animalistic in his attitude towards his sexual target , (1/2m)
- (b) treating the other only as an object of desire/lacking consideration or respect for the other person. (1/2m)

Do not accept:

- “Herd mentality”

**Comments:**

Question was not too well answered: again, a problem of academic rigor. Implicit within the *general* idea of stampede is the idea of force, impatience and/or callousness (1/2m). *Specific* to the passage's context, however, it also meant that the individual disregards or lacks respect for his intended target (1/2m) and this was clearly stated in lines 54-55 already: "...who stampedes to his goal *without taking "no" or "not yet" for an answer*".

Candidates need to keep in mind the importance of answering a question precisely as required.

7. The author asserts that for a person without manners, sex is "a way of maintaining an iron solitude in the midst of union" (line 57). Explain the irony here. (2m)

Answer:

- a) The irony is that for a person without manners, sex, instead of fostering a deep intimacy with another (1m),
- b) becomes the means through which the two are wholly alienated/segreated/separated from one another. (1m)

OR

The irony is that two individuals may have a physical relationship without having an emotional connection/bond (2m).

Penalise: "union", "solitude" IF an explanation of the key words is not found anywhere else in the answer. (-1m)

**Comments:**

A fair number of awkwardly phrased answers. Candidates had to be able to express the contradiction between the key words "union" and "solitude", thereby explaining the irony *specifically in the context* of sex, instead of merely paraphrasing what "union" and "solitude" meant. There is no mark penalty for usage of the key words if candidates had explained the meanings in their answers.

An ideal answer would be able to convey the dichotomy between union and solitude, then tying in with the explanation of *why* it is ironical: that sex is about the closest intimacy possible between individuals (1m), yet irony exists in how the modern man uses sex instead as a means of individual gratification, without being concerned about his partner, hence remaining alone even in this closest of unions (1m).

An alternative answer would be to explain about the physical bond between two(1m), yet to remain alone emotionally in the relationship (1m).

8. Explain what Immanuel Kant meant when he stated that one should “act so as to treat humanity, ...always as an end in itself, and never as a means only” (lines 62 - 63). **Use your own words as far as possible.** (2m)

Answer:

- a) Kant meant that one should regard people as important in themselves/with respect/dignity (1m),
- b) and not as a way to achieve one's goals/serve one's interest. (1m)

Notes: Candidates are to be penalised one mark for each lift of “treat”, “end” or “means”.

**Comments:**

Most candidates understood the meaning of the quote by Kant, rightly answering that people need to have respect/care/concern for others instead of using them to achieve one's own goals. However, a lot of candidates failed to paraphrase, in particular, the word “treat” (along with “end” and “means”), costing 1m for carelessness.

9. Explain the phrase “constricting artifice” (line 72) in the context of the passage. (2m)

Answer:

- a) Some who disregard the importance of manners view manners as stifling/overly restricting/suppressing/hindering/restraining/hampering their freedom of conduct (1m),
- b) and as a/an unnatural/affected/pretentious/superficial/insincere/contrived/fake form of interaction with others. (1m)

Penalise: lift of “artificial”/“artifice” (-1m)

**Comments:**

Most candidates managed to secure the first two points; however, a majority lost the 3rd mark on “discipline of body and soul”.

A lot of overly literal paraphrasing as well, with the words “minute ability” being translated variously as “small skill”, “minor capability” and other such phrases, thereby missing the actual point of the author, which was about a refinement of manners to such a degree that it intuitively influences people to behave with others first in mind.

10. Explain what the author means by 'manners' in paragraph 13. **Use your own words as far as possible.** (3m)

	From the passage	Answer
a	<b>to live and act for others</b> (l.77)	The author thinks manners means showing consideration for others' welfare/interest in one's conduct/ cares for others,
b	<b>to influence and be influenced by their judgment</b> (l.77)	sharing one's views, AND listening to others' with an open mind;  Note: answers must convey a sense of the two-way interaction Accept: "change", "alter", "mould"
c	a <b>discipline</b> at once of the soul and of the body (l.77-78)	and having self-control/restraint.  Accept: "training of an individual, physically and mentally"

(Every point-1m)

**Comments:**

For a question which simply required direct paraphrase, this wasn't well done at all. It seems strange that students retrieved their answers from other paragraphs when all 3 points were glaring at them in paragraph 13 itself.

Most students managed to extract and rephrase 'to live and act for others'. However not many were able to get the mark for 'to influence and be influenced by their judgement', failing to grasp the idea of a MUTUAL sharing and receiving of views. Answers which fail to convey the sense of mutuality would obtain no marks.

11. Give the meaning of the following words as they are used in the passage. You may write your answer in one word or a short phrase. (5m)

	Vocabulary	1 mark	½ mark	0 mark
a	adage (line 1) <b>noun</b>  <i>the old <b>adage</b> reminds us of an important truth</i>	saying/proverb/maxim/truism/axiom/ <b>moral saying/wise saying</b>	words of wisdom	idiom/popular phrase/quote
b	cutthroat (line 12) <b>adjective</b>  <i>in the world of <b>cutthroat</b> competition</i>	brutal/harsh/ruthless/merciless/relentless/intense AND unforgiving/ <b>unprincipled/cruel/unscrupulous/vicious</b>		severe/stiff/intense/rude/aggressive/ <b>fierce/mercenary/unethical</b>



	Vocabulary	1 mark	½ mark	0 mark
c	obsolete (line 17) <b>adjective</b> <i>fast food and take-out have made cooking <b>obsolete</b></i>	redundant/out-dated/out of use/out of fashion/no longer applicable in modern context/out-moded/unfashionable/	no longer necessary (because of idea of time) / <b>a thing of the past/no longer relevant</b>	unnecessary/needless/ <b>useless/irrelevant/defunct/null</b>
d	hilarity (line 39) <b>noun</b> <i>adding to the common fund of <b>hilarity</b></i>	joy/mirth/merriment/amusement/laughter/humour/joyous humour/humorous banter/ <b>joyfulness</b>		harmony/cheerfulness/jest/jokes and laughter/ <b>happiness/enjoyment/entertainment/lightheartedness/fun</b>
e	discreetly (line 39) <b>adjective</b> <i>while <b>discreetly</b> helping himself to the common dish</i>	Subtly/unobtrusively/imperceptibly/unnoticeably/acting without drawing attention/ <b>inconspicuously/ not obviously</b>		quietly/ <b>carefully and quietly/surreptitiously/secretly/politely</b>

Note: Penalise spelling errors only in language, if mis-spelling does not change meaning.

#### Comments:

Students are reminded not to produce multiple answers, as one answer might end up negating the other.

**cutthroat** - a popularly erred explanation was the word ‘intense’. While cutthroat competition may imply an intense atmosphere, the adjective itself has to be explained, as “ruthless” or “unprincipled”.

**Obsolete** - this means to be no longer in use; outdated. The common answers of ‘irrelevant’, ‘unnecessary etc. are therefore wrong.

12. In the passage, Roger Scruton observes that manners have become increasingly unimportant in modern society. He argues for the need to re-establish their importance by teaching manners to the young.

How far are these views relevant to your society? Support your answer by referring to what you have read in the passage and to the situation in your country. (8m)

### *Guidelines*

*The candidate may choose to agree or disagree with Scruton that manners have become increasingly unimportant in Singapore, but he/she may be hard put to challenge the author's view that manners have to be taught to the young.*

Some arguments/examples that Scruton's views are not wholly relevant to Singapore in that manners are increasingly seen as important in Singapore society, and manners are being taught to the young:

- The government's efforts to make Singapore a more civilised society have borne some fruit, such as various courtesy campaigns held over the years. For e.g., the attitudes of service personnel, from salespersons in retail stores to taxi drivers, towards their clients have improved, with many taking the effort to greet and thank customers, even if the customers may leave some shops having bought nothing.
- On the whole, Singaporeans are enjoying a higher level of education. While education does not necessarily make one civilised and polite, the greater exposure to education gives children increasing opportunities to be taught the right values and conduct in schools.
- Many parents are also concerned that their children will interact well with their peers and find friends in school (ref. to Scruton's argument that parents want their children to be "lovable" and "agreeable"), so they try to inculcate manners in their children by getting them to greet others, to say 'please', "thank you" or "sorry" in the appropriate contexts.
- Singaporeans are increasingly well-travelled, so they have the opportunities to observe the behaviour of people in other countries and to emulate them. For e.g., the Brits' habit of queuing, such as waiting in line at bus stops to board buses or waiting for their turn to pay for their purchases at departmental stores/eateries. They also stand towards the left on escalators so as not to obstruct the paths of those who are in a rush. Many Japanese are also noted for their courteous behaviour on trains; their cell phones are on silent mode and conversations on the phone are not above a whisper and kept brief so as not to disturb other commuters.

Some arguments/examples to support Scruton's assertion that manners are increasingly disregarded in Singapore society:

- The lack of manners is evident in the way sexual relations are conducted in our society, as "sexual partners are constantly being pushed towards animal relations, not fully human ones" and those who "stampede" towards their goal and cannot take 'no' for an answer. More wives are emerging from their suffering in silence, to sue or divorce husbands who force themselves on their

- wives against their will, and there is also a significant number of cases of molest, sexual harassment, rape and 'date rape'.
- Eating as a "social occasion" is increasingly devalued: mealtimes for many families may be spent in front of television or computer screens; conversations are increasingly scarce.
  - Although MRTs now have designated priority or reserved seats for the handicapped, pregnant women, or the elderly, many still rush into trains for these seats and would rather sit on these seats and 'snooze', than to give them up for those who may need them more.
  - Many Singaporeans do not want to hold the lift doors open for others even if they see them rushing towards the lift, and many do not stop to thank others who have held the lift doors open for them, or to thank bus drivers who have waited for them so they could board the bus.
  - Cleaners working in schools, hawker centres, food courts and at public toilets are often ignored and when they clear trays and tables, hardly a word of thanks is uttered by Singaporeans who have been served.

### Comments:

#### *Common Errors*

1. **Less** Families eat together...
2. **Lesser** families eat together... (**Greater** families are busily climbing up the corporate ladder?)
3. I agree to this fact...
4. Large **amounts** of people...
5. Large **amount** of complaints...
6. **Little** opportunities to learn manners because parents have little time for them...
7. Only interested in **academics/academia**...(when they mean schoolwork, not professors and their world)
8. This had **lead** the young to...
9. **Mannerisms** as a paraphrase for **manners**
10. The Straits Times' online platform is "**STOMP**" not "**STORM**".

#### *General Feedback*

1. Again, students must not refer to author as Roger unless he is their close friend or buddy. Got no manners meh? It is Scruton to them, please.
2. It is definitely not bad manners, to speak Singlish, only bad grammar and syntax...and fractured bits! This was quoted as bad manners in some scripts.

It is unmannerly though, to speak Malay, Tamil or Mandarin when you are among people (especially in the minority), who do not understand the language!

3. Answers largely uninspiring and bland, with the usual eggs of bad manners, like not giving up seats on the MRT/bus, queue-cutting, lack of respect for elders...
4. A lack of careful consideration of points from passage for their discussion; students need to know that bland ideas lead to uninspiring discussion and hence a low mark.
5. Nuances in passage not well understood. For instance, the author is concerned about poor manners in sexual relationships (lines 51-52), not immoral behavior (which is altogether too rude to contemplate here). So, it may be concluded that if one does not stampede towards sex but treat one's partner with sensitivity and tenderness, that would be good manners; there is no condemnation in the passage of teenage sex, premarital or extramarital sex, only rude sex!
6. A number of students went on to state that they disagreed with the notion that manners are unimportant and attributed this idea to Scruton! This, at best, was careless expression and at worst, a lack of comprehension.
7. An annoying and illogical assertion was that manners in Singapore have deteriorated because of 'Western' influence. Again, filial piety, conservative and moral values appear to be exclusively Asian in their responses! The logic goes something like this:

- Asians are conservative, therefore more courteous
- Western counterparts are liberal, therefore less courteous

Candidates should be fair-minded and avoid slamming the West (and Western media!) for all that's wrong in our own society.

8. Many discussed peripheral issues (e.g. meals disappearing as "social occasions", globalisation contributing to "cutthroat competition", advances in technology making us less dependent on others etc) without attempting to *connect* their discussion to the issue they *should have* discussed, the importance of manners and inculcating manners in young people.

The question was relatively straightforward. Candidates only had to address the main arguments put forth by the author and discuss if these views were relevant to Singapore. In particular:

1. The diminishing display of manners in the general populace

## 2. The consequent need to instill manners in individuals

Responses must hence be relevant and engaged in addressing the key issues, rather than simply picking out any statement made by the author and attempting to compare it with Singapore.

Mediocre responses (2-5 marks) -

Candidates often made baseless claims without sufficient substantiation with relevant examples or illustrations. Examples listed are at best trivial or overgeneralizations.

Typical list of overgeneralisations:

- teenagers these days are often seen pretending to sleep on buses and not giving up their seats
- teens spouting vulgarities on the streets
- lack of manners in youngsters are because they do not spend enough time with their parents having been taken care of by their maids when they were young
- the Chinese families still make an effort to have dinners together after work and school
- workers these days only have time for quick meals and fast food

These examples, while plausible, but when unaccompanied by useful qualifications or further explanations, tend not to portray the candidate's insight or deeper understanding of the situation. Indeed, it would be impossible for anyone to make these observations and claim that they represented all families in Singapore or all youth.

At worst, examples are downright frivolous, invalid or irrationally linked to support the candidate's argument. While making for an interesting read at times, the reader is often left puzzled (hence the occasional indications of "???" on script) and stumped at how to respond:

- Chinese families these days still value the practice of manners, as can be seen by the Steamboat dinners they always have during gatherings or over Chinese New Year (candidate proceeds to spend a paragraph describing how the meal of Steamboat serves to inculcate manners in individuals; surely a better social phenomenon can be found?).
- People these days can be seen jostling for seats while boarding buses and trains, but the polite person does not - he drives (?!!).

- My sister in primary school often complains of how her classmates are heard to be using vulgarities all the time (such anecdotal evidence should always be AVOIDED as it does not make one's argument a credible one).

Examples used MUST be specific to YOUR SOCIETY as demanded by the question. Outlining facts from other localities (such as Japan or the Zulu language in South Africa) may be allowed, but it has to be in relation to a situation in YOUR SOCIETY, not a stand-alone example to prove your claim.

Candidates' responses also tended to simply describe the situation in their society, and state how it corresponds (or not) with the thesis advanced by Scruton, thus proving that Scruton's views are relevant (or not) to said society. Responses are unsophisticated with little depth.

Good responses (6 - 8 marks) -

Few and far between indeed. Good responses tended to be provocative, balanced, insightful and original.

Candidates are able to show through relevant examples, how a specific argument made by the author may be superficially true, but is in actuality inapplicable or fallacious. Even if they did agree with Scruton's thesis, it was not via plugging in Singaporean examples into the passage, but by a process of reasoning as well.

Instance of agreeing with author but with qualified reasoning:

"Singapore's society today is indeed placing greater emphasis on manners. This is evident in the numerous government campaigns for graciousness on public transport, as well as in the government's strict control on "unmannered" acts such as littering. Furthermore, Scruton's point on teaching our children for society certainly holds. Passing on good values to the next generation is a strong prevailing theme in Asian culture, and Singapore fully reflects this with compulsory moral education in Primary School. Rather than interpreting this as a reaction to a supposedly less mannered generation however, this emphasis can instead be viewed as a reinforcement of our culture and values..."

Instance of a provocative response in qualified disagreement with Scruton:

"However, it is difficult to argue that every member of society is uniformly rude at all times, or that Singaporeans do not value manners and interpersonal relations at all. Scruton argues that "the meal as a social occasion" has disappeared, citing this as an example of increased isolation amongst members of society. Singapore differs in that the meal is still an integral part of Singaporean society. In hawker centres for example, the default table shape used is round, encouraging a sense of community as families are seated round it. Singaporeans value good food, and it is common to see families enjoying a good meal together, even if it is not at home... The prevalence of fastfood joints, restaurants and coffeeshops all serve to show us that they serve as vital communal eating places where interpersonal relations are still forged over meals... the meal still has the function of bringing Singaporean families together."