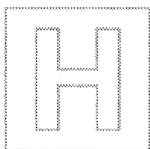


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DUNMAN HIGH SCHOOL  
General Certificate of Education Advanced Level  
Higher 1

## YEAR 6 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

### GENERAL PAPER

**8807/02**

Paper 2

**2 September 2019**

INSERT

**1 hour 30 minutes**

### READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Insert contains the passage for Paper 2.



This document consists of **3** printed pages and **1** blank page.

**[Turn over**

*Bernie Greenwood urges us to reconsider our beliefs and actions in order to save the Earth.*

- 1 Those who doubt that human activities have the ability to change the Earth's climate should look to the melting Arctic, and shiver. There is no need to pore over records of Earth's temperatures and atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations. The process is starkly visible in the shrinkage of the ice that covers the Arctic Ocean. In the past 30 years, the volume of ice present in the summer has fallen by three quarters. At this rate of change, the Arctic Ocean will be largely ice-free in summer by 2040. To avert such a catastrophe, we would have to limit the increase in the global average temperature, ideally, to 1.5°C – a mammoth task, to say the least. Current efforts to meet this goal will likely be futile: not only are some key players still unconcerned, policy reforms have been too conservative and are being implemented at a glacial pace. 5 10
- 2 Some evolutionary psychologists have offered the sobering view that humans could be hardwired to lose the fight against climate change. The same instincts that once helped us survive by helping us to focus only on what was most essential to our immediate well-being are working against us today. Viewed through the lenses of survival, our current propensity to hoard and exploit the Earth's riches for ourselves seems much more rational than rationing them for the benefit of our distant descendants. This is compounded by the famous 'bystander effect', which also arises out of a survival instinct: we tend to believe that someone else will deal with a crisis because in the past, if every single member of the group were to spring into action to deal with a threat, they would all be put in danger. It was better to wait for a leader to step up to save the tribe. Today, however, this instinct leads us to assume that our leaders must be doing something about the climate crisis. They are not, and we cannot afford to wait. 15 20
- 3 Crucially, for us to stand any chance of avoiding a climate catastrophe, we must thoroughly reconsider our understanding of what it means to progress. People today tend to measure progress exclusively in materialistic terms. This vision of 'progress' is almost unthinkingly accepted, seemingly immune to criticism, and promulgated with great fervour – it is the religion of the modern world. Championing alternative visions of progress would be tantamount to political suicide: continual economic growth is assumed to lead to better standards of living, and is thus often the yardstick by which political parties seeking power are measured. Woe betide any party that dares suggest that we step away from our fixation with perpetual economic growth. No sooner have they uttered such audacious words than they are instantly dismissed as naïve tree-huggers, ignorant to the 'reality' of the situation. 25 30
- 4 The reality, however, is that the endless impulse for growth and wealth creation has led to an unhampered rise in resource use, pollution, and waste and ineluctably drives climate change. Pursuing this narrow goal will only lead human existence down the path of annihilation. It leads to lacerating the Earth, gouging out its riches, and poisoning its pure air and waters. Those in power aggressively promote industries which boost the economy, no matter how much they contaminate the environment. Decision-makers trade lush forests for concrete jungles without any qualms. They devise ways to keep businesses functioning round the clock, ignoring the drain on resources which goes into keeping everything and everyone working 24/7. In an era where making money matters above all else, businesses are only concerned with getting people to spend more, so the idea of designing products and packaging for maximum reuse, repair and refurbishment is anachronistic. All our items end up in an ever-growing heap in a landfill or in an incinerator. Alarming, many countries are so overwhelmed by their own waste that they export it to poorer countries. And bizarrely, some claim that it is only through these poor countries' participation in the global waste trade that they can lift themselves out of their impoverished state, regardless of the environmental impact! 35 40 45
- 5 Wealth generation requires the relentless consumption of fossil fuels and fuels even more consumption. As a society, we are becoming increasingly preoccupied with the acquisition of consumer goods and the accumulation of luxury experiences because we see these as markers of social status. This is, arguably, exacerbated by the pressure many feel to make the highlight reel of their lives on social media as envy-inducing as possible. Much of 50

- whatever it is that makes our social media feeds look good are terrible for the planet. Think of the outfits-of-the-day that must never be repeated – even innocuous items such as clothing have pernicious implications. Think of the ‘influencers’ who receive package after package of products to promote – where do the items end up when the reviews are over? Think of the regular trips to far-flung corners of the world, and how everyone races to be the first to ‘discover’ a pristine beach untouched by mass tourism, leaving a trail of trash in their wake. Global tourism has expanded so rapidly that it now accounts for eight per cent of greenhouse gas emissions. But would you be willing to give up your annual holiday just to save the planet? 55 60
- 6 A common refrain we hear nowadays is that green consumerism will allow us to reconcile perpetual growth and planetary survival. But studies have found that higher incomes invariably correlate with higher carbon footprints, regardless of how environmentally-conscious individuals profess to be. Those who see themselves as ‘green consumers’ are typically richer, and mainly focus on ‘eco-friendly’ behaviours that have relatively small benefits, while ignoring – or worse, using these to justify – their other indulgences. They might eschew plastic and tote reusable cups, but if animal-based proteins and trips to faraway locales are staples in their diet and their calendars, all their recycling efforts would have gone to waste. In making us feel less guilt, green consumerism may actually end up making us even more culpable of ravaging our planet. 65 70
- 7 Optimists may argue that technological advances offer a glimmer of hope in the fight against climate change. There is now a seemingly endless catalogue of technologies being developed which seek to ensure a dignified and secure future for each and every one of us on Earth without destroying it: renewable energy sources, advanced recycling systems, negative emission technologies which remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere... Unfortunately, some of these technologies are just as likely as their environmentally hostile predecessors to throw up unanticipated problems and regrettable side effects. Technical solutions are not the proverbial silver lining. Halving the exhaust pollution from one car is great, but not if the number of cars on our roads doubles! Only a combination of new technologies and changing values can offer any serious hope for the future of our Earth. 75 80
- 8 That we must consume less is no epiphany. In fact, the environmental movement of the 1970s sagely exhorted us to ‘Reduce, Reuse, Recycle’. The purposefully sequenced slogan made it clear which action would be the most pivotal in tackling our environmental problems. Yet almost half a century later, it is evident that we have got things backwards. How long more, and what will it take, for us to finally warm up to the idea that when it comes to the environment, wanting less is truly more? 85

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***Acknowledgements:***

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