

**2022 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION
GENERAL PAPER
Paper 2 Suggested Answers**

1. Suggest two reasons why the author uses ‘you’ in the first paragraph. [2]

From the passage	Suggested rephrase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>You</u> see them in most age-care facilities, seated on pastel-coloured lounges, being babysat by a TV they are mostly not watching (l.1–2) Seeing them like this, it is hard to remember they were once young, vital and independent. What is harder is thinking that it might one day be <u>you</u> (l.3–5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The author wants to show that the sad state to which the elderly have been reduced to is a common sight that the reader has seen/ encountered to draw the reader’s attention to the plight of the elderly. [1] The author also wants to make the reader consider/ face the possibility that the reader may eventually become frail/ weak/ reliant/ non-functioning. [1]

2. According to the author, what are the effects of the ‘dehumanising’ (line 9) that occurs in the treatment of the elderly? Use your own words as far as possible. [2]

From the passage	Suggested rephrase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reducing someone to a letter of the alphabet is just one effect of the unconscious dehumanising that happens often in the treatment of the elderly. (l.7–10) Some older people take extreme measures to avoid this kind of lingering scenario: joining Exit International or taking steps to enable them to end their lives at a time of their choosing. (l.10–12) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The elderly are regarded as worthless/ useless/ insignificant/ devalued as human beings [1] and in order not to meet the same fate, some elderly people opt to commit suicide/ take drastic steps to kill themselves. [1]

3. Explain what is paradoxical about the children's feelings 'when their parents go into aged care' (line 13). Use your own words as far as possible. [2]

From the passage	Suggested rephrase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guilt and shame – often tempered with unspoken relief – colour many children's lives when their parents go into aged care. (l.12–13) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While the children feel bad/ embarrassed about sending their parents to aged care/ for not personally taking care of their parents, [1] it is paradoxical that they also feel less distressed about caring for their parents/ glad that the burden/ difficulty of caring for their parents is reduced. [1] <p><i>Answers must show the tension between guilt and shame and relief.</i></p>

4. From paragraph 8, give three reasons why the author is optimistic that ageism can be effectively tackled. Use your own words as far as possible. [3]

From the passage	Suggested rephrase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Because younger people have grown up in a more mixed world, they know diversity is here to stay (l.56–57) ... the #MeToo movement has also helped. It has been a catalyst for universal equality. In that sense, activism feeds activism". (l.59–60) Even Hollywood is getting better; we are seeing more active and positive portrayals of older people. (l.60–61) The workplace is where ageism awareness is definitely on the rise. (l.63–64) While there are genuine challenges to mixed-age workforces to do with retraining and seniority, all the research shows that they are the most effective (l.64–66) 	<p>The author is optimistic because</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [A] as young people are more accustomed/ used to/ more accepting of differences, they will be less likely to discriminate against the elderly. [1] [B] Movements against other forms of discrimination/ that support fair treatment for all have resulted in/ pushed the campaign/ crusade against ageism/ discrimination of the elderly. [1] [C] The movie industry is stepping up efforts to depict the elderly in a respectful/ good light/ as able individuals. [D] People are now more conscious/ mindful of ageism in the workplace. [1] [E] Workplaces show the greatest productivity/ are most efficient/ optimal/ function best when older and younger employees work together. [1] <p><i>(Any 3 points)</i></p>

5. In paragraph 9, what are three proposals the author makes to counter the 'long-term unconscious bias' (line 68–69) towards the elderly? Use your own words as far as possible. [3]

From the passage	Suggested rephrase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each time we see an older person, we need to imagine them as our future self (l.71–72) rather than recoil from their wrinkles or infirmities (l.72) applaud their resilience (l.72–73) We need to re-humanise older people (l.73) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [A] We should treat the elderly in the same way that we wish to be treated when we become old/ we need to realise that we will eventually become like the elderly/ age. [1] [B] Instead of being disgusted/ horrified by the ageing physical features/ frailties/ weaknesses of the elderly, [1] [C] we should commend/ celebrate/ their tenacity/ grit/ perseverance/ fortitude/ determination/. [1] [D] We should also treat the elderly in a more kindly/ humane/ civilised fashion. [1] <p>(Any 3 points)</p>

6. In the final paragraph, what suggestions does the author give for how people can fight ageism? Use your own words as far as possible. [3]

From the passage	Suggested rephrase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need to recognise ageism in ourselves and (l.74) come together with others to effect social change... to reject age shame (l.74–76) We need to enlist young people in this battle too. (l.76–77) 	<p>To fight ageism,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [A] people should acknowledge their own ageist attitudes [1] and [B] work with/ unite with others to resist/ fight against ageist attitudes/ behaviour. [1] [C] We can also rally young people to advocate/ campaign/ fight against/ oppose discriminatory attitudes/ behaviour against the elderly. [1]

7. Suggest two reasons why the author ends the passage with the final sentence. [2]

From the passage	Suggested rephrase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They are the ones who are going to create and live in the culture of the future. (l.77–78) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The final sentence reiterates the author's argument of the need to change/ improve society to eliminate ageist attitudes. [1] OR The final sentence reiterates the need to forge a better society/ re-direct/ change the ethos of society to treat the elderly with respect. [1] The author wants to issue a call for action to the young to forge a future which eliminates ageist attitudes/ behaviour. The final sentence brings the reader back to the first paragraph where the reader is asked to envision the future where he may suffer the indignity of old age/ one day become old and infirm. [1] The final sentence allows the reader to envisage a more optimistic/ hopeful future where the elderly are not discriminated against. [1] <p><i>(Any 2 points; accept any sensible reason)</i></p>

8. Using material from paragraphs 3–5 (lines 16–40), summarise what the author has to say about why the elderly are not well-taken care of.

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. [8]

The elderly are not well-taken care of because ...

From the passage		Suggested rephrase
• we put them in conditions that leave many of them bored (l.16–17)	A1	• we place them in unstimulating environments/ environments that cause them to become jaded/ uninterested,
• lonely (l.17)	A2	• isolated/ alienated/ alone and
• poorly fed (l.17)	A3	• under-nourished.
• One underlying cause could be deeply entrenched ageism (l.18)	A4	• Strongly held/ Long-held discriminatory beliefs/ attitudes against the elderly
• the language we use (l.19) ... we diminish our regard for the senior members of our society verbally (l.20–21)	A5	• cause people to speak to/ about the elderly disparagingly/ disrespectfully.
• we frame policy – removing their dignity and (l.22)	A6	• We implement policies which take away the self-respect/ self-esteem and
• sense of agency (l.22–23)	A7	• independence/ control/ individuality/ freedom of the elderly.
• ‘ <i>The</i> ’ implies a homogenous group when nothing could be further from the case. (l.20)	A8	• We think that the elderly are all the same/ we do not see the elderly as individuals.
• condescending generalisations (l.23)	A9	• These disrespectful labels/ stereotypes of the elderly
• that assume vulnerability (l.23)	A10	• focus on their helplessness/ defencelessness
• and dependence (l.23)	A11	• and reliance on others/ neediness,
• instead of resilience (l. 24)	A12	• rather than their grit/ tenacity/ perseverance/ ability to bounce back from setbacks
• and independence (l.24)	A13	• and their self-reliance/ self-sufficiency/ agency.
• ...but with ageism, we have internalised it . (l.24–25)	A14	• We have accepted/ acknowledged ageism/ made ageism part of our mindset.
• One of the reasons ageism is so embedded in our culture (l.27)	B1	• Ageism is firmly entrenched/ ingrained in our way of life/ lifestyles/ social norms
• and hard to eradicate (l. 27)	B2	• and is difficult to eliminate/ completely do away with

From the passage		Suggested rephrase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> may be because it expresses ... deep-seated fear (l.28) 	B3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> as it reflects/ is a manifestation of the deep-rooted/ profound/ entrenched fear
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> decades of accumulated (l.28) 	B4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> built up over the years/ time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumerism urges us all to 'fight' ageing as if it were a battle we could win (l.28–29) 	B5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are pressured/ forced/ pushed/ encouraged to resist looking/ growing old
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> even though we know in our hearts that is a lie. (l.29–30) 	B6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> despite being unable to do so/ even though growing old is inescapable/ inevitable/ unpreventable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mantras ... emphasise the need to be vigorous and vital for as long as possible, (l.30–31) 	B7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Society also stresses the importance of being energetic/ dynamic/ vibrant/ active,
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> yet offer no alternative scenarios for those with degenerative diseases, loss of cognition or suffering from loneliness. (l.31–32) 	B8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and does not make provision for the elderly with old age/ age-related problems/ illnesses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> where well-groomed residents play bridge and endless rounds of golf with new chums. But we want those who cannot afford it parked out of sight. (l. 34–35) 	B9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The elderly poor are marginalised/ not accepted/ rejected/ disregarded by society/ excluded from community life/ ignored/ brushed aside.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We further disassociate ourselves from their needs, (l.38–39) 	C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We distance ourselves from providing for the elderly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> delegating their fate to aged care workers and nursing homes (l.39) 	C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and leave them in the care of others/ third parties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We reset our expectations of what constitutes meaningful living (l.36) 	C3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We lower our standards of what a fulfilling existence is made up of and
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> satisfied with the thought that their basic needs for safety and personal hygiene are being met (l.36–37) 	C4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reassure/ convince ourselves it is sufficient/ enough/ all right to provide the elderly with the bare minimum/ the essentials // to not cater to their higher-order needs/ intangible needs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We try not to think too long or hard about how they spend their days. (l. 37–38) 	C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We avoid acknowledging that they are leading unfulfilling lives/ a lesser life.

(28 points)

Mark scheme

1 point	1 mark	5–6 points	4 marks	11–12 points	7 marks
2 points	2 marks	7–8 points	5 marks	≥ 13 points	8 marks
3–4 points	3 marks	9–10 points	6 marks		

- 9. Caroline Baum makes significant criticisms of how society regards old age and the elderly. How far do you agree or disagree with the author's observations, relating your arguments to your own experience and that of your society? [10]**

QUESTION ANALYSIS AND SUGGESTED APPROACH

Makes significant criticisms of how society regards old age and the elderly

- These criticisms include failure on the part of the government, businesses, the general public and families alike to meet the various needs (i.e., physical, social, emotional, mental) of the elderly. This also extends to the various stakeholders in society regarding old age and the elderly poorly, neglecting their interests and discriminating against them.

How far do you agree or disagree with the author's observations

- Students should clearly state the degree of agreement, using appropriate qualifiers.
- Students should identify the author's observations and the reasons she gives for her views.

relating your arguments to your own experiences and that of your society

- The society must be identified at the start of the answer.
- All aspects of the AQ answer must relate to the society identified.
- The answer must be contextualised in the society identified, right from the start.
- Residents of the society identified should NOT be referred to vaguely as 'people'; instead, specific nationalities such as 'Singaporeans', 'Malaysians', 'Chinese' (or other relevant nationalities) should be used throughout the answer.
- Answers should not vaguely describe what is happening in the society identified. Instead, answers should offer:
 - clear reasons and evaluation to support *how far the student agrees or disagrees* with the author's opinions in relation to that society.
 - some consideration/ evaluation on the causes that motivate people to think about old age in a certain way and care for/not care for the elderly, etc.
 - reasons why the situation in that society may have changed/ intensified/ abated in recent times: people's changing mindsets/ revisions in legislations, etc.

SUGGESTED APPROACH

R: The extent to which you agree with the author's observations as they pertain to your own experiences and that of your society.

OB1–5: Observations made by the author pertaining to how society regards old age and the elderly (with relevant quotes from the passage). The chosen observations should be clearly stated with paragraph/ line reference at the start of each body paragraph.

EX, EV: Explaining, developing and evaluating arguments with reference to yourself and your own society, making the link clear to OB and R.

EG: Supporting ideas with relevant examples from the society identified, and making the link from the examples to OB, EX, EV and R.

INTRODUCTION

- In Singapore, the proportion of individuals aged 65 years and above will increase to about 23.8 per cent in 2030 as Singapore joins the ranks of other super-aged societies like Japan and Italy.
- An ageing population exerts a strain on society, and this has led to some Singaporeans harbouring ageist mindsets and discriminating against the elderly.
- However, by and large, our unwavering faith in upholding traditionally Asian values such as filial piety and communitarianism have continued to ensure that most Singaporeans are respectful towards the elderly and are stepping up to take care of them through various means outlined in the country's 'Many Helping Hands' approach. Therefore, I am more inclined to disagree with Baum's criticisms of how society regards old age and the elderly as her views are not very representative of the vast majority of Singaporeans.

OBSERVATION 1

Baum claims that ageism 'often begins with the language we use' (line 19), especially when we 'diminish our regard for senior members of our society verbally' (line 21).

OBSERVATION 2

Another criticism that Baum makes is on the way policy is framed. Instead of fostering 'resilience and independence' (line 24), she believes that policies assume that the elderly are 'vulnerable' (line 23).

OBSERVATION 3

Baum is critical of our society which urges us all to 'fight' ageing (line 29) and be 'vigorous and vital' (line 31) while not offering 'alternative scenarios' (line 31) for the elderly suffering from 'degenerative diseases, loss of cognition or suffering from loneliness' (lines 32).

OBSERVATION 4

One of the significant criticisms that Baum puts forth is that people further 'disassociate themselves' (line 38) from the needs of the elderly, 'delegating their fate to aged care workers and nursing homes' (lines 39).

OBSERVATION 5

Baum is critical of how we 'reset our expectations of what constitutes meaningful living' (line 36) and comfort ourselves with the thought that the elderly's basic needs for safety and personal hygiene are being met.

CONCLUSION

- In conclusion, even though there are instances where ageism may seem to be prevalent in Singapore, the majority of the population, across all levels, care about the elderly in many different ways and treat them with respect. Moreover, given that the government has put in place so many measures to ensure that senior Singaporeans remain active and healthy for as long as they live, Baum's criticisms of society's poor regard for old age and the elderly would be unfair in the light of my society, Singapore. Therefore, I would mostly disagree with Baum as her views are largely not representative of Singapore.