

2022 HCI C2 GP Preliminary Examination
Paper 2 Suggested Answers (26 Sep 2022)

Passage 1

1. In paragraph 1, in what two ways is the reference to Helen of Troy a revealing example of attractiveness as a "weapon of mass destruction"? Use your own words as far as possible. [2]

Passage	Answer [Any 2 for 1m each]
a. In films, the <i>femme fatale</i> character whose charms ensnare her lovers finds her predecessor in the literary figure of Helen of Troy.	a. Helen's suitors <u>were entrapped / lured / fatally fascinated</u> by her beauty Note: must have negative connotation word choice to be credited
b. Famously referred to as "the face that launched a thousand ships" in Homer's <i>Iliad</i> , Helen was so beguiling that a <u>competition to win her hand</u> resulted in the Trojan War. Is it not evident then that attractiveness could be a <u>weapon of mass destruction</u> ?	b. They were willing to <u>engage in combat / conflict / go into battle / attack others / wage war (allow lift of war) to edge out their rivals in love / be awarded the fair maiden</u> c. <u>Inferred</u> : Beautiful women could lead to <u>many lives lost / widespread devastation</u> (BOD)

2. Why does the author argue "for positions of authority, it can pay to be plain" (Lines 13-14)? Use your own words as far as possible. [3]

Passage	Answer [Any 3 out of 4 pts for 1m each]
a. Today, those with symmetrical features and striking figures are likewise elevated into more knowledgeable collaborators than they truly are.	Plain people in positions of authority a. <u>face fewer unrealistic expectations</u> of their abilities [which leads to greater disappointment should they not succeed]
b. Yet at performance assessments, envy related hostility holds both genders back	b. <u>would not be at the receiving end of jealousy</u> [due to their appearance].
c. The achievements of comely feminine associates are condescendingly dismissed and	In addition, they will be unlikely to experience the following: c. when the attractive [females] succeed, <u>their accomplishments are scorned / mocked / patronised / sneered at disdainfully / derisively</u>
d. scathing doubt cast on the abilities of that office beeecake	and d. <u>scepticism is placed / levied on the capabilities of visually attractive [male] workers</u>

3. Suggest why the author uses the word "transfigure" in line 17. [1]

Passage	Answer [1m]
To be crowned the fairest of them all, women <u>bled</u> themselves and men <u>applied white-lead potions</u> , to transfigure even the <u>sallowest of skins</u>	The writer wants to highlight <u>the lengths / extent of the extreme measures</u> that men and women are prepared to take to <u>achieve beauty</u> OR that they are <u>willing to drastically/radically alter / change/ transform</u> themselves to gain a fair complexion / achieve beauty. Note: the extent / degree of change needs to be captured in the answer.

4. What does the author claim are the consequences of the "beauty bias" (line 21) on contemporary society? Use your own words as far as possible. [2]

Passage	Answer [1m each]
In more contemporary times, good looks are correlated with robust constitutions, resulting in illnesses being taken far less seriously when they afflict the attractive.	a. For more attractive patients, <u>their complaints about their health conditions are more likely to be taken lightly seen as trifling / slight easily set aside / shelved / written off lightly / thought little of / did not get the attention they deserved</u> [due to their physical attractiveness] [1] GLOSS: The medical care/needs of the attractive is/are compromised.
Even in supposedly incorruptible courts, there are also reports of our beauty bias affecting legal judgements with more severe fines levied on the less attractive	b. Our <u>institutions [accept courts as a lift] are discriminatory/ prejudiced in their treatment of the physically unattractive</u> [1] GLOSS: Our institutions are not consistent / not fair in their sentencing of the less attractive.

5. In paragraph 4, how do people demonstrate that they are "intimidated" by beauty (line 23)? Use your own words as far as possible. [2]

Passage	Answer [1m each]
People are intimidated by exquisite women and <u>will give a wide berth</u> to the virile males they encounter.	a. They <u>avoid interactions / engagement / developing connections</u> with those who are too beautiful / visually perfect
Little wonder online dating sites like OKCupid report that people with flawless profile pictures are less likely to find matches than those with quirker ones. <u>Who would have the audacity to invite</u> Lisa of South Korean girl group Blackpink, crowned the world's Most Beautiful Face in 2022 or YouTube star PewDiePie, voted the globe's Most Handsome Face of 2020, <u>out for a date</u> ?	b. Nobody <u>would have the temerity / boldness/ dares to get to know the attractive better for the purpose of romance</u>

6. In paragraph 5, what distinction does the author make between the attitudes of the public and his own in terms of their perceptions of beauty? [2]

Passage	Answer [2m or 0]
For those born under the Beauty star, the bubble of beauty is the proverbial albatross round their necks. Believed to have an unflagging audience of admirers worshipping at their feet, how could these Gods and Goddesses of the Body ever be adrift or alone? In their temples, surely they are above the manifold troubles the run-of-the-mill wrestle with? This elevation of beauty to the level of godliness has been encouraged by the influence of social media and its curation of perfect images, making the beautiful, easy targets for derision. How dare they complain when Fortune has smiled on them? Adding insult to injury, such stereotyping of the beautiful subjects them to undue mental stress and anxiety.	a. The value of beauty: The author thinks beauty is a burden / weight / load / encumbrance but the public views it as a blessing / gift / reward from the gods b. The effect of beauty : The author makes the point that beauty isolates / cuts off the beautiful from others but the public thinks the beautiful are popular BOD / esteemed / highly approved of / adulated OR they can never be without friends/ company as they are surrounded by admirers / followers / supporters Note: Any one set correctly identified and contrasted explanation of a distinction for [2]

7. How does the author support his earlier assertion in paragraph 1 that "there are downsides to being drop dead gorgeous" in the last paragraph? Use your own words as far as possible. [2]

Passage	Answer [Any one set for maximum of 2]
... with the <u>modern-day femme fatale</u> an ... archetype	1a. The author <u>repeats / refers back to the femme fatale idea</u> used in paragraph 1 and 1b. points out being <u>beautiful is seen as evil</u> by <u>alluding to the evil seductress</u> idea.
Recently, Yahoo CEO <u>Marissa Mayer</u> was widely panned for flaunting her looks in a Vogue editorial <u>instead of celebrated for her corporate achievements</u> . If even an accomplished tech-Titan like Mayer could be <u>disparaged as a "career-obsessed Barbie"</u> ...	2a. The author <u>raises the example of Marisa Mayer</u> who was criticised for showing off that she was beautiful [for a fashion magazine/Vogue] 2b. though she has been a leading /entrepreneur /successful leader, <u>beauty can still create undue expectations / be prejudicial</u> , that being beautiful means one cannot be competent (for females)

Passage 2

8. Why does the author feel it is "unsurprising" that the panda has benefitted from the "radical single species conservation line" [1]

Passage	Answer [1m]
Charismatic megafauna like the <u>cute and cuddly</u> panda ... from this campaign	Pandas are animals that are <u>magnetic / captivating / appealing</u> in looks OR look good in snapshots / photogenic so <u>people feel more compelled/ to save them / their species</u> . GLOSS: They attract attention with their good looks so people want to save them more than other species.

9. Using material from paragraphs 2 to 5, summarise the benefits that the author believes attractiveness confers. 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]

From a young age, those who are more attractive ...

Message	Answer
Paragraph 2	
1. Attractive children <u>are venerated like royalty</u> ;	1. are revered / paid homage to / honoured
2. with mothers and fathers <u>showering affection</u> on these cherubs	2. Parents lavish/ heap (BOD) love / warmth / care / devotion / adoration on them
3. <u>Cosseted and pampered</u> with all the <u>trappings necessary</u> to complement their attractiveness,	3. they are indulged / spoilt / coddled / pandered to / with clothing / accessories OR anything they need BOD/ [that act as a foil to / match / supplements / their beauty]
4. an <u>encouraging</u> environment <u>envelops</u> such children	4. positivity is engendered/ generated even from
5. Even the <u>acknowledgement</u> from passers-by who coo and fawn over these endearing cherubs, <u>contributes to their emotional growth</u> .	5. the attention / notice / awareness from others of strangers / anyone they meet
Paragraph 3	
6. In <u>school</u> , teachers too <u>accord the appealing</u> child <u>special treatment</u> , judging him as more likely to succeed.	6. The fetching / pretty / handsome / attractive pupil is favoured / is discriminated positively .
7. As expected, the <u>fine-looking</u> young man is <u>subsequently selected for key leadership positions</u> and	7. chosen / hand-picked for important/ main/ major roles NOTE: leadership not needed
8. <u>offered the coaching to succeed</u> .	8. and the training / guidance / mentoring / preparation [to achieve]
9. <u>preferential investment of resources</u> - which psychologists term the halo effect-	9. These special / partisan / extra/ additional provision of materials / time and effort (BOD)
10. <u>allow him to manifest the affirmative traits</u> ascribed to him, later on in life.	10. enable the demonstration / exhibition/ display of these (no need affirmative) behaviour / characteristics and he will
11. He can then <u>blossom into a poised adult</u>	11. flourish / thrive / develop into an assured / confident / secure [person / grown-up]
12. which will <u>lead to a lifetime of bliss</u>	12. and be happy / have contentment forever (Note: KEY IDEA FOR lifetime needed)
Paragraph 4	
Particularly pleasing is the way attractive adults have 13. <u>leveraged their good looks to reap multiple benefits for society</u> .	13. some have used [the weight of / the force of / the pull of] their attractiveness to do good / be altruistic / engage in philanthropy
14. <u>Good looks have helped entrepreneurs</u> such as Elon Musk – once voted the sexiest CEO alive- <u>secure investors with very little trouble</u>	14. [in the business world] some have used their attractiveness to get capital / funding for their start-ups / enterprises easily / effortlessly / without problems / difficulty GLOSS: kick-start entrepreneurship with ease
15. Trailblazers like svelte actress Emma Watson, have unapologetically <u>capitalised on their looks to turn the spotlight on issues most people would have sidelined</u> .	15. while others highlight / pinpoint / emphasize / underscore / draw attention to topics/ matters that are generally seen as / deemed unimportant / unheeded / overlooked / ignored GLOSS: raised awareness of concerns generally disregarded
16. More ordinary looking <u>social activists</u> could never have had this ability to command attention and even if they did, they <u>would have taken a lot more time</u>	16. though they used less time / effort Note: TIME allowed as a lift
Paragraph 5	
Beautiful people also 17. <u>have higher success rates in procreation</u> because striking looks are believed to be indicative of a person's quality as a mate, especially pertaining to reproductive fitness.	17. The attractive are more likely to / can find partners more easily
18. Those who are attractive can afford to <u>diminish their efforts at fostering relationships</u> , yet <u>have a continued chance at forming influential connections</u>	18. Despite putting in less time / endeavour, they can still be in / be part of powerful circles / alliances [of influence] NOTE: need both points, TIME allowed as lift

19. The time saved means that they are better able to <u>invest</u> in themselves.	19. they can endow / put in /devote more effort (to improve) themselves
which 20. <u>results in greater esteem</u> and	20. which leads to higher regard / respect / appreciation / better opinion of themselves / self-worth
21. <u>reduced psychological issues</u>	21. fewer mental/ emotional problems

Points & [Marks]	1-2 [1]	3-4 [2]	5-6 [3]	7-8 [4]	9-10 [5]	11-12 [6]	13-14 [7]	15+ [8]
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10. Why does the author end with a focus on the panda in the final paragraph? [2]

Answer [Any 2 points for 1m each]
The author is using the focus on the panda
a. to <u>turn full circle</u> to a reference / example [of the panda] he started off with / which <u>acts as a frame</u> in the conclusion to support the example of the panda he started off with
b. to <u>act as a contrast</u> to the Yangtze river dolphin which became extinct as it was ugly/ lacking in attractiveness / visually repugnant
c. to <u>reinforce his point</u> that when we <u>put emphasis</u> on attractiveness (as in the case of the panda), it can be useful / helpful to <u>highlight important issues</u> that are overlooked and/ bring about desired change

Question on both passages

11. David Robson argues there are downsides to attractiveness while Kathy Buccio extols the benefits of attractiveness. How far do you agree or disagree with the views expressed in the two passages? Illustrate your answer with examples of how you and your society regard attractiveness. [10]

There are adequate opportunities for students to be in agreement with either writer and to different extents, but both passages should be examined and balance attempted. There will be interpretations/responses that range from the sophisticated to merely valid. Markers should award credit where possible.

Good answers will:

- Evaluate how far there is agreement possible with the writers' claims. Students can consider the logic/credibility of the case/issue.
- Consider whether the situations in Singapore or the students' home countries reflect the perspectives presented by the writers. Students' responses to these will guide them to decide the extent to which they agree with the writers.

A very good answer will demonstrate a nuanced appreciation of the writer's arguments. Promising responses will make an intelligent selection of points and use effective transitional phrases to connect arguments.

Very good answers will:

- Elucidate why the student is not (entirely) in agreement/disagreement with either writer. It should be demonstrated how factors such as prevailing societal beliefs, the cultural environment, possible future trends, and so forth, make a particular writer's arguments not (completely) tenable.
- Recognise limitations of either writer's point of view.

Given time constraints, students will not handle every expectation or angle (well) and must not be unfairly penalised. If they have presented an adequate answer, credit must be given.