

Candidate's Name

CTG

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YISHUN JUNIOR COLLEGE JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2015

H1 GENERAL PAPER PAPER 2

8807/02
14 August 2015
1030h-1200h

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TIME 1 hour 30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Write your name and CTG in the spaces at the top of this page.

Answer **all** the questions.

At the end of the examination, fasten the cover page, passages and all your work securely together.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question.

(Note that 15 marks out of 50 will be awarded for your use of language.)

Question	1 1m	2 2m	3 2m	4 2m	5 3m	6 1m	7 2m	8 2m	9 2m	10 8m	11 10m
Marks											

FOR EXAMINER'S USE	
Content	/35
Language	/15
Total	/50

This question paper consists of **9** printed pages including this page.

[Turn over]

David Robson examines the issue of boredom and its effects.

- 1 Sandi Mann is one of the few psychologists to have forayed into the mind-numbing territory—of boredom. Mann wants to understand the profound effect that boredom may have on our lives. “It’s the Cinderella of psychology,” she says. After all, admitting that you study boredom might itself sound a bit, well, boring – but that is far from the truth. Boredom, it turns out, can be a dangerous and disruptive state of mind that damages your health – and even cuts years off your lifespan. If that sounds negative, Mann’s research would also suggest that without boredom we couldn’t achieve our creative feats. 5
- 2 Boredom is such a large part of day-to-day existence that it is somewhat surprising the word only entered the language with Charles Dickens’s *Bleak House* in 1852. Dickens’s study of Lady Deadlock’s suffering – she is “bored to death” by her marriage – would end up pre-empting many of the latest findings. Perhaps because of its prevalence in our lives, scientists had been slow to explore the sensation. “When you are swimming in something, maybe you don’t think of it as being noteworthy,” says John Eastwood at York University in Canada, who was one of the first scholars to take an interest. 10
- 3 One of the most common misconceptions is that “only boring people get bored”. Yet as Eastwood set about exploring the reasons for boredom, he found that there are two distinct types of personality that tend to suffer from ennui, and neither are particularly dull themselves. Boredom often goes with a naturally impulsive mindset among people who are constantly looking for new experiences. For these people, the steady path of life just isn’t enough of a rollercoaster to hold their attention. “The world is chronically under-stimulating,” says Eastwood. The second kind of bored people have almost exactly the opposite problem; the world is a fearful place, and so they shut themselves away and try not to step outside their comfort zone. “Out of their high-sensitivity to pain, they withdraw.” While this retreat might offer some comfort, they are not always satisfied with the safety it offers – and chronic boredom results. 15 20 25
- 4 Almost from the very beginning, it became clear that either of these states could push people to harm themselves; a proneness to boredom was linked to a tendency to smoke, drink too much, and take drugs. Indeed, in one study boredom was the single biggest predictor of alcohol, cigarette and cannabis use among a group of South African teenagers.
- 5 Boredom is also linked to more mundane but equally unhealthy behaviours, such as comfort-eating your way through tedium. “Boredom at work is propping up the confectionary industry,” says Mann, who is based at the University of Central Lancashire, UK. The overall effect of boredom on your life expectancy could be drastic, too. When researchers in the famous Whitehall study followed the lives of middle-aged civil servants in the UK, they found that the people who are most likely to get bored were 30% more likely to have died over the next three years. 30 35
- 6 That is something of a puzzle for evolutionary psychologists. Emotions should evolve for our benefit – not to push us to self-destruction. “The very fact that boredom is a daily experience suggests it should be doing something useful,” says Heather Lench at Texas A&M University. Feelings like fear help us avoid danger, after all, while sadness might help prevent future mistakes. So, if true, what does boredom achieve? 40
- 7 Reviewing the evidence so far, Lench suspects that it lies behind one of our most important traits – curiosity. Boredom, she says, stops us ploughing the same old furrow, and pushes us to try to seek new goals or explore new territories or ideas. That search for an escape

- could sometimes push us to take risks that eventually hurt us. One research team simply left subjects by themselves in a room for 15 minutes with a button that allowed them to give themselves an electric shock on the ankle; many did indeed elect to give themselves the brief buzz of pain, seemingly because it was the only way to break up the tedium. Perhaps the same search for an escape explains why bored people turn to unhealthy behaviours – but the upside is that it can also increase innovation. 45 50
- 8 Mann has found that the ennui people feel when performing mindless tasks boosts their creativity – such as finding innovative uses for everyday objects. She suspects the tedium encouraged their minds to wander, which leads to more associative and creative ways of thinking. “If we don’t find stimulation externally, we look internally – going to different places in our minds,” she says. “It allows us to make leaps of imagination. We can get out of the box and think in different ways.” Without the capacity for boredom, then, we humans may have never achieved our artistic and technological heights. 55
- 9 Given this benefit, Mann thinks we should try not to fear boredom when it hits us. “We should embrace it,” she says – a philosophy that she has now taken into her own life. “Instead of saying I’m bored when I’m stuck in traffic, I’ll put music on and allow my mind to wander – knowing that it’s good for me. And I let my kids be bored too – because it’s good for their creativity.” 60
- 10 Eastwood is less enthusiastic about boredom’s benefits, but admits we should be cautious about looking for an immediate escape. “The feeling is so aversive that people rush to eliminate it,” he says. “I’m not going to join that war on boredom and come up with a cure, because we need to listen to the emotion and ask what it is trying to tell us to do.” For instance, simply looking for instant gratification on a smartphone or tablet may be counter-productive, he thinks. “We live in a tech-driven society where we are overly stimulated – we are constantly yanked around by interruptions,” says Eastwood. That puts us on a kind of treadmill, he says – we keep on expecting quicker and easier ways to revive our curiosity. “One possibility is that this actually makes people more bored.” 65 70
- 11 Instead, he suggests that it would be wiser to question whether there are more serious, long-term issues that are causing us to feel disengaged. His work, for instance, has shown that priming people to feel their lives have a greater purpose and meaning tends to make them less bored during subsequent tests. Although our feelings of tedium during a work meeting or family gathering might seem like superficial annoyances, they could be a symptom of a deeper existential crisis and need for fulfilment that extends far beyond immediate circumstances. 75
- 12 “To feel you can have an effect on the world and that things in life make sense, these are inherently important things for human beings – just like sunlight, fresh air and food,” says Eastwood. As we enter the New Year, that could be as good a reason as any to re-evaluate your life, what you are trying to achieve with it, and to rethink what you actually mean when you say you are bored. 80

Read the passage and then answer **all** the questions. Note that up to fifteen marks will be given for the quality and accuracy of your use of English throughout this Paper.

Note: When a question asks for an answer **IN YOUR OWN WORDS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE** and you select the appropriate material from the passage for your answer, you must still use your own words to express it. Little credit can be given to answers which only copy words or phrases from the passage.

1. What does the word “forayed” (line 1) imply about the research on boredom? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

[1]

2. Why does Sandi Mann call boredom “the Cinderella of psychology” in line 3?

[2]

3. Explain what the author means by ‘Dickens’s study of Lady Deadlock’s suffering – she is “bored to death” by her marriage – would end up pre-empting many of the latest findings’ (lines 9-11). **Use your own words as far as possible.**

[2]

4. According to Eastwood, why had scientists “been slow to explore the sensation” (line 12)? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

[2]

5. How do the two types of personality in paragraph 3 illustrate the misconception that “only boring people get bored” (line 15)? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

[3]

6. What does Mann think about how we should respond to boredom when it hits us (line 58)?

[1]

7. In paragraph 10, Eastwood claims that “we should be cautious about looking for an immediate escape”. How does the remainder of the paragraph illustrate his concern?

[2]

8. Explain the author’s use of ‘superficial’ (line 76) and ‘deeper’ (line 77) in paragraph 11. **Use your own words as far as possible.**

[2]

9. What, according to the author, is “as good a reason as any to re-evaluate your life” (lines 81-82)?

[2]

11. David Robson highlights a number of research findings on the effects of boredom and responses to it. How far would you agree with the findings, relating your arguments to your own society?

This image shows a full page of blank handwriting practice paper. It features multiple sets of horizontal lines. Each set consists of three lines: two solid black outer lines and one dashed purple middle line, providing a guide for letter height and placement. The lines are evenly spaced and run horizontally across the entire width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

[illegible]

[10]

END OF PAPER