

Prelims 2010: Proposed Questions and Answers

From Passage A

1. "Set free for the day, blinking and smiling with surprise at all this light and space, poor mole-people above ground at last" (lines 7–9). What does this imply about city life? Use your own words as far as possible. [2]

| Lifted Answer | Suggested Paraphrase |
|---|---|
| set free ... surprise at all this light and space, poor mole-people above ground at last (l.7-9) – to be inferred | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> City life appears to be stifling/ confining/ restrictive/ claustrophobic/ oppressive/ suffocating/ much like a prison/ confined cell/ overwhelming/ hectic and full of stress/ pressurizing/ people feel imprisoned/ shackled/ entrapped by the pressures of city life (1) <i>Hectic /harried (½); fast paced/ busy (0)</i> The city is overcrowded, overly congested/ densely populated/ too many people crammed/ packed/ trapped in a small space (1) City life also seems to grey/ dull/ dreary/ gloomy/ dreary/ depressing (1) - due to the poor living conditions/ dirt and grime/ pollution (<i>explanation optional</i>) <i>Monotonous/ boring (½); burdened/ unpleasant (0)</i> <p>Accept any 2 of the above answers.</p> |

- 2) In what way are cities "monstrous parasites" (line 17)? Use your own words as far as possible. [3]

| Lifted Answer | Suggested Paraphrase |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consuming the resources of regions vastly larger than themselves, giving very little back (l.17-18) though cities today occupy only 2% of the Earth's land surface, they consume more than 75% of its resources (l.18-20) giving very little back | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both parasites and cities are small in size (1) but just as parasites devour/ feed on their hosts voraciously despite their size, cities utilize a massive amount of resources from other bigger regions (1) <i>Lift: "consume/ consuming resources" (0)</i> Both also do this at the expense of the welfare of their hosts/ without benefiting their hosts (1) <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Just as the parasites deplete the nutrients of their hosts, weakening them, cities contribute to the depletion of resources and caused environmental damage to other regions <i>Cities contribute very little to environmental protection (0)</i> <p><i>If students do not make clear step by step comparisons between the qualities of parasites and cities, students will only get half of the total marks allocated for each part.</i></p> |

3) Paragraph 4

Explain, **in your own words as far as possible**, why “cities are a complete contradiction” (line 31) to the success of human evolution [2]

| Lifted Answer | Suggested Paraphrase |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hunting and gathering ancestors had the numbers about right, nomadic, never staying long enough in one place for pathogens to build up to potentially deadly levels (l.37-39) but cities... the breeding grounds of disease (l.39-40). Dangers of disease multiply when people are crowded together... squalor & unpleasant odours (l.33-34) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the past humans did not reside in one place long enough for diseases to spread, contributing to the success of human survival. (1) This is opposite to/ in conflict with the current congested, dirty living conditions in the city which are conducive to the spread of epidemics (1). <p><i>If only one set of conditions (past or present) is given & mentions that the other is the opposite/ contrasts with it is given, then answer = 1½ marks e.g.</i> The over-populated/ over-crowded/ congested and dirty conditions of the city which facilitate the easy transmission of potentially fatal diseases (1) seem to be in conflict with/ totally the opposite of the conditions that allowed humans to thrive in the past (½)</p> |

4) What is meant by the phrase “urban graveyard effect” (line 49)? Use your own words as far as possible. [1]

| Lifted Answer | Suggested Paraphrase |
|--|---|
| Bacterial and viral diseases are the price humanity has paid to live in large and densely populated cities ... share 296 diseases with animals (l.41-47) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It means living in cities can be hazardous to health / results in many illnesses being transmitted easier to the dwellers (½), resulting in many deaths (½) <p><i>Deaths not mentioned = 0; greater risk of transmission of diseases not mentioned also = 0</i></p> |

5) Explain the irony of city living. Use material from lines 52 – 56 for your answer. [2]

| Lifted Answer | Suggested Paraphrase |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> despite appalling housing conditions, lack of fresh water and services, minimal health care and few chances of finding a job the urban are on average “better off than their rural cousins, on almost every indicator or social and economic well-being” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the poor living conditions in the city, one would assume/ presuppose city dwellers to have a low quality of life. (1) Instead/ however, contrary to expectation, they seem to enjoy a better standard of living and quality of life relative to those in rural areas. (1) <p>→ For 2nd part of the answer, if there is no comparison made between the urban and rural poor, only ½ mark.</p> |

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| | <p>→ No marks will be awarded if the student gave the reverse explanation i.e. “Instead of having a better quality of life as expected, living conditions in the city are poor.”</p> <p>→ No marks will be given if only one part of the answer is provided.</p> |
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From Passage B

6i) Explain the meaning of “the city has had its day” (line 1). [1]

| Suggested Answer |
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| <p><i>(inferred)</i> - urban living is no longer popular / practical/ the city has outlived its usefulness/ no longer serves its purpose/ no longer an ideal or good place to live in / has lost its significance/ less attractive/ less appealing / not as desirable/ past its prime/ on the decline(1)</p> <p>→ <i>City life is no longer needed/ necessary/ essential/ irrelevant/ obsolete/ no longer useful/ beneficial/important/ significant (0)</i></p> |

6 ii) What are the reasons cited by those who say that the city “has had its day” (line 1)? Use your own words as far as possible. [2]

| Lifted Answer | Suggested Paraphrase |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No longer get together in an urban huddle/ gather round the <i>agora</i> to do their business (l.3-4) • Info technology allows them to work wherever they want – get their religious, sporting or cultural fix by turning on the television, do their shopping... work on the internet (l.4-6) • Pestilential to morals, the health and liberties of man, sort of places you get mugged (l.7-8) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The city seems to have lost its function as a meeting place/hub for people to carry out transactions since technology now enables people to work and carry out their daily lives anywhere, independently. (1) <p>→ <i>Technology allows people to work and carry out their daily activities (0)</i> → <i>does not explain why the city has had its day.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The city is no longer an ideal place to live in as it is full of vices, crime and diseases (1) <p>→ <i>Any two points = 1 mark</i> → <i>Morals/ moral values/ immoral/ unhealthy = 0 (lift)</i></p> |

7) What is the tone intended by the author when he included “Starbucks” (line 13) in his list of “everything” (line 12)? [1]

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| <p><i>Inferred</i> - The author was taking a tongue-in-cheek / humorous / wry/ light hearted/ amused/ cheeky look at the essentials of modern life or The writer’s tone is one of resignation as trivialities are now seen as essentials</p> |
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→ *Even if the tone is right but the explanation is way off, making no sense (0)*
 → *Tries to be funny (½); mocking/ sarcastic (0)*

8) Why does the writer mention a series of examples in lines 46 to 48? [1]

| Lifted Answer | Suggested Paraphrase |
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| Where do Chinese city-dwellers go for their holidays? Back to where they, or their family, once came from. Where do urban Africans get buried? | <p>To emphasise/ highlight/ drive home the point/ reinforce his point</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • our sense of loss and longing for the rural lifestyle <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • our affinity for/ desire to re-connect with/ go back to our “rural background”/ roots/ the countryside (1) <p>→ ½ mark for author’s intention and ½ mark for an explanation of his intention → ½ mark for “the writer wants to say/ show/ illustrate, express + explanation...” → 0 mark for “humans want to go back to...” without a reference to the writer’s intention. → 0 mark for “go back to nature/ go back to their homeland or home country”</p> |

9) Give the meaning of the following words as they are used in the passage.

Write your answers in one word or a short phrase. [5]

| | 1 | ½ | 0 |
|--|--|---|---|
| severed (passage A, line 12) <i>v</i> | cut/cut off forcibly/abruptly ended forcibly/ abruptly disconnected | ended/ intentionally ended disconnected/ completely disconnected | break/ break away/ break off/ broken/ broken off strained, disabled, disenabled, weakened, destroyed, damaged, amputated, forcibly removed/ removed, ripped, demolished, terminated, detached completely |
| powerfully (Passage A, line 20) <i>adv</i> | strongly, with great impact/ impactfully have a significant and widespread impact | vividly persuasively convincingly | clear/ clearly evidently, obviously, patently, substantially, forcefully, precisely, influentially, greatly, effectively, graphically, significantly, saliently, cogently, aptly, starkly, very well |
| brutal (Passage A, line 50) <i>adj</i> | harsh, unvarnished, unpleasant, stark painful and hard to accept | cruel, blunt real but hard to accept | crude, painful, cold, hard, shocking, serious, obvious alarming, sad, real, critical, |

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| | very undesirable but true devastating but true undisguised hard hitting, unforgiving | | hard to accept very inconvenient, undeniable, unfortunate, hurtful, aggressive nasty, bitter, unsparing, ugly, sad but true |
| absorbed (Passage B, line 22) <i>v</i> | precoccupied, engrossed, immersed, consumed by heavily/ fully/ too/ deeply/ greatly/ completely/ overly + caught up/ involved in/ tied up with/ occupied focused to the exclusion of everything else/ totally focused on | occupied, caught up, tied up overly concerned | concerned, involved focused/ overly/ too focused/ obsessed/ fanatical saturated, overwhelmed, concentrated on, too/ totally/ overly busy, taken away, fully filled with, overloaded, surrounded, indulged, chained, tires, completely glued spending all of their time deeply buried |
| epitome (Passage B, line 50) <i>n</i> | hallmark, embodiment, signature, quintessence, (the) superlative prime/ most triumphant/ perfect/ ultimate/ best/ outstanding/ apt + representation/ model/ example/ illustration/ symbol/ form model representation/ example state of perfection the very representation of symbolic representation very essence | showing traits/qualities that characterize icon/ iconic distinguishing/ classic symbol/ illustration well representation (exp) a good representation of defining aspect top model | Typical/ main/ most significant feature most apt characteristic role model, strong symbol, sign, representation, paragon, salient, record, highlight, example, high/ highest point/ level/ form/ peak, pinnacle, apex, trademark, benchmark crux/ core defining aspect essence essential factor centre/ central |

10) Using material from paragraphs 3 – 6, summarise the factors which indicate that cities are not doomed.

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.** [7m]

The city is not doomed because.....

| Lifted Answer | | Suggested Answer |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> many people like urban life and want to go on living in the city (l.15) the elderly, a growing share of the population, want easy access to transport, doctors, hospitals, family and friends (l.16-18) the young like the buzz of the city, the concentration of restaurants, clubs and other forms of entertainment (l.19-20)... pleasures of the city (l.27)...fun (l.29) for the childless and the empty-nesters, the city has many merits (l.22-23) the better educated (and so the richer) are likely to find work... (20-21)... providing jobs (l.29) ...some 60% of American jobs in American cities fall into the “ new economy” (l.40-41) cities as natural homes for the “creative class...artists, designers,”(l.25-26) much more inventiveness at the municipal and state level than at the federal level... cities like Chicago are now seen as central to environmental improvements ... public policy is becoming more city-centred (l.31- 36) private sector investment ...combined with government money for urban purposes more widely and effectively (l.33-35) cities are becoming sexier in the popular imagination...through television shows... trendiness (l.37 – 39) for anyone on their way up, the city is the place to be (l.40) | <p>A1</p> <p>A2</p> <p>A3</p> <p>A4</p> <p>A5</p> <p>B</p> <p>C</p> <p>D1</p> <p>D2</p> <p>E1</p> <p>E2</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many people still prefer/desire/ opt/ choose to live in the city/ still a popular choice for many people(1) {without the “still prefer” ½ mark only} The city puts the elderly within easy reach of good infrastructure, services and facilities. (1) {no mention the elderly = ½ } and loved/ close ones (1) { kin/ relatives only = ½ ; social circle only = ½; companionship= 0} The young enjoy the vibrant city life with its diversity of leisure/ recreational activities. (1) {no mention of the young = ½ ; entertainment = lift = 0} The city thus offers many benefits especially to those with few or no family commitments (1) {no mention of who = ½ } More employment opportunities (1) Cities have a rich cultural heritage/ culturally vibrant/ rich in the arts and culture (1) City policy makers have more innovative ideas to improve city living conditions (1) More private and public funds are channelled for these improvements (1) cities also have a hip/ cool image thanks to the media (1) {no mention of media = ½; trendy to live in the city = lift = 0 } it is the preferred/obvious choice for the upwardly mobile/ those seeking a better life/ betterment/improvement (1) |

11) In Passage A, Reader argues that cities present a host of environmental and health problems while in Passage B, the writer argues that “the city is not doomed” (line 9).

Are you more optimistic or pessimistic about city living?

In your answer, assess some of the issues raised by both writers and support your views with examples drawn from your own observations and experiences. [8]

Suggested approach:

R1: Are you more optimistic or pessimistic about city living?

1. Choose a view – optimistic (agree with writer from The Economist) OR
- pessimistic (agree with Reader)

2. Give reasons for your choice

*** While either is theoretically possible, it makes more sense to be optimistic.

R2a & R2b: Assess some of the arguments made by both writers.

1. Identify one important argument raised by Reader and the writer from The Economist for discussion.
2. Evaluate the argument and provide reasons why you agree.

R3a & R3b: Support your views with examples drawn from your own observations and experiences.

1. Substantiate your reasons with evidence i.e. provide relevant, concrete examples. These examples need not be from your society.

| Why I am more optimistic | | |
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| Passage B | Explanation and Evaluation | Examples |
| <p>1) ...it may not be feasible to go on living 20km away from everything (I.12-14) ... easy access to transport, doctors, hospitals, cinemas and above all family and friends (I.17-18)</p> | <p><u>Stand</u> I am more optimistic about city living and thus agree largely with the writer from The Economist because city life does indeed provide a host of benefits and conveniences.</p> <p><u>Explanation</u> The amenities are located in close proximity, and this is further enhanced by the efficient transportation system which provides fast and convenient access. Health facilities and loved ones are also nearby.</p> | <p>1) Moscow, Russia: one of the most precise subway in the world, carries over 8.2 million passengers on an average weekday. 2) Paris, France: the Paris Metro has one of the best coverage, average distance to a station from any point is only about 500 meters. 3) Atlanta, USA: parks, subway stations, museums, world's largest aquarium, movie theatres, world's largest drive-in, universities all located downtown.</p> |

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| <p>2) ...like the buzz of a city, the concentration of restaurants, clubs and other forms of entertainment (I. 19-20) ...pleasures of the city... entertainment, they say, can replace manufacturing in the post-industrial city, providing both jobs and fun (I. 27-29)</p> | <p><u>Explanation</u> City life is often vibrant and there is a diversity of leisure activities which one can engage in to relax and unwind. Some cities are also rich in cultural heritage.</p> | <p>1) Rome, Italy: one can be exposed to the cultural heritage through ancient monuments, medieval and Renaissance buildings and fountains, museums. It addition, it is also renowned for its many fine restaurants and cafes, a good nightlife, and lively streets and squares. It is also an international center of fashion and the film industry. 2) Turin, Italy: major cultural hub with excellent museums, elegant shops, and good restaurants. One can view baroque architecture, historic palaces, cafes, artisan workshops, and arcades. 3) Birmingham, UK: internationally recognised as a leader in leisure, entertainment, business, shopping, and sport. Presence of modern shopping arcades, diverse pubs, clubs and restaurants and fine museums, theatres and art galleries. £500 million Bullring mall in city centre.</p> |
| <p>3) ...likely to find work in the universities, hospitals and research centres that tend to cluster in cities (I. 20-21) ...for anyone on the way up, the city is the place to be (I. 40)</p> | <p><u>Explanation</u> The city offers various job opportunities, both for the highly educated and also for people seeking progress and who wish to experience upward social mobility.</p> | <p>1) Austin, Texas, USA: job growth between 2004 and 2008 was 14.8%. Strong growth in service sectors like education and health, leisure and hospitality.</p> |
| <p>4) ...private-sector investment is being combined with government money for urban purposes much more widely and effectively. Cities... now seen as central to environmental improvements(I.33-36)</p> | <p><u>Explanation</u> Due to more sources, and a larger pool of funding, the living conditions in cities are now vastly improved through the efforts of concerned policy makers.</p> | <p>1) Surat, Bombay, India: in 1994, 40% of its 2.2 million people lived in slums, without drainage and sanitation. There was outbreak of plague following a flood, migrant workers fled, thousands of businesses closed. Only 40% of the daily garbage was cleared. Now, 97% of the daily garbage is cleared, morbidity fell by 65% within two-and-a-half years. Pledge to extend sanitation to</p> |

| | | <p>every corner of the city with piped water, a result of two schemes costing \$90 million.</p> <p>2) Naga, Philippine: leaped from third-class city in 1988, in terms of income and services, to first-class status in 1990. Of 5500 squatter families, 4668 now own land. Number of concrete roads and households with running water doubled between 1988 and 1996, and garbage collection efficiency rose from 29% to 85%.</p> |
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| Passage A | Explanation and Evaluation | Examples |
| <p>1) ... cities are monstrous parasites, consuming the resources of regions vastly larger than themselves and giving very little back (I. 17-18) ... the ecological footprints of many cities have been assessed and the results are uniformly alarming (I. 23-24)</p> | <p><u>Evaluation</u> I must concede though, that Reader does have some valid concerns about city living.</p> <p><u>Explanation</u> Due to residential density, transportation systems and electricity consumption, cities utilize a large amount of resources and contribute greatly towards pollution, thus leaving a large carbon footprint behind.</p> | <p>1) Linfen, China: soot-blackened city, air is filled with burning coal. Automobile and industrial emissions main source of coal and particulates pollutants.</p> <p>2) La Oroya, Peru: 99% of children have blood levels that exceed acceptable limits, their average lead level was triple the WHO limit.</p> <p>3) Los Angeles, California, USA: consumes 235438 MWh (millions of kilowatt hours).</p> <p>4) Lexington, Kentucky, USA: 3.455 per capita carbon emission from transportation and residential energy use (largest carbon footprint).</p> |
| <p>2) ... dangers of disease multiply when people are crowded together (I. 33)... breeding grounds of disease (I.40) ...bacterial and viral diseases are the price humanity has paid to live in large and densely populated cities (I. 41-42)... urban graveyard effect (I.49)</p> | <p><u>Explanation</u> City life is potentially hazardous to health as the close proximity of humans facilitates the transmission and rapid spread of diseases, some of which could be fatal.</p> | <p>1) Philadelphia, USA: yellow fever epidemic killed as many as 5000 people, roughly 10% of the population, in 1793.</p> <p>2) Singapore: 144 of Singapore's 206 probable cases of SARS have been linked to contact with only 5 individuals.</p> <p>3) Hong Kong: 2.7 secondary infections of SARS were generated on average per case at the start of the epidemic. Transmission rates fell after efforts made to reduce population contact rates, among other measures.</p> |

| Counter arguments to ideas in passage A | Explanation and Evaluation | Examples |
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| <p>1) ... cities are monstrous parasites, consuming the resources of regions vastly larger than themselves and giving very little back (I. 17-19)</p> <p>... the ecological footprints of many cities have been assessed and the results are uniformly alarming (I. 23-24)</p> | <p><u>Evaluation</u> However, his concerns and pessimism can be easily allayed and dismissed, especially if we take into consideration developments in today's world. Hence, I firmly believe that city life should be viewed with optimism instead of pessimism.</p> <p><u>Explanation</u> There is a greater awareness of the carbon footprint which cities are leaving behind and hence, there is increased and sustained effort by community and global leaders in tackling this issue. There is now the push to go-green and certain cities are testament to this success. This is manifested in sustainable cities, or eco-cities. These are cities designed with consideration of environmental impact, inhabited by people dedicated to minimization of required inputs of energy, water and food, and waste output of heat, air pollution. A sustainable city can feed itself with minimal reliance on the surrounding countryside, and power itself with renewable sources of energy. The crux of this is to create the smallest possible ecological footprint, and to produce the lowest quantity of pollution possible, to efficiently use</p> | <p>1) Calgary, Canada: city with the best eco-ranking based on water availability and drinkability, waste removal, quality of sewage systems, air pollution and traffic congestion.</p> <p>2) Oakland, California, USA: 17% of power produced from renewable energy. Renewable energy sources produce electricity with no global climate-changing greenhouse gas emissions or regional air pollution that comes from burning fossil fuels.</p> <p>3) Honolulu, USA: 1.356 per capita carbon emission from transportation and residential energy use (smallest carbon footprint).</p> <p>4) Melbourne, Australia: various methods of improving public transport implemented, including car free zones and entire streets. Programs for becoming carbon neutral such as 'Zero Carbon Moreland'.</p> <p>5) Tianjin, China: China's collaboration with Singapore, Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-city. Existing wetlands and biodiversity will be preserved. Green spaces will be interspersed throughout city. Significant part of water supply drawn from non-traditional sources such as desalinated water. Integrated waste management, with particular emphasis on reduction, reuse and recycling of waste. Light-rail transit system, supplemented by secondary network of trams and buses, will be main mode of transportation.</p> <p>6) Freiburg, Germany: known for its strong solar economy. All houses built to low energy</p> |

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| | land; compost use \d materials, recycle it or convert waste-to-energy, and thus the city's overall contribution to climate change will be minimal. | consumption standard and whole district designed to be car free. 7) Clonburris, Dublin, Ireland: high levels of energy efficiency, mandatory renewable energy for heating and electricity, use of recycled and sustainable building materials, direct heating system for distributing heat, provision of allotments for growing food, banning of tumble driers, provision of natural drying areas. |
| 2) ... dangers of disease multiply when people are crowded together (I. 33) ...bacterial and viral diseases are the price humanity has paid to live in large and densely populated cities (I. 41-42) | <u>Explanation</u> Advanced medical science able to cure diseases. More importantly though, is the ability to prevent the outbreak of diseases through close monitoring and sharing of information on potential outbreaks/pandemics through governments and global organizations such as WHO. | 1) With outbreak of swine flu in Mexico City, WHO raised its alert level to four on its six-level scale. Countries responded by taking measures such as issuing travel health notice, banning imports, setting up of screening centers, minimizing public contact, contact tracing. |