2020 Prelim Exam Paper 2
Suggested Answer Scheme

From Passage 1

1. By referring to bureaucrats as 'older and more conventional' (line 2), what does the author suggest about TikTok stars? **Use your own words as far as possible**. [2]

From the text	Suggested inference
one hopes she will save some room in her cabinet for **older** and more **conventional** bureaucrats, even if they do not have millions of followers, great hair or amazing dance moves (lines 1-3)	They are generally younger (1) and unorthodox/non-conformists (1) N.B. Contemporary is not accepted

Markers' comments: Most students got this question correct, but those who did not mainly faltered on the second mark regarding the unconventional nature of the TikTok stars. Some answers merely paraphrased that they had many followers, great hair or could dance well.

2. Explain what the author means by the sentence 'This is not a question of 'if' but 'when'' (lines 3-4). Use your own words as far as possible. [2]

From the text	Suggested inference
This is not a question of 'if' but 'when' (lines 3-4)	It is not a matter of whether a TikTok star will become President/not an issue of whether it will be possible (1) But this is only a matter of time/this will happen sooner or later (1) 2 points for 2 marks

Markers' comments: Several answers did not properly address the context of a TikTok star attaining the Presidency or leadership/dominance in the political sphere and merely stated that influencers would shape society or would dominate the whole of society, which was too vague. Students have to address both the idea of **certainty** (that the TikTok star WILL DEFINITELY become President) and **time frame** (that it is only a matter of time for this to happen) in their answers.

3. Suggest one reason why the dance battles are 'awkward' (line 12). [1]

From the text	Suggested inference
Awkward dance battles between budding TikTok influencers, none of whom could have been older than 10 (lines 12-13)	The dancers are too young and hence seem uncoordinated/like they are trying too hard to succeed OR The dancing looks uncomfortable

	OR
	The dancing seems childish or unsophisticated
	N.B. Reasonable answers that touch on the context of the dancers being young and awkward can be accepted.

Markers' comments: Quite a number of students merely stated that the dancers were young, without any explanation at all as to why the youth is linked to awkwardness. A small number of students mistakenly latched onto the idea that the awkwardness was due to the battles being held over social media or that "it is awkward because you see them dancing over the phone and not in real life".

4. Explain the author's use of brackets in lines 13-15. [1]

From the text	Suggested paraphrase
(Adults who are just catching up: TikTok is a short-form video app owned by the Chinese internet company Bytedance.) (lines 13-15)	The author wants to highlight that adults are not up-to-date with/are ignorant of the latest social media trends or platforms

Markers' comments: Most students got this answer correct. Those who did not gave stock answers about the use of brackets being used to offer supplemental information without giving a context, or did not touch on the fact that this information was for adults/older people who might not be familiar with TikTok. A few students got the line reference wrong and thought it was a reference to influencers' clothing and accessories.

5. How does the author show that influencers are 'essentially one-person start-ups'? (line 19) **Use your own words as far as possible.** [3]

From the text	Suggested paraphrase
Many social media influencers are essentially one-person start-ups - the best ones are able to **experiment relentlessly** with new **formats** and **platforms**	Persistently/tirelessly trying out different ways of delivering content (1)
build an **authentic connection** with an audience	Establish a genuine relationship with their audience/viewers (1)
and figure out how to **distinguish** themselves in a **crowded** media **environment**	How to differentiate themselves from other influencers in a saturated/congested media space/arena (1)

	3 points for 3 marks

Markers' comments: This question was quite straightforward but several students failed to paraphrase some aspects of the key ideas, e.g. not just experimenting but experimenting <u>relentlessly</u>, and not just distinguishing themselves but distinguishing themselves in a <u>crowded</u> media setting.

6. Using lines 23-26, explain **three** ways in which the author uses language to suggest a negative perception of influencers who became famous. **Use your own words as far as possible.** [3]

From the text	Suggested paraphrase
Some of them have succeeded by virtue of being conventionally attractive, or good at video games, or in possession of some other surface-level attribute.	The author uses the phrase 'surface level attributes' to suggest that the influencers succeed because of superficial traits and not real talent (there is a disparaging tone to the phrase 'surface-level attribute' implying they have no substance) (1)
Others have made their names with dubious stunts	The phrase 'dubious stunts' suggests that they are engaging in questionable behaviour/antics (1)
and extreme political commentary.	The phrase 'extreme political commentary' suggests they are intentionally airing radical views or perspectives to seek attention (1) 3 points for 3 marks N.B. Students must <u>quote</u> and <u>explain</u> to get the marks

Markers' comments: Many answers for this question ignored the language requirement for the questions and simply paraphrased the author's criticisms of the influencers which resulted in no marks being awarded. Other answers simply quoted words like 'dubious' and 'extreme' and gave very vague explanations e.g. "the words dubious and extreme suggest that they do things that are viewed negatively." The better answers quoted specific words or phrases and explained how they created a negative impression. Reasonable answers that quoted the author's choice of words or identified appropriate tone by the author were accepted. Several students misinterpreted the passage and detected the use of sarcasm that was not present.

7. Using material from paragraphs 5-7 only (lines 27-52), summarise what the author has to say about how social media influencers and entrepreneurs go about their work. [8]

Influencers are…

	From text	Possible paraphrase
A	individuals who **utilise** social media platforms to **build** … (l. 27)	People who use/employ social media to create/ establish …
B	**their own personal brand** (l. 27)	a unique image/online presence
C	Or **influence** their **followers** to **act** (l. 28)	Or change their audiences' behaviours
D	They can **share anything** from clothes and beauty products to make-at-home slime with their followers (l. 29-30)	They can post/ upload/ update a wide range of topics
E	While it might **seem** like **frivolous fun,** (l. 31)	While it may appear to be inconsequential entertainment/ pointless amusement
F	some influencers are **making significant amounts of money**(l. 31)	some influencers are profiting hugely
G	from their **connection** to their fans (l. 32)	From their relationship with their audience
H	Making them the **modern** entrepreneur (l. 32)	making them the present-day/ contemporary entrepreneur
I	… the ones who have **started** their own **businesses** (l. 33)	The ones who have begun / established their own enterprises
J	from the brand they **created** online (l. 34)	from the brand they established online
K	…have much in common with traditional entrepreneurs when it comes to **driving** the economy**.** (l. 34-35)	stimulate economic growth.
L	Entrepreneurs… are people who **organise**,(l. 36)	Entrepreneurs handle/coordinate
M	Manage, (l. 36) **OR** Influencers... managing their business (l.41)	Run/ control
N	and take on the **risks** of a business. (l. 37) **OR** Influencers... and taking on risk. (l. 42)	And make gambles with their enterprises/face the dangers of entrepreneurship
O	They often start **a new business** in response to a **perceived need** for a good or service. (l. 37)	They frequently start enterprises to fulfil demand for a product or service.

P	An influencer, in contrast, is someone who has **the power** to **affect** (l. 38-39)	However, influencers are people who strongly impact audiences (note: if students mention "ability", they must indicate that the great strength or degree of this ability)
Q	**or change people** and their **behaviour** through social media (l. 39)	and modify practices through social media.
R	Often to get them to **buy** something (l. 39-40)	Usually to persuade them to purchase something
S	Companies can target highly **specific** groups of people (l. 42-43)	Companies can target particular groups of audiences
T	through employing an influencer (line 43)	by hiring influencers
U	Due to the fact that influencers form a **more personal relationship** with their followers, (l. 44-45)	Because influencers form a more/deeper (must use an intensifier) intimate/ close-knit relationship with their audience
V	…the people who can **steer the** online **conversation** will have an upper hand in whatever niche they occupy – whether media, politics, business or some other field (l. 47-48)	The people who can control the online discourse can control/ have leverage/ clout over diverse fields
W	These people are **setting up businesses,** (l.51)	They are establishing enterprises,
X	**hiring staff,** (l.51)	employing people
Y	**managing budgets**(l.51)	and overseeing finances

25 possible points
1-2pts = 1m, 3-4pts = 2m, 5-6pts = 3m, 7-8pts = 4m, 9-10pts = 5m, 11-12pts = 6m,
13-14pts = 7m, 15pts or more = 8m

Markers' comments: Generally well done with many scoring well. Weaker responses lacked precision when paraphrasing. The context of the points **does matter** when paraphrasing, for example points C and P are similar but C is about influencers and their followers whereas P is about influencers affecting people in a more general way.

8. Why does the author italicise the word 'is' in line 49? [1]

From the text	Suggested paraphrase
The way to think of influencers or creators *is* as entrepreneurs" (lines 49-50)	He is trying to stress that they are actually entrepreneurs/no different at all from entrepreneurs

Markers' comments: Many answers merely parroted the passage, stating that influencers are similar to entrepreneurs or influencers are entrepreneurs. Answers need to show an understanding that they are actually the same/identical or that there is actually no difference.

9. What does the hiring of personal branding consultants suggest about 'sleepy, old-line industries' (line 60)? **Use your own words as far as possible.**   [2]

From the text	Suggested paraphrase
And even executives in sleepy, old-line industries	'Sleepy' suggests they are slow to react/lethargic/not dynamic (1) 'Old-line' suggests they are outmoded or no longer relevant/sunset industries (1)
now hire 'personal branding consultants' to help increase their online followings.	They are trying to keep up with the times/revamp themselves/they realise the importance of expanding their reach (1) N.B. Any 2 points for 2 marks Reasonable answers for the last point as to how the industries are using social media/influencers to reach out or stay relevant can be accepted.

Markers' comments: Some answers misinterpreted the context of the question and argued that these old-line industries were doing badly because they did not recognise the power of influencers or refused to change their ways.

10. Which phrase in paragraph 10 is used to support the author's earlier reference to influencing as a 'burnout-inducing job' (line 17)? [1]

From the text	Suggested paraphrase
Fizzle out	n/a

11. Why does the author end the passage with a warning about dismissing influencers (line 78)? [1]

From the text	Suggested paraphrase
In other words, influencers are the future. Dismiss them at your peril (line 78)	They should not be overlooked/underestimated because they will be very powerful or very influential in the future N.B. Answers must contain both elements i.e. A reference to the future and a reference to their potential power/influence

12. Kevin Roose argues that influencers have a significant impact on society today. How far do you agree with his views? Support your answer with examples drawn from your own experience and that of your society. [10]

Marks	Descriptor
Band 1 **8-10**	**REQUIREMENTS** ● Students must make <u>systematic reference</u> to the requirements of the question, with evidence of a <u>balanced</u> treatment. Students should refer to the author's views – <u>that influencers have significant impact on our society</u> and give reasons to support their stand as to which way they lean more towards (more of a boon or bane), considering the context of SG. <u>Key ideas:</u> 1) Influencers build their own personal brand and influence their followers to act 2) Influencers make significant amounts of money from their connection to their fans and are modern entrepreneurs 3) Companies target highly specific groups of people through employing influencers

4) Even sleepy old-line industries now hire infuencers to help increase their online followings
5) Influencers who steer the online conversation will have an upper hand in whatever niche they occupy whether media, politics, or business

EXPLANATION
Shows a good or very good understanding of the terms and issues.

EVALUATION
Students should make very convincing evaluation by making judgements and decisions and by developing arguments to logical conclusions. They should also include elaboration and support through personal insight and apt illustrations.

COHERENCE
Student demonstrates clear paragraph organisation and cogent argument.

KEY IDEAS	Significant impact brought about by influencers
Lines 30-32 **Influencers make significant amount of money from their connection to fans, making them the modern entrepreneur.**	Influencers' work generate huge sums of money, which highlights their significant economic impact on society. So profitable is being an influencer that in 2016, the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS) declared that social media management companies and bloggers have to declare not just their income but also non-monetary benefits in kind as part of their taxable income. The large scale and high levels of profit of their work have also enabled them to set up their own companies, which employ various salaried workers. The payment received by influencers comes about because they are able to establish a connection to their fans, who then support their business ventures or boost sales of products they endorse. This connection between influencers and followers is usually painstakingly built by the former sharing extensively with the latter their personal life details, which include their relationships, their thoughts and feelings and day-to-day activities. As these followers journey closely with the influencers in their lives, they feel as if they know them very well and can trust all the product recommendations they make or even the products that these influencers themselves manufacture. However, it is important to note that the connection that is established is also a result of very intentional curation of content that the influencers willingly showcase. This connection that is built might not be a genuine and strong one, when influencers purposefully portray themselves in a particular way that is not truly reflective of who they genuinly

	are. Some skeptics who share this concern about influencers are doubtful about them and unable to establish a connection with them.
Lines 42-44 **Companies can target highly specific groups of people through employing influencers.**	Through collaborating with influencers on marketing campaigns or even sponsoring them with goods and services, companies are reaching out directly to the specific profiles of followers that various influencers have. For the release of their hairstyling tools, Dyson has consistently engaged beauty bloggers (e.g. @Tippytoes, @Mongabong) by sponsoring them with the latest innovations. The influencers would showcase videos and photographs of them trying out the new products and also provide a review of them. Since beauty bloggers are followed mostly by those interested in upkeeping their physical appearances, Dyson's strategy to reach out to consumers via the influencers is highly effective, judging from the hype that surrounds their products and the high volumes of sales generated. This can be observed in trends of other types of influencers approached by companies too – food bloggers (e.g. @ieatishootipost and YouTubers of Night Owl Cinematic's Food King) would often be sent dishes and invited to restaurants for free meals, all in exchange for reviews and some promotion to their food-loving followers. Fashion bloggers will receive unreleased designs so that they could wear them, give a preview to their fashion-loving followers and generate a high level of interest for the fashion labels.
Lines 60-61 Even sleepy old-line industries now hire influencers to help increase their online followings	Industries that typically employ traditional mass-media advertising, such as the wedding and interior design industries, have taken to employing influencers to raise their publicities. When these influencers share with their followers the life stages they go through (e.g. marriage and buying a house), these companies will approach them and offer them sponsored services or discounts. Through the influencers, these companies will also extend discounts to the followers who are potential consumers.
The people who steer the online conversation will have an upper hand in whatever niche they occupy whether media, **politics** or business	During Singapore's General Elections (GE) 2020, influential youth like Joel Lim, was memorable in the way he sparked and led online discussions, debate and conversations about politics in Singapore. Through his analysis of election campaigns and videos, as well as posting a series of Instastories on various social issues and concerns, he offered objective and insightful commentary that enabled politics to more accessible to his followers. His influence was significant

	as indicated by a rapid rise in followers garnered during GE 2020. Other influencers like Benjamin Kheng have also spoken up publically about various political and social issues on his podcasts and videos and given the massive following that these figures have, it is evident that they have the power to prompt the youth to be more politically conscious.
Influencers form a more personal relationship with their followers The followers are seemingly more likely to buy what the influencer suggests.	Influencers who are especially savvy have demonstrated an acute sense of awareness that a personal connection with their followers is crucial in ensuring that they receive the support they seek. It is common to see notable influencers like Narelle Kheng, Jemima Wei and even popular political figures like Nicole Seah directly engaging with their followers through online interactions. Through a series of comments, 'mentions' and 'tags', it is clear that influencers who forge personal connections and have conversations with their followers enjoy a positive reputation that often turns into support for whatever they purport or endorse. Some influencers like Naomi Neo also frequently host 'Q&A' sessions where they divulge intimate details about their personal lives and struggles.
Influencers build their own personal brand or influence their followers to act (including buying products, supporting a brand or vacationing in a certain location)	Influencers in Singapore have managed to capitalise on social media platforms and monetise their online presence and influence. From Xiaxue's promotion of Hada Labo beauty services to Andrea Chong's collaboration with Superga sneakers that was almost instantly sold out upon launch, it is evident that influencers wield a great deal of power in getting their followers to buy products and support particular brands. These promotion and endorsement deals are so successful that influencers like Jianhao Tan and Naomi Neo have been able to afford luxury cars despite their young age. Even when it comes to travel, influencers who post attractive photos of themselves in luxury resorts and hotels are able to influence their followers to visit a particular destination that they have signed deals with.

Markers Comments for AQ:
Some students selected points from the passage that were not relevantly linked to the question's focus on influencers' impacts. They would pick up points like influencers gaining fame and success because of their looks and dubious stunts / extreme political commentary.

The weaker scripts saw a lack of specific examples of influencers, which demonstrate a lack of familiarity with the topic. The better scripts were able to bring in egs of influencers in SG like Naomi Neo, Jianhaotan and Night Owl Cinematics. Even stronger ones would evaluate the degree of their influence, bringing in evidence of their success

as influencers (e.g. 'Foodking' bringing about long queues to restaurants that are well-reviewed and recommended).

Good scripts also brought in relevant contextual info - Singaporeans, especially the young, are highly connected to social media platforms; Singaporeans are highly educated and have a mind of their own, so that they are not that easily swayed by influencers' opinions, etc.

Introductions were rather generic with many students discussing the impact of influencers in general. The intro should be directly contextualised to Singapore from the get go.

Weaker scripts only listed and described the various examples of influencers in Singapore, thus achieving low levels of analysis. Stronger scripts were able to thoroughly evaluate the impacts these influencers have on Singapore. The strongest scripts were able to successfully consider the varying impact that influencers have on different stakeholders, groups and demographics within Singapore. Some were also able to identify circumstances under which the impacts could be limited or harmful.

Surprisingly, quite a few students wrongfully discussed Amos Yee when he is not an influencer, but rather an isolated figure who utilised social media. Students need to be mindful that the topic is about social media **influencers** and not just any user of social media. Not many students were able to discuss a good range of concrete examples.

Links to the context of Singapore were apparent though not always well explained, with some citing generic traits of Singapore such as 'fast-paced' or 'open economy' which did not relate to the specific point that was being made in the paragraph.