

Tampines Meridian Junior College
2020 JC2 Preliminary Examination
Paper 2 Answers

Questions from Passage 1

1. From paragraph 1, what are the differences between traditional schooling and the new wave in education? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2m]

From the passage	Paraphrased
Students add more years to education early in life (Lines 1-2) vs continual training throughout a person's lifetime (Lines 4–5)	In traditional schooling, people would spend their younger years / childhood / adolescence in school but now they will return to school / acquire skills and knowledge regularly throughout/ all through their lives.
taking years to complete certificates and degrees (Line 2)... lengthy blocks of time (Line 5) vs consumed in short spurts when needed (Line 2)	While students used to require a long time/many years to finish their education, the new wave requires them to complete brief courses only when required .

1m for each pair, 0m for answers which are not paired up or paired wrongly.

2. How does the author support the claim that the idea of a mechanistic relationship between education and wages has 'taken a knock' (line 8)? [1m]

From the passage	Inferred
A recent survey conducted by the Pew Research Centre showed that a mere 16% of Americans think that a four-year degree course prepares students very well for a high-paying job in the modern economy. (Lines 7-10)	He cites recent surveys showing only a very low percentage/small minority/insignificant number/a handful of respondents believing that degree courses would lead to one getting good salaries/high-paying jobs in the modern economy. [1m]

3. How does the author illustrate that 'it has become essential to acquire new skills' (lines 16 – 17)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2m]

From the passage	Paraphrased
Coding skills, which most adults never learned in school (Lines 17-18)	He illustrates it through the example of coding skills, which were never taught in schools
...are now being required well beyond the technology sector . (Line 18)	but are now needed in jobs even in non-technological industries
In America, almost half of the postings in the occupations with the highest pay are for jobs that frequently ask for coding skills. (Lines 18-20)	A large number of jobs which offer the best/most salaries/wages/remuneration require one to have coding skills

3 points for 2m, 1 – 2 points for 1m

4. Using material from paragraphs 4 – 6 only (lines 21 – 38), summarise the benefits of lifelong learning for individuals, companies and governments. 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.** [8m]

Lifelong learning is beneficial as it...

	From the passage	Paraphrased							
1	it is good for your health (L21)	Keeps one fit/well/in good shape/physical condition							
2	your wealth (L21-22) OR lifelong learning was crucial to both economic prosperity (L38)	Helps makes society/one richer/ more affluent/ prosperous							
3	your civic engagement (L22)	Involved as a citizen/member of society/in the community/society							
4	your family's future prospects (L23)	And ensures that one's children will do well in life/ increase one's family's likelihood of success							
5	It prolongs your independent life (L22-23)	Helps <u>one</u> remain self-sufficient / self-reliant (subject: individual) Om = freedom, autonomous							
6	and enriches your quality of life (L23)	Enhances / boosts one's welfare / well-being							
7	For companies, investing in worker skills makes sense too – it promotes flexibility (L23-24)	Lifelong learning helps workers be more adaptable							
8	and creativity (L24)	Innovative							
9	problem-solving (L24)	Able to tackle issues / rectify difficulties / answer challenges							
10	teamwork (L24)	Collaborate / work well with others							
11	and an increased sense of agency among staff (L24-25)	Workers feel more independent / in control / greater control over their work							
12	making them more satisfied (L25)	More contented / content / happier / fulfilled							
13	and more productive (L25)	And achieve greater results / improve efficiency / increase output							
14	These are, of course, exactly the traits needed as companies face the challenges of the latest industrial revolution (L25-26)	Which are the characteristics companies require to address technological disruption / which is required to thrive in the new economy							
15	Skills and aptitudes generated in one context are applied elsewhere . In a study, funds were allocated to support staff with learning outside of company training. They took the skills they developed for pleasure back into the workplace. (L27-30)	Workplaces benefit from what workers learnt in other places / for leisure OR Employees can transfer/apply the skills learned for leisure/fun to their current job OR Competencies learned in hobbies are useful at work							
16	The study found that absenteeism rates dropped (L30)	Workers are less likely to take sick leave/miss work							
17	workplace disputes and strikes symbolic of poor labour relations came to an end (L31)	Quarrel / have bad ties with the management / bosses / colleagues OR start worker protests over employment conditions							
18	Investing in learning for pleasure improved the bottom line . (L31-32)	Which increases company profits							
19	For governments, supporting learning in later life helps to delay the onset of dependency among rapidly ageing populations (L33-34)	Lifelong learning helps slow down / prevent the reliance of older citizens on the <u>state</u> Om = prolong sense of control/freedom/autonomy among the elderly (subject: government)							
20	plays an important role in overcoming inequality and exclusion (L34)	address the income disparity/gap OR create a more inclusive society							
21	supports inter-generational learning (L35)	Aids in learning between the young and old							
22	creating more resilient families and communities (L35)	Creates stronger societies / familial bonds / families that do not break apart easily							
23	and social cohesion (L38)	And united society / boost community bonding							
	Points	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9	10-11	12-13	14 and above
	Marks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Lifelong learning is beneficial as it...keeps one fit, prosperous, involved as a citizen, and ensures that one's children will do well in life. Lifelong learning also helps one remain self-sufficient, enhancing one's well-being. Lifelong learning helps workers to be more adaptable, innovative, and increases their ability to tackle issues and collaborate with others. Workers feel more independent, are more contented and achieve greater results, characteristics which companies require to address technological disruption. Workplaces also benefit from what workers learnt for leisure. Workers are less likely to take sick leave or have bad ties with the management, which increases company profits. Lifelong learning helps slow down the reliance of older citizens on the state, create a more inclusive, stronger and unity society. [22 points 116 words]

5. Suggest why the author says 'a college degree at the start of a working career does not answer the needs of a lengthened career span' (lines 39 – 40). [1m]

From the passage	Inferred
A college degree at the start of a working career does not answer the needs of a lengthened career span . (Lines 39-40)	One's knowledge and skills gained at university will become obsolete/outdated as one works more years/longer than before . [1m] OR The more years one works , the more likely that what one has learnt at university will no longer be useful at work. [1m] OR New knowledge/technological or industrial developments may render one's knowledge learnt from university redundant/ outdated the longer one has worked . [1m]

Questions from Passage 2

6. From paragraph 1, what is needed for workers to succeed in today's fast-changing labour market? **Use your own words as far as possible**. [2m]

From the passage	Paraphrased
Succeeding in such a labour market requires workers to be agile lifelong learners , (Line 4)	Workers need to be responsive to new needs/demands at the workplace OR quick to learn what is needed/demanded at the workplace
comfortable with continuous adaptation (Line 5)	confident / unafraid with having to keep adjusting
and willing to move across industries. (Line 5)	and have a readiness to switch industries/job sectors

3 points for 2m, 1 – 2 points for 1m

7. From paragraph 2, explain two ways in which the author uses language to show his doubts about lifelong learning. **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2m]

From the passage	Inferred
Lifelong learning is supposed to provide the intellectual flexibility and professional adaptability needed to seize opportunities in new and dynamic sectors as they emerge, as well as the resilience to handle shocks in declining industries. (Lines 8-10)	The author uses the word 'supposed' to indicate that what lifelong learning is expected to do may not end up being the case
Training centres, the logic goes, simply need to identify the competencies that companies will look for in the future and design courses accordingly. (Lines 10-12)	The author uses 'simply' to show the naiveté behind the thinking that lifelong learning is so easily carried out / that lifelong learning is not so easily done .
Training centres, the logic goes , simply need to identify the competencies that companies will look for in the future and design courses accordingly. (Lines 10-12)	The author uses 'the logic goes' to show that what lifelong learning is supposed to do only works in theory and <u>not in reality</u> / practice .
Yet, in the Eurozone, only about 10% of the labour force undertook some type of formal or informal training in 2017, and the share declined sharply with age. (Lines 12-13)	The author uses the word 'only' to show how few people are actually willing/receptive to lifelong learning / there is a low uptake to lifelong learning.
Yet , in the Eurozone, only about 10% of the labour force undertook some type of formal or informal training in 2017, and the share declined sharply with age. (Lines 12-13)	The author uses the word 'yet' to show how in spite of all that lifelong learning is claimed to be, very few people are willing to embark on it. (✓ comparison/contrast) (X-irony)
If lifelong learning is the key to competing in the labour market, why are people so reluctant to pursue it? (Lines 13-14)	The author uses a question to challenge the belief that lifelong learning is important for getting ahead at the workplace

Any 2 for 2m

Para 3: Paraphrasing

8. According to the author in lines 16 – 21, why is lifelong learning dreaded? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [3m]

From the passage	Paraphrased
Lifelong learning is thus dreaded because it is viewed as extremely costly in terms of time, money, and effort , (Lines 16-17)	Lifelong learning takes up a lot of time, finances and energy (or group as ' resources ') [1m]
and the returns are regarded as highly uncertain , especially amid technological disruption. (Lines 17-18)	And the results are very unpredictable / rewards or benefits are not guaranteed , especially with technological disruption [1m]
Such views may be reinforced by the feelings of depression and hopelessness that often arise when workers lose their jobs or face career crossroads. If the need to "start over" after years in a certain job or field is demoralising , after decades it can seem like an insurmountable challenge . (Lines 18-21)	Workers are <u>already</u> feeling miserable/in despair/ disheartened from being out of job / fired / having to find a new job, thus learning something new late in adulthood may seem impossible / very difficult . [1m]

Para 4: Paraphrasing

9. Why does the author claim that 'today's training programmes for older workers are ineffective' (lines 30 – 31)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2m]

From the passage	Paraphrased
The reason why today's training programs for older workers are ineffective is partly because they usually target those abilities most apparent in the young. (Lines 30 – 31)	Such programmes target capabilities that are at their peak/best/most obvious in one's youth
Middle age is where cognitive performance starts to decline . Those youthful abilities deteriorate substantially, (Lines 27 – 28)	However, these capabilities greatly degenerate/regress/worsen in one's later years / when one is older
making the acquisition of new skills increasingly challenging . (Lines 28 – 29)	And so older workers find the learning of new competencies/something new much harder /more difficult

3 points for 2m, 1 – 2 points for 1m

Para 5: Inferential/ Lang use

10. **Using your own words as far as possible**, explain the irony which the author describes in lines 37-39. [2m]

From the passage	Inferred
Such an approach can be expected only of the most highly educated and qualified workers – those whose jobs are ironically not even at risk from automation. (Lines 37-39)	<p>Lifelong learning is supposed to help those with low qualifications upgrade their skills, but the reality is that the only ones who can afford / are able / would bother to engage in lifelong learning are <u>those who are already highly trained/competent/do not need it in the first place.</u> [2m]</p> <p>OR</p> <p>It is expected that those who engage in lifelong learning are those who are most likely to lose their jobs to automation, however, the ones who do so are the <u>least likely to lose their jobs.</u> [2m]</p> <p>1m = The irony is that those who can afford / are able / would bother to engage in lifelong learning are <u>those do not need it in the first place.</u></p>

From both passages

11. Alan Tuckett believes lifelong learning should be embraced while Edoardo Campanella argues that there are difficulties in doing so.

How far do you agree or disagree with the views expressed in both passages? Support your answers with examples of how you and your society regard lifelong learning. [10m]

From the passages	Agree	Disagree
<p>Passage 1, Paragraph 1</p> <p>A new wave in education and training has arrived, one marked by continual training through a person's lifetime, consumed in short spurts when needed, rather than in lengthy blocks of time as they do now. (Lines 3-6)</p>	<p>The Singaporean government places heavy emphasis on the need to constantly upgrade one's skills in order to adapt to the rapidly evolving job landscape today. The launch of the national movement SkillsFuture was a recognition of this need for an integrated system of education and training that could respond to the constantly evolving needs of the workplace. This is especially important for the PMETs who have been retrenched due to their jobs being outsourced to countries with lower labour costs. As a number of them are in their 40s and 50s, there is a need to prepare them with more relevant skills to find new jobs, and possibly in new industries.</p>	<p>Lengthy blocks of time dedicated to learning are still important in Singapore, especially during one's youth where responsibilities are likely to be fewer as compared to adulthood. This is especially since a basic degree is still recognised as a prerequisite for professions which pay more and have better prospects.</p>
<p>Passage 1, Paragraph 2</p> <p>The idea of a mechanistic relationship between education and wages has taken a knock (Lines 7-8)</p>	<p>More Singaporeans are taking non-traditional routes to pursue their dream jobs as a university degree is no longer seen as being the sole key to success. The growing graduate glut in Singapore also downplays the value of a degree. (In 2009, just over a quarter of the labour force held a degree; today, the figure is 37.5 per cent.) Some Singaporeans may then prefer to learn on the job or monetise their existing skills which they honed out of interest. More companies are also updating their hiring policies to give them access to a wider talent pool.</p>	<p>Paper qualifications are still highly valued by Singaporeans as they make the holder competitive and marketable. Graduate employment rates in Singapore remain high, with many fresh graduates drawing relatively high starting pay as compared to non-graduates.</p>
<p>Passage 1, Paragraph 3</p> <p>In many occupations it has become essential to acquire new skills as established ones become obsolete. (Lines 16-17)</p>	<p>In the age of technological disruption, many industries have undergone upheavals and workers find their job scopes changing rapidly. Many workers have to go for reskilling in order to adapt to new demands, or even find new careers as they are retrenched. The Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications system allows individuals to equip themselves with job-specific</p>	<p>It is difficult to convince those who are still employed and busy with their current jobs to reskill. The unpredictable nature of various industries also makes it hard to predict what skills will become outdated.</p>

From the passages	Agree	Disagree
	technical skills and competencies needed to perform various job tasks.	
Passage 1, Paragraph 4 “For companies, investing in worker skills makes sense too” (Line 23)	Singapore’s SkillsFuture statutory board works closely with trade associations and business chambers to better curate courses for employers. More companies are also showing an increased willingness to send their employees for training or reskilling. The SkillsFuture Enterprise Credit (SFEC) encourages employers to invest in enterprise transformation and capabilities of their employees. Eligible employers receive a one-off S\$10,000 credit to cover up to 90% of out-of-pocket expenses on qualifying costs for supportable initiatives.	Most companies in Singapore are not investing enough in their workers, with only 12 per cent putting money on better training for their employees, according to the National Business Survey involving more than 700 local and foreign companies. Some SMEs lack the capabilities to draw up and implement training plans for their workers. The tight labour market also makes them hesitant to invest in their workers’ training as these newly workers can easily leave for another job.
Passage 1, Paragraph 5 Lifelong learning need not be restricted to one’s work to generate powerful benefits. (Line 27)	When we pursue mastery of a new skill or hobby, we enrich our lives, whether we are a teenager or a retiree. Sometimes lifelong learning is simply a necessity. For example, the Covid-19 pandemic has led to older citizens learning how to use various communication tools to keep in touch with their families, whether it is learning how to video call or use Whatsapp or Zoom.	NA
Passage 1, Paragraph 6 For governments, supporting learning in later life helps to delay the onset of dependency among rapidly ageing populations; (Lines 33-34)	With Singapore being an ageing population, the government has been trying to ensure that the older workers remain employable even after they reach the retirement age, with initiatives to help with retraining and reskilling. The retirement age in Singapore has also been raised in an effort to relieve economic pressure on the working population.	The initiatives such as those launched under SkillsFuture and the setting up of the National Jobs Council amount to billions. This is no small sum and can be argued to be a huge risk as if the older workers are unable to find employment despite having been retrained, they would further burden the system.
Passage 1, Paragraph 6 Lifelong learning...plays an important role in overcoming inequality and exclusion; (Line 34)	As Singapore aims to become an advanced economy and inclusive society, it is important to equip every citizen, regardless of their background, with the necessary skills to thrive. The fact that every Singaporean above the age of 25 has been given SkillsFuture credits is testament to this. There are also government-funded skills training schemes such as Workforce Singapore’s Professional Conversion Programmes which are aimed to help mid-career	Those who earn lower incomes may not have the time nor the financial means to engage in lifelong learning. The \$500 SkillsFuture credits given by the government is often insufficient to cover the costs of retraining.

From the passages	Agree	Disagree
	workers make a job switch, as well as help professionals prepare for new jobs in the new economy.	
Passage 1, Paragraph 6 and supports inter-generational learning, creating more resilient families and communities. (Line 35)	If the elderly are able to learn new skills and earn an income, they would relieve the financial pressure on their children, many of whom comprise the 'sandwich generation'. More income streams in a family would also contribute to greater financial stability. The current Covid-19 pandemic has also seen the Singaporean government commit billions towards helping job seekers of all ages cope with the worsening labour market prospects, with initiatives such as SGUnited Mid-Career Traineeships and Adapt and Grow.	It is not easy for the elderly to reskill so often. Many of them are involved in manual labour or menial jobs and these job scopes are susceptible to frequent shifts due to automation and human labour being made redundant. Constant upgrading is thus deemed troublesome.
Passage 2, Paragraph 3 The truth is that reversing the process of skills obsolescence requires overcoming psychological and intellectual barriers that are too often ignored. (Lines 15-16)	Being made redundant or having one's skills deemed outdated is a huge blow to one's self-esteem. It would seem that many years of hard work have gone to waste and one might even experience a sense of betrayal by the system. There is also a certain stigma attached to having to go for retraining or to seek career guidance, especially among older workers.	The Workforce Singapore agency tries to overcome such barriers by providing comprehensive career guidance and job search services. The WSG provides career counselling services from professional career coaches, and one can sign up for workshops and networking events. By working with WSG's career coaches, one can also personalise one's career plan to achieve their goals, get unbiased feedback on their blind spots, and acquire job search skills to stand out from other candidates.
Passage 2, Paragraph 3 Lifelong learning is thus dreaded because it is viewed as extremely costly in terms of time, money, and effort, and the returns are regarded as highly uncertain, especially amid technological disruption. (Lines 16-18)	One main reason why many SMEs are reluctant to invest in their workers' training is that these newly workers can easily leave for another job after receiving training. The speed at which technology develops and disrupts also makes it tricky for workers to decide what new skills are needed for the future.	Lifelong learning may be costly in the short term, but it would eventually pay off later. For instance, workers who choose to develop industry-relevant skills during a weaker hiring climate would boost their employability in the eventual recovery.
Passage 2, Paragraph 4 The reason why today's training programmes for older workers are ineffective is partly because they usually target those abilities most apparent in the young. (Lines 30-32)	Being digital natives, the young would naturally find it easier to process new information as they are used to rapid shifts in technology.	Necessity is a great motivator for learning so as long as the older workers see the usefulness of what they have to learn, they will work to overcome any inhibitions or inertia they may have. For example, with the launching of SG Digital Office, seniors, hawkers and market

From the passages	Agree	Disagree
		vendors have been able to learn digital skills such as e-payment which are highly useful to them.
<p>Passage 2, Paragraph 4</p> <p>For companies, retraining a workforce becomes too challenging, hence when new skills are needed, they turn to alternatives like automation and outsourcing instead. (Lines 32-33)</p>	<p>Ageism does exist in Singapore as there is the pervasive assumption that an older worker is less productive regardless of his actual abilities. Older workers may be stereotypically ranked lower in creativity, alertness, health, ambition, physical strength and productivity while ranked higher in susceptibility to accidents, and resistance to innovation and change. Hence a company would turn to cheaper alternatives such as automation and outsourcing, instead of investing their current older workers. Says National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) assistant secretary-general Patrick Tay: "Based on labour market statistics and reports, we have seen that our middle-career workers continue to be the most vulnerable and affected by retrenchments, with higher skilled, middle-aged PMEs the hardest hit."</p>	<p>Not all companies can afford automation. Neither do all turn to outsourcing as nearly a million of Singapore's 1.42 million foreign workforce today are work permit holders in low-wage, low-skilled positions. More companies are in fact willing to send current workers for retraining, especially with the government giving more subsidies for SMEs to do so.</p>
<p>Passage 2, Paragraph 5</p> <p>The assumption that workers, regardless of their age and educational background, will independently do what it takes to keep up with technological change is a fallacy that risks creating an army of unemployed citizens. (Lines 35-37)</p>	<p>Many older workers are resistant towards the idea of learning new skills, particularly if it has to do with technology due to their anxieties/phobia surrounding technology. According to the MOM's latest job vacancies report, the top PMET vacancies in 2019 included software, web, and multimedia developers, and systems analysts - both roles which require technical skills. Yet, tech-related roles which are in huge demand are getting more technical in nature, and it is not easy to pick these skills up.</p>	<p>It is arguable that the rate that technology is disrupting the jobs economy is rapid enough to force people to keep up with the changes. There is a plethora of avenues for Singaporeans to tap on as well, one being Skills Ignition SG, a new jobs and skills training initiative launched in July 2020 by tech giant Google in conjunction with government agencies EDB, IMDA and SkillsFuture Singapore. This initiative covers two programmes targeted at entry-level and mid-career workers to prepare them for jobs related to digital marketing and cloud technology.</p>

Application Question (10 marks)

Marks	Descriptors
Band 1 8 – 10	<p>1 REQUIREMENTS: Systematic reference to the requirements of the question with evidence of a balanced treatment.</p> <p>2 EXPLANATION: Shows a good or very good understanding of terms and issues.</p> <p>3 EVALUATION: Makes very convincing evaluation by making judgements and decisions and by developing arguments to logical conclusions, and includes elaboration and support through personal insight and apt illustration.</p> <p>4 COHERENCE: Very clear shape and paragraph organisation and cogent argument.</p>
Band 2 4 – 7	<p>1 REQUIREMENTS: Covers requirements of the question adequately but not necessarily a balanced treatment.</p> <p>2 EXPLANATION: Shows an adequate level of understanding of terms and issues (which may include minor distortion).</p> <p>3 EVALUATION: Evaluation is attempted but is not always convincing, and tends to be superficial with limited development of ideas, and is not as thorough in support.</p> <p>4 COHERENCE: Paragraphing is sometimes helpful and there is a recognisable over-all shape to the answer; arguments are generally cogent.</p>
Band 3 1 – 3	<p>1 REQUIREMENTS: An incomplete and/or unbalanced treatment of the requirements.</p> <p>2 EXPLANATION: Shows very limited degree of understanding and a higher incidence of misinterpretation.</p> <p>3 EVALUATION: Tends to be a mere summary of restatement of the text with a few simple and undeveloped judgements, with very thin support.</p> <p>4 COHERENCE: Paragraphing and organisation are haphazard; arguments inconsistent or illogical.</p>
0	Nothing in the answer meets any of the criteria.

Use of English (15 marks)

- Assessment must be based on the individual candidate's performance across the whole paper.
- Generally, look for sentence length, the range and variety of vocabulary, and the incidence, range and severity of the following types of error: spelling, vocabulary, tense, number, sentence construction.
- Apply the 'best fit' principle when not all the descriptors of a single band are found within a script.

Marks	Descriptors
Band 1 12 – 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very good to excellent linguistic ability: very few serious errors; only a few slips or minor errors. • Assured command of language: it is clear, fluent, effective and appropriate throughout. • Answers are cogent, concise and well organised. A wide variety of apt vocabulary is used and sentence structure is inventive, developed and appropriate. • There is a sustained attempt to rephrase the text language for all the answers.
Band 2 8 – 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good to very good linguistic ability: a number of errors of various kinds but they do not seriously impede the flow of the writing. • Competent command of language: the Candidate usually writes in convincing and idiomatic English, with some positive merits. • Vocabulary and sentence structures are varied and appropriate but not necessarily outstanding. • There is a noticeable attempt to avoid the text language for all the answers.
Band 3 4 – 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfactory / mediocre linguistic ability: errors of various kinds are frequent but the English is for the most part intelligible. • Moderate command of language: the English is at times halting, repetitive and generally insecure. • Misuse of vocabulary and/or breakdown of syntax or grammar. Only simple statements attempted successfully. • There are recognisable but limited attempts to rephrase the text language in the answers.
Band 4 1 – 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak linguistic ability: frequent and serious errors of various kinds, rendering the English muddled or unintelligible at times. • Very poor command of language. • Widespread misuse of vocabulary; sentence linking is inappropriate or haphazard. • Answers mostly comprise wholesale copying of the text language. Any attempts to use own language are limited to single word expressions.