

2020 CJC General Paper Preliminary Examinations
Paper 2 Answer Scheme

From Passage 1

1. In paragraph 1, why is boredom a significant problem today? Use your own words as far as possible. (2m) [Direct]

From the Passage	Suggested Paraphrase
Being trapped in a tedious job, with no possibility of escape, is a recipe for real boredom. This kind of boredom is unpleasant and definitely bad for us. But a flurry of recent media interest on the subject of boredom suggests that (a) it is a frequent experience that (b) really bothers people and (c) is not limited to the workplace. This must tell us something about contemporary life.	<p>Boredom is...</p> <p>(a) Regularly/usually/often/commonly/routinely/consistently encountered/recurring/norm/part and parcel of modern life,</p> <p>DNA: "widespread" (not about frequency)</p> <p>(b) Negatively affects/ disturbs/annoys/irritates people significantly/greatly/ very much/genuinely/truly</p> <p>DNA: "affects" (too neutral); "harms" (goes beyond meaning of original)</p> <p>(c) and goes beyond/is not confined to the office/work environment/our occupations/careers (accepted lift: work)</p> <p>B.O.D.: Boredom is anywhere/everywhere/prevalent/widespread</p> <p>DNA: "scope of our occupations" (narrow meaning); "places of work" (lift)</p> <p>Note: The following phrases are not accepted as answers because they do not explain <u>why</u> boredom is a significant problem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "being trapped in a tedious job, with no possibility of escape" merely sets the context and describes the state of boredom - "unpleasant and definitely bad for us" merely describes boredom as a significant problem <p>1-2pts = 1m; 3pts = 2m</p>

2. Explain what the author means by "digital detox" (2m) [Inferential]

From the Passage	Suggested Paraphrase
One of the defining features of today's culture is the near ubiquity of mobile digital technology, and smart phones in particular. To be able to be transported to any time or place, real or virtual, to access unlimited information and entertainment, or to carry out unfettered communication , is an extraordinary possibility, with untold positive potential. Nevertheless, increasing numbers of people now sense that constant connection is not good for them and feel the need for a "digital detox".	<p><u>Meaning: 'Detox'</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Detox refers to a process or period of time in which one abstains from or rids the body of toxic or unhealthy substances <p><u>Context: 'Digital Detox'</u></p> <p>(a) By referring to digital detox, the author is suggesting that as a result of the potential harm of continuous/regular/perpetual/prolonged/recurring use of devices, [1]</p> <p>Accept: "interact with people" for "connection" Note: Answer must capture idea of "constant"</p> <p>(b) there is a need for people to abstain from technology for a period for their benefit [1]</p> <p>Accepted lift: "digital"</p> <p>DNA: "toxic" (lift); "communicate" (lift); "access" (lift)</p>

3. Explain the paradox in paragraph 3. (2m) [Inferential]

From the Passage	Suggested Paraphrase
<p>Turning to one's smart phone in order to fill or kill time in the hiatuses of life has become a widespread, unthinking habit, an automatic response to a lull in activity. It is a distraction from the impatience of waiting for time to pass.</p> <p>Paradoxically, such an attempt to avoid boredom, may, it seems, actually result in a kind of dissatisfaction, which is itself experienced as boredom.</p>	<p>By diverting our attention to our technological devices...</p> <p>Accepted lift: "smart phone"</p> <p>1) <u>Satisfaction vs dissatisfaction</u> (a) [Expectations]: We would expect that we would get pleasure/entertainment, [1] (b) [Reality]: instead, it brings about a sense of discontent/unhappiness [1]</p> <p>OR</p> <p>2) <u>Escape boredom vs greater boredom</u> (a) [Expectations]: We would escape boredom/be kept occupied/less bored [1] (b) [Reality]: instead, it actually still brings about boredom [1]</p> <p><i>Answers must capture subject of "turning to one's smart phone"</i> <i>Accepted lift: "boredom", "time"</i> <i>DNA: "avoid" (lift), "experience" (lift)</i> <i>0m if wrong pair of expectations and reality identified (e.g. 1a + 2b)</i></p>

4. Using material from paragraphs 4-6 only (lines 17-32), summarise what the author has to say about the benefits of boredom.

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.

One benefit of boredom is...

Pt	From the Passage	Suggested Paraphrase
a	<u>Paragraph 4</u> the chance, instead, to withdraw for a while (line 18)	...it is a temporary/momentary retreat/get away for a short time/period/to take a break
b	is an important opportunity to recharge mental batteries . (line 18)	Significant/essential possibility/prospect/platform to rejuvenate ourselves/ regain our psychological/ intellectual strength or to rest our minds DNA: "chance" (lift of a)
c	Moments when there seems to be "nothing to do" are times when we can turn inwards (line 19-20)	To reflect/focus/meditate/face on our thoughts/emotions/spiritual health/soul/being/internal life accept any answer with the meaning of some internal aspect of one's self)
d	to reestablish our relationship with ourselves (line 20)	Reconnect (the prefix re- is important) with ourselves/our identity/thoughts/emotions/spiritual health/soul/being/internal life (accept any answer with the meaning of some internal aspect of one's self) <i>Accepted lift: ourselves</i>
e	and cultivate an inner life . (line 20)	Develop/nurture/foster/inculcate/improve our thoughts/emotions/spiritual health/soul/being/internal life (accept any answer with the meaning of some internal aspect of one's self) <i>DNA: "enhance" (wrong meaning); "life" on its own</i>

<u>Paragraph 5</u>		
f	We can revisit past experiences,	Return to/relive/reminisce previous encounters/moments/memories DNA: “refresh” (lift of g)
g	enjoy them afresh,	Appreciate previous encounters again / once more DNA: “new”, “joy” (lift)
h	maybe see them in a different light	View them from/form an alternate/another perspective
i	and gain new understanding,	Learn from them / Acquire an original/novel/more/deeper comprehension/appreciation/knowledge/ insight of things DNA: fresh (lift from g), different (lift)
j	or rethink future plans.	Re-evaluate/reconsider/reflect on our aims / goals DNA: schedules (too specific)
k	Such times also offer us the chance to be fully in the here and now.	Give us the opportunity to completely live in the present/moment/ seize the day
l	We can look around and notice new details,	To see/capture/identify/pay attention to /gain an awareness/ be conscious of/ learn about novel features / elements / information / changes in our surroundings/space/area DNA: “fresh” (Lift from point g); “take note” (lift); “differences” (lift) <i>*idea of “environment” must be captured at least once across points l, m,n and o</i>
m	developing our familiarity with our own environment	Growing/becoming close/ drawing near /getting used to/ adapt to / become comfortable with to our surroundings/space/area <i>*idea of “environment” must be captured at least once across points l, m,n and o</i>
n	and our sense of belonging to it (the environment)	And attached/connected to / identifying with / feeling included in our surroundings/space/area DNA: sense of identity <i>*idea of “environment” must be captured at least once across points l, m,n and o</i>
o	and it (the environment) to us.	And vice versa (accept only if point n is mentioned and accurately paraphrased) Relationship/connection of our surroundings/space/area to us <i>Allow lift of “to us”</i> <i>*idea of “environment” must be captured at least once across points l, m,n and o</i>

p	This (developing our sense of belonging to the environment) is important for well-being .	which is essential/necessary for our welfare/health/ happiness DNA: if this point is linked to boredom rather than our sense of belonging to the environment
q1	A longer period with time on our hands can lead to the discovery of a new interest	Boredom enables us to find / uncover a novel passion/ activity/ hobby/ pastime , Note: the idea of “new” is not needed as “find/uncover” already entails the meaning of “new” <i>Point q1 alone (without q2) will not be accepted</i>
q2	– if it is not frittered away with distractions .	provided it is not wasted on other preoccupations/ interruptions Accepted lift: “if” <i>Point q2 alone (without q1) will not be accepted</i>

Paragraph 6

r	While boredom signifies a lack of stimulus, gaps and pauses in engagement are potentially of great personal value .	Momentary lapses in activity or being occupied with something holds significant prospects / is significantly treasured/prized for / of significant worth to the individual .
s	People who fully appreciate this are those who say they never get bored: they are always able to find something that interests them to think about	They can consistently discover things/ideas/activities that attract/appeal to them to ponder over/reflect/muse on/mull over/consider DNA: “ability”, “enable”, “fascinates”
t	or do,	Or to complete/execute/perform/take action
u	or can find contentment in simply being.	Boredom allows one to gain/obtain/feel fulfilment/satisfaction/enjoyment/happiness in life/in one’s existence DNA: “gratitude” / “thankfulness” <i>Accepted lift: “simply being”</i>
v	In business parlance, time is money, but time has its own intrinsic value .	While some believe that time should not be wasted, having time is beneficial due to its inherent worth
w	We need to learn to appreciate and enjoy raw time as a precious resource.	Time is a cherished/prized/rare asset. Accepted lift: time

Total possible points: 24

Point	1-2	3-4	5-6	7	8-9	10-11	12-13	14+
Marks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

5. In paragraph 6, how does the author support his idea that “land which is allowed to lie fallow from time to time becomes more productive” (lines 40-41)? (2) [Direct]

From the Passage	Suggested Paraphrase
<p>Viewing unassigned time as a positive asset encourages the development of inner resources, such as curiosity, playfulness, imagination, perseverance and agency, out of which all sorts of fulfilling activities can emerge. In fact, a number of professionals in the creative industry have spoken of the benefit of being idle for their craft. For example, novelist Neil Gaiman finds that getting really bored is the best way to come up with new ideas, and because constant social networking makes boredom impossible he committed himself to a period offline.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Farmers learnt long ago that land which is allowed to lie fallow from time to time becomes more productive. It seems that the same can be true of the human mind.</p>	<p>The author supports his assertion by referring to the example of...</p> <p>a1) professionals/those who work in the creative industry who pledged to keep away from digital devices/websites/applications</p> <p>OR</p> <p>a2) the novelist who detached himself from the virtual world/ keep away from digital devices/websites/applications that allowed him/them to interact with other users/find people with similar interests to one's own. (1)</p> <p><i>Acceptable lift: novelists, professionals, creative industry, Neil Gaiman</i></p> <p><i>DNA: “idle” (lift); “social (media)” (lift)</i></p> <p>(b) which effectively enabled him/them to innovate / be innovative / come up with fresh /innovative / groundbreaking / alternative / different perspectives/concepts/ plans/thoughts/ storylines for his/their writing OR improve their skill (1)</p> <p><i>DNA: “new” (lift); “creative [without reference to industry]” (lift)</i></p>

From Passage 2

6. What is the purpose of Sandi Mann's experiment in paragraph 1? Use your own words as far as possible. (1m) [Direct]

From the Passage	Suggested Paraphrase
<p>I have met lots of people with a talent to bore in my time, but psychologist Sandi Mann is one of the few to have honed it as a craft. Eager volunteers visiting her lab may be asked to carry out less-than-thrilling chores like copying out lengthy lists of telephone numbers. They mostly tolerate the task politely, she says, but their shuffling bottoms and regular yawns prove they are hardly relishing the experience. Their agony is Science's gain, though, since Mann wants to understand the profound effect that boredom may have on our lives.</p>	<p>Its purpose is to help us investigate/research/discover/ comprehend/learn/gain knowledge/insights about the severe/deep/far-reaching/complex/significant/ immense/extreme impact/implications of boredom in Man's life. [1]</p> <p>DNA: “observe”, “highlight”, “emphasize”, “long-term”</p>

7. According to paragraph 2, what are the effects of boredom? Use your own words as far as possible. (3m) [Direct]

From the Passage	Suggested Paraphrase
<p>Boredom, it turns out, can be (a) a dangerous and disruptive state of mind that damages your health – and even (b) cuts years off your lifespan. Almost from the very beginning, it became clear that this state of mind could (c) 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. (c) That is not to mention more mundane but equally unhealthy behaviours, such as comfort-eating your way through tedium. The overall effect of boredom on your (b) 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 (b) the people who are most likely to get bored were 30% more likely to have died over the next three years.</p>	<p>Boredom</p> <p>a) ruins/ severely affects one's overall / mental and physical well-being, [1]</p> <p>DNA: "mindset" (wrong meaning)</p> <p>b) shortens one's life/ leads to earlier death / increased number of early deaths, [1]</p> <p>DNA: "new" (lift);</p> <p>c) and results in self-destructive acts / habits [1] (must capture the idea of detrimental to self; do not accept specific examples)</p> <p>Accepted lift: "themselves"</p> <p>DNA: behaviour (lift); harm (lift); life expectancy (lift); lifespan (lift); "unhealthy" (lift); "harm" (lift)</p>

8. Explain the author's use of the word "rollercoaster". (2m) [Inferential]

From the Passage	Suggested Paraphrase
<p>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 is not enough of a rollercoaster to hold their attention.</p>	<p>(a) [Literal meaning] A rollercoaster with its many tight turns and steep slopes brings extreme thrill. [1]</p> <p>(b) [Context] The author is highlighting the fact that a stable life is not sufficiently thrilling/exciting to engage people. [1] (answer must capture idea of "not enough")</p> <p>Acceptable lift: "life"</p> <p>DNA: "not enough of a" / "not... enough" (lift)</p>

9. Why does the author use the word 'admittedly' in Line 24? [Inferential] (1m)

From the Passage	Suggested Paraphrase
<p>Admittedly, we should be cautious about looking for an immediate escape from boredom. While boredom 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 push us to take risks that eventually hurt us - such as seeking pain, seemingly to break up the tedium. This same search for an escape</p>	<p>(a) [Literal meaning] "Admittedly" means used to express a concession or recognition/acknowledgment that something is the case.</p> <p>(b) [Context] The author is conceding that, while boredom is bad, we need to be wary of trying to avoid it too quickly/hastily.</p>

explains why bored people turn to unhealthy behaviours.	(a) + (b) = 1m
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10. What contrast does the author draw between the perceived and actual impact of boredom? [Direct] (2)

From the Passage	Suggested Paraphrase
It would be wise to question whether there are more serious, long-term issues that are causing us to feel disengaged. Priming people to feel their lives have a greater purpose and meaning tends to make them less bored. Although our feelings of tedium during a work meeting or family gathering might seem superficial annoyances, they could therefore be a symptom of a deeper existential crisis and need for fulfilment that extends far beyond immediate circumstances. 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.	<p>Contrast: severity of impact</p> <p>(a) The feelings of monotony developed at a job or family event might appear to be insignificant irritations [1]</p> <p>(b) However these reflect/ are a sign of/ effect of a more profound/serious predicament regarding the meaning and purpose of life [1] (answer must capture the comparative element of meaning in “deeper”)</p> <p><i>DNA: “the reality is that it is not.” / “side-effect”</i></p> <p><i>If no/wrong contrast identified, award 0m. If contrast identified, award 1m for each point successfully paraphrased.</i></p> <p><i>0m for identifying contrast between “immediate circumstances” vs “long term issues” (causes rather than impact of boredom)</i></p>

11. Teresa Belton argues that boredom can be good for people, while David Robson highlights the detriments of it.

How far do you agree or disagree with the views expressed in the two passages? Support your answer with examples drawn from your own experience and that of your society.

Suggested Answers:

Passage 1: Boredom is good for you			
Para	Main Claim	Largely Agree	Largely Disagree
4	In our hectic lives, in which we are bombarded by attention-grabbing external stimuli, the chance, instead, to withdraw for a while is an important opportunity to recharge mental batteries. Moments when there seems to be “nothing to do” are times when we can turn inwards, to reestablish our relationship with ourselves and cultivate an inner life.	e.g. Silent retreats where participants take a vow of silence for a given time. By removing distractions and verbal communication i.e. removing many of the noises we can have control over, participants can reach a deep level of solitary contemplation and personal reflection. Several studies back up the connection between silent meditation and mindfulness, which can boost immune system health, benefit people with insomnia, and improve quality of life.	
5	We can revisit past experiences, enjoy them afresh, maybe see them in a different light and gain new understanding, or	As Singaporeans face increasing pressure from work and family commitments, there is a greater tendency to focus on what requires immediate attention (the tight	The author might have generalised too quickly, assuming that one’s past experiences are positive/happy ones that can be enjoyed, and that in revisiting

	<p>rethink future plans. Such times also offer us the chance to be fully in the here and now.</p> <p>Main idea: Time taken for self-reflection or recollection can bring us pleasure and opportunities to learn from our past, and potentially help us to recalibrate our plans for the future.</p> <p>Being in the present moment, or the “here and now,” allows us to be aware and mindful of what is happening at this very moment. We are not distracted by ruminations on the past or worries about the future, but centered in the here and now.</p>	<p>deadlines to be met at work and in school, for adults, to take care of their parents and their families), and this has resulted in many individuals neglecting their own psychological and emotional needs. When faced with such intense pressure, this could result in unhappiness that adults all too often shrug off, as they perceive that they do not have the time and space to address these or to reflect on their life and their needs, assuming that these require dedicated time and space. If individuals could view such short moments of ‘boredom’ as ‘me-time’ and seize such opportunities to reflect on happy incidents, reflect on where they are at now and, their achievements, or reflect on what makes them unhappy and what they could do to change things, these moments might prove to be most beneficial/ productive in giving them some much needed respite for that day, energising them for the next few hours, or come up with ways to address certain issues they are facing at the moment..</p>	<p>some of these experiences when one is bored, he or she would be able to gain some satisfaction.</p> <p>It is indeed true that in moments of idleness, we could end up thinking about our past, or something that we encounter in our idle state (e.g. a song that one might hear on radio, or a cafe that we pass on a bus ride home) could trigger a memory and in these moments of reflection, past experiences that are unpleasant or even traumatic could inadvertently trigger stressors that could bring some distress. For such cases, it might be more valuable to be constantly kept preoccupied or distracted with what they are interested in, rather than making use of such moments of boredom to recollect or be in the moment.</p> <p>Others who are facing much pressure at the moment would also prefer to be distracted and kept busy as being ‘centered in the here and now’ might not be helpful in giving them peace of mind. This would be particularly difficult for those who have been retrenched or are at risk of losing their jobs.</p> <p>E.g. The impact on the economy and livelihood creates real financial stress for many to meet basic needs, and the widespread impact limits our ability to seek alternative means of income. This creates a sense of helplessness and even hopelessness. https://stayprepared.sg/mymentalhealth/articles/impact-of-covid-19-on-mental-health/ In such a situation, a state of boredom and idleness might lead to the worries about our health, loss of income and employment, overwhelming and potentially consuming us, such that these emotions can trigger or exacerbate certain mental health symptoms such as depression, anxiety, anger and even post-traumatic stress disorder. In the worst case scenario, if an individual loses his sense of purpose in life, the</p>
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			consequences might be dire. [As reflected by Robson in Para 2 on the impact of boredom on our state of mind]
7	Viewing unassigned time as a positive asset encourages the development of inner resources, such as curiosity, playfulness, imagination, perseverance and agency, out of which all sorts of fulfilling activities can emerge. In fact, a number of professionals in the creative industry have spoken of the benefit of being idle for their craft.	Disengaging increases brain activity. In an experiment conducted by neurologist Marcus Raichle, it was found that when subjects performed specific tasks, activity in certain brain regions, like the hippocampus, medial prefrontal cortex, and the precuneus, was suppressed.” And when they were not given a specific task to complete, the result was the exact opposite - the regions that were deactivated during concentration become super active when not focused on a specific task—this means increased blood flow in your brain—this means a healthier, happier, more creative brain. In neuroscience, this network of brain regions that become so active during idleness is referred to as the Default Mode Network (DMN) or the Resting State Network (RSN). For e.g. Social media users got creative while staying at home, as they adapted to a new normal in Singapore under the "circuit breaker" measures to help fight the coronavirus engaging in .finger painting and cooking to doing stretches with their pets.	

Passage 2: Why boredom is detrimental

Para	Main Claim	Largely Agree	Largely Disagree
4	That search for an escape could push us to take risks that eventually hurt us - such as seeking pain, seemingly to break up the tedium.		Such a view finds limited resonance in Singapore, perhaps due to our conformist and risk-averse culture. While many in Singapore do find boredom unpleasant, we generally do not feel compelled to engage in risky behaviour to divert ourselves. This is especially so since deviant and unhealthy behaviours are considered socially unacceptable and frowned upon by our conservative society. Among many others, Robson mentioned smoking, alcoholism and drug use

			<p>as examples of risky acts that bored people turn to. Yet Singapore boasts one of the lowest drug abuse rates in the world and drinking culture and tobacco use is far less prevalent here than most other countries. This suggests that Robson's claim does not bear out in my society. Moreover, with many entertainment options on offer, Singaporeans do not need to turn to risky behaviours to escape boredom.</p>
5	<p>One unhealthy behaviour is that boredom may drive people to look for instant gratification on a smartphone or tablet, which is counter-productive.</p>	<p>Singapore is known for its unending drive for efficiency and productivity, which has produced people who are uneasy with the idea of sitting still and doing nothing, even momentarily. When unoccupied, individuals in Singapore instinctively turn to their devices for entertainment or work, instead of reaping the benefits of boredom. This has fueled smartphone addiction. A 2017 study by consultancy Ernst & Young revealed that people in Singapore spend over twelve hours on gadgets daily to work, play games and browse social media and the Internet. A third of all respondents admitted to being addicted to smartphones and tablets. Ironically, this knee-jerk reaction to whip out our smartphones to maximise the value of every free minute has actually made us less fruitful in our use of time.</p>	<p>Singaporeans have been creative in finding ways to manage their boredom and to even utilise their time on digital devices in a meaningful and responsible way. There are many websites and links (albeit, online) that share a wide range of activities from sports to skills courses and sightseeing) for people of all ages to experience. During the circuit breaker period, websites such as The Honeycombers shared ideas on how to benefit from online sites and virtual experiences (i.e. visiting museums, going on virtual tours/travelling). Also, the Smart Local is a site that provides useful tips on various locations and sites to physically visit in Singapore that provide entertainment, sporting activities, cultural and historical sightseeing. As Singaporeans are looking for things to do or see to enjoy some quiet time away from the demands of work, these platforms are important for them to find meaningful ways to address their feeling of boredom.</p>
6	<p>Although our feelings of tedium during a work meeting or family gathering might seem superficial annoyances, they could therefore be a symptom of a deeper existential crisis and need for fulfilment that extends far beyond immediate circumstances.</p>	<p>Boredom is linked to problems with attention. What bores us never fully engages our attention. After all, it is hard to be interested in something when you cannot concentrate on it. People with chronic attention problems, such as attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), have a high tendency for boredom. They fail to give close attention to details or have difficulty sustaining attention in a task or play activity. In a classic experiment from 1989, James Laird from Clark University in Worcester, found that even low</p>	<p>Boredom may not be due to a "... deeper existential crisis and need for fulfilment that extends far beyond immediate circumstances." Becoming bored could be due to how challenging a task is, whether one has the required skills to perform it, and our knowledge on it, our interests in it, etc. Also, while our ability to focus may differ, Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) emphasises the importance of being aware of your learning styles to optimise</p>

		<p>levels of distraction such a quiet tv in the next room could lead one with ADHD concluding that a reading task is boring. This is due to a lack of focused effort to remain attentive.</p>	<p>learning. For example, pre-schools in Singapore adopt the MI approach and typically have the following classroom features: Different specialized “learning areas” that are designed to exercise and develop each type of intelligence; activities that are designed to focus on one or a few of the intelligences at a time and respect for the strengths and interests of each individual child.</p>
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