

Innova Junior College
JC 2 Preliminary Examination 2
General Paper, Paper 2
Suggested Answer Scheme

From paragraph 3

1) What is meant by 'tipping point' (line 11)? Why does the author say we 'seemed to have reached a tipping point'? [2m]

From the passage	Suggested answer
But we seem to have reached a tipping point .	It means that consumption habits are about to change significantly all over the world.
	OR
Although 'ethical' sales still only account for a tiny part of the global economy, analysts and companies firmly believe the future of retail will be green ,	'Tipping point' means when a significant change takes place leading to a new and irreversible development. / point of no turning back or point of no return. [1] (Award 1m even if context is missing)
and are rebranding and repositioning themselves accordingly.	He says so because even companies think that in time to come, there will be an increase in demand for environmentally friendly products , [1/2]
	and are thus changing their image and company philosophy to fit in [1/2]

From paragraph 4

**2) 'It would be great if this were true; but it isn't.' (lines 24-25)
What is the author regretting in this sentence? [1m]**

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
you can spend your way to a sustainable world	He regrets that the belief held by many that consumerism could be an ethical way to save the environment is actually false. [1]
OR	

'creating a world that works for everyone has never been easier. It lies in your simple shopping decisions and lifestyle habits!'

..but it isn't (true).

From paragraph 6

3) What 'fatal flaw' is the author referring to in paragraph 6 and what are its consequences?

Use your own words as far as possible. [3m]

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
<p>The fatal flaw in treating consumer-led growth as the main indicator of economic success in industrialized countries is that it assumes infinite growth is possible,</p>	<p>When the economic development in developed nations is measured chiefly in terms of people's spending [1/2], it supposes/takes for granted limitless expansion can happen/take place [1/2],</p>
<p>and doesn't take into account environmental and social limits.</p>	<p>and does not take into consideration the extent that nature and human needs allow. [1/2]</p>
<p>Consequences The oil, water, land, soil, clean air and mineral resources we depend upon are</p>	<p>Consequences The natural resources/endowments OR assets supplied by nature that we rely on [1/2]</p>
<p>under severe pressure or actively running out.</p>	<p>are over-exploited or depleting fast. [1/2] (1/2 m even if they give either one)</p>
<p>It would take more than five planets to sustain the world's current population at US consumption levels.</p>	<p>Our present usage of natural resources far exceeds/is very much more than what the earth can supply. [1/2]</p>

From paragraph 7

4) 'No one's arguing against low-energy lightbulbs' (lines 46 - 47)

What point is the author making in this sentence? [1m]

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
<p>change the entire structure of our exploitative, wasteful, resource-intensive economy;...</p> <p>purchasing more sustainable versions of the things we actually need</p> <p>has to form part of the solution.</p>	<p>While the author thinks that we should consume less, he concedes that [bonus 1/2]</p> <p>it is clear that we need to consume less energy/ be more protective of our energy needs [1/2]</p> <p>OR</p> <p>that buying environmentally friendly versions of essential products [1/2]</p> <p>must also be a way to save the earth. [1/2]</p>

From paragraph 10

5) 'are you sitting down for this?' (lines 68-69). What is the author suggesting about consumers in this question? [1m]

<p>So it's possible that the best option for the environment would be not to buy a particular item from Marks & Spencer at all, but to buy it second-hand, or maybe borrow it, or even - are you sitting down for this? - to go without it completely.</p>	<p>The writer thinks that consumers are too entrenched in their shopping habits [1/2] and may not be able to stop purchasing unnecessary products entirely. [1/2]</p> <p>OR</p> <p>They will be shocked/taken aback to hear [1/2] the suggestion to stop purchasing unnecessary products entirely. [1/2]</p> <p>OR</p> <p>They will find the suggestion to stop purchasing unnecessary products entirely [1/2] inconceivable/preposterous/unbelievable. [1/2]</p>
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6) Why is 'responsible' in inverted commas in line 71? [1m]

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
The voluntary nature of 'responsible' business is another severe limitation.	The inverted commas show that the word 'responsible' is used ironically OR the writer has reservations about/doubts the validity of the claim [1/2] as the problems that come with such business suggest that they are not so ethical after all. [1/2]

7) In paragraph 11, what are the undesirable consequences of the growth of the organics industry? [2m]

It turns out that the boom in organics, far from boosting small-scale sustainable farming around the world,	Instead of encouraging limited-sized, environmentally friendly agriculture globally, [1/2]
is industrializing the sector,	the growth of the organics industry is becoming too capital intensive/ requires too much machinery [1/2],
squeezing the small farmers out and	causing small producers to lose business and [1/2]
watering down organic standards.	compromising the quality of organic products. [1/2]

From paragraph 12

8) In paragraph 12, according to the author, when does the ethical consumerist approach work best?

Use your own words as far as possible. [1m]

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
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It is most effective when used collectively and strategically .	It works best when large numbers of a group/society take up the cause together [1/2] with a clear plan of action/objective . [1/2]
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From paragraph 13

9) Explain what the author means by ‘this particular eco-bullet is one we now have to bite.’ (lines 92-93) [2m]

From the passage	Suggested answer
Sometimes our most ethical shopping choice will be to buy nothing; to embrace the idea that less can be more.	We need to exercise responsible/prudent consumerism /reduce our consumption as the public [1/2]
But this is the one message that is not coming through clearly - from NGOs, governments, business and the media.	But the voluntary citizen groups/non-profit agencies, political leaders ,private companies and the news agencies [1/2 for any 2] are not explicitly promoting/advocating/ encouraging such behaviour [1/2]
<i>And this particular eco-bullet is one we now have to bite.</i>	Hence we now have to face the inevitable/impending environmental/ecological disaster [1/2] stoically/bravely/with fortitude. [1/2m]
	OR
	Since political leaders, non-profit agencies, companies and the mass media [1/2] are not explicitly promoting [1/2] responsible consumerism amongst the people [1/2], we now have to face the inevitable environmental disaster [1/2] bravely. [1/2]
	MAX 2m to be awarded

10) Vocab:

	1 m	½ m	0 m
Rage NOUN (line 1)	- Trend that is widely popular/fashionable	- Trend - Popular	- Anger - Fury

<p><i>'Ethical' shopping is all the rage these days.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Widespread enthusiasm - Fad/craze/fashion 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Violence - Buzz - Frenzy - Talk of the town
<p>Defensively ADVERB (line 15)</p> <p><i>'The big companies have moved into the ethical market defensively.'</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protectively - Carefully in order to safeguard/protect one's interest - Carefully in order to protect against risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cautiously - Carefully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aggressively - Protected
<p>Pontificated VERB (line 20)</p> <p><i>Irish rocker Bono, ever the self-appointed spokesperson for charitable causes, recently pontificated that: 'Shopping is politics. You vote every time you spend money.'</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preached - Lectured in a pompous manner - Spoke/expressed judgement in a pompous/dogmatic manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lectured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mentioned - Spoke - Talked - Expressed - Argued - Stated
<p>Purports VERB (line 22)</p> <p><i>New Consumer, which purports to be the 'ultimate ethical lifestyle magazine', enthuses that: 'creating a world that works for everyone has never been easier.'</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Claims/professes/asserts/declares in an apparently false manner - Alleges/claims/professes/asserts/declares in a manner that is not credible/believable - Falsely gives the appearance of being something 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Claims - Professes - Self-proclaims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Says - Asserts - Declares
<p>Seismic ADJECTIVE (line 87)</p> <p><i>Surviving the multiple impending catastrophes that</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Massive - Of enormous proportions - Very extensive and profound - Having highly significant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major - Profound - Far-reaching - Extensive - Great - Dramatic - Significant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any literal earthquake references - Very strong - Groundbreaking

<p><i>our throwaway lifestyles have triggered will involve a seismic shift in the way we live our lives.</i></p>	<p>consequences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enormous proportions - Drastic - Tremendous - Gigantic - Earthshaking - Very important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Huge - Very big - Impactful - Important
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11) Summary:

Using materials from paragraphs 8-11, summarise why and how companies turn to ethical business and the limitations of such business. [8m]

Companies turn to ethical business because...

No	Points	Paraphrased	Marks
Para 8			
1	But so much of the ethical consumption boom focuses on luxury goods : (line 48)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Companies concentrate on expensive/branded products (how) 	½
2	<p>fair trade roses grown in huge hothouses next to Kenya's Lake Naivasha, (line 49)</p> <p>sucking up precious water resources... (line 49-50)</p> <p>pointless gadgets such as solar-powered cappuccino whisks... (line 50-51)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Even though producing these goods take up land space (limit) ▪ and valuable water (limit) ▪ and create useless devices (limit) <p>(any 2 points for max 1m)</p>	<p>½</p> <p>½</p> <p>½ Max 1m</p>
3	<p>Their main impact is to make the shopper feel good – 'I'm doing something for the planet!' – (line 51-52)</p> <p>without having to change their lifestyle one bit, (line 52-53)</p> <p>while the companies laugh all the way to the bank. (line 53)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ as it makes consumers guilt-free (how) ▪ while not requiring/needing them to modify/alter their spending habits (how) ▪ which benefits businesses/reaps profits for businesses (limit) 	<p>½</p> <p>½</p> <p>½</p>
Para 9			
4	rapid conversion of big business to all things ethical is not just about exploiting a lucrative new market and (line 54-55)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Companies turn to ethical business not only to take advantage of profitable fresh demand, (why) 	½

	<p>making efficiency savings – (line 55)</p> <p>it is also a self-preservation strategy. (line 55)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ and become less wasteful (why) ▪ but also to protect their self-interest (why) 	<p>½</p> <p>½</p>
5	<p>to avoid being broken up, regulated, eco-taxed, boycotted? (line 57-58)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To evade being divided, controlled, taxed and shunned, (why) <p>Any 2 (divided, controlled, taxed or shunned)</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Without the need for governments to resort to any extreme, potentially profit-curbing measures</p>	1
6	<p>Be one step ahead of the game and (line 58)</p> <p>show you're doing the right thing (line 58-59)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ they must/have to pre-empt possible restrictions (how) or ▪ anticipate future problems ▪ and demonstrate that they are taking ethical actions (how) 	<p>½</p> <p>½</p>
Para 10			
7	<p>One way is for companies to do what is known as 'choice editing'... unethical options are removed from the market, 'edited out' by the company, (line 61-63)</p> <p>reducing consumer choice in pursuit of the greater good.... Just don't offer them as an option to consumers. It's as simple as that. (line 63-65)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Companies can choose not to sell non-environmentally-friendly/morally wrong products (how) ▪ Thus decreasing buyers' options for the sake of a wider benefit/of the environment OR ▪ thus increasing the option for more ethical alternatives (how) 	<p>½</p> <p>½</p>
8	<p>The problem is that this approach relies on the company to really do what is most ethical which from time to time will inevitably contradict what will make them money. (line 65-66)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not selling products unavoidably goes against the profit motive (limit) OR 	½

	<p>OR</p> <p>Given that the company exists to sell stuff, (line 69)</p> <p>So it's possible that the best option for the environment would be not to buy a particular item from Marks & Spencer at all, but to buy it second-hand, or maybe borrow it, or even - are you sitting down for this? - to go without it completely. (line 66-69)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>it's hard to imagine 'don't buy this' appearing as one of the edited options. (line 69-70)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> And (but) the role of the business is to make profits (limit) To save the natural surrounding/nature we should avoid consumerism. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The needs of nature are incompatible with businesses (limit) <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They are unlikely to employ this method/use to stop anyone from purchasing (limit) <p>Max 1m</p>	½
Para 11 (All limitations)			
9	<p>The voluntary nature of 'responsible' business is another severe limitation. It turns out that the boom in organics, (line 71-72)</p> <p>far from boosting small-scale sustainable farming around the world (line 72)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethical business is not required/ mandatory/ or merely optional It does not encourage limited-sized, environmentally friendly agriculture globally 	½ ½
10	<p>is industrializing the sector ... (line 73)</p> <p>squeezing the small farmers out and (line 73)</p> <p>watering down organic standards. (line 73)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> But it is becoming too capital intensive/involves intensive machinery Smaller producers are muscled out of the market/lose business and the quality of organic products are compromised 	½ ½ ½
11	<p>Fair trade is increasingly driven, not by the needs of poor producers, (line 74)</p> <p>but the demands of big business. (line 74-75)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fair trade does not suit/ resolve the plight of struggling farmers But is led by the needs of large corporations. 	½ ½
12	<p>'M&S went out and bought the whole lot. When fair trade roses came out, Sainsbury's got them. (line 76-77)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large companies can monopolise the supply 	½

	We were all fighting over the roses.' (line 78)	▪ And limit its (supply) availability/ increase competition	½
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12) AQ:

In this article, Jess Worth discusses the limitations of ethical consumerism.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with his views? How far do you think your society practises ethical consumerism? [8m]

To what extent do you agree or disagree with his views?

From the passage	Possible Points of Agreement	Possible Points of Disagreement
<p>'But if we do not face up to the limitations of a consumer-driven approach to solving the world's problems, openly debate the contradictions and shortcomings that are becoming increasingly clear.....takes us away from the route towards genuine global justice. '(line 28-32)</p> <p>'We need to change the entire structure of our exploitative, wasteful, resource-intensive economy; and that includes buying much less stuff.'</p> <p>No-one's arguing against low-energy lightbulbs.' (line 44-47)</p>		<p>If people try too hard to find fault with ethical consumerism, it may deter companies from wanting to be socially responsible so as not to face any backlash from the public. This may set us back even further in our "route towards genuine global justice".</p> <p>Disagree. Resources that are required to sustain the environment will be reduced if consumers do not buy these items. Companies will not have the incentive to go into ethical businesses since there are no profit margins. They can then contribute to unethical businesses.</p>
'The problem with the concept of 'ethical consumerism' is that it's		Ethical consumerism can be a logical statement. It can support environmentally friendly practices

something of an oxymoron' (line 33)		such as growing coffee in a responsible manner. Eg: The Body Shop, Starbucks
'ethical consumption boom focuses on luxury goods'(line 48)	The luxury business is a competitive one and this is one of the marketing strategies. High net worth consumers, given their resources, are often targeted to get them to do something for the environment. However, luxury brands also have a reputation for exploiting workers, such as low wages, exposure to harmful chemicals (Eg: Gucci). Luxury = not necessity	
'the rapid conversion of big business to all things ethical... a self-preservation strategy' (line 54-55)	Harmful industries such as those in the petrochemical industries have always been an avid supporter of environmental causes. (Eg: Shell, BP, tobacco companies)	
'unethical options are removed from the market, ...reducing consumer choice in pursuit of the greater good... Just don't offer them as an option to consumers. It's as simple as that.' (line 62-65)		If it means consumers end up buying more environmentally friendly products (even if it is because they have no other choice), 'forced responsible shopping' may be worth the price of reduction in consumer choice (for the good of the environment). This is particularly true with goods which have become more a necessity than a luxury item such as light bulbs.
<p>'What ethical consumerism can accomplish is limited in many different ways.' (line 26)</p> <p>'The problem is that this approach relies on the company to really do what is most ethical, which from time to time will inevitably contradict what will make them money.' (line 65-66)</p>	<p>Leaving the 'ethical decision' to companies may indeed not be good. Apart from the issue of a conflict of interest ('doing what is ethical' and company bottomline) which the writer raises, there is the issue of the lack of responsibility and awareness on the consumers' part.</p> <p>Consumerism is ultimately driven market demand and profit margins. It is difficult for companies to balance their</p>	Granted there is a tenuous line that separates companies' desire to be socially responsible and to bring in profits, there is no denying that ethical consumerism can accomplish some good in the world however limited such good may be.

	altruistic motives and profit expectations. Hence, ethical consumerism can hit an altruistic ceiling, limiting the possible good that it can actually achieve.	
'So it's possible that the best option for the environment would be not to buy a particular item from Marks & Spencer at all, but to buy it second-hand, or maybe borrow it, or even - are you sitting down for this? - to go without it completely.' (line 66-69)	This is indeed the ideal form of ethical consumerism. Although clearly it is not applicable to all goods, if people embrace this idea, it would mean less strain on the environment through reduced production and use of natural resources and reduced waste products.	
'Fair trade is increasingly driven, not by the needs of poor producers, but the demands of big business. (line 74-75)	Beyond the problem the writer raises, Fairtrade has developed as a badge system that people can identify, buy the product and abrogate responsibility. Just because one product carries the Fairtrade mark doesn't mean that the company has a responsible social ethos. People feel good purchasing brands like The Body Shop, Ben & Jerry's and De Beers.	Fairtrade makes a major difference to millions of developing-world farmers and workers. The Fairtrade Labelling Organisation says that, in 2004, producers got an extra \$100m in revenue as a result of Fairtrade – 10% of the value of Fairtrade retail sales that year. But it's not just about prices – close co-operation with producers and the assurance of long-term contracts encourages community development in areas such as education and health. In short, there are poor farmers who benefit from Fairtrade still and this alone may make this venture worthwhile. It is not perfect but it should not be dismissed as useless either.
'as a means to change the world, the ethical consumerist approach is a blunt and imprecise tool.' (line 79)	Ethical consumerism as it is practised now is indeed an ineffective and inaccurate way of dealing with our environmental problems.	
'Surviving the multiple impending catastrophes that our throwaway lifestyles have triggered will involve a seismic shift in the way we live our lives. (line 86-88)	It will indeed require a very big shift in lifestyle for most of us, particularly in modern affluent society where the throwaway culture is well-entrenched eg. societies with excessive shopping cultures like Singapore and Dubai.	Possible for ethical consumerism to make a difference. With conscious buying comes heightened awareness of environmental, human rights and animal rights issues. Shopping is a common pastime of

	It can also be a matter of survival for societies such as the United States where 50% of the economy is made up consumer spending.	Singaporeans which makes being environmentally conscious a much easier task for Singaporeans to do on a daily basis.
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How far do you think your society practises ethical consumerism?

From the passage	How far does your society practise EC?
“The problem with the concept of 'ethical consumerism' is that it's something of an oxymoron” (line 33)	A minority of Singaporeans practice ethical consumerism by supporting these products but the movement is backed by strong and persuasive marketing strategies from companies like The Body Shop.
We need to change the entire structure of our exploitative, wasteful, resource-intensive economy; and that includes buying much less stuff. No-one's arguing against low-energy lightbulbs.’ (line 44-47)	Singapore is a rich country and many citizens are engaged in wasteful activities such as excessive purchases, evident in the viability of the many shopping malls. There is also emphasis on packaging on top of quality purchases. Given ethical purchases can sometimes cost more, (eg: Body wash from The Body Shop VS Lux soap, energy saving air-conditioners) Ethical consumerism is probably the last thing on Singaporeans' practical minds.
‘ethical consumption boom focuses on luxury goods’ (line 48)	Singaporeans do buy into this marketing strategy. The high net worth consumers could use this to get into the limelight or gain respect from their peers.
the rapid conversion of big business to all things ethical... a self-preservation strategy’ (line 54-55)	In Singapore, businesses have used ethical consumerism as marketing strategies to capture market share. (Eg: HSBC, the environmentally friendly bank to differentiate itself from the competitors)
‘So it's possible that the best option for the environment would be not to buy a particular item from Marks & Spencer at all, but to buy it second-hand, or maybe borrow it, or even - are you sitting down for this? - to go without it completely.’ (line 66-69)	Second hand culture not well-established in Singapore (except for cars) largely due to the availability and affordability of new products. Easy instalment schemes are used by businesses to attract customers to buy new products as well. (Courts, Harvey Norman, interest-free instalments, credit cards etc.)
Organics (para 11)	While the organic market is getting bigger with greater awareness among Singaporeans, not everyone is turning to organic products because they are much more expensive than the non-organic variety

	<p>and thus affordable only to the more affluent. For the majority of Singaporeans, price seems to be the biggest determining factor in making consumer choices.</p> <p>Singaporeans like the idea but are unable to embrace ethical consumerism entirely due to such restrictions. Variety is limited which is perhaps due to the small market hence creating a vicious cycle.</p>
<p>'Sometimes our most ethical shopping choice will be to buy nothing; to embrace the idea that less can be more. But this is the one message that is not coming through clearly - from NGOs, governments, business and the media.' (line 90-93)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Media influence – advertisements 2. Singaporeans love for sales 3. Great Singapore Sale & IT Fair 4. 'Endorsement' by the government – good for the economy <p>Amidst all this, it is very difficult for Singaporeans to 'embrace the idea that less is more'. They are more used to the idea of good bargain buys where the slogan is 'the more you buy, the more you save.'</p> <p>Even the choice of buying environmentally friendly products may not be available to many Singaporeans due to the high cost and the government is not doing much to improve the situation e.g. hybrid cars.</p> <p>There is token effort on the part of businesses to support ethical consumerism such as encouraging customers to bring their own reusable bags or charging a small amount for plastic bags. But in this 'city of convenience', even the reusable bag culture has not caught on among many Singaporeans although some do try to make the effort to embrace this initiative.</p>
