

NATIONAL JUNIOR COLLEGE
Senior High 2 Preliminary Examination
Higher 1

Name	
PM Class	

General Paper

Paper 2

8807/02**20 Aug 2021**

INSERT

1 hour 30 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Insert contains the passage for Paper 2.

This document consists of **3** printed pages.

Passage 1. *George Monbiot argues that people settle for careers that leave them dissatisfied.*

- 1** To seek enlightenment, intellectual or spiritual; to do good; to love and be loved; to create and to teach: these are the highest purposes of humankind. If there is meaning in life, it lies here. Those who graduate from the leading universities have more opportunity than most to find such purpose. So why do so many end up in pointless and destructive jobs? Finance, management consultancy, advertising, public relations, lobbying: these and other useless occupations consume thousands of the brightest students. To take such jobs at graduation, as many will in the next few weeks, is to amputate life close to its base. 5
- 2** I watched it happen to my peers. People who had spent the preceding years laying out exultant visions of a better world, of the grand creative projects they planned, of adventure and discovery, were suddenly sucked into the mouths of corporations dangling money like angler fish. At first they said they would do it for a year or two, ‘until I pay off my debts.’ Soon afterwards they added: ‘...and my mortgage.’ Then it became, ‘I just want to make enough not to worry anymore.’ A few years later, ‘I’m doing it for my family.’ Now, in middle age, they reply, ‘That was just a student fantasy.’ 10
- 3** Why did they not escape, when they perceived that they were being dragged away from their dreams? I have come to see the obscene hours some new recruits must work – sometimes 15 or 16 a day – as a form of reorientation, of brainwashing. You are deprived of the time, sleep and energy you need to see past the place into which you have been plunged. You lose your bearings, your attachments to the world you inhabited before, and become immersed in the culture that surrounds you. Two years of this and many are lost for life. 15
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- 4** Recruitment begins with love bombing of the kind that cults use. They sponsor sports teams and debating societies, throw parties, offer meals and drinks, send handwritten letters, use student ambassadors to offer friendship and support. They persuade undergraduates that even if they do not see themselves as consultants or bankers (few do), these jobs are stepping stones to the careers they really want. They make the initial application easy, and respond immediately and enthusiastically to signs of interest. They offer security and recognition when people are most uncertain and fearful about their future. And there is the flash of the king’s shilling: the paid internships, the golden hellos, the promise of stupendous salaries within a couple of years. Entrapment is a refined science. 25
- 5** We have but one life. However much money we make, we cannot buy it back. As far as self-direction, autonomy and social utility are concerned, many of those who enter these industries and never re-emerge might as well have dropped dead at graduation. They lost it all with one false step, taken at a unique moment of freedom. 30
- 6** Elsewhere, at this vulnerable, mutable, pivotal moment, undergraduates must rely on their own wavering resolve to resist peer pressure, the herd instinct, the allure of money, flattery, prestige and security. Students, rebel against these soul-suckers! Follow your dreams, however hard it may be, however uncertain success might seem. 35

Passage 2. *Barry Schwartz examines how work can be satisfying.*

- 1 There is the prevailing view that so few people in the world get satisfaction from their work. Many of us believe that only certain kinds of jobs permit people to find meaning, engagement, discretion, autonomy, and opportunities to learn and grow. If we take this view, satisfying work is just going to be the province of the few. For everyone else, work will be about the paycheck. It is just the way things are. Us and them. 5

- 2 Alternatively, we could take the view that what stands in the way of satisfying work is the incredible efficiency associated with routinised, assembly-line type work that was responsible for the explosive economic growth we have witnessed since the beginning of the industrial revolution. Unsatisfying work is just the price people pay for a society in which affordable cars, cell phones and computers are the norm. So either satisfying work is not for everybody, or unsatisfying work is the price we pay for material prosperity, or both. Both views seem to explain why we should not idealise the notion of satisfying work. But both views are wrong. 10

- 3 Peter Warr, a professor of work psychology, points out that to be satisfied with our work, we typically need a belief in the purpose of what we do. People who see their work as a 'job' enjoy little discretion and experience minimal engagement or meaning. People with jobs see work as a necessity of life. They work for pay, would switch jobs if given the chance to earn more money, cannot wait to retire, and would not encourage their friends or children to follow in their footsteps. People who see their work as a 'career' generally enjoy more discretion and are more engaged. They may even enjoy what they do, but their focus is on advancement. They see themselves as following a trajectory that leads to promotion, higher salary, and better work. 15 20

- 4 It is people who see their work as a 'calling' who find it most satisfying. For them, work is one of the most important parts of life, and they are pleased to be doing it. Work is a vital part of their identity; they believe their work makes the world a better place, and they would encourage their friends and children to do this kind of work. Essentially, differences in the way people approach their work are explained by the attitudes they bring to their work – the characteristics of who they are, not what the work is. 25

- 5 Few of us can find such a noble calling in what we do, but work does not need to have global impact to carry enormous meaning and satisfaction. The best waiters, plumbers, or hairdressers are proud of their ability to understand, talk to, and manage people. These people have realised the big difference their seemingly simple jobs have on others' quality of life. 'It is important to hear my client,' said one stylist. 'The consultation is the most important moment of the haircut.' 'Do not assume you know what they want,' said another stylist, 'because they may not even know what they want.' Stylists who love their work love its technical complexity and room for creativity. Another stylist observed that 'this is a business that is unlike most; there's something very nurturing about it. It is one of the few places in our society where you have permission to touch people. It is intimate. We humans have a need for connection.' 30 35

- 6 The lesson here is that virtually any job has the potential to offer people satisfaction. Jobs can be organised to include variety, complexity, skill development and growth. They can be organised to provide the people who do them with a measure of autonomy. And perhaps most importantly, they can be made meaningful by connecting them to the welfare of others. It helps if the work itself is challenging, varied and engaging. It helps if the work gives you the chance to use your skills and develop more skills. It helps if you have discretion over how you do your job. It helps if you feel that you are part of a group, with fellow workers you respect. Most importantly, it helps if the work is aimed at a valuable goal, and gives the work you do meaning and purpose. And this last characteristic – a sense of higher purpose – is indispensable. 40 45

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