

2021 J2 Prelim: Suggested SAQ Answers

1. Explain what the author means by ‘thanks to the gift of language, man is destined to be a social and political animal’ (lines 1-2). (2m)

From the passage	Suggested answer
The Greek philosopher, Aristotle, argued that thanks to the gift of language, man is destined to be a social and political animal. Yet the human instinct to socialise has always been balanced by an urge to withdraw into solitude.	(a) As we have been endowed with/given the ability to communicate, (b) we end up being fated to use it with one another for interaction/companionship (c) and affairs of the state. (a)+ (b)/(c) = 1m (a)+ (b) + (c) = 2m If (a) only, 0m (must show relationship)

2. Explain how the ‘boost in living standards’ could enable women to engage in solitary hobbies (lines 9-12). (3m) [inference+paraphrase]

From the passage	Suggested answer
Industrial society brought a spate of solitary hobbies within reach by boosting living standards and enlarging personal space. Women, with a little time on their hands, took up pastimes that had once been necessities, such as cooking, dressmaking and embroidery.	(a)With technological advancement/more use of machines that has led to a growth in wealth/improved convenience/efficiency, (b) **women were liberated/freed from essential (domestic) chores/duties [linked to (a), focus is that they have been freed from ‘necessities’, ‘necessities should not be lifted’] (c) and engaging in these activities for recreational purpose/for leisure 1m each But must minimally show relationship between two parts (b) and (c). If only one part is stated, 0m. **(b) must be explicitly represented. (b) is core.

3. In lines 14-17, how does Charles Kingsley present ‘tobacco as the ideal accompaniment to the solitary life’? (Technique+context)

om the passage	Suggested answer
Charles Kingsley, a British historian and novelist, regarded tobacco as the ideal accompaniment to the solitary life—“a lone man’s companion, a bachelor’s friend, a hungry man’s food, a sad man’s cordial, a wakeful man’s sleep, and a chilly man’s fire”.	He stated (a) a list of situations (technique) in which tobacco is (b) a perfect /best /multi-faceted /all-purpose complement/support (inference to justify ‘ideal accompaniment’; adjective and noun must be paraphrased) (c) to address a lone person’s essential physical and emotional needs. (link) *must be about ‘needs’ (a)+(b)/(c)=1m (if context is not misinterpretation/language breakdown) (a)+(b)+(c)=2m (a) is essential but by itself with no/wrong context is 0m.

4. Explain what the author means when he says that hobbies ‘married sociability with solitude’ (line 20). Use your own words as far as possible. (1m)

From the passage	Suggested answer
Such activities also married sociability with solitude. Smokers shared their solitary vice in dedicated rooms in clubs and pubs. Fishing encouraged people to collaborate on being alone.	Sociability and solitude coexist in the pursuit of hobbies which means that people are engaging in their solo hobbies/ hobbies alone/individually in a group setting. (1m) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Context (the green text) needs to be explainedNo mark awarded if only the paraphrasing of ‘married’ is stated.

5. In paragraph 4, the author states that ‘the more civilisation has advanced, the further people have had to go to achieve the sensation of solitude’ (lines 23-24). Explain why this might be the case. (1m)

From the passage	Suggested answer
Yet the more civilisation has advanced, the further people have had to go to achieve that sensation of solitude. And the more sophisticated civilisation has become, the more people have been willing to use its fruits to escape the enforced sociability that has mostly been humanity’s lot.	(a) Due to the increase in population density/ people’s schedules becoming busier / people having more responsibilities/ better connectivity among people leading to increased interactions, (Accept any logical answer that suggests how civilisation has advanced) (b) people need to do more/put in more effort to be by themselves. *(b) is necessary. **For (b), it’s not enough to just say that it’s difficult, since the quote says people have had to go ‘further’. It should be ‘more difficult’.

6. In lines 57-60, what distinctions does the author draw between the ways in which hermits in the past and modern hermits isolate themselves? (2m)

From the passage	Suggested answer
Just as Saint Jerome squatted in his cave surrounded by his library, modern hermits sit in their flats gorging on downloaded books and films or chatting with friends across the world.	(a) Hermits in the past cut themselves off from the rest of the world while modern hermits retain connections with the outside world even if they are physically alone. [connections] (b) Hermits in the past only had books while modern hermits have a variety of online media to keep them occupied. [type of media OR variety of media] ** Answers must be phrased in such a way that they convey HOW they isolated themselves (what they did), rather than WHY (what they wanted to do). Each pair of differences=1m

7. Why does the author include the information between the double dashes (lines 62-63)? (2m)

From the passage	Suggested answer
Distraction is always one click away. And the same technology that allows the solitary individual to engage remotely with society also allows society to engage remotely—and sometimes secretly—with the individual. Giant companies watch over you, whether you are alone or in a crowd.	Either: 1a. He wants to emphasise/highlight his discomfort/unease (standalone function) 1b. about the fact that our devices/digital technology/companies are actually surveilling us without our knowledge. (context) 1(a) alone is 1m 1(a)+1(b)=2m Or: 2a. He wants to emphasise/highlight/add crucial/important information about (function that requires an object) 2b. the fact that our devices/digital technology/companies actually surveilling us without our knowledge (context) 2(a)=0m 2(a)+2(b)=2m ‘society’ will not be accepted as a subject as writer has specifically pointed out ‘companies’.

8. Explain why the author thinks that the ‘blurring’ of ‘boundaries between solitude and sociability’ is disturbing (lines 65-66). (2m)

From the passage	Suggested answer
<p>There is also something disturbing about the way the boundaries between solitude and sociability are blurring. Visit a gym and you see sweaty individuals performing private workouts in public. On a train many of your fellow passengers will be insulated by headphones. Those ubiquitous devices are double-edged: they can fill your head with babble or, thanks to noise-cancelling, leave you in silence. As the two categories mingle, so the quest for balance becomes more intense.</p>	<p>*disturbing: upsetting/disquieting/dismaying <i>Question is a test of understanding the implications of ‘disturbing’. Need to look at it from author’s POV.</i></p> <p>(a) There is now no clear distinction between private and public activities [Situation]</p> <p>(b) which we accept as normal or natural [Reality - ‘disturbing’]</p> <p>(c)but yet the author believes/expects that they should be kept separate. [Expectation]</p> <p>This is a 0 or 2m question. <i>Student must be able to articulate the Situation-Reality-Expectation relationship.</i></p>

9. In paragraph 10, how does the author show that ‘solitude is both one of mankind’s greatest blessings and greatest curses’ (lines 75-76)? (2m)

From the passage	Suggested answer
<p>In 2020, the pandemic lockdown has put the question of solitude at the heart of politics. Social distancing has been a tragedy for those living and, in some cases, dying alone. But for others, it has proved a strange blessing. Overworked people have been able to take a break from the treadmill of commuting. Many have picked up long-abandoned hobbies, such as tending the garden or playing bridge. Indeed, solitude is both one of mankind’s greatest blessings and greatest curses. Now, thanks to a virus that has been carried across the world by human sociability, more people than ever are getting the chance to experience both.</p>	<p>(a) The author uses the example of the pandemic lockdown in 2020/social distancing to show (technique)</p> <p>(b) how the spread of the virus forces people to be alone and be miserable/suffer in isolation.</p> <p>(c) However, there are also some who have found the enforced solitude a joy/relief/break from the stress of work <u>or</u> pleasure from being able to engage in hobbies in isolation.</p> <p><i>(b) and (c) are only awarded if (a) is correct.</i> <i>(a) alone=1m</i></p>