

Nanyang Junior College - Preliminary Examination 2020 - Suggested Answer Scheme

1. How do the examples in paragraph 1 illustrate the author's assertion that highly successful people are well-rounded (lines 3 -7)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [3]

From the text	Suggested Answer
Lest we begin to suspect that these successful executives are monomaniacal, tedious and exhausting, we are encouraged to admire how well-rounded they are. At weekends, the Facebook founder, Mark Zuckerberg, and his family embrace "Jomo" – the joy of missing out. Warren Buffett kicks back with his ukulele. Oprah Winfrey makes time for twice-daily meditation. (lines 3-7)	The examples show that highly successful people/ iconic/famous/influential figures are able to a) balance the demands of their respective profession/business/work OR a) balance their accomplishments at work, b) with building relationships with their families, c) and managing their leisure pursuits/ hobbies/pastimes OR play /relax

2. **Using your own words as far as possible,** explain the irony in the phrase "Jomo – the joy of missing out" (line 6) [2]

From the text	Suggested Answer
Lest we begin to suspect that these successful executives are monomaniacal, tedious and exhausting, we are encouraged to admire how well-rounded they are. At weekends, the Facebook founder, Mark Zuckerberg, and his family embrace "Jomo" – the joy of missing out. Warren Buffett kicks back with his ukulele. Oprah Winfrey makes time for twice-daily meditation. (lines 3-7)	a) We would expect that people would be upset when they are not experiencing /they are excluded from what others are doing, (expectation) b) but instead, they are happy to not participate in/not engage in/not be included in what others are doing. (reality)

3. In paragraph 2, what difference does the author see between leisure time in the past and today? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2]

From the text	Suggested Answer
Weekdays are tough. But weekends? Exhausting! Increasingly, our leisure time is not leisure as our parents or grandparents might have enjoyed it: time away from the productive demands of work for pottering, ambling, collecting, socialising. It is leisure with an imperative, self-imposed or otherwise, to maximise relaxation yield,	a) In the past, people did not feel the need to fill leisure time with activities that were considered to be purposeful/useful, b) but today, leisure time is filled with the need to gain as much as possible/as much as we can/to be purposeful and

<p>compete over hobby production and co-opt every activity – exercising, meditating, making Halloween costumes for the children – into a dynamic of human perfectibility. (lines 11-17)</p>	<p>ensure that every activity is done to the best of our ability/to ensure that we excel in the activity.</p> <p>Note: The difference must be clear - both (a) and (b) must be correct. [2m or 0m] Point a): Do not accept lifts of ‘productive’, ‘productivity’. Point b): Accept ‘tangible gain’</p>
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4. Why has the author written ‘hobbies’ in inverted commas (line 42)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [1]

From the text	Suggested Answer
<p>This has changed the way we view our time off. We are intimidated by the expectation that we must actually be skilled at what we do in our free time. Our ‘hobbies’, if that is even the word for them anymore, have become too serious, too demanding, too much an occasion to become anxious about whether you are really the person you claim to be. ... My grandad was a keen photographer, coin collector, cyclist, watercolourist and tropical-fish keeper – and, bless him, he was not much good at any of them. I do not think that was the point. His hobbies were ways of absorbing himself and meeting people. There was not the same urge to share and compare and discover how rubbish your efforts were next to some tropical-fish fancier in Colorado with 373,000 followers; likewise, my mother has never given much thought to how she might turn her sewing skills into a side hustle. She just likes doing it. (lines 41-55)</p>	<p>The author disagrees with the use of this label (FUNCTION) a) because unlike how they are supposed to be relaxing/fun, b) they have become an area where people feel stressed about / have become an area for people to be competitive in due to the need to be perfect/flawless. (CONTEXT)</p>

5. According to paragraph 7, how and why has our participation in hobbies changed from childhood to adulthood? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2]

From the text	Suggested Answer
<p>This has changed the way we view our time off. We are intimidated by the expectation that we must actually be skilled at what we do in our free time. ... Small children sing, swim, climb, draw, play various sports, make various crafts and do not much worry if they are any good at them. When you are 37, for example, it is embarrassing</p>	<p>(A1) As children, we took part in many leisure activities, (A2) but as adults, we participate in fewer activities. (B1) As children, we were not bothered by societal</p>

<p>to be rubbish at drawing, so we tend to narrow our range of activities. (lines 41-48)</p>	<p>expectations/assumptions/presumptions and assessment of how well we carried out those leisure activities, (B2) but as adults, we are conscious of society's assessment of our performance in these leisure activities.</p> <p>Note: Cannot lift 'various', 'narrow' (Point a), 'expectation', 'skilled', 'good' (Point b)</p>
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6. What is the author's purpose of asking the question in line 63? Use your own words as far as possible. [1]

From the text	Suggested Answer
<p>We could turn to art and literature for some perspective – but these are subject to the same imperatives. Apps such as Joosr and Blinkist condense books into 20-minute versions. On Reddit's podcast forum, a number of users report listening at 1.5x speed, so as to maximise consumption, and express regret that they cannot do the same for Netflix shows. "I do audiobooks at 1.6," one user explains to me. "It feels like an appeal to intelligence – the natural pauses and implied rimshots are gone. It is a fast stream of one-two punches that challenges my reaction time and makes me listen harder – and it is less casual." Less casual? (lines 56-63)</p>	<p>a) The author uses a question/a rhetorical question to express his disbelief that (FUNCTION)</p> <p>b) people are becoming too obsessed with the need to be busy and competitive / to achieve as much as they possibly can to the extent that even what is supposed to be leisure / relaxing has become an area to be taken very seriously. (CONTEXT)</p> <p>Note: Must have Pt (a) (Function) Pt (b) - relaxing vs serious (must have contrast betw relaxing and serious)</p> <p><u>Pt (a)-</u> Do NOT accept: emphasising/highlighting/reiterate (on its own), To get the reader to think about/ to ponder</p>

7. Explain the author's use of the word 'claw' in line 66. **Use your own words as far as possible.** [1]

From the text	Suggested Answer
In the past, it was the poor who worked all hours, while the upper classes flaunted their leisure as a status symbol – take those Parisian flâneurs* who used to take their tortoisés for walks. The members of the early labour movement battled hard to claw back their time and they were successful at it: we have them to thank for our largely work-free weekends. (lines 64-68)	<p>The author is emphasising that activists in the past had to</p> <p>a) work very hard to enable the working population</p> <p>b) to get more leisure time.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The author is emphasising</p> <p>a) the great difficulty / the lengths that activists in the past had to go through to enable the working population</p> <p>b) to be entitled to a fair amount of leisure time.</p>

8. Explain what the author means by 'Busyness is worn as a badge of honour; idleness is condemned as a vice' (lines 71-72). **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2]

From the text	Suggested Answer
In the past, it was the poor who worked all hours , while the upper classes flaunted their leisure as a status symbol – take those Parisian flâneurs* who used to take their tortoisés for walks.... Now, if anything, the 19th-century paradigm has been reversed : automation and associated forces mean those at the lower end of the labour market often do not have enough work to do , while the rich are time-poor. Busyness is worn as a badge of honour; idleness is condemned as a vice. (lines 64-72)	<p>a) Being fully occupied with activities/work is proudly seen as a sign/an indication of one's success/wealth/accomplishment/usefulness to society, (1)</p> <p>b) while being free is seen with contempt/great disapproval/disdain/as an evil/immoral. (1)</p>

9. In paragraph 10, what is the author implying about the people in rural Cornwall? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2]

From the text	Suggested Answer
From an economic point of view , the decline of leisure is not as illogical as it first appears. Time is money. The more money you earn, the more valuable your time is. The more valuable something is, the less inclined you are to waste it. That is why people in London walk faster than people in rural Cornwall. (lines 73-76)	He is implying that a) they are less wealthy than the Londoners/earn less income than the Londoners, b) because they are less particular about how they are spending their time.

10. What point is the author making when he says, 'But, naturally, when I managed to swim a mile, I shared it on Instagram' (lines 89-90)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [1]

From the text	Suggested Answer
But I sense a backlash against the cult of competitive accomplishment... I have found time to go swimming, too... Another is that there is a straightforward relationship between effort and reward. If you keep at it, you get better. In very few areas of 21st-century life is that true. But, naturally , when I managed to swim a mile , I shared it on Instagram.	<p>The author is making the point that this sense of needing to account for (b) what one achieves during leisure (c) is unavoidable/inevitable. (a) [1]</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The author is making the point that it has become part of our nature (a) to constantly prove our worth (c) to others. (b) [1]</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The author is making the point that it is innate/inherent in human beings/in us to constantly prove our worth to others. [1]</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The author is making the point that inevitably, people still feel the need to show off to others that they are busy even when indulging in their leisure activities/to show off to others that they have excelled in their activities/pastimes. [1]</p>

11. Using material from paragraphs 3-6 only (lines 18-40), summarise what the author has to say about the reasons for, and effects of, leisure becoming competitive today.

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.**

Leisure has become competitive today because it _____

1	It is hard to say precisely when this shift took place. One reason leisure has become more competitive is that it is increasingly quantifiable . (lines 18 -19)	is more easily measured today / is getting easier to measure and
2	Smartwatches keep track of your movements, from steps walked to kilometres skied; (lines 19 -20)	monitor our activities/exercises,
3	platforms such as Strava allow you to compare times with peers. (lines 20 -21)	to evaluate/relate our performance with contemporaries/peers
4	The principle works beyond exercise , too. (line 21)	and it is not limited to traditionally measurable activities/ it extends to almost all activities/ it extends to usually unmeasurable activities /This yardstick/standard is used for other purposes
5	Apps such as SleepScore help you measure how productive your sleep is; (lines 21 -22)	Including the effectiveness of our sleep/rest
6	Calm and Headspace gamify mindfulness and meditation , (lines 22 -23)	and contemplation/reflection .
7	so it is no longer an antidote to work (line 23)	Hence, leisure is no more a means to get away from work / no more a cure/solution/remedy for work
8	but a way of preparing yourself for more work. (lines 23 -24)	but a method/means to be ready for more work
9	A little competition makes things fun (lines 25 -26)	Competitive leisure actually makes participation enjoyable
10	and there is nothing wrong with wanting to improve your triathlon time. (line 26)	and motivates the individual to better the time taken to complete his exercise.
11	However, Dr Thomas Curran, a clinical psychologist at the University of Bath, sees a correlation between the increased use of metrics and the rise in perfectionism in young people. (lines 26 -28)	However, there is a link between the greater tendency to clock one's activities and the upsurge in the yearning for excellence /the yearning to be flawless /the yearning to have no weaknesses .

12	In a recent study, he defined this as “an irrational desire to achieve , (lines 28 -29)	There is an illogical yearning to excel/be accomplished
13	along with being overly critical of oneself and others”. (lines 29 -30)	and being excessively judgemental of oneself and others/one’s peers.
14	“Perfectionism is a very problematic trait, especially for those who suffer with it at the clinical end,” he says. “It is positively associated with depression, anxiety (lines 31-32)	Perfectionism has affected mental health adversely / Perfectionism has led to mental illnesses/extreme sadness
15	and even suicide. (lines 32 -33)	and can be fatal .
16	We are not suggesting that every young person is a clinical perfectionist, but we are suggesting that they are moving further up the spectrum as time unfolds – and that is concerning.” (lines 33 -35)	There are more young people [16] who are becoming mentally ill [14] because of perfectionism.’ Or It is a growing concern that more young people [16] are falling victim to mental illness. [14]
17 18	The culture of metrics has migrated (from the business world) into our leisure time via education and public services. (lines 36 -37) OR Schools have become more results-oriented. (line 37)	[17] The focus of schools on accomplishments/achievements [18] is another reason for us adopting the commercial practice of quantifying/measuring our performance during our leisure time.
19	In an attempt to make the important measurable, we have instead made the measurable important. (lines 37 -39)	and this shift has caused us to prioritise/assign importance or attention on what is quantifiable rather than/over other values that were once considered to be significant.
20	This has helped to create a generation who see learning as a numbers game. (lines 39 -40)	and consequently, reducing education to just grades. OR This has led to the rise of a generation that perceives education as being all about grades/success that can be graded.

Mark Scheme:

1-2 pts = 1m	3-4 pts = 2m	5-6 pts = 3m	7-8 pts = 4m	9-10 pts = 5m	11-12pts =6m	13-14pts = 7m	15 pts & above = 8m
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12. Richard Godwin discusses **the competitive nature of modern pastimes**. How far would you agree with his observations, relating your arguments to your society?

Possible points to consider:

Para 3 [lines 18-21]: One reason leisure has become more competitive is that it is increasingly quantifiable. Smartwatches keep track of your movements, from steps walked to kilometres skied; platforms such as Strava allow you to compare times with peers.

Para 7 [lines 41-42]: We are intimidated by the expectation ... that we must actually be skilled at what we do in our free time.

Para 11 [line 78] (the author) senses a backlash against the cult of competitive accomplishment.

Para 4 [lines 25-26]: A little competition makes things fun and there is nothing wrong with wanting to improve your triathlon time.

Possible Ideas from the Text	Relevant to a large extent to Singapore	Not Relevant to a large extent to Singapore
<p>Para 4, (Lines 25-26): A little competition makes things fun and there is nothing wrong with wanting to improve your triathlon time.</p>	<p>Competitive leisure actually makes participation enjoyable and motivates the individual to do better. Many sports and exercise groups have emerged in Singapore that make working out enjoyable yet effective. The camaraderie that builds up between these participants who were previously strangers to one another has been helpful in pushing each other to test their own personal limits.</p> <p>On websites such as https://www.meetup.com/cities/sg/singapore/sports-fitness/, members of the public can get into shape by joining any of the recreational sports groups whose doors are always open to new members. Groups like Love Tennis Singapore and Hunter Badminton Club cater</p>	<p>Competition actually strips the pleasure and motivation to engage in recreational activities that might otherwise be appealing. Students who enjoy the arts, especially those that involve painting and sculpting as well as those who enjoy and are adept at music or acting, are often given the opportunity to engage in these pursuits at a higher academic level when they join the Art Elective Programme, Music Elective Programme or Theatre Studies offered in some of the top junior colleges in Singapore like NYJC, RI & VJC. The presence of standardised tests and other forms of assessment and drilling by well-meaning but anxious tutors who have to fulfil their Key Performance Indicators and keep up the school's pass and distinction rates mean that</p>

	to the interest of tennis and badminton enthusiasts who meet regularly and play together. Sharing a common love for the sport and offering pointers to each other to improve each other's gameplay makes the whole recreational experience an enjoyable one.	an activity that is supposed to relax the mind now taxes and vexes the mind. Recreational artistic activities are often intended to be an outlet for self-expression rather than used to define the worth of an individual and to rank him. However, this is no longer possible due to the fact that grades are awarded in these artistic pursuits. Students who have learnt how to game the system would therefore ensure that the 'product' they generate meet exam standards. Hence, engaging in competition in artistic pursuits distorts the original intent of that recreational pursuit and erodes the pleasure that participants derive from them.
Possible Ideas from the Text	Relevant to a large extent to Singapore	Not Relevant to a large extent to Singapore
Para 11 (line 78) (the author) senses a backlash against the cult of competitive accomplishment.	<p>The Singapore Government recognises that being overly competitive would hamper people's development, particularly children's. If the over-emphasis on results continues, late bloomers would be at a disadvantage. They might not have an opportunity to bloom at all just because they did not show promise at an early stage. Consequently, the society will be the poorer for it.</p> <p>The Ministry of Education announced a no-trial pilot where selection trials to join a CCA will be removed in some primary schools. The</p>	<p>Singaporeans, by and large, have the <i>kiasu</i> mentality. It has been drilled into us that as a small country with no natural resources, we have to be self-reliant and that we have to be ahead of the competition if we want to survive in this competitive world. Hence we would do whatever that is legally possible to be one up on others in all aspects of our lives, including sports, which are inconsequential to our survival.</p> <p>We have invested millions into the Foreign Sports Talent Scheme so that we would stand</p>

	<p>removal of trials is meant to address the emphasis on results that have been going in schools where the best players are picked to join a CCA or to represent schools in competitions. Those who do not make the cut are, unfortunately, not allowed to play or are unable to pursue their interest. If we had continued to dismiss the late bloomers, our efforts to be a sporting nation would just be a dream even though sports funding has increased over the years.</p>	<p>a better chance of winning medals at top tier international sports meets and put Singapore on the sporting map. So far, the scheme has been fairly successful. Four of five of our Olympic medals were won by foreign-born athletes.</p>
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