

Name: _____

Register Number: _____

Class: _____



南僑中學

NAN CHIAU HIGH SCHOOL
PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2025
SECONDARY FOUR

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1184/02

Paper 2 Comprehension
INSERT

20 August 2025, Wednesday

1 hour 50 minutes

Candidates answer in the Question Paper.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Insert contains Text 1, Text 2, Text 3 and Text 4.

This paper consists of 6 printed pages including the cover page.

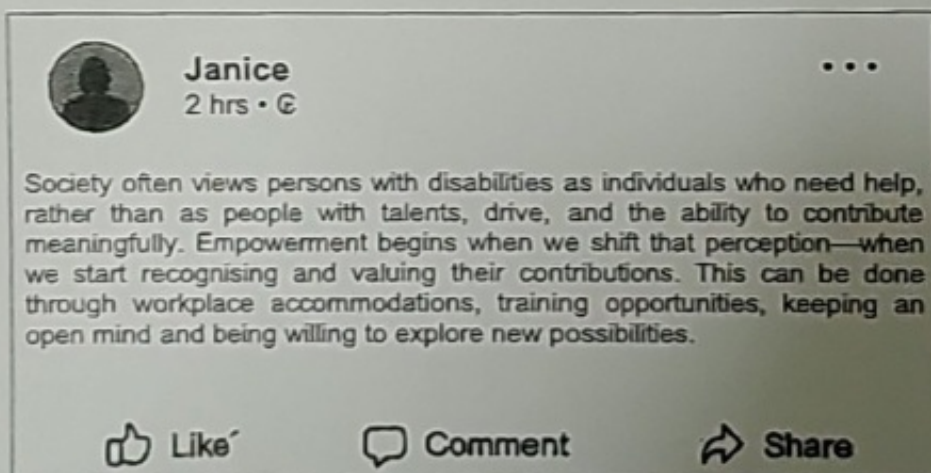
Section A

Study the poster (Text 1) and the social media post (Text 2) and answer Questions 1–4 in the Question Paper.

Text 1 is taken from a poster by America's Office of Disability Employment Policy for the National Disability Employment Awareness Month.



Text 2 is taken from a social media message posted by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Bizlink Centre Singapore.



Section B

Text 3

In the text below, two boys are getting water at a camp's water point.

Read the text carefully and answer Questions 5–16 in the Question Paper.

- 1 The morning air was still cool when Stanley stepped out of the tent, his boots crunching over the gravel path that led to Camp Green Lake's water point. The sun had barely risen beyond the ridge, and the day's heat was kept well at bay, for now. He carried his bottle loosely in one hand, feeling its emptiness in its lightness. Ahead, Zero was crouched beside the tap, filling his own bottle in slow, measured motions. 5
- 2 Mr. Pendanski stood nearby and looked up as Stanley approached. He glanced at his watch, scribbled something on his clipboard, before looking up again with a forced smile. "Sleep well, Stanley?" he asked, but his voice carried the edge of routine, a question asked not for answer, but to fill the space between them. Stanley nodded, not speaking. He did not trust his mouth to shape words so early, and anyway, Mr. Pendanski was not one for small talk. 10
- 3 Stanley waited behind Zero, head throbbing slightly, his sleep having been worn thin by pain. His back burned from yesterday's digging in the sun, though the sun had yet to touch his skin that morning. A thin breeze moved across the camp, stirring the fine dust around their ankles. Zero tightened the cap on his bottle and stood, stepping aside with quiet efficiency. His eyes flickered up to meet Stanley's for a brief moment, dark and unreadable, before shifting away to stare at the horizon where the light was beginning to deepen into gold. 15
- 4 Stanley bent to fill his bottle. The water gushed out clear and cold, splashing his fingers before pooling steadily into the metal vessel. He watched it rise, thinking of nothing but the swirl and rush, the taste of it already imagined on his tongue. Behind him, Mr. Pendanski spoke again, voice drifting away into the growing heat. "Don't take too long filling your drink. The warden wants you boys out digging before it gets hot." 20
- 5 Stanley straightened, wiping the rim of his bottle with the back of his hand. He could feel Zero's presence beside him, quiet and light as a shadow. The boy stood with his arms hanging loosely, head tilted towards the ground, as if listening to something buried deep below the cracked soil. For a moment Stanley wondered what thoughts moved behind Zero's stillness, what shapes and colours drifted through his mind. But Zero remained silent. 25 30
- 6 They began walking back towards the tents. Gravel shifted under their feet, breaking the silence. The sun rose further in the unforgiving blue sky, sending thin blades of heat that licked at Stanley's neck and ears. Beside him, Zero walked, eyes fixed on the ground in front of his feet, letting the world shrink to a narrow path he could control. He walked with the same small steps: never too fast or too slow, each movement as economical as his words. Zero had learned long ago that at Camp Green Lake, no one would wait for him to catch up. Behind them, Mr. Pendanski's boots ground heavily against the path, the sound scraping across Stanley's nerves. 35

7 Back at the tent entrance, Stanley paused to take a sip of water. The coolness
spread through his mouth and throat, sharpening his awareness of the dry wind that 40
ruffled his hair. Zero watched him, eyes half-hidden beneath the brim of his cap. For
an instant, Stanley thought he saw something like a smile flicker across Zero's face –
not happiness, but a small easing of the tightness that usually held his features still.
Then it was gone, leaving only the dawn light glinting off the weathered metal bottle 45
and the faint taste of rust and dust on Stanley's tongue.

Adapted from 'Holes' by Louis Sachar

Section C

Text 4

In the text below, the writer discusses about a common consumer behaviour.

Read the text carefully and answer Questions 17-23 in the Question Paper.

- 1 Have you ever noticed how buying one new item often leads to the purchase of several more? You begin with a sleek new phone, and suddenly your old charger, your case, your desk accessories and even your bag feel outdated. This cascade of spending is not random. It is a well-documented behavioural phenomenon known as the Diderot Effect. At its core, the Diderot Effect describes how the introduction of a new possession can create a spiralling pattern of consumption that threatens financial well-being, reinforces material desire and shifts personal identity. 5
- 2 The concept traces its roots to an essay written in 1769 by the French philosopher Denis Diderot, titled *Regrets for My Old Dressing Gown*. In it, Diderot recounts how receiving a luxurious new robe as a gift led him to feel that his other belongings – once perfectly satisfactory – no longer matched his elevated aesthetic. This robe, a symbol of luxury, triggered a series of replacements: his chair, his desk, his curtains and beyond. Each new purchase was an attempt to maintain a sense of visual and personal coherence. Ironically, what began as a single indulgence left Diderot financially strained and no more content than before. 10 15
- 3 The Diderot Effect persists for several psychological and social reasons. One explanation lies in the human desire for consistency. People are naturally inclined to maintain internal harmony, including among their possessions. A mismatch between a new, aesthetically pleasing item and older belongings can create discomfort, nudging individuals to upgrade surrounding objects. Social pressures also play a part. Ownership of newer or more stylish goods can generate the feeling – or illusion – of status and success. Modern marketing exploits this instinct relentlessly, presenting consumption as a gateway to self-improvement, confidence and happiness. 20
- 4 This phenomenon has wide-ranging implications for behaviour and lifestyle. People may find themselves spending beyond their means as they strive to create a sense of aesthetic or social alignment. A single luxury item can distort perceptions of what is necessary, leading to the abandonment of functional possessions that 'no longer fit'. New purchases often fail to satisfy in the long term, giving rise to a repeated cycle of wanting and buying. Homes become cluttered with items driven by impulse rather than need, contributing to both environmental waste and personal dissatisfaction. At its most extreme, this behaviour can erode one's financial stability and increase anxiety about personal image and self-worth. 25 30
- 5 The cumulative effect of these small decisions is not trivial. Individuals can unwittingly shift their identity by aligning their sense of self with consumer goods. In such cases, buying becomes a form of self-expression, but also a form of self-deception. Lifestyle inflation – when expenses increase as income rises – often follows, making it harder for people to save or invest. Consumption, in this light, becomes not just a series of actions but a defining narrative. This pursuit of cohesion and status through ownership may ultimately interfere with authentic contentment, replacing value with vanity. 35 40
- 6 In today's world, the Diderot Effect is more relevant than ever. The fast fashion industry, with its constant release of trends, encourages continual upgrading of wardrobes, regardless of need. Home design influencers on social media have made

it commonplace to feel that furniture and decor must be completely overhauled to remain stylish. Subscription services now provide constant access to the 'next best thing', subtly shifting wants into needs. The rise of online shopping platforms has made impulsive purchases easy, immediate and emotionally satisfying – at least in the short term. In schools, peer pressure around brands and belongings can shape identity from a young age, embedding materialism into the teenage psyche. 45 50

- 7 Recognising the Diderot Effect allows for conscious resistance. It encourages intentional purchasing – asking what truly adds value rather than what simply 'matches' something new. As societies face growing concerns about sustainability, the ability to distinguish need from want becomes more than a personal virtue; it is a collective responsibility. The challenge is not to eliminate consumption, but to slow it down. It is to put one's foot down in defiance of letting one item dictate the purchase of ten others. Ultimately, understanding this effect can empower individuals to live more purposefully, with clarity over what they own – and why. 55

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT (Jul 7 version) [Large language model].

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1184/02

Paper 2 Comprehension
QUESTION PAPER

20 August 2025, Wednesday

1 hour 50 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your class, index number and name on the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black ink.

Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid/tape.

Answer all questions.

Write your answers in the spaces provided in the Question Paper.

The Insert contains the texts for all the sections.

The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.

This paper consists of 8 printed pages including the cover page.

2
Section A [5 marks]

Refer to the poster (Text 1) and the social media post (Text 2) on page 2 of the Insert for Questions 1–4.

- 1 Look at the poster (Text 1). Tick (✓) the sentence that best conveys the overall message of the poster.

☐ People with disabilities are so much more than their disabilities

☐ People with disabilities must contribute at work

☐ People with disabilities are able to contribute at work

[1]

- 2 How does the image support what the poster is saying about people with disabilities?

.....
..... [1]

- 3 What information does Text 2 give to support the idea from Text 1 that disability is only one part of who persons with disabilities are?

.....
..... [1]

- 4 Look at Texts 1 and 2 and statements (a) and (b) below.

Tick (✓) the correct answer for each statement.

- (a) The tone of the language used in both texts is...

☐ matter of fact

☐ encouraging

☐ indifferent

[1]

- (b) The most likely context for Text 2 is ...

☐ to train employers who have hired persons with disabilities

☐ to explain why society is still not ready to hire persons with disabilities.

☐ to convince employers that hiring persons with disabilities is feasible.

[1]

3
Section B [20 marks]

Refer to **Text 3** on pages 3 and 4 of the Insert for Questions 5-16.

- 5 Paragraph 2 tells the reader that Mr. Pendanski 'scribbled something on his clipboard' (line 7).
What do you think he was scribbling down?

.....
..... [1]

- 6 In Paragraph 2, in what **two** ways did Mr. Pendanski show that he did not really care about Stanley?

(i)
..... [1]

(ii)
..... [1]

- 7 In Paragraph 2, what did Stanley think would happen if he tried to verbally answer Mr. Pendanski's question?

..... [1]

- 8 Paragraph 3 tells the reader that Stanley's head was 'throbbing slightly' (line 12). What had happened to cause this?

..... [1]

- 9 What was the cause of Stanley's 'pain' (line 13)?

..... [1]

- 10 Paragraph 4 states 'He watched it rise, thinking of nothing but the swirl and rush,' (lines 20-21)

What does 'it' refer to?

..... [1]

- 11 Paragraph 5 describes Zero from Stanley's perspective. Explain how the language used in this paragraph emphasises Zero's mysterious nature. Support your answer with **three** details from Paragraph 5.

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [3]

- 12 Paragraph 6 describes Stanley's surroundings on the way back to the tents. Explain how the language used in this paragraph emphasises the extreme heat. Support your answer with **two** details from Paragraph 6.

.....

.....

..... [2]

- 13 In Paragraph 6, Zero is described as walking 'with the same small steps: never too fast or too slow, each movement as economical as his words.' (lines 35-36)
Why do you think Zero walked this way?

..... [1]

- 14 In Paragraph 6, the sound of Mr Pendanski's boots scraped 'across Stanley's nerves'.
Why do you think Stanley felt that way?

..... [1]

- 15 In Paragraph 7, Stanley observed that Zero's facial expression showed 'a small easing of the tightness that usually held his features still' (line 44).

- (a) Referring to Paragraph 7, what was the writer comparing this facial expression to?

.....

..... [1]

- (b) Why do you think Zero's facial expression changed only slightly here?

.....

..... [1]

16

5

The structure of the text reflects how Stanley was feeling during his trip to the camp's water point. Complete the flow chart by choosing one word or phrase from the box to summarise how Stanley's feelings changed in each part of the text. There are some extra words in the box you do not need to use.

Stanley's feelings

curious	uninterested	physical discomfort	impassive	anticipation	muggy	agony
---------	--------------	---------------------	-----------	--------------	-------	-------

Paragraphs 1-2:	(i)	
-----------------	-----	-------



Paragraph 3:	(ii)	
--------------	------	-------



Paragraph 4:	(iii)	
--------------	-------	-------



Paragraph 5:	(iv)	
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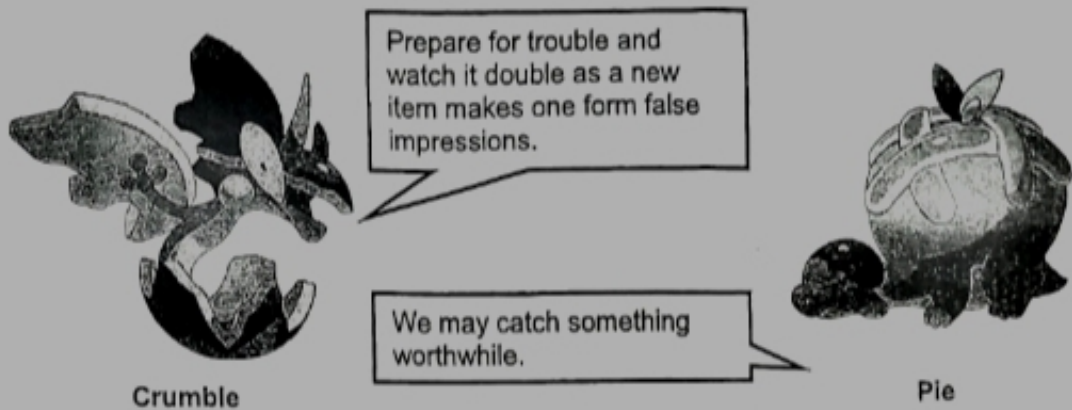
[4]

6
Section C [25 marks]

Refer to Text 4 on pages 5 and 6 of the Insert for Questions 17-23.

- 17 In Paragraph 1, why is the writer sure that the cascade of spending is not random?
.....
..... [1]
- 18 The writer says that a new purchase can place 'financial well-being', 'material desire' and 'personal identity' (lines 7) at risk. Explain **in your own words** how it does this.
.....
..... [1]
- 19 In Paragraph 2, what does the writer do to show the irony of Diderot's actions?
.....
..... [1]
- 20 Which word suggests that Diderot's view of his belongings had improved in Paragraph 2?
..... [1]
- 21 In Paragraph 3, the writer says that owning new things 'can generate the feeling – or illusion – of status and success' (lines 21-22).
- (a) What is the effect of suggesting that the feeling is an 'illusion'?
-
..... [1]
- (b) Why is this description effective?
-
..... [1]
- (c) Which word in the same paragraph supports the idea that this issue is made worse.
-
..... [1]

- 22 Here is a part of a conversation between two students, Crumble and Pie, who have read the article.



- (a) (i) With reference to Paragraph 4, which feature of writing shows that the writer shares the same opinion as Crumble?

..... [1]

- (ii) Give one reason from Paragraph 4 which Crumble can use to explain that problems will 'double'.

..... [1]

- (b) Give one reason from Paragraph 5 which Pie can use to support her view. Answer in your own words.

..... [1]

- Use only information from Paragraphs 6 and 7 of Text 4.

The Diderot Effect remains significant in the present day as

[illegible]

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1184/02

Paper 2 Comprehension
QUESTION PAPER

Answer
Scheme

20 August 2025, Wednesday

1 hour 50 minutes

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Section A [5 marks]

Refer to the poster (Text 1) and the social media post (Text 2) on page 2 of the Insert for Questions 1-4.

- 1 Look at the poster (Text 1). Tick (✓) the sentence that best conveys the overall message of the poster.
- People with disabilities are able to contribute at work. [1]
- 2 How does the image support what the poster is saying about people with disabilities?
- The people with disabilities wearing office attire / (formal) working clothes shows that they are able to contribute at work. [1]
- Reject: shows... are able to work. (odd phrasing - clothes don't give you a sudden 'superpower' of being able to work...)
- 3 What information does Text 2 give to support the idea from Text 1 that disability is only one part of who persons with disabilities are?
- Society often views persons with disabilities as individuals who need help, rather than as people with talents, drive, and the ability to contribute meaningfully. [1]
- 4 Look at Texts 1 and 2 and statements (a) and (b) below.
- Tick (✓) the correct answer for each statement.
- (a) The tone of the language used in both texts is...
- matter of fact [1]
- (b) The most likely context for Text 2 is...
- to convince employers that hiring persons with disabilities is feasible. [1]

Section B [20 marks]

Refer to Text 3 on pages 3 and 4 of the Insert for Questions 5-10.

- 5 Paragraph 2 tells the reader that Mr. Pandanski 'scribbled something on his clipboard' (line 7). What do you think he was scribbling down?
- He was scribbling down Stanley's time of arrival. [1]
- Clue: 'as Stanley approached, He glanced at his watch'
- 6 In Paragraph 2, in what two ways did Mr. Pandanski show that he did not really care about Stanley?
- (i) He gave a forced smile to Stanley when asking about his sleep. [1]
- (ii) His voice carried the edge of routine when asking about Stanley's sleep. [1]
- Copied:
He looked up again with a forced smile.

- His voice carried the edge of routine. (a question asked not for answer, but to fill the space between them).
- Note: answers need to be specific enough to address 'care' stated in the question
- 7 In Paragraph 2, what did Stanley think would happen if he tried to verbally answer Mr. Pandanski's question?
- His words would not be clear / he would not be coherent. [1]
- Clue: 'did not trust his mouth to shape words so early'
- Mr. Pandanski would not continue with the conversation. [1]
- Clue: 'was not one for small talk'
- 8 Paragraph 3 tells the reader that Stanley's head was 'throbbing slightly' (line 12). What had happened to cause this?
- He had not slept well the night before due to pain. [1]
- Reject: 'sleep worn thin' even though copied from the passage as the meaning is unclear
- 9 What was the cause of Stanley's 'pain' (line 13)?
- His back had gotten sunburned the previous day. [1]
- Need: 'the previous day'??
- 10 Paragraph 4 states 'He watched it rise, thinking of nothing but the swirl and rush,' (lines 20-21). What does 'it' refer to?
- It refers to the water in the bottle. [1]
- Need to specify 'in the bottle' because there is also water in the tap, so simply saying 'water' is an ambiguous answer.
- 11 Paragraph 5 describes Zero from Stanley's perspective. Explain how the language used in this paragraph emphasises Zero's mysterious nature. Support your answer with three details from Paragraph 5.
- '[quiet and] light as a shadow' suggests that Zero seemed not fully there, and hence Stanley couldn't get a grasp on Zero's true nature. [1]
- 'as if listening to something buried deep below the cracked soil' suggests that Zero had physical interests / was lost in his own imagination which Stanley had no access to. [1]
- 'wondered what thoughts moved behind Zero's stillness / what shapes and colours drifted through his mind' suggests that Stanley had no idea what Zero could be thinking about. [1]

12	Paragraph 6 describes Stanley's surroundings on the way back to the tents. Explain how the language used in this paragraph emphasises the extreme heat. Support your answer with two details from Paragraph 6.
(Any 2 for 2m)	
'sun rose further in the' unforgiving blue sky' suggests that there was <u>not a single cloud</u> in the sky to block the hot sun.	
'thin blades of heat' suggests that the sun's <u>high temperature cut through</u> the air.	
'licked at Stanley's neck and ears' suggests that the high temperature was <u>being compared to flames</u> around Stanley's head.	
13	In Paragraph 6, Zero is described as walking 'with the same small steps: never too fast or too slow, each movement as economical as his words.' (lines 35-36) Why do you think Zero walked this way?
He was trying to <u>conserve his energy</u> (for the tasks that he needed to do at the Camp / because he knew no one would help him if he couldn't catch up with the others). [1]	
Cue: at Camp Green Lake, no one would wait for him to catch up	
14	In Paragraph 6, the sound of Mr Pandanski's boots scraped 'across Stanley's nerves'. Why do you think Stanley felt that way?
The sound of the boots was <u>very loud</u> in the <u>quiet environment</u> . [1]	
Cue: breaking the quiet rhythm of dawn. Mr. Pandanski's boots ground <u>heavily</u> against the path	
15	In Paragraph 7, Stanley observed that Zero's facial expression showed 'a small easing of the tightness that usually held his features still' (line 44).
(a) Referring to Paragraph 7, what was the writer comparing this facial expression to?	
It was being compared to a smile. [1]	
Cue: For an instant, Stanley thought he saw <u>something like a smile flicker</u> across Zero's face	
(b) Why do you think Zero's facial expression changed <u>only slightly</u> here?	
He was a <u>shy / introverted</u> person / who <u>did not usually openly show his emotions</u> . [1]	
Cue: Zero watched him, eyes half-hidden beneath the brim of his cap tightness that usually held his features still	

16	The structure of the text reflects how Stanley was feeling during his trip to the camp's water point. Complete the flow chart by choosing one word or phrase from the box to summarise how Stanley's feelings changed in each part of the text. There are some extra words in the box you do not need to use.												
Stanley's feelings													
curious		uninterested		physical discomfort		impassive		anticipation		muggy		agony	
Paragraphs 1-2:		(i)		impassive									
↓													
Paragraph 3:		(ii)		physical discomfort									
↓													
Paragraph 4:		(iii)		anticipation									
↓													
Paragraph 5:		(iv)		curious									
[4]													

Section C [25 marks]

Refer to Text 4 on pages 5 and 6 of the Insert for Questions 17-23.

17	In Paragraph 1, why is the writer sure that the cascade of spending is not random?
It is a well-documented behavioural phenomenon. [1]	
18	The writer says that a new purchase can place 'financial well-being', 'material desire' and 'personal identity' (lines 7) at risk. Explain in your own words how it does this.
PW: create a spiralling pattern of consumption	

It does this by causing a continuous increase in the buying of things. It does this by causing a cycle of increasing expenditure.	
[1]	
19	In Paragraph 2, what does the writer do to show the irony of Diderot's actions?
The writer used dashes on / to single out / to isolate 'once perfectly satisfactory' to emphasise that his belongings did not need to be replaced.	
The writer used dashes on / to single out / to isolate 'once perfectly satisfactory' to emphasise that the old belongings continue to satisfy him, but he has decided otherwise.	
[1]	
20	Which word suggests that Diderot's view of his belongings had improved in Paragraph 2?
'elevated' [1]	
21	In Paragraph 3, the writer says that owning new things 'can generate the feeling – or illusion – of status and success' (lines 21-22).
(a) What is the effect of suggesting that the feeling is an 'illusion'?	
It is to make the reader question / feel doubtful about the feeling of success. [1]	
X – It is to hint that the feeling may not be accurate / real. (states purpose not effect)	
(b) Why is this description effective?	
It emphasises that owning new things does not lead to an elevation of status or achievement of success. [1]	
(c) Which word in the same paragraph supports the idea that this issue is made worse.	
'exploits' [1]	
22	Here is a part of a conversation between two students, Crumble and Pie, who have read the article.
 	
Prepare for trouble and watch it double as a new item makes one form false impressions. We may catch something worthwhile.	
Crumble Pie	
(a) (i)	With reference to Paragraph 4, which feature of writing shows that the writer shares the same opinion as Crumble?

The writer quoted 'no longer fit' / used quotation marks to mark out 'no longer fit' to suggest that a new item makes one think that current items that are still usable are obsolete. [1]	
(ii)	Give one reason from Paragraph 4 which Crumble can use to explain that problems will 'double'.
New purchases often fail to satisfy in the long term, giving rise to a <u>repeated</u> cycle of wanting and buying. or It gives rise to a <u>repeated</u> cycle of wanting and buying.	
[1]	
(b)	Give one reason from Paragraph 5 which Pie can use to support her view. Answer in your own words.
PW: a form of self-expression	
Consumption enables one to show who he/she is.	
or	
PW: a defining narrative.	
Consumption contributes to a story that shapes / significantly influences one's identity.	
[1]	

- 23 Using your own words as far as possible, summarise what makes the Diderot Effect relevant today, and how it can be resisted.

Use only information from Paragraphs 6 and 7 of Text 4.

Your summary must be in continuous writing (not note form). It must not be longer than 80 words (not including the words given to help you begin).

	Passage Words	Own Words
1	The <u>fast fashion industry</u> , with its constant release of trends, encourages <u>continual upgrading of wardrobes</u> , regardless of need.	The fast fashion industry promotes frequent, unnecessary clothing replacements.
2	Home design influencers on <i>social media</i> have made it commonplace to feel that <u>furniture and decor must be completely overhauled</u> to remain stylish.	Home design influencers spread the idea that home makeovers are required. 'completely overhauled' - intensity must be shown = totally / all or very (just 'overhaul' = ok)
3	<u>Subscription services</u> now provide constant access to the "next best thing," subtly <u>shifting wants into needs</u> .	Subscription services turn desires into perceived necessities.
4	The rise of <u>online shopping platforms</u> has made <u>impulsive purchases</u> easy, immediate and emotionally satisfying – at least in the short term.	Online shopping platforms make buying things simple, quick and gratifying.
5	In <u>schools</u> , <u>peer pressure</u> around brands and belongings can shape identity from a young age, embedding <u>materialism</u> into the <i>teenage</i> psyche.	Peer influence in school can foster materialism. *should refer to 'schools' or 'teenage'
6	<u>Recognising</u> the Diderot Effect allows for conscious resistance.	*(how it can be resisted) Acknowledging / Identifying the effect helps to stop it knowingly. X - 'understand'
7	It encourages <u>intentional purchasing</u> or asking what truly adds value rather than what simply "matches" something new. or distinguish need from want	It supports thoughtful spending on items that serve a purpose. or It supports identifying worthy purchases over trendy ones. or It supports differentiating necessities from desires.
8	The challenge is not to eliminate consumption, but to <u>slow it down</u> .	The goal is to reduce, not stop buying.
9	It is to <u>put one's foot down in defiance</u> of letting one item dictate the purchase of ten others.	It is about standing firm against the effect.

Sidenote: Apologies for poor quality! I used a PDF scanner.