

TEMASEK JUNIOR COLLEGE
2026 JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION
Higher 1



GENERAL PAPER

8881/02

Paper 2 Insert

26 August 2026

1 hour 30 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Insert contains the passages for comprehension.

Passage 1. *An author believes that it is better to have a positive outlook in life.*

- 1 In 1952, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, a self-help book intended to help readers develop greater positivity, became widely popular. The book, light on science and heavy on unsubstantiated anecdotes and theories, was widely criticised by mental health experts at the time.

- 2 Despite the substantial criticism, it is not hard to spot the book's continued influence today. It is on social media, in viral manifestation practices, in marketing for fitness tracking apps, in TedTalks, in multi-level marketing companies and in team-bonding mantras. The 'just be positive!' approach has become a modern-day religion: unquestioningly followed and propagated with great fervour. These positivity evangelists are not wrong however, because many studies have found that positivity is associated with many beneficial outcomes. So how do we understand positivity and stay positive?

- 3 What determines whether one has a positive outlook is complicated. It is partly due to a genetic lottery. It also depends on the myriad of early childhood interactions that span years with one's caregivers – relationship dynamics that form the foundation for whether individuals expect good or bad things to happen. People may also respond radically differently to life experiences; their reactions could differ depending on their mood, the time of day or the season of life they are in. The result is an unpredictable cocktail of outcomes shaping whether an individual can be considered optimistic.

- 4 Positivity has been associated with many desirable health benefits, but this is due in part to how people with positive outlooks handle stress. For one, optimists are more likely to successfully overcome challenges because they are less likely than pessimists to engage in avoidant behavior. They are more likely to address problems directly rather than sweep them under the rug. And if a stressful situation is out of their control, optimists are more likely to accept it and either remove themselves from the situation or come to terms with it, thereby preventing cyclical spirals of negativity.

- 5 Positive reframing of what would otherwise be deflating situations or stages in life helps us thrive. Far from wallowing in the darkness, we can pick ourselves up, and work on managing and even overturning challenges that come our way.

- 6 Also, a generally positive outlook can make it easier to recover from difficult experiences, maintain a healthy perspective during periods of uncertainty, and avoid becoming trapped in patterns of worry, frustration, or hopelessness. This does not mean that positive people never experience stress or painful emotions, but rather that these emotions are less likely to become the lens through which they interpret everything that happens to them. A balanced approach makes space for negative emotions – a far more sustainable way to deal with the highs and lows of everyday life. We can acknowledge that something hurts while still believing that things can improve or feel disappointed about an outcome without allowing that disappointment to define everything else in our lives.

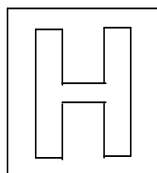
- 7 In this sense, positivity is less about maintaining a particular emotional state and more about developing the flexibility to move through different emotional states without becoming stuck in them. So, let us work towards a healthy degree of positivity, so that we will be able to hold space for reality, our fears, and our concerns. Truly, it is about time we turn the potential from theory into a reality to be actualised.

Passage 2. *An author argues that optimism is not always beneficial.*

- 1 Decades of research have found that positive thinking isn't always so positive. In some cases, pessimists fare better than those with a sunnier disposition. Married couples who were extremely optimistic about their future, for example, were more likely to experience relationship deterioration. And in situations where danger is present, excessive optimism can have severe consequences. What is normally a strength of optimists – risk-taking, can become a dangerous weakness. Because we believe that things will work out even where there is little evidence to support this perspective, we tend to underestimate the costs and ignore warning signs. 5
- 2 Neglecting health precautions is one of the most consistently documented dangers of unrealistic optimism. Smokers who underestimated their cancer risk were less likely to quit and more likely to perceive cigarettes as less harmful than they really are. Such individuals believe themselves capable of preventing problems – even when their actual behaviour does not reflect those beliefs. This illusion of control creates a false sense of security. Critically, it is not just that people think bad things are unlikely to happen to them; they also fail to take the steps that would actually reduce their risk, because they feel the steps are unnecessary. 10 15
- 3 There are also consequences of excessive optimism in the realm of leadership. The tendency to be over-optimistic can cause a leader to be perceived as unapproachable by team members. The more optimistic leaders are, the less likely they are to integrate negative views. This can lead to decisions that result in faulty planning. Furthermore, workers are inclined to stop reporting bad news to their leaders as they assume their bosses do not want to hear it. Failing to acknowledge tough realities can leave some feeling that their struggles are not understood, while pushing for others to embrace optimistic views can leave them feeling frustrated. 20
- 4 Optimism can also beget disappointment. Anticipating perfection often results in a higher likelihood of being upset when the results come in lower than expected. Conversely, those who underestimate their abilities – the pessimists – often feel better afterward. When people are told to stay positive in the face of adversity, it can invalidate their real and painful emotions. This dismissal can make people feel isolated and reluctant to share their feelings in the future. For the eternal optimists, the ultimate question is how we can benefit from our tendency towards seeing the upside of life while minimising threats to ourselves or others. 25 30

Passage 3. *An author shares his reflection on positive thinking.*

- 1** Some days, it is hard to will myself to think positively when things seem to be going downhill. Then, my best friend slaps me out of this slump by persistently reminding me that my strengths will help me turn the situation around and in that moment, hearing this makes the world a shade brighter. I move a little more, eat a little better, and speak with a little more purpose. The belief that things can improve gives me the quiet confidence to make the choices that make improvement possible. 5
- 2** Then there are other days when that same insistence on brightness feels strangely heavy. I catch myself smoothing over frustrations, rehearsing reassuring phrases while a quieter, more honest voice asks awkward questions I would rather not hear. It is tempting to turn away from that voice, to keep polishing a comforting image instead of facing what is raw, or tired, or plainly not working. 10
- 3** These days, I try to hold optimism a little more loosely. I let myself feel disappointed when things go wrong, then look for what might come next, instead of pretending it doesn't sting. It is not the shiny kind of positivity you see in quotes, but real and lasting. I learnt that managing positive thinking is not about drowning out the noise of doubt, but learning which voices to listen to at the right time. 15



TEMASEK JUNIOR COLLEGE
2026 JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION
Higher 1



CANDIDATE
NAME

CG

SUBJECT
TUTOR'S NAME

GENERAL PAPER

8881/02

Paper 2

26 August 2026

1 hour 30 minutes

Candidates answer on the Question Paper.

Additional Materials: Insert

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your name, CG and GP tutor's name on all the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black pen.

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

Answer **all** questions.

The Insert contains the passages for comprehension.

Note that up to **15** marks out of **50** will be awarded for your use of language.

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

For Examiner's Use	
Content	/35
Language	/15
Total	/50

Answer **all** questions.

For
Examiner's
Use

Your answers should be:

- written **in your own words as far as possible**. Where you select the appropriate material from the passage in your answer, you must still use your own words to express it.
- written in **continuous prose**.

From Passage 1

- 1 According to the author, why was the self-help book on positivity 'widely criticised' (line 3) by experts?

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..... [2]

- 2 Explain the author's use of the phrase 'modern-day religion' in line 8.

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..... [2]

- 3 From paragraph 3, explain **three** ways in which the author uses language to show that the factors shaping one's positive outlook are 'complicated' (line 12).

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..... [3]

4 From paragraph 4, how do people with a positive outlook handle stress?

*For
Examiner's
Use*

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..... [3]

5 In what way is the final paragraph an effective conclusion to the author's argument?

.....

..... [1]

From Passage 2

- 6 Summarise what the author has to say about the harmful effects of excessive optimism.

Write your summary in **no more than 120 words**.

*For
Examiner's
Use*

[8]

From all the passages*For
Examiner's
Use*

- 7** Passage 1 states that 'a balanced approach makes space for negative emotions' (line 34).

Identify **one** specific idea from Passage 3 which can be used to support this statement. Justify your answer.

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.....

.....

..... [2]

- 8** Passage 2 states that 'pushing for others to embrace optimistic views can leave them feeling frustrated.' (lines 23–24).

Identify **one** specific idea from Passage 3 which can be used to undermine this statement. Justify your answer.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

How far do you agree that a positive outlook brings about more benefits than harm?

- the ideas and opinions from **at least** one of the reading passages
- examples drawn from your own experience and that of your society.

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**2026 JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION
GENERAL PAPER
Paper 2 Suggested Answers**

From Passage 1

- 1. According to the author, why was the self-help book on positivity ‘widely criticised’ (line 3) by experts? [2]**

From the passage	Suggested rephrase
The book, light on science and heavy on unsubstantiated anecdotes and theories, was widely criticised by mental health experts at the time. (l.2–5)	The book was criticised as - it was seen as being lacking in data/research [1] - and was instead centred on unverified claims and stories. [1]

- 2. Explain the author’s use of the phrase ‘modern-day religion’ in line 8. [2]**

From the passage	Suggested rephrase
It is on social media, in viral manifestation practices, in marketing for fitness tracking apps, in TedTalks, in multi-level marketing companies, in team-bonding mantras... the ‘just be positive!’ approach has become a modern-day religion: unquestioningly followed and propagated with great fervour. (l.6–9)	The author uses the phrase ‘modern-day religion’ to describe how - the push to be optimistic is blindly embraced/adhered to, [1] - and promoted/spread with extreme zeal in the world today. [1]

- 3. From paragraph 3, explain three ways in which the author uses language to showcase that the factors shaping one’s positive outlook are ‘complicated’ (line 12). [3]**

From the passage	Suggested rephrase
- It is partly due to a genetic lottery. (l.14) - It also depends on the myriad of early childhood interactions that spans years with one’s caregivers – relationship dynamics that form the foundation for whether individuals expect good or bad things to happen. (l.15–16) - People may also respond radically differently to life experiences; their reactions could differ depending on their mood, the time of day, or the season of life they are in. (l.16–17) - The result is an unpredictable cocktail of outcomes shaping whether an individual can be considered optimistic. (l.18)	The author uses the phrases ‘genetic lottery’ to explain that one’s propensity towards optimism is a matter of hereditary chance/luck. ‘myriad of early childhood interactions’ to refer to the wide range of possible formative social bonds// social bonds from young that could determine if one believes positive or negative outcomes will occur. ‘respond radically differently’ to talk about the drastically/ fundamentally alternative ways in which individuals may react to events that occur. ‘unpredictable cocktail’ to show that the erratic mixture of factors that determines if an individual is seen as positive is uncertain/ not known beforehand/ cannot be foreseen. Any 3 points for 3 marks.

4. From paragraph 4, how do people with a positive outlook handle stress? [3]

From the passage	Suggested rephrase
- For one, optimists are more likely to successfully overcome challenges because they are less likely than pessimists to engage in avoidant behavior. (l.20–22) They are more likely to address problems directly rather than sweep them under the rug. (l.22–23) - And if a stressful situation is out of their control, optimists are more likely to accept it (l.23–24) and either remove themselves from the situation (l.24) or come to terms with it (l.24–25)	- They do not intentionally ignore difficult situations/ obstacles/ do not brush aside matters and instead tackle them head-on. [1m] - If they cannot manage a stressful situation, they acknowledge the situation/ stop trying to change the situation/ recognise that the situation will not change. [1m] - and either extricate themselves from/ get out of the situation [1m] - or be at peace with/ make peace with/ reconcile themselves to/ learn to live with the situation [1m] Any 3 points for 3 marks.

5. In what way is the final paragraph an effective conclusion to the author's argument? [1]

From the passage	Suggested rephrase
So let us work towards a healthy degree of positivity, so that we will be able to hold space for reality, our fears, and our concerns. Truly, it is about time we turn the potential from theory into a reality to be actualised. (l.41–43)	The final paragraph concludes the author's argument effectively as - it highlights the author's assertion/ stance that as long as one takes a measured/ moderated approach, positivity will benefit us. [1m] - it is a call to action to get readers to moderate their levels of positivity in order to fully realise the benefits of optimism. [1m] - it reiterates the author's overall argument that there are immense benefits to a positive outlook provided we can balance it well. [1m] Any point for 1 mark.

From Passage 2

6. Summarise what the author has to say about the harmful effects of excessive optimism.

Write your summary in no more than 120 words. [8]

From the passage		Suggested rephrase
Married couples who were extremely optimistic about their future, for example, were more likely to experience deterioration. (l.2–4)	A1	[inferred] Those who are excessively optimistic about their relationships/ life/ situations [CAUSE] have a higher chance of the latter failing/ worsening [EFFECT].
And in situations where danger is present, excessive optimism can have severe consequences. (l.4–5)	A2	Where harm is imminent [CONTEXT], excessive optimism might result in grave/ dire outcomes [EFFECT].
What is normally a strength of optimists – risk-taking, can become a dangerous weakness. (l.5–6)	A3	Being daring, typically an asset of optimism [CONTEXT], can transform into a flaw/ shortcoming that brings about harms/ problems [EFFECT].
Because we believe that things will work out even where there is little evidence to support this perspective, we tend to underestimate the costs and ignore warning signs. (l.6–8)	A4	Since excessively optimistic people have faith that matters can be resolved/ will be fine, though there is minimal proof to substantiate this [CAUSE], they may downplay/ misjudge harms [EFFECT].
Neglecting health precautions is one of the most consistently documented dangers of unrealistic optimism. (l.9–10)	B1	Ignoring measures to secure/ Not safeguarding/ Not taking care of one's well-being is another harmful effect of excessive optimism.
Such individuals believe themselves capable of preventing problems – even when their actual behaviour does not reflect those beliefs. (l.11–13)	B2	These people think they are competent/ proficient/ effective/ skillful in averting/ pre-empting trouble, although their actions do not back up this perspective/ indicate otherwise.
This illusion of control creates a false sense of security. (l.13–14)	B3	This fosters an unreal/ untrue/ misleading feeling/ perception of safety/ makes them feel safe even when the situation is unsafe [EFFECT].
also fail to take the steps that would actually reduce their risk, because they feel the steps are unnecessary. (l.15–16)	B4	Individuals do not even take actions that would lessen the probability of harm [EFFECT] as they deem it unneeded/ needless/ unwarranted. [CAUSE].
The tendency to be over-optimistic can cause a leader to be perceived as unapproachable by team members. (l.18–20)	C1	Excessive optimism results in leaders being seen as distant/ unfriendly/ aloof/ cold by their subordinates [EFFECT].
The more optimistic leaders are, the less likely they are to integrate negative views. (l.19–20)	C2	Such leaders generally do not accept/ consider/ account for skeptical/ pessimistic/ bleak perspectives [EFFECT].
This can lead to decisions that result in faulty planning. (l.20)	C3	This can cause choices/ resolutions, that lead to poor/ unsound/ flawed/ erroneous organisation.
Furthermore, workers are inclined to stop reporting bad news to their leaders as they assume their bosses	C4	As subordinates perceive that their superiors dislike it [CAUSE], they are prone to withholding negative/

From the passage		Suggested rephrase
do not want to hear it. (l.20–22)		unpleasant/ troubling information [EFFECT].
while pushing for others to embrace optimistic views can leave them feeling frustrated. (l.23–24)	C5	and forcing workers to welcome optimistic views [CAUSE] can result in them feeling angry/ infuriated/ exasperated [EFFECT].
Optimism can also beget disappointment. Anticipating perfection often results in a higher likelihood of being upset when the results come in lower than expected. (l.25–26)	D1	Expecting flawless/ ideal outcomes [CONTEXT] leads to the increased propensity of being/ tendency to be unhappy/ disheartened when it does not work out as expected [EFFECT].
When people are told to stay positive in the face of adversity, it can invalidate their painful emotions. (l.28–29)	D2	Individuals told to be optimistic even amid difficulties [CAUSE] can be made to feel that their distress/ agony is being dismissed/ brushed aside/ not taken seriously [EFFECT].
This dismissal can make people feel isolated and reluctant to share their feelings in the future. (l.29–30)	D3	This creates a sense of feeling alone and being unwilling to reveal/ tell others about their emotions anymore.

Total no. of points = 16

Mark scheme

1 – 2 points	1 mark	6 points	4 marks	9 points	7 marks
3 – 4 points	2 marks	7 points	5 marks	≥ 10 points	8 marks
5 points	3 marks	8 points	6 marks		

From all the passages

7. Passage 1 states that ‘a balanced approach makes space for negative emotions’ (line 34).

Identify one specific idea from Passage 3 which can be used to support this statement. Justify your answer. [2]

From the passage	Suggested rephrase
- I let myself feel disappointed when things go wrong, then look for what might come next, instead of pretending it doesn't sting. It is not the shiny kind of positivity you see in quotes, but real and lasting. (l.12–14) OR - I learnt that managing positive thinking is not about drowning out the noise of doubt, but learning which voices to listen to at the right time. (l.14–16)	<u>Paraphrasing of idea</u> - The idea from Passage 3 lines 12 to 14 states that the author allows himself to experience dissatisfaction when things do not go as planned instead of acting like nothing has happened (and doing so leads to authentic and enduring positivity). [1] OR - The idea from Passage 3 lines 14 to 16 states that positive thinking is about understanding which perspectives to pay heed to at the correct moment instead of ignoring any skepticism. [1]

Common idea: A healthy level of optimism is about holding/ allowing space for negative emotions.	<u>Justification</u> This supports the statement in Passage 1 as it is in acknowledging negative thoughts that helps us to truly experience well-adjusted positivity/ accommodating upsetting feelings ensures that we are not blindly positive. [1]
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8. Passage 2 states that ‘pushing for others to embrace optimistic views can leave them feeling frustrated.’ (lines 23–24).

Identify one specific idea from Passage 3 which can be used to undermine this statement. Justify your answer. [2]

From the passage	Suggested rephrase
Then, my best friend slaps me out of this slump by persistently reminding me that my strengths will help me turn the situation around and in that moment, hearing this makes the world a shade brighter. (l.2–4) Contrasting idea: optimism thrust on us by others can leave us frustrated vs optimism encouraged in us by others allows us to feel better/hopeful.	<u>Paraphrasing of idea</u> - The idea from Passage 3 lines 2 to 4 states that steadfast/ non-stop/ never-ending/ consistent encouragement and validation from others about keeping optimistic helps the author feel hopeful in dire situations. [1] <u>Justification</u> - This undermines the statement in Passage 2 as instead of feeling annoyed by the sense of optimism that is forced upon us, we feel heartened and uplifted by constant reminders to do so amid challenging moments in life. [1]

9. The reading passages cover a range of views about having a positive outlook.

How far do you agree that a positive outlook brings about more benefits than harms?

Support your answer with reference to:

- the ideas and opinions from at least one of the reading passages
- examples drawn from your own experience and that of your society. [12]

QUESTION ANALYSIS

A range of views about having a positive outlook:

From Passage 1 (benefits of a positive outlook)

- Optimists are more likely to successfully overcome challenges because they are less likely than pessimists to engage in avoidant behaviour. (Paragraph 4)
- Positivity has been associated with many desirable health benefits, but this is due in part to how people with positive outlooks handle stress. (Paragraph 4)
- Positive reframing of what would otherwise be deflating situations or stages in life helps us thrive. (Paragraph 5)

From Passage 2 (harmful effects of an excessively positive outlook)

- The tendency to be over-optimistic can cause a leader to be perceived as unapproachable by team members. (Paragraph 3)
- Failing to acknowledge tough realities can leave some feeling that their struggles are not understood, while pushing for others to quickly embrace optimistic views can leave them frustrated. (Paragraph 3)

- When people are told to stay positive in the face of adversity, it can invalidate their real and painful emotions. (Paragraph 4)
- Anticipating perfection often results in a higher likelihood of being upset when the results come in lower than expected. (Paragraph 4)

From Passage 3 (reflecting on when and how best to embrace positivity)

- The belief that things can improve gives us the quiet confidence to make the choices that make improvement possible. (Paragraph 1)

How far do you agree that a positive outlook brings about more harm than benefits?

- Students should clearly state the degree of agreement, using appropriate qualifiers to indicate some balance in the stand.

the ideas and opinions from at least one of the reading passages

- Students should pick two different ideas/opinions, one each from a different passage, for discussion.
- These ideas/ opinions should be related to evaluating the extent to which positivity is viewed as beneficial or harmful and the reasons WHY they are deemed as such.

examples drawn from your own experience and that of your society

- The society must be identified at the start of the answer.
- All aspects of the AQ answer must relate to the society identified.
- The answer must be contextualised in the society identified, right from the start.
- Residents of the society identified should NOT be referred to vaguely as 'people'; instead, specific nationalities such as 'Singaporeans', 'Malaysians', 'Chinese' (or other relevant nationalities) should be used throughout the answer.
- Answers should not vaguely describe what is happening in the society identified. Instead, answers should offer:
 - clear reasons and evaluation to support *the extent at which the student agrees* with the identified ideas/opinions in relation to that society.
 - some consideration/ evaluation of people's perception on the benefits or harm of positivity by referencing the nature and characteristics of that society.
 - reasons why the situation in that society may have changed/ intensified/ abated in recent times: people's changing mindsets/ evolving social and economic realities etc.

SUGGESTED APPROACH

R: The extent to which you agree whether positivity brings benefits or harm, in relation to your own experiences and that of your society.

OB 1–3: Observations regarding whether or not positivity brings harm or benefits. The chosen observations should be clearly stated with paragraph/ line reference at the start of each body paragraph.

EX, EV: Explaining, developing and evaluating arguments with reference to yourself and your own society, making the link clear to OB and R.

EG: Supporting ideas with relevant examples from the society identified, and making the link from the examples to OB, EX, EV and R.

**** for the suggested answer below, 'your society' = Singapore**

INTRODUCTION	Analysis
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• In his 2026 New Year message, Singapore's Prime Minister Lawrence Wong reiterated the government's narrative that in a world of fast-moving change and uncertainty, our small nation must constantly rethink, reset and refresh with every challenge or unknown. Even with that, he reminded Singaporeans that 'we can press on confidently – because we are dealing with them from a position of strength.' • Indeed, maintaining a positive outlook has contributed to Singapore and Singaporeans weathering the challenges that come our way over the years. • While we need to ensure that optimism stays grounded and expectations are managed, I largely agree that positivity brings about more benefits than harm in the context of Singapore.	• <i>Engaging the issue within the context of Singaporean society.</i> • <i>Stating clear, balanced stand.</i>
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OBSERVATION 1	Analysis
In Passage 1 paragraph 4, the author argues that 'optimists are more likely to successfully overcome challenges because they are less likely than pessimists to engage in avoidant behaviours' (line 20–22). • This argument resonates powerfully with what Singaporean society has increasingly become – forward-looking pragmatism. Born out of historical vulnerability, we have always given ourselves very little space for wallowing in self-pity when faced with adversity and uncertainty. We realised that such a pessimistic approach meant that Singapore would never rise above the constraints it faced, proving skeptics right that Singapore is too small and resource-deprived to survive. A positive outlook enabled Singapore to leap into action to start building the nation its citizens needed. • Our first Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew may have shed tears on national television over the separation in 1965 but dusted himself down to lead with a gritty defiance that was driven by an underlying conviction that Singapore could beat the odds. • Decades later, Singapore continues to deal with challenges in the uncertain global climate with a similar outlook. Rather than being passive and wishful, the nation has embraced a brand of pragmatic positivity, combining a positive, can-do spirit with strategic planning and action. • Instead of adopting a 'wait and see' attitude or aimlessly protesting technological displacement, Singapore adopts a proactive stance towards healthy adoption and development Artificial Intelligence (AI). With national imperatives like the setting up of the National AI Council, the Smart Nation 2.0 Initiative and the SkillsFuture programme, it is clear to see our relentless drive to pivot and ride the crest of a wave, rather than simply bemoaning the threats posed by AI. • Such an optimistic and forward-looking approach is rolled out even for young Singaporeans, as students as young as those in Primary 4 use supervised education-specific AI tools to support their learning. In higher education, all students will take compulsory modules to build foundational AI skills tailored to their specific disciplines. • Ultimately, this forward-looking pragmatism ensures that Singapore does not merely survive technological disruption, but actively shapes it to maintain a competitive edge on the global stage for every Singaporean.	• <i>Clear identification of OB about the benefits of a positive outlook.</i> • <i>EV/ EX – relevant characteristic of SG and how optimism has helped and continues to help us navigate and thrive in today's world.</i> • <i>EGs – clear and specific examples provided across levels to illustrate the OB.</i> • <i>Rounding up the paragraph to reiterate the overall stand.</i>

● Far from a naïve sentiment, such a brand of optimism proves to be highly beneficial because it enables Singapore to tackle challenges bravely and judiciously, instead of avoiding them.	
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OBSERVATION 2	Analysis
Another reason why optimism is seen as beneficial comes from Passage 1, paragraph 5, where the author argues that ‘positive reframing of what would otherwise be deflating situations or stages in life helps us thrive’. I strongly agree with this idea, especially in Singapore, where society is still heavily shaped by kiasuism and the intense preoccupation with traditional milestones. ● In such an environment where perceived failures can feel overwhelming, positive reframing becomes an essential psychological tool to maintain resilience and allow Singaporeans to continue to excel in whatever path they take. ● This mental shift is increasingly evident in how young Singaporeans navigate Singapore’s hyper-competitive education system, where missing out on the conventional express pathway, such as failing to qualify for a junior college or an autonomous local university, can initially feel devastating. ● While the government is still trying its best to ‘lower the temperature’ and get Singaporean parents and students to move away from defining themselves by their academic success or failure, an increasing number of young Singaporeans are now actively reframing so-called failures as opportunities to build alternative strengths. ● A clear example is Marvin Kang, who saw his poor A-level results as a chance to restart at Ngee Ann Polytechnic in his twenties. Instead of wallowing in defeat, he leveraged his polytechnic experience to rebuild his self-esteem, eventually earning a university scholarship and co-founding The Astronauts Collective – a non-profit dedicated to helping youth explore meaningful career paths. ● Nationally, the idea of taking a gap year to escape from the exhaustion and struggles of trying to keep up with intense academic pursuits is also gaining traction, with startup websites like GapyearSG providing resources and a community to start on a journey of self-recalibration and rest. Instead of seeing it as dropping out of the race, this is increasingly seen as an important break to gain clarity for the journey ahead. ● This reframing is also made easier by structural expansions in higher education that reward alternative routes. With local polytechnic graduates now making up around one-third of the intake across Singapore’s six autonomous universities, the traditional junior college route is no longer the sole gatekeeper to university. As the Ministry of Education incorporates aptitude-based admissions and industry-focused universities like Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) and Singapore University of Social Sciences, young Singaporeans are further validated in reframing academic detours more as different pathways to success as compared to deflating dead ends. ● In an Asian society like Singapore, remaining single, childfree, or delaying marriage past one’s twenties is viewed	● <i>Clear identification of OB about the benefits of optimism.</i> ● <i>EV/ EX – relevant characteristic of SG and how positive reframing is relevant.</i> ● <i>EG/ EX – clear and specific examples related to education to illustrate the OB, with explanation as to how Singaporean youth handle/ react positively to disappointments due to traditionally-defined milestones and educational pathways</i> ● <i>EG – another example but engaging adulthood and the</i>

by elders with pity or disapproval, often framed as a 'failure' to complete a core life stage. Today, however, young Singaporeans actively reframe these choices positively. Rather than viewing singlehood or a child-free lifestyle that would lead to a lonely future, Singaporeans choose to view it as a deliberate, empowering decision that grants them the autonomy to pursue personal passions, achieve financial freedom, or to be a 'pawrent' to a pet instead. Even among those who do wish to start a family later, delays are reframed not as falling behind peers, but as a responsible choice to ensure emotional maturity and financial stability first before thinking about starting a family. • Ultimately, this capacity to reframe life's deflating moments and stages reflects a growing maturity among Singaporeans. In this sense, freeing them from societal pressures and expectations to chart a course or live a life for themselves clearly offers more benefits than it brings harm.	<i>pressures associated with marriage and family-planning.</i> • <i>Rounding up the paragraph to reiterate the overall stand.</i>
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OBSERVATION 3	Analysis
However, optimism can invite disappointment as 'anticipating perfection often results in a higher likelihood of being upset when the results come in lower than expected' (lines 25–26). • At first glance, there certainly appears to be some truth to the statement, particularly in context of Singapore and its meritocratic ethos, which encourages individuals to believe that hard work will consistently and reliably translate into top results. • This optimistic belief, when left unrestrained, can easily transform into unrealistic perfectionism. • In Singapore's high-pressure academic culture, for instance, students who sit national examinations such as the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) or A Level examination, with overly confident expectations having put in the requisite hard work may find themselves devastated when these excessive levels of optimism do not translate into academic excellence. • In fact, the years-long trend of young Singaporeans facing immense mental health struggles in response to these expected levels of perfection has been well-documented across the nation's media outlets, with a 2026 CNA article reporting that psychologists had seen a 20 per cent rise in cases involving examination-related stress every year since 2021, with many students feeling that they simply cannot fail for fear of disappointing loved ones and falling short of their own projections. • While such a harmful effect of being overly optimistic can indeed be observed among some segments of Singaporeans, to fully conclude that optimism is therefore harmful would be an over-generalisation as it dismisses the value of grounded optimism, which acknowledges setbacks as part of the journey and has been a large part of Singapore's story at the national level. • Rather than merely being disappointed, Singapore's approach has been to use setbacks and even failures as valuable lessons to better guide decision making in the future. Rather than an optimistic anticipation of perfection, ours is a	• <i>Clear identification of OB about the benefits of online learning.</i> • <i>EV/ EX – relevant characteristic of SG and how optimism can be seen to invite disappointment.</i> • <i>EGs – clear and specific examples provided across levels to illustrate the OB.</i> • <i>Rebuttal of OB to reinforce overall stand by showcasing how grounded optimism has steered Singapore through its founding years and still allowed the nation to reap success through setbacks and disappointments.</i> • <i>EV/EX to support rebuttal that grounded optimism has</i>

calibrated yet optimistic anticipation of high standards that has enabled Singapore to punch above its weight in many areas. - As an example, in the 2000s when early iterations of Singpass faced usability issues and low adoption, the government did not lower its ambitions – it went back to the drawing board, invested in better design, and iterated until the product worked. Singapore's approach was never rooted in blind optimism that things would go smoothly, but in a calibrated confidence that high standards are achievable if shortcomings are honestly confronted. The result is a digital identity platform that is now studied by governments around the world. - With the government actively looking at ways to improve the nation's overall wellbeing, coupled with policy attempts to shift the focus away from high-stakes examinations and to instead prioritise crucial skills such as resilience, teamwork and the joy of learning, there is much for Singaporeans to be optimistic about. Ultimately, when Singaporeans dig deeper and learn to pair their aspirations with resilience and a realistic evaluation of their circumstances, optimism becomes not a source of vulnerability but a genuine engine of progress.	<i>and will continue to serve Singaporeans well.</i> <i>EG – clear and specific example provided to illustrate the rebuttal.</i> <i>Rounding up the paragraph to reiterate the overall stand.</i>
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CONCLUSION	Analysis
- In conclusion, Singapore's history and continued development demonstrate that a positive outlook has been instrumental in overcoming adversity and embracing new opportunities, especially when it is grounded in pragmatism. - However, it is crucial to note that being positive can become counterproductive if it develops into unrealistic perfectionism or unattainable expectations. This highlights the importance of utilising optimism carefully as Singaporeans stand to benefit most from a form of positivity that is hopeful yet pragmatic. - All in all, it cannot be denied that positivity does indeed bring immensely more benefits than harm in the context of Singapore society.	<i>Reiterations of the benefits that positivity brings to Singapore.</i> <i>Reflective conclusion with nuance.</i>