



HWA CHONG INSTITUTION
PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION
Higher 1

**Candidate
Name**

CT Group

**Index
Number**

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

This 2-page Insert contains the reading passages for comprehension. Please detach it and fill in your particulars in the boxes above. Please retain this Insert at the end of the examination.

Passage 1. An author argues for fewer rules to make society better.

- 1 In 2002, the town of Drachten in the Netherlands conducted a counter-intuitive experiment: the forest of traffic lights and speed-limit signs at the accident-prone Laweiplein intersection was removed, followed by the speed bumps, markings and divisions between road and pavement. To the disbelief of naysayers, road users adapted, relying on eye contact, gestures and common sense for navigation. Without traffic 5 infrastructure to dictate their every move, drivers and pedestrians alike became attentive. As their judgement and consideration improved, traffic moved smoothly and accidents declined. The shared-space concept was adopted elsewhere in the Netherlands and beyond, and its success raises a provocative question: if people behave responsibly when rules are removed, do we need rules to make society better? 10
- 2 Governments may enforce laws that limit unfettered speech or criminalise substance abuse. Corporations may have to adopt specific hiring practices. Students face restrictions on attire and behaviour. Some countries are also policing social media access for minors and disallowing mobile phones in the classroom. While many rules and regulations may be well-meaning, an argument against them is that they erode everyone's 15 freedom just to constrain misbehaviour by a minority. Consequently, every new restriction elicits disbelief in its necessity. When space for decision-making keeps shrinking, people conclude that their judgement – and they – no longer matters. The ensuing learned helplessness is a worrying deficiency in our troubled world.
- 3 The call for freedom is further bolstered by the argument that limiting rules and regulations 20 promotes imagination, enterprise and initiative. In societies where even children are encouraged to exercise liberty, scientists create new materials and entrepreneurs pursue audacious ventures. Anyone can be an activist, a whistleblower or a political candidate. By contrast, cultures that overstate the value of conformity set a course towards decline. Overprotected with Nos and Don'ts, their youth can discern problems but would 25 only wait for answers. Not only do they balk at a push and pull of the status quo because "that's not how things are done here", but they also preface their responses to problems with "the government should", evidence that blind compliance has taken root. The apathetic may not even bother to condemn that which is morally wrong and only ask whether it is legally permitted. 30
- 4 None of this suggests that society could function without rules altogether. For instance, when people who resent authority "telling us what to do" reject precautions such as lockdowns and social distancing during a pandemic, they endanger more than just themselves. However, when restrictions multiply, mankind is poorer for it. Think of censorship of outrageous artistic expression or strong opposing views for example. 35
- 5 A society that is constantly told to toe the line becomes less creative, less courageous and less responsible. The task at hand, therefore, is to return as much freedom to the people as possible so that they get to decide how to forge a better way forward.

Passage 2. Another author weighs the importance of rules.

- 1 Rules pervade daily life. They sustain civility, evident in the interlacing of “please”, “sorry” and “thank you” in conversations. They keep us from being a public nuisance when we are out and about. Rules govern language use too. Ignoring them makes you and me unintelligible.
- 2 In events such as sports championships, rules ensure that the medals belong to talent and effort. In financial markets where avarice must be reined in, regulations maintain trustworthiness. When missteps may trigger cross-border incidents, particularly in foreign relations, rules of engagement are key to good policy-making. In many other arenas, our resolve to stick to the rules protects the common good and ensures transgressors will be punished, thus saving the world from pandemonium. 5
- 3 Nevertheless, rules can become problematic. Just look at biomedical research, where efforts to uphold human rights bloat review processes. Despite calls to protect the environment, companies cling to familiar but outmoded technology. The installation of green infrastructure by government agencies may be impeded by requirements written for the last century too. 15
- 4 Worst of all, tyranny lurks within the very rules designed to order society. Like Procrustes who forced travellers to fit his iron bed by stretching or amputating their limbs, humans tend to impose their opinions on dress, language or ritual on others with no regard for their distress.
- 5 Policy-makers and institutions must regularly review the rules and regulations they craft. Rather than merely treading carefully, stakeholders should do their part to ensure that expectations and restrictions are not just necessary, but also effective. 20

Passage 3. A teenager shares his views regarding rules.

- 1 I do not dislike rules completely. In fact, some of them make sense, such as when I am playing basketball or chess with my friends and everyone abides by the rules.
- 2 But I wonder whether teachers create rules simply because they enjoy making them. We are told how to cut our hair and where to sit during recess. We must not be foul-mouthed or uncouth. Our teachers insist good manners prepare us for adulthood and defiance has consequences. It is hard to be convinced when we see adults misbehaving freely all the time. So we learn to evade the Discipline Master instead. 5
- 3 I notice that the stricter the rule, the more tempted people are to break it. When our school banned mobile phones recently, we did not stop bringing them to school. Instead, we invented ways to hide them. The ban did not cure our addiction; it created another cat-and-mouse game. 10
- 4 I think it is simplistic to think about rules in a black-and-white way. Some rules, like the ones in games, keep things fair or ensure people cooperate. Others exist because adults worry, quite rightly, about what young people like me do when we are set free. But rules like wearing uniforms “properly” are pointless. 15
- 5 I think we should stick to the rules that make sense to us rather than accept them all.



HWA CHONG INSTITUTION
PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION
Higher 1

Candidate Name	
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CT Group	
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A Level Exam Index Number				
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GENERAL PAPER

Paper 2

Candidates answer on the Question Paper.

8881/02

26 August 2026

1 hour 30 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your name, CT Group and A Level Exam index number on all the work you hand in.

Write and shade your student ID in the box on the right using a 2B pencil.
(Your student ID is the first part of your school email address: *****A@...)

Write in dark blue or black pen in this Question Paper.

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

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.

STUDENT ID											
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8	8	8	8	8	8	I	V				
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						L	Y				
						M	Z				

You are reminded of the importance of legible handwriting and good presentation.

Please submit this Question Paper at the end of the Preliminary Examination.
Please retain the Insert.

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

This document is a Question Paper with **6** printed pages.
An Insert with **2** printed pages is attached to this Question Paper.

[Turn over

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 for your answer, you must still use your own words to express it.
- written in **continuous prose**.

From Passage 1

1. What does the 'forest of traffic lights and speed-limit signs' (line 2) reveal about the original approach to road safety in Drachten?

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.....[2]

2. From lines 11-14, explain **two** ways in which rules erode freedom.

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.....

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.....[2]

3. Explain why the author describes learned helplessness as a 'worrying deficiency in our troubled world' (line 19).

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.....[2]

4. How does the author's use of language in lines 24-28 convey their view of cultures that overvalue conformity?

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.....[3]

5. How does the final paragraph support the author's view that 'when restrictions multiply, mankind is poorer for it' (line 34)?

For
Examiner's
Use

[2]

From Passage 2

6. Summarise the importance of rules and when they need to be reviewed.

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

[8]

Candidate to declare Word Count: _____ words

FOR EXAMINER'S USE

No. of Points	0	1-2	3-4	5	6	7	8	9	10 / 10+
Mark Allocation	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

From all the passages*For
Examiner's
Use*

7. Passage 1 states that 'every new restriction elicits disbelief in its necessity' (lines 16-17).

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

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.....

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.....[2]

8. Passage 2 states that 'humans tend to impose their opinions on dress, language or ritual on others' (lines 17-18).

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

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.....[2]

For
Examiner's
Use

9. The reading passages cover a range of views about rules and regulations.
How far do you agree that rules create more advantages than disadvantages?

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.

[illegible]

*For
Examiner's
Use*

.....[12]

END OF PAPER

Hwa Chong Institution
2026 General Paper Preliminary Examination
Paper 2 Suggested Answers_shared

FOR ALL ANSWERS: ACCEPT 'RULES' / 'REGULATIONS' / 'LAWS'. DETAILS IN PARENTHESES ARE OPTIONAL.

1. What does the 'forest of traffic lights and speed-limit signs' (line 2) reveal about the original approach to road safety in Drachten? [2]

Passage	Answer (1 mark per point)
... a counter-intuitive experiment: <u>the forest of traffic lights and speed-limit signs</u> at the accident-prone Laweiplein intersection was removed, followed by the speed bumps, markings and divisions between road and pavement.	(a) The large number/ profusion of traffic control devices/ equipment showed that ... <u>OR</u> The extensive intervention showed that ... (b) ... the road authorities were cautious/ strict about enforcing road safety. <u>OR</u> ... the traffic engineers were determined to control/ regulate traffic. Note: The key words is not 'jungle'/wilderness', hence the BOD/rejected answers. BOD: excessive/ overwhelming/ too many/ heavy-handed. Not accepted: backfired/ chaotic/ confusing/ the many signages led to accidents.

2. From lines 11-14, explain **two** ways in which rules erode freedom. [2]

Passage	Answer (Any 2 points. 1 mark per point)
Governments may enforce laws that limit unfettered speech ... or criminalise substance abuse. Corporations may have to adopt specific hiring practices. Students face restrictions on attire and behaviour. Some countries are also policing social media access for minors and disallowing mobile phones in the classroom.	(a) The public may be unable to speak freely. OR People have to watch what they say. OR People cannot freely communicate their views. (b) The authorities make the consumption of narcotics illegal. OR The authorities prohibit the consumption of (illicit) drugs. (Recreational) drug misuse is an offence punishable by law. (c) Businesses may have to comply with mandatory recruitment procedures. OR Companies may be required to select employees in particular ways. (d) Schools expect their pupils to follow a dress code and misconduct is forbidden. OR Schools specify how their pupils are to dress and conduct themselves. (e) The young may not freely use social media or mobile phones (during lessons. OR The authorities are placing constraints on children being involved in social media activities and when they use their devices. Note: (a) and (b) can be counted as 1 or 2 ways. Not accepted: 'Freedom of speech' contains a lift. 'Freedom of expression' overlaps with (d). No to 'overconsumption of drugs is illegal'. 'Use the internet' is too broadly worded.

3. Explain why the author describes learned helplessness as a 'worrying deficiency in our troubled world' (line 19). [2]

Passage	Answer (1 mark per point)
When space for decision-making keeps shrinking, people conclude that their judgement – and they – no longer matters . The ensuing <u>learned helplessness is a worrying deficiency in our troubled world</u> .	(a) The author is conveying their scepticism/ doubts/ casting aspersions on people who give up thinking for themselves/ no longer care/ are habitually passive/ submissive ... (b) They will not be used to proactively coping with the problems afflicting their society/ be unable to independently manage crises in these turbulent times. <u>OR</u> ... will be able to surmount the difficulties pervading the world without direction from the authorities.

4. How does the author's use of language in lines 24-28 convey their view of cultures that overvalue conformity? [3]

Passage	Answer (1 mark per point)
<u>By contrast, cultures that overstate the value of conformity set a course towards decline.</u> Overprotected with Nos and Don'ts, their youth can discern problems but would only wait for answers. Not only do they balk at a push and pull of the status quo because "that's not how things are done here", but they also preface their responses to problems with "the government should", evidence that blind compliance has taken root.	(a) "Set a course towards decline" warns against allowing conformity to cause a society/ culture (allow) to deteriorate/ degenerate/ weaken (BOD). (b) "Overprotected with Nos and Don'ts" points out that the young/ people are shielded/ sheltered from doing/ trying/ attempting anything that may harm/ lead to failure/ endanger them. (c) To "only wait for answers" means the young/ people expect solutions to be given/ handed out/ spoon-fed to them/ are used to being handheld through difficulties/ are disinclined to tackle issues head-on/ suffer from inertia to resolve concerns. (d) The author uses the phrase "balk at a push and pull of the status quo" to point out that the young/ people flinch/ shrink from/ resist changes to the current situation/ are afraid to change the state of affairs/ recoil from being the ones to discard familiar approaches. (e) With "blind compliance has taken root", the author concludes that overvaluing conformity will lead to unquestioning obedience/ mindless conformity will become ingrained/ uncritical submission will become entrenched. Note: The quote and explanation must match. Note: If candidates combine two (or more) points, award only [1] if the second marking point is indistinct/lost.

5. How does the final paragraph support the author's view that 'when restrictions multiply, mankind is poorer for it' (line 34)? [2]

Passage	Answer (1 mark for 1 point)
A society that is constantly told to toe the line becomes less creative, less courageous and less responsible. The task at hand, therefore, is to return as much freedom to the people as possible so that they get to decide how to forge a better way forward.	(a) <u>EITHER</u> Too many rules undermines/ weakens our imagination/ innovativeness, daring/ bravery and sense of accountability/ the willingness to shoulder duties. <u>OR</u> Being overly constrained reduces people's ability to develop/ hone (various) desirable qualities/ essential character traits/ valuable skills that allow them to be change makers. (b) A reduction would create the leeway for us to improve the state of affairs in our society/ bring forth positive change/ ignite the spark of progress. Note: Society becoming worse off/ suffer detrimental consequences - paraphrases of the quote?

6. Summarise why rules are important and when they need to be reviewed. Write your summary in **no more than 120 words**. [8]

No. of Points	0	1-2	3-4	5	6	7	8	9	10 / 10+
Mark Allocation	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Passage	Answer
Rules pervade daily life. They sustain civility , evident in the interlacing of “please”, “sorry” and “thank you” in conversations.	1) Rules/ social conventions keep everyday/day-to-day/quotidian interaction courteous / polite/ well-mannered/ gracious.
They keep us from being a public nuisance when we are out and about.	2) They prevent disorderly conduct / curb misconduct/ inhibit misbehaviour in public spaces/ shared areas.
Rules govern language use too. Ignoring them makes you and me unintelligible .	3) Following language rules keeps us from being garbled / incoherent.
In events such as sport championships, rules ensure that the medals belong to talent and effort .	4) Rules ensure top spots in competitions are reserved for excellence .
In financial markets where avarice must be reined in , regulations maintain trustworthiness .	5) (Where transactions must be honest/ above board,) restrictions restrain greed / repress rapacity/ rein in mercenary tendencies/ inspire confidence.
When missteps may trigger cross-border incidents , particularly in foreign relations, rules of engagement are key to good policy-making .	6) Rules of engagement (allow)/ directives are the cornerstone of peaceful international politics / bedrock of informed decisions in foreign policy / are crucial to keep bilateral ties cordial/ ensure the best course of action/ plan will be formulated/ avert regrettable diplomatic incidents .
In many other arenas, our resolve to stick to the rules protects the common good ...	7) Public interest / mankind's/ humanity's/ society's overall wellbeing can only be safeguarded if everyone is/ one and all are willing/ determined/ agree to live by the rules.
... and ensures transgressors will be punished , thus saving the world from pandemonium.	8) The rule of law (maintain order/ keep society peaceful/ avert chaos by) enable(ing) wrong-doers to be penalised / charged / Malefactors will be disciplined/ Law-breakers will pay for their crime.
Nevertheless, rule can become problematic. Just look at biomedical research, where efforts to uphold human rights bloat review processes .	9) Good intentions poorly executed creates bureaucratic red tape (that slows things down)/ hinders progress .
Despite calls to protect the environment, companies cling to familiar but outmoded technology. The installation of green infrastructure by government agencies may be impeded by requirements written for the last century too.	10) Sticking to established/ proven but obsolete/ outmoded methods hampers expedient problem-solving / An overly cautious approach/ The reluctance to innovate obstructs (quick) improvement of a dire situation.
Worst of all, tyranny lurks within the very rules designed to order society ... humans tend to impose their opinions on dress, language or ritual on others with no regard for their distress .	11) People pressure / coerce/ intimidate/ terrorise/ bully those around them/ their fellow man to adopt their culture / cultural norms despite the trauma it causes them.

7. Passage 1 states that ‘every new restriction elicits disbelief in its necessity’ (lines 16-17). Identify **one** specific idea from Passage 3 that can be used to undermine this statement. Justify your answer. [2]

Passage 3	Identification [1]	Justification [1]
Some rules, like the ones in games, keep things fair or ensure people cooperate . Others exist because adults worry, quite rightly , about what young people like me do when we are set free. But rules like wearing uniforms “properly” are pointless. I think we should stick to the rules that make sense to us rather than accept them all.	(a) (Many) rules are essential to facilitate collaboration/ coordination/ equity among people (b) <u>OR</u> Rules (are not needless when they) can allay (parental) concern as they can prevent/ discourage children/ youth (allow) from wayward behaviour. (c) <u>OR</u> Rules that are logical/ practical/ reasonable / valid are accepted and followed. Note: The idea must be extracted or inferred from Passage 3.	Instead of being perceived as all pointless, rules are ... (a) ... accepted as required/ fundamental/ essential/ sensible/ useful when they allow/ make it possible for activities/ life to proceed (seamlessly/ successfully/ as intended)/ to avert chaos/ disputes. (b) ... seen as protective mechanisms/ needful/ helpful that nurture children/ ensure appropriate conduct/ part of/ complementing parenting. Note: Accept any justification that is <u>logically linked</u> to the identified idea. Mark holistically.

8. Passage 2 states that ‘humans tend to impose their opinions on dress, language or ritual on others’ (lines 17-18). Identify **one** specific idea from Passage 3 that can be used to support this statement. Justify your answer. [2]

Passage 3	Identification [1]	Justification [1]
We are told how to cut our hair and where to sit during recess. We must not be foul-mouthed or uncouth. Our teachers insist good manners prepare us for adulthood and defiance has consequences . It is hard to be convinced when we see adults misbehaving freely all the time. So we learn to evade the Discipline Master instead .	1) Students are subjected to rules set by teachers, and these rules govern every facet of school life (in an onerous way). 2) The students can only accept the code of conduct that dictates their behaviour in school (or face punishment for violating them). 3) Schools exert institutional control over students. Note: The idea must be extracted or inferred from Passage 3.	a) (The author’s snide) allusion to unruly adult/ misdemeanours involving adults makes) it is clear that the teachers’ expectations/ the restrictions on the students’ freedom/ autonomy/ choices fail to resonate/ are seen as double standards. b) (From the students’ avoidance of the Discipline Master/ authority figures,) it can be inferred that they do not accept what they see as meaningless superfluous and will be flouting them. c) The argument that the expected behaviour is etiquette/ decorum rings false to the author. They (do not see adults (allow) walking the talk and) concludes that they are the victim of their teachers’ whims and fancies/ being made to accept subjective preferences/ made to accept others’ standards or perspectives. d) (If schools have to use the threat of punishment to make students toe the line,) it is clear that the latter do not respect/ do not agree with/ find the code of conduct onerous. e) The students will violate the school rules if they get away with it, a sign that they are chafing under control. Note: Accept any justification that is <u>logically linked</u> to the identified idea. Mark holistically.

9. The reading passages cover a range of views about rules and regulations. How far do you agree that rules create more advantages than disadvantages? 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]

REQUIREMENTS. Candidates should:

- decide the extent to which society has gained or lost from the implementation of rules.
- support and balance their views with reasoned arguments and provide supporting illustration.
- show understanding of the ideas and attitudes in the selected passage(s).
- analyse/evaluate the selected material and real-world concerns/situations they raise for discussion.

EXPLANATION. Candidates should show understanding of some of the following issues:

Passage 1

- Are rules really needed to force people to adhere to social norms etc?
- To what extent is there justification for the rules set by governments, schools and corporations? Is it fitting to have rules and regulations that apply to all even though they are targeted at the minority?
- Is it true that people will accept rules passively, and believe that their judgement and views no longer matter?
- What is the relationship between rules and innovation/conformity?
- How much freedom should we grant people to forge a better way forward?

Passage 2

- Do rules support the smooth running of social institutions and society in general?
- Are rules effective in ensuring that individuals are treated fairly?
- Are rules a double-edged sword? Can excessive or poorly designed rules have a negative impact on society? To what extent do rules hinder us from achieving our aims?
- Is no leeway given at all for those who deviate from what rules require?

Passage 3

- To what extent are people frustrated with institutional control?
- How far is it true that people push back against or break stricter rules?
- Do people truly have no say in how rules are set?
- Are they convinced that rules create standards that apply to everyone?

Across the passages

- Do those who set rules truly not care about the concerns and opinions of others? (P1, P2)
- Is there belief in the necessity of rules? (P1, P3)
- Do rules guarantee civility in human interactions? (P1, P3)
- What do figures of authority look out for when implementing rules (e.g. preservation of peace, smooth running of social systems or work processes, maintenance of harmony)? (P1, P2, P3)
- What makes rules and regulations acceptable or contentious/questionable? (P1, P2, P3)

Guidance for Markers: candidates are not restricted to the material in the passages when crafting their response.

EVALUATION. Candidates should question/show reasons for their take on the selected views and give examples from their own and their society's experience in support of these reasons.