

Name		GP Class	
Reg No.			

NATIONAL JUNIOR COLLEGE
Senior High 2 Preliminary Examination
Higher 1

General Paper

Paper 2
INSERT

8881/02

20 August 2026

1 hour 30 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Insert contains the passages for Paper 2.

Passage 1. *An author considers why quitting is sometimes the right and healthy decision.*

- 1 Society glamorises persistence. We romanticise stories of entrepreneurs who failed before succeeding, athletes who pushed through injury, and couples who weathered decades of adversity. The message is clear: quitting is for the meek. Quit, and you face judgment from others, and worse, from yourself. But this cultural glorification of perseverance ignores a critical neurobiological reality. Sometimes, the best thing for your well-being is to walk away. Contrary to conventional wisdom, the decision to quit is not about weakness. It is about self-regulation, and the evidence shows that strategic disengagement is essential for long-term well-being, not to mention day-to-day sanity. 5

- 2 Your brain is constantly calculating whether continued effort is worth the investment, and its signals are worth heeding. When results exceed expectations, your brain triggers dopamine and serotonin¹, increasing drive, and improving your sense of purpose. This does not happen only when you receive a positive outcome but also occurs when your brain calculates the difference between expected and actual results. The reverse is equally true. When reality consistently falls short of expectations, you experience a negative emotion. This is not just disappointment. It is your brain recalibrating, suggesting that your current course of action is not worth the effort. Repeatedly overriding these signals does not make you resilient. It makes you less able to direct your energy where it can actually do good. 10 15

- 3 The good news is that disengaging from unattainable goals has measurable benefits. Disengaging from perpetual dissatisfaction, and subsequently reengaging with meaningful alternatives, is positively related to higher subjective well-being, reduced psychological distress, and even better physical health indicators like reduced cortisol levels. Quitting, in other words, is not an ending but a redirection. This reframing matters. A goal abandoned is not necessarily a life diminished; it may, in fact, be a life reclaimed. The key lies in recognising when a goal is genuinely unattainable versus merely challenging. 20

- 4 Knowing when to quit requires two candid assessments. First, honestly assess the gap between expectations and outcomes. If frustration is predictable and persistent, it is time to change the course. Second, critically evaluate whether you are staying due to sunk-cost thinking; the flawed belief that past investment justifies continued future effort regardless of realistic prospects. Neither assessment is easy, but both are necessary. 25

- 5 Ultimately, the cultural celebration of persistence is a compelling but unsupported narrative. Our brains operate continuously, helping us determine where to invest our effort. Ignoring these signals invites frustration, anxiety, and, in the worst case, depression. Sometimes the best remedy for well-being and motivation is recognising when a fight should end. Strategic quitting is not surrendering; it is self-regulation in action, freeing you to redirect your energy towards goals that are genuinely within reach and worth pursuing. 30 35

¹*Dopamine and serotonin are chemicals produced naturally by the brain that regulate mood, drive, and the sense of reward and well-being.*

Passage 2. *Another author explains why you should push through and never give up.*

- 1** Any worthwhile goal demands perseverance because meaningful achievements rarely come easily. Difficulties, setbacks, and slow progress are normal parts of the journey rather than signs that you should stop. Many people abandon their ambitions not because success is impossible but because fear of failure, fear of judgement or temporary discouragement convince them to quit too soon. Yet, history is filled with examples of individuals who only succeeded because they persisted beyond repeated disappointments. If you give up at the first sign of hardship, you may never discover what you were capable of achieving. The gap between those who succeed and those who do not is often not talent or circumstance, but the willingness to remain in difficulty long enough for it to yield. 5
- 2** When the urge to quit arises, resist the temptation to make a permanent decision based on fleeting emotions. Instead, commit to continuing for just one more day. Breaking a daunting goal into manageable steps makes it feel less overwhelming and allows progress to continue. Rather than worrying about the final outcome, concentrate on completing the next task well. Small, consistent actions maintain momentum, and once momentum is lost, restarting often becomes much harder than simply continuing. Discipline, in this sense, is not about feeling motivated. It is about acting in spite of not feeling motivated. 10
15
- 3** It is equally important to recognise the progress you have already made. Many people focus excessively on how far they still have to go and overlook how much they have already accomplished. Reflecting on past improvements builds confidence and reminds you that your efforts have not been wasted. Every obstacle overcome is evidence that you have grown stronger and become better equipped to face future challenges. Progress, even when it feels invisible, is rarely absent. Sometimes it simply requires a longer view to see. 20
- 4** Instead of abandoning a goal when progress slows, look for ways to improve your approach. Obstacles often signal the need for adjustment rather than surrender. Seeking advice, learning new skills, experimenting with different methods, or modifying your plan can reignite progress without requiring you to abandon your ambitions. Flexibility allows you to overcome setbacks while remaining committed to the same destination. The goal, in other words, needs not be fixed in its form, only in its direction. 25
- 5** Finally, remember why you started. Goals that are rooted in personal values and long-term purpose provide motivation that lasts beyond moments of frustration. Temporary discomfort often fades, but the satisfaction of achieving something difficult remains. Those who persevere not only increase their chances of success but also develop resilience, confidence, and discipline, virtues that continue to benefit them long after the original goal has been achieved. In this sense, persistence is never purely about the outcome. The person you become in the process is often the most lasting reward. 30
35

Passage 3. *An author explores why quitting is so often misunderstood.*

- 1 Last month, I watched a colleague clear out his desk after resigning from a job he had held for eleven years. He didn't look defeated. He looked relieved. And yet, almost everyone around him whispered the same thing: such a waste. That moment stayed with me. Why do we instinctively treat someone walking away as though they have lost something, rather than chosen something? 5

- 2 Quitting, I strongly believe, has an image problem. We have spent generations building a culture that treats persistence as a virtue so absolute that it has stopped being a virtue at all and become a reflex. We don't ask whether someone should keep going. We simply assume they should, and judge them quietly, sometimes loudly, when they don't.

- 3 However, not all quitting is the same. There is the quitting that comes from fear: the abandoned project, the dropped course, the relationship walked away from before it ever got difficult. That kind of quitting deserves scrutiny. It is worth asking, honestly, whether you are walking away from something hard or simply something uncomfortable. 10

- 4 And then there is the other kind. The quitting that comes after genuine reflection, after you have sat with a decision long enough to know, with clarity, that continuing serves no one, least of all yourself. That kind of quitting takes more courage than most people will admit. My colleague had spent years in a role that had slowly hollowed him out. He stayed because leaving felt like failure, because he had invested so much of himself that walking away seemed to dishonour all of it. That reasoning is familiar to most of us. We call it commitment. Often, it is just fear wearing a more respectable coat. 15
20

- 5 What troubles me is how little space we give people to make this distinction. We celebrate the athlete who plays through injury and quietly condemn the one who doesn't. We admire the entrepreneur who pivots after failure but raises an eyebrow at the one who simply stops. Our stories about resilience almost always end with someone pushing through, rarely with someone wisely stepping back. 25

- 6 My colleague looks happier now. I think he made the right call. And I think we owe it to ourselves, and to each other, to stop treating that as something to whisper about.

Name		GP Class	
Reg No.			

NATIONAL JUNIOR COLLEGE
Senior High 2 Preliminary Examination
Higher 1

General Paper

8881/02

Paper 2

20 August 2026

Candidates answer on the Question Paper.
Additional Materials: Insert

1 hour 30 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your registration number, GP class, and name on all the work you hand in.
Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.
Do not use staples, paper clips, glue or correction fluid.

Answer **all** questions.

The Insert contains the passage 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.

For Examiner's Use	
Question No.	Marks
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
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 for your answer, you must still use your own words to express it.
- written in **continuous prose**.

From Passage 1

1 In paragraph 1, what is society's view about quitting?

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

2 According to paragraph 2, what are the two reasons for not '[r]epeatedly overriding these signals' (line 16)?

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

3 Why does the author use the word 'reframing' (line 22) when discussing quitting?

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

- 4** In paragraph 4, how does the author's use of language convey the difficulty of knowing when to quit?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....[3]

- 5** In what ways is the final sentence an effective conclusion to the author's argument?

.....

.....

.....

.....[2]

6 Summarise the reasons why one should not quit and the ways to overcome the temptation to quit.

[8

From all the passages

- 7** Passage 1 states that 'disengaging from perpetual dissatisfaction...is positively related to higher subjective well-being...' (lines 19–20).

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

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

- 8** Passage 2 states that those who persevere develop 'virtues that continue to benefit them long after the original goal has been achieved' (lines 33–34).

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 quitting has more advantages than disadvantages?

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

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal dotted lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a guide for handwriting practice. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

.....[12]

[BLANK PAGE]

NJC Preliminary Examinations 2026 General Paper

1. In paragraph 1, what is society's view about quitting? [2]

From the passage	Suggested answer [Literal]	Marks
Society glamourises persistence. We romanticise stories of entrepreneurs who failed before succeeding, athletes who pushed through injury, and couples who weathered decades of adversity. The message is clear: quitting is for the meek. Quit, and you face judgment from others, and worse, from yourself. (Line 1–4)	The writer means that A. society views quitting as a sign of weakness/cowardice/timidity, lack of strength/determination/grit, and that <i>*any answer that shows understanding of lacking the will/weakness</i>	1
	B. those who do so face reproach / criticism / scrutiny / disapproval both from others and from themselves. <i>*Award one mark for each of the above ideas.</i>	1

2. According to paragraph 2, what are the two reasons for not '[r]epeatedly overriding these signals' (line 16)? [2]

From the passage	Suggested answer [Literal]	Marks
Repeatedly overriding these signals does not make you resilient. It makes you less able to direct your energy where it can actually do good. (Line 16–17)	Ignoring the signals A. does not build character / make you stronger.	1
	B. Instead, it diminishes / reduces your capacity / ability to channel / focus your efforts on pursuits that are more productive / worthwhile / where it would be better spent / spent on better things / things that are beneficial / appropriate <i>*Award one mark for each of the above ideas.</i> <i>*Context must be captured.</i> <i>*B is not about improving how things are done but about investing in something better.</i>	1

	<i>*Accept lift for 'energy'.</i> <i>* The idea of 'more' for (b) needs to be minimally implied. E.g better</i>	
--	---	--

3. Why does the author use the word 'reframing' (line 22) when discussing quitting? [2]

From the passage	Suggested answer [Inferential]	Marks
Quitting, in other words, is not an ending but a redirection. This reframing matters. A goal abandoned is not necessarily a life diminished; it may, in fact, be a life reclaimed. (lines 18–23)	The writer uses 'reframing' to suggest that A. quitting should be viewed differently from how society typically sees it, and that	1
	B. rather than being seen as a failure or an ending, quitting can be understood as a positive step toward a more meaningful and fulfilling path. <i>*Award one mark for each of the above ideas.</i>	1

4. In paragraph 4, how does the author's use of language convey the difficulty of knowing when to quit? [3]

From the passage	Suggested answer [Literal–Inferential]	Marks
Knowing when to quit requires two candid assessments. First, honestly assess the gap between expectations and outcomes. If frustration is predictable and persistent, it is time to change the course. Second, critically evaluate whether you are staying due to sunk-cost thinking; the flawed belief that past investment justifies continued future effort regardless of realistic prospects. Neither assessment is easy, but both are necessary. (Line 25–29)	The author A1. [Method] uses the word(s) 'candid' / 'honestly' / 'critically evaluate' A2. [Contextual explanation] to suggest that the assessments require one to confront uncomfortable truths / demand a degree of frank self-examination.	1
	B1. [Method] uses the phrase 'critically evaluate' and 'assessments' B2. [Contextual explanation] to suggest that the assessment requires deep thinking.	1

From the passage	Suggested answer [Literal–Inferential]	Marks
	C1. [Method] uses the phrase ‘critically evaluate’ and economic jargon ‘sunk-cost thinking’...recognition of ‘flawed belief’, C2. [Contextual explanation] implying that one must confront and admit one’s own faulty reasoning.	1
	D1. [Method] states that ‘neither assessment is easy’, D2. [Contextual explanation] showing that the writer explicitly / directly concedes to the challenge. <i>*Award one mark for each of the above ideas identified.</i> <i>*Accept any contextual explanation that reasonably aligns with the identified method.</i> <i>* Watch for answers that use the question phrase ‘difficulty of knowing when to quit’ without further explanation.</i>	1

5. In what ways is the final sentence an effective conclusion to the author’s argument? [2]

From the passage	Suggested answer [Inferential]	Marks
Strategic quitting is not surrendering; it is self-regulation in action, freeing you to redirect your energy towards goals that are genuinely within reach and worth pursuing. (Lines 33–35)	The sentence A1. [How] reinforces/ echoes the main argument introduced in the first paragraph, A2. [Why it is effective] thereby linking/ bringing the argument to a full circle, (the argument being quitting isn’t about giving up but reframing / channeling effort into attainable targets, etc.)	1

From the passage	Suggested answer [Inferential]	Marks
	B1. [How] uses powerful and contrasting / juxtaposing imagery of ‘surrendering’ and ‘freeing’, B2. [Why it is effective] thereby encapsulating the author’s entire argument in a single image and compelling the reader to abandon the negative associations of quitting and embracing the positive ones.	1
	C1. [How] uses the word ‘freeing’ which carries a positive and empowering connotation C2. [Why it is effective] that resolves the tension in at the start of the passage / that directly counters the shame and weakness associated with quitting in paragraph one, giving the argument a satisfying sense of resolution / encouraging the reader to see quitting in a more positive light.	1
	D1. [HOW] highlights positivity / optimism / ends on a decisive and forward-looking note, D2. [Why it is effective] leaving the reader with a sense of possibility rather than loss, which reinforces the overall argument that quitting is a redirection rather than an ending. <i>*Award one mark for each of any two of the above ideas identified.</i>	1

Summary

From Passage 2

6. Summarise the reasons why one should not quit and the ways to overcome the temptation to quit.

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

	Big Idea	From the passage	Suggested Answer
	Why one should not quit		
1	Accomplishment s need effort	meaningful achievements rarely come easily (L1–2)	<u>Significant accomplishments demand / require</u> persistent effort / determination / perseverance
2	Obstacles are expected	Difficulties, setbacks, and slow progress are normal parts of the journey (L2) Temporary discomfort often fades, but the satisfaction of achieving something difficult remains. (L30–31)	Experiencing obstacles / delays is a <u>natural aspect of growth/improvements</u> The <u>unease/ difficult emotions/ hardships</u> do not last
3	Successful people did not quit	examples of <u>individuals who only succeeded</u> because they persisted beyond repeated disappointments (L5–6)	People attained one's goals <u>only after enduring multiple failures / setbacks</u>
4	Potential remains unrealised	If you give up at the first sign of hardship, you may never discover what you were capable of achieving (L6–7)	Giving up prematurely hinders individuals from <u>realising what they truly can become/potential</u>
5	Builds character	builds confidence ... grown stronger (L19) become better equipped to face future challenges (L21) develop resilience, confidence, and discipline, virtues that (L32–33)	Pushing through adversity <u>builds mental toughness / self-assurance / self-control</u> . Can handle <u>future crises better</u>
6	Benefits last beyond completion of task	continue to benefit them long after the original goal has been achieved [L33–34]	<u>Advantages last beyond after aim has been met / long-lasting positive impact</u>
	Ways to overcome temptation to quit		

7	Delay decisions	resist the temptation to make a permanent decision based on fleeting emotions (L10–11)	Refrain from making irreversible <u>choices</u> when driven by temporary feelings
8	Break down tasks	Breaking a daunting goal into manageable steps makes it feel less overwhelming and allows progress to continue (L11–13)	<u>Divide</u> major objectives into <u>smaller, bite-sized tasks</u> that feel <u>achievable</u> .
9	Don't obsess on the outcomes	Rather than worrying about the final outcome (L13)	Rather than <u>obsessing over the ultimate end goal</u>
10	Focus on next task	concentrate on completing the next task well . (L14)	Focus on <u>immediate action</u>
11	Keep moving / Persevere	commit to continuing for just one more day (L11) <u>Small, consistent actions maintain momentum</u> (L14)	<u>Take tiny, regular steps to keep moving / progress steadily</u> . <u>Endure</u> daily / show daily dedication
12	Celebrate achievements	recognise the progress you have already made (L17)	Look back and <u>appreciate how far you have come</u> /what you have <u>achieved thus far</u> .
13	Re-strategise	Look for ways to improve your approach (L23) Seeking advice, learning new skills, experimenting with different methods or modifying your plan (L24–25) Flexibility allows you to overcome setbacks while remaining committed to the same destination. The goal, in other words, needs not be fixed in its form, only in its direction.	<u>try out other techniques/ experiment</u> Be <u>more adaptable / less rigid</u> in the approach taken
14	Remind oneself of purpose	remember why you started (L29)	Keep the underlying motivation for your pursuit <u>clearly in mind</u> / remind yourself of the <u>initial purpose</u>
15	Take longer view of progress	Progress, even when it feels invisible, is rarely absent. Sometimes it simply requires a	Measure progress <u>over a prolonged period</u> / take a <u>macro view</u> on progress.

		longer view to see.	
--	--	---------------------	--

Points-to-Marks Table

Points	1–2	3–4	5	6	7	8	9-10	11 +
Mark	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

7. Passage 1 states that ‘disengaging from perpetual dissatisfaction...is positively related to higher subjective well-being...’ (lines 19–20).

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

From the passage	Suggested answer	Marks
Idea 1: I watched a colleague clear out his desk after resigning from a job he had held for eleven years. He didn't look defeated. He looked relieved. (lines 1–2)	I: Idea: The author's colleague's decision to leave an unfulfilling job improved his emotional well-being. J: Justification: This supports passage 1's claim because by quitting a role that had become harmful, the author's colleague became happier, illustrating that disengaging from a dissatisfying situation can lead to greater well-being.	1m for idea 1m for justification

8. Passage 2 states that those who persevere develop 'virtues that continue to benefit them long after the original goal has been achieved' (lines 33–34).

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

From the passage	Suggested answer	Marks
We have spent generations building a culture that treats persistence as a virtue so absolute that it has stopped being a virtue at all and become a reflex. (lines 7–8)	I: Idea 1: Passage 3 states that when the habit of persisting becomes so deeply ingrained that it is carried out automatically and without thought, it loses its moral worth entirely. J: Justification: This directly undermines the claim that perseverance develops virtues, by arguing that persistence, <u>when practised blindly</u> and without reflection, ceases to be a virtue altogether / If persistence becomes merely an <u>unthinking habit rather than a conscious and considered choice</u>, it cannot be said to build character or discipline in any meaningful sense.	1m for any one idea 1m for corresponding justification
My colleague had spent years in a role that had slowly hollowed him out. He stayed because leaving felt like failure, because he had invested so much of himself that walking away seemed to dishonour all of it. (lines 16–19)	I: Idea 2: Passage 3 states that years of remaining in an unsuitable position had gradually drained the author's colleague of his sense of self and well-being. J: Justification: This undermines the idea that perseverance yields lasting personal benefits as rather than developing resilience and confidence over time, the colleague's years of persistence in an unsuitable role had the <u>opposite effect, gradually depleting rather than enriching him.</u>	

From the passage	Suggested answer	Marks
However, not all quitting is the same.(line 10)...And then there is the other kind. The quitting that comes after genuine reflection, after you have sat with a decision long enough to know, with clarity, that continuing serves no one, least of all yourself. (lines 14–15)	I: Idea 3: Passage 3 states that pressing on in certain circumstances offers no benefit to anyone, and is most damaging to the individual doing so. J: Justification: This challenges the notion that persistence <u>always</u> leads to personal growth and lasting reward as there are <u>circumstances</u> where continuing offers no benefit whatsoever.	
He stayed because leaving felt like failure, because he had invested so much of himself that walking away seemed to dishonour all of it. That reasoning is familiar to most of us. We call it commitment. Often, it is just fear wearing a more respectable coat. (lines 17–20)	I: Idea 4: Passage 3 states that what we tend to label as dedication and resolve is frequently nothing more than an unwillingness to face the discomfort of walking away, dressed up in more socially acceptable terms. J: Justification: This challenges the idea in passage 2 as it reframes perseverance as fear disguised as virtue, arguing that in reality, it is an inability to confront the discomfort of walking away / avoidance. <i>*Answer needs to address either 'virtues' or 'continue to benefit them long after' - to distinguish stronger answers from weaker ones</i>	

Application Question

9. The reading passages cover a range of views about quitting.

How far do you agree that quitting has 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.

Possible text references	Possible applications to Singapore Context
Passage 1 Core Ideas	
Cultural stigma around quitting (lines 1–4)	Singapore's kiasu culture frames quitting as a social failing. The national narrative of

	overcoming hardship through determination frames quitting as fundamentally at odds with the country's collective identity.
Disappoint when outcomes don't meet expectations, and burnout (lines 13–14; 31 (31–32))	High stress, anxiety, and depression rates among youth and corporate workers pushing through extreme burnout reflect individuals persisting even under significant strain. While this can become unhealthy, it has historically driven Singapore's rapid development and remains central to the national identity.
Sunk-cost thinking (lines 27–28)	Rising rates of stress, anxiety, and depression among students and workers suggest that persisting without reflection causes genuine harm. Societal stigma around career gaps or leaving stable jobs traps many people in roles that no longer suit them, enduring quietly out of fear of judgement rather than genuine commitment. Many graduates remain in ill-fitting degree paths or careers simply because they feel they have invested too much to walk away.
Quitting as strategic redirection (lines 21–22)	Notably, government policy itself signals that strategic quitting can be wise. SkillsFuture and WSG Career Conversion Programmes actively encourage Singaporeans to leave unsuitable careers and retrain, reframing quitting as adaptability. MOE's removal of mid-year exams and the shift to Full Subject-based Banding reflect a move away from rigid endurance toward more flexible pathways. Growing national attention to mental health and the push for Flexible Work Arrangements further suggest that stepping back, when done thoughtfully, is increasingly recognised as a sign of self-awareness rather than weakness.
Passage 2 Core Ideas	
Grit and staying power over circumstance (lines 6–9)	Singapore's transformation from a developing nation into a global economy is built on a culture of perseverance in the face of adversity, making quitting feel fundamentally at odds with the national story. Yet the existence of alternative academic pathways through ITE and Polytechnics suggests that strategic redirection has always been part of Singapore's meritocracy. Quitting one path to pursue a better-fitting alternative is not failure but a pragmatic recalibration that the system itself accommodates.
Discipline over motivation (lines 29–30)	NS instils discipline, resilience, and the ability to endure discomfort in young men, qualities that carry over into academic and professional life.

	Singapore's consistently strong PISA rankings reflect a broader culture of structured effort and perseverance that has produced tangible results. This suggests that the habit of pushing through difficulty, when channelled appropriately, yields real and measurable benefits.
Pivoting methods while keeping the destination (lines 23–28)	Government initiatives such as enterprise digital transformation grants and WSG Career Conversion Programmes actively encourage workers to leave ill-fitting roles and retrain for new ones. This reframes quitting not as defeat but as workforce adaptability, recognising that redirecting one's efforts toward more viable pursuits is a productive and even necessary response to a rapidly changing economy.
Character growth as the ultimate reward (lines 31–34)	CCE places resilience at the heart of holistic student development, signalling that the ability to persist through adversity is a core life skill rather than an optional virtue. However, resilience as taught through CCE is not about blind endurance but about bouncing back thoughtfully, implying that knowing when to change course is itself part of what it means to be resilient.
Passage 3 Core Ideas	
Whispers/judgment when walking away (lines 2–3)	In Singapore, leaving a stable job or taking a career break is still widely perceived as a red flag by employers and society alike. This stigma pressures individuals to remain in unsuitable roles rather than risk being judged as uncommitted or unreliable. Far from being beneficial, this culture of staying discourages the kind of honest self-assessment that could lead to more fulfilling and productive career choices.
Persistence as an unthinking reflex (lines 6–7)	The 'Iron Rice Bowl' culture is deeply rooted and creates the expectation that one should hold onto a secure job at all costs. This means that many Singaporeans endure burnout quietly rather than admit that a role or career path is no longer working for them. This silent suffering is mistaken for strength, when in reality it often leads to declining performance, disengagement, and long-term harm to one's health and well-being.
Commitment as "fear wearing a respectable coat" (lines 19–20)	Many Singaporeans remain in degree programmes or careers that no longer suit them simply because they are afraid that they have invested too much to walk away or because it is more honorable to stay the course than to 'lose face'. Such thinking traps individuals in unproductive pursuits at significant personal cost. Government initiatives like SkillsFuture directly

	challenge this by encouraging workers to retrain and pivot, signalling that redirecting one's efforts is a sign of adaptability rather than wasted investment.
Narrow definition of resilience (lines 24–25)	Singapore's hustle culture has long celebrated overwork as a badge of honour (i.e., glorification of overwork), making the decision to step back feel like an admission of inadequacy. However, this is increasingly being challenged by national mental health campaigns and the push for Flexible Work Arrangements, reflecting a growing recognition that sustainable performance requires rest and reflection, and that stepping back at the right moment can be more productive than pushing through at all costs.