



GENERAL PAPER

Paper 2
INSERT

8881/02

27 Aug 2025

1 hour 30 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Insert contains the passages for comprehension.

This document consists of **4** printed pages.

Passage 1. *An author discusses the challenges of digital interaction and the benefits of real community.*

- 1 In a world where a swipe can summon strangers and a screen can simulate a smile, the paradox of our age becomes glaring: we are constantly connected, yet curiously alone. Technology has extended our voices across the globe, linking us in seconds. But connection is not the same as communion. Digital tools have indeed improved the efficiency of our interactions, yet such interactions do not fulfil our need for communion — one that revolves around a sense of belonging, mutual support, and shared interests. 5
- 2 The appeal of digital interaction is obvious. It is fast, borderless, and endlessly accessible, allowing for almost immediate responses in public engagement and global awareness. Still, its very speed can strip it of substance. Much of what we share online is brief and often curated, designed more for visibility than vulnerability. In these spaces, conversations may start easily but can end just as quickly. Offline, however, connections grow through rhythm and routine; seeing familiar faces at a community class, chatting after a neighbourhood meeting, or lending a hand during a local event. These in-person moments offer a kind of reliability that digital touchpoints rarely deliver. 10
- 3 Moreover, personal identity is more deeply shaped within real communities than in digital spaces. Online environments are like photo filters—distorting and reflecting only selected facets of who we are, often encouraging curated self-images and idealised portrayals rather than authentic connections. This constant pressure to present a perfect version of ourselves online often results in unrealistic personal expectations and social comparison, potentially leading to a disconnect between our online personas and true self. In contrast, physical communities resemble a garden where identity grows through seasons of shared experience. Through continuous and evolving interactions, these communities offer stable ground where individuals are recognised in both their struggles and achievements. Religious communities, volunteer organisations, and support groups provide a foundation of genuine belonging to nurture confidence and self-worth over time, something that online platforms cannot achieve with their fleeting affirmations of a curated online persona. 15 20
- 4 Professional growth, too, is most meaningfully nurtured within authentic communities. While digital networks undoubtedly provide convenience and broaden access to information and opportunities, they often fall short in cultivating the depth of trust and mentorship that face-to-face interactions can offer (a stranger online would unlikely provide sincere and credible professional advice beyond cursory phrases). Unlike digital platforms, spaces such as co-working hubs, industry associations, and professional gatherings create fertile ground for collaboration, where ideas are exchanged not just through words but through shared context and being physically present. These environments encourage engagement that is reflective and adaptive – qualities that largely asynchronous online messages and algorithm-driven feeds rarely inspire. Ultimately, it is through sustained real-world interaction that individuals hone critical thinking and gain the kind of perspective we cannot get through digital interfaces alone. 25 30 35
- 5 At the societal level, strong and physically rooted communities can act as bulwarks against the strong currents of isolation and division that accompany rapid urbanisation and widening inequality. Although online movements can raise awareness, that is often as far as it goes. Meaningful change is frequently driven by neighbourhood initiatives and face-to-face activism. These communities strengthen public trust and promote safer, more engaged societies; likes and shares often do not translate to real-world action. True social change demands more than a trending hashtag. It requires sustained, collaborative effort, often rooted in real-world communities. On a larger scale, social movements from civil rights struggles to contemporary climate activism, have succeeded because of shared spaces, collective resilience, and tangible solidarity. Organisations like Doctors Without Borders exemplify how meaningful, coordinated action, built on trust and sacrifice, can achieve what online petitions alone cannot. 40 45
- 6 Ultimately, community is about more than accessibility; it is about authentic connection, shared responsibility, and unwavering support. In an age where digital interactions are so convenient, we must intentionally choose to engage beyond the screen. After all, true connection lives in real life, not in notifications. 50

Passage 2. *An author writes about the negative aspects of community.*

- 1** Being part of a group feels comforting and safe—something we instinctively seek. Despite offering belonging and support, it is hardly the utopia we imagine. Today, the increasing focus on individualistic pursuits highlights the need to pay closer attention to the role of communities. Whether in the past or present, communities pressure individuals to conform; for those who do not fit in, this pressure can be stifling. This can manifest in the form of societal expectations regarding behaviour or explicit rules about traditions. For rural communities who continue clinging to outdated traditions, this can reinforce inequalities or prevent growth. Taken to the extreme, such communities silence dissenting voices, leading to poor decisions or even violence. 5
- 2** Today, it is easy to believe that with the rise of digital platforms, communities have become more inclusive and accepting. They are, after all, more diverse and more accessible. However, instead of reducing the pressures to conform and promoting a more tolerant environment, social media algorithms have in fact deepened polarisation through the creation of echo chambers. Over time, these online communities can often alienate others as people start to feel that their views are sidelined by stronger, opposing voices. Even finding common ground can become a challenge. 10
- 3** Furthermore, online groups often offer shallow connections that exacerbates loneliness. Technology appears to encourage and support constant interaction, as one can converse with their friends anytime and anywhere - yet such interactions lack depth, no matter how many 'friends' they have in these groups. The convenience of digital connections could result in misconstrued notions of quality relationships, and eventually eroding cohesion within society. 15
- 4** Whether physical or online, communities have inherent value. Subscribing blindly to community beliefs can cause us to lose sight of ourselves and hinder objectivity. The challenge today is to foster communities that celebrate individuality, encourage progress, and truly include everyone. 20

Passage 3. *An author shares some personal experiences as part of a residential community.*

- 1 Another invitation to a neighbourhood gathering arrived in my letterbox today, this time for a "community gardening initiative" at the next residents' committee meeting. I found myself performing the same ritual: sighing deeply, pinning it half-heartedly to my cork board, and feeling that familiar mix of guilt and irritation.
- 2 The truth is, that after spending the entire day at the office navigating corporate politics and forced socialisation, the last thing I want is to spend my precious evening hours making small talk about someone's new renovations or debating the merits of different pest control services. 5
- 3 Yet, I cannot deny the nagging voice in my head that reminds me of how these same neighbours I'm avoiding were the ones who fed my cat when I was hospitalised last year. Or how Mr. Rahman from the fifth floor, despite my initial reluctance to engage, persisted in greeting me until I finally gave in. 10
Now, our brief morning exchanges offer welcome respite from the dread of going to work again.
- 4 There's an undeniable wisdom in maintaining these community bonds. When the lift broke down last month, it was our WhatsApp group that spread the news faster than any official channel. When Madam Liu fell in her flat, it was her next-door neighbour who heard her calls for help. These incidents serve as powerful reminders that we're not just occupying adjacent spaces; we're part of an ecosystem of mutual support. 15
- 5 Perhaps the real challenge lies in finding the right balance. Must active participation in a community mean attending every function? Surely there's a middle ground between being the neighbourhood recluse and the ever-present committee member. As I stare at this latest invitation, I'm reminded that community, like any relationship, doesn't demand perfection—just presence, even if it's occasional and imperfect. 20
- 6 Maybe I'll start small. The gardening initiative might not be such a bad idea after all.



YISHUN INNOVA JUNIOR COLLEGE
JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION
Higher 1

CANDIDATE
NAME

CG

INDEX NUMBER

GENERAL PAPER

8881/02

Paper 2

27 August 2025

1 hour 30 minutes

Candidates answer on the Question Paper.

Additional Materials: Insert

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your class, index number and 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

This document consists of **7** printed pages, **1** blank page and **1** Insert.

Answer **all** questions.

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 is the author suggesting by using the word ‘curiously’ in line 2?

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..... [2]

- 2** Explain what the author means by “connection is not the same as communion” (line 3)?

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..... [2]

- 3** In paragraph 2, give **three** contrasts the author makes between digital and face-to-face interactions.

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- 4 In paragraph 3, explain **two** ways in which the author uses language to convey the criticisms of the effects that online environments have on our self-image.

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..... [2]

- 5 In paragraph 4, what does the author state are **two** shortcomings of digital platforms in nurturing professional growth?

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..... [2]

From Passage 2

- 6** Summarise the harms brought about by communities.

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

[8]

From all the passages

- 7 Passage 1 states that ‘These in-person moments offer a kind of reliability that digital touchpoints rarely deliver.’ (lines 12–13).

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 ‘communities pressure individuals to conform’. (line 4).

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

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..... [2]

9 The reading passages cover a range of views about the value of community.

How far do you agree or disagree that community is beneficial to society?

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]

Yishun Innova Junior College
2025 JC2 General Paper Prelim Exam
Paper 2 Answer Guide

1. What is the author suggesting by using the word ‘curiously’ in line 2? [2]

From the passage	Suggested paraphrase
In a world where a swipe can summon strangers and a screen can simulate a smile, the paradox of our age becomes glaring: we are constantly connected , yet curiously alone .	The author is suggesting that a) it is strange/odd/unexpected that people feel <u>isolated</u> [1] b) <u>despite all the communication/ interactions</u>. [1] 1 mark for context; 1 mark for ‘curiously’ No mark for only context. Point (a) must be attempted to award mark for context. Accept answer if it is phrased as an irony structure as long as the meaning of ‘curiously’ is captured.

2. Explain what the author means by “connection is not the same as communion” (lines 3-4)? [2]

From the passage	Suggested paraphrase
Technology has extended our voices across the globe, linking us in seconds. But connection is not the same as communion . Digital tools have indeed improved the efficiency of our interactions, yet such interactions do not fulfil our need for communion — one that revolves around a sense of belonging, mutual support, and shared interests.	The author means that despite being able to communicate/linked through <u>technology</u>, a) the relationships that we build online are different from OR simply conversing/ interacting with others digitally does not necessarily lead to / is not equivalent to OR convenient/quick/frequent interactions online are different b) having genuine feelings/intimate/ closeness in physical relationships // deep emotional closeness or mutual understanding/ true companionship in real life. Note for (b): Focus on the quality of connection 1m for each point Note: Answers must capture a difference in the quality of connections.

3. In paragraph 2, give **three** contrasts the author makes between digital and face-to-face interactions. [3]

From the passage	Suggested paraphrase
It is fast , borderless , and endlessly accessible , allowing for almost immediate responses in public engagement and global awareness. Still, its very speed can strip it of substance . Much of what we share online is brief and often curated , designed more for visibility than vulnerability . In these spaces, conversations may start easily but can end just as quickly . Offline, however, connections grow through rhythm and routine —seeing familiar faces at a community class, chatting after a neighbourhood meeting, or lending a hand during a local event. These in-person moments offer a kind of reliability that digital touchpoints rarely deliver.	<u>SPEED</u> a) [A1] Digital interactions are speedy/ swift// allow for speedier reactions [A2] while face-to-face interactions happen/ develop over time// takes time// can delay reactions. Alternative answer: Digital interactions are speedier than face-to-face interactions. <u>ACCESSIBILITY</u> b) [B1] Digital interactions are convenient/ takes place anywhere/ spontaneous [B2] while face-to-face interactions occur in specific settings/ situations. <u>DEPTH</u> c) [C1] Digital interactions are superficial/ shallow while [C2] face-to-face interactions provide closeness/ intimacy/ security/ built on trust. Alternative answer: Digital interactions are more superficial compared to face-to-face interactions. OR [C1] Digital interactions are selectively edited/ to attract attention while [C2] face-to-face interactions are more genuine/ sincere/ authentic. Note: For (c) answers could be either an inverse paraphrase of one of the qualities e.g. 'substance' or paraphrasing both qualities i.e. 'substance' and 'reliability' but must show the contrast 1 mark for each paired contrast.

4. In paragraph 3, explain **two** ways in which the author uses language to convey the criticisms of the effects that online environments have on our self-image. [2]

From the passage	Suggested paraphrase
Moreover, personal identity is more deeply shaped within real communities than in digital spaces. Online environments are like <u>photo filters</u> — distorting and reflecting only selected facets of <u>who we are</u> , often encouraging curated self-images and idealised portrayals rather than authentic connections. This constant pressure to present a perfect version of ourselves online often results in unrealistic personal expectations and social comparison, potentially leading to a disconnect between our online personas and true self.	a) The author uses an analogy of <u>photo filters</u> / the word '<u>distorting</u>' to vividly describe that the portrayal of ourselves online is twisted/ manipulated to hide <u>our true selves</u>. (capture idea of 'distortion' or 'selected facets of ourselves') OR b) The author uses the word '<u>curated</u>' to highlight that individuals carefully select/ pick and choose only parts of themselves to show, rather than an honest depiction. c) The author uses the word '<u>idealised</u>' / '<u>perfect</u>' to highlight that our online personas are unattainable/ flawless representations of ourselves. d) The author uses the word '<u>constant</u>' to emphasise the unrelenting push/ need to present a perfect image online. Any 2pts for 2m

5. In paragraph 4, what does the author state are **two** shortcomings of digital platforms in nurturing professional growth? [2]

From the passage	Suggested paraphrase
Professional growth, too, is most meaningfully nurtured within authentic communities. While digital networks undoubtedly provide convenience and broaden access to information and opportunities, they often fall short in cultivating the depth of trust and mentorship that face-to-face interactions can offer (a stranger online would unlikely provide sincere and credible professional advice beyond cursory phrases). Unlike digital platforms, spaces such as co-working hubs, industry associations, and professional gatherings create fertile ground for collaboration , where ideas are exchanged not just through words but through shared context and being physically present . These environments encourage engagement that is reflective and adaptive —qualities that largely asynchronous online messages and algorithm-driven feeds rarely inspire. Ultimately, it is through sustained real-world interaction that individuals hone critical thinking and gain the kind of perspective we cannot get through digital interfaces alone.	a) Interactions on digital platforms are not able to develop genuine confidence in the coaching/ guidance. Note: Paraphrase of 'trust' can capture depth. Do not accept a paraphrase of part in parentheses as it does not capture the point b) Digital platforms do not provide a conductive/ prime environment // similar experiences in person for cooperation/ group exchanges/ people to work together. c) Digital platforms do not provide opportunities for introspection/ reviewing and improving ideas. Accept: 'flexible' for adaptive d) Online communities <u>do not</u> facilitate development of evaluative/ analytical skills and exploration of views/ opinions. 1 mark for each point. Maximum of 2 marks.

6. Summarise the harms brought about by communities.

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

	Main idea	From passage	Suggested paraphrase
1	Pressure to conform (to expectations)	communities pressure <u>individuals</u> to conform or This can manifest in the form of <u>societal expectations</u> regarding behaviour or explicit rules about traditions.	Societal groups/societies demand/exert influence on <u>individuals</u> to follow the norms OR Individuals must align with/ follow <u>established/ current/ norms/ practices</u> Note: need to capture the pressure/implied meaning of expectations
2	Suffocating for people who are different	for <u>those who do not fit in</u> , this pressure can be stifling	For individuals who deviate from the norm, conformity may be suffocating/ oppressive .
3	Worsens inequalities	For rural communities who continue <u>clinging to outdated traditions</u> , this can reinforce inequalities	Communities that <u>support archaic traditions/beliefs</u> can exacerbate/ worsen disparities
4	Hinders progress	or prevent growth	Hinder progress/ development // obstruct opportunities for purposeful development/ meaningful transformation. <i>*Context must be attempted for either Point 3 or 4.</i>
5	Suppresses opposing views	Taken to the <u>extreme</u> , such communities silence dissenting voices	When <u>uniformity</u> is overemphasised, opposing perspectives are muted/ suppressed// alternative viewpoints are shut down,
6	Poor decision-making	leading to poor decisions	resulting in flawed/ misguided/ sub-optimal/ less ideal judgments/ choices
7	Physical violence	or even violence	or even physical harm .
8	Exacerbates polarisation	deepened polarisation	further entrench/ widen/ exacerbates social divisions/ opposing viewpoints
9	Creates echo chambers / reinforcement of existing beliefs	through the creation of echo chambers	by forming spaces where similar beliefs resonate // existing beliefs are reinforced // isolating users from differing perspectives // encourage confirmation bias
10	Alienation	Over time, these online communities can often alienate others as people start to feel that their views are sidelined	Over time, individuals may feel ostracised/ like an outcast/ divorced from society

11	Difficult to find common agreement	Even finding common ground can become a challenge ,	Even reaching/ forging/ achieving consensus can become difficult/ a formidable task/ mission
12	Superficial online connections	<u>online groups</u> often offer shallow connections or yet such <u>interactions</u> lack depth ,	<u>Online groups</u> frequently provide superficial communication/ discourse/ relationships
13	Worsens loneliness	that exacerbates loneliness .	Worsens the sense of isolation / lacking friends/companions <i>Note: Point 12 must be attempted for this to be awarded</i>
14	Flawed ideas of quality relationships	The convenience of digital connections could result in misconstrued notions of quality relationships ,	Warped/ erroneous/ flawed perceptions of what makes a healthy/ worthy/ good/ meaningful <u>relationship</u>
15	Erodes social cohesion	and eventually eroding cohesion within <u>society</u>	Weakening/wearing down social unity/ bonds/ ties/ togetherness within <u>society</u> <i>Paraphrase should capture the macro impact on society/human relationships.</i>
16	Lose sight of ourselves	<u>Subscribing blindly to community beliefs</u> can cause us to lose sight of ourselves	<u>Following community beliefs without understanding</u> causes us to become unsure/ oblivious/ confused of <u>who we are / our identity</u>
17	Clouds judgement	and hinder objectivity	Promote groupthink / herd mentality // obstruct logical thinking/impartiality// clouds judgement

Points	1-2	3-4	5	6-7	8-9	10	11	≥12
Mark	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

From all passages

7. Passage 1 states that ‘These in-person moments offer a kind of reliability that digital touchpoints rarely deliver.’ (lines 13).

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

Prompt	Selected claim	Suggested paraphrase	Justification
These in-person moments offer a kind of reliability that digital touchpoints rarely deliver	we're part of an ecosystem of mutual support (line 16-17) these same neighbours I'm avoiding were the ones who fed my <u>cat</u> when I was	Passage 3 claims that real life communities are avenues where we can seek help from one another / we can depend on for help . Note: if students paraphrase examples, they will need to	This supports the idea from Passage 1 as it demonstrates that / exemplifies how neighbours provide individuals with { <u>an inherent and undeniable</u> }

	<u>hospitalised</u> last year (line 8-9) When Madam Liu fell in her flat, it was her next-door neighbour who heard her calls for help (lines 14-15)	show the idea of support/assistance from neighbours 1 mark for paraphrase	<u>sense of security and/or support.</u> 1 mark for justification
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8. Passage 2 states that ‘communities pressure individuals to conform’. (line 4).

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

Prompt	Selected claim	Suggested paraphrase	Justification
communities pressure individuals to conform (lines 4-5)	Perhaps the real challenge lies in finding the right balance . Must active participation in a community mean attending every function? Surely there's a middle ground between being the neighbourhood recluse and the ever-present committee member. (lines 17-19) I'm reminded that community, like any relationship, doesn't demand perfection —just presence, even if it's occasional and imperfect . (lines 19-21)	Passage 3 claims that being part of a community does not require constant involvement / can be achieved by finding an equilibrium in the level of participation needed . Marker's note: Paraphrase should capture the idea that <u>involvement in communities</u> need not be at 100% <u>participation</u> all the time. 1 mark for paraphrase	This undermines the idea in Passage 1 as it shows that people have the autonomy/ can decide/ free to choose over how much they want to commit to any community . 1 mark for justification

9. The reading passages cover a range of views about the value of community.

How far do you agree or disagree that community is beneficial to society?

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.