

**Qn 1: Describe a powerful performance you have watched or taken part in.
Why was it so impactful for you?**

Being a huge heavy metal fan, my ambition in life is to be a musician. I have worked hard to master the art of playing the electric guitar, in my bedroom. Although I am still a student, my band have already performed at some of the biggest local festivals. Our big break came when we were invited to headline a massive show last December, opening for Arch Enemy from England.

Two hours before, we had to set up our equipment on stage. As I entered the hall, I was dumbfounded. The venue was easily 10 times the size of our usual performance space. My legs began to wobble under the weight of the enormity of the task ahead. 'For a mediocre guitarist, this is way out of your league,' self-doubt engulfed me like a flame. Worst still, while standing on the stage, I was gripped by the fear of failing during the performance.

One hour before, we were waiting anxiously to talk to Arch Enemy. As they entered from the back stage, I had a vision of some Bollywood film heroes strutting with style and poise. They were so cool, exuding a tremendous air of confidence. Words would not flow out from my mouth; I had to force myself to whisper 'Hello'. I was star-struck.

'Just do your thing, fellas,' cooed Mark Arm the lead guitarist, after dishing out some useful tips on working the crowd and keeping our nerves in check. 'Let's pray,' he continued. What an irony, praying in a metal performance!

Five seconds before we entered the stage, I was expecting pin-drop silence as everyone had come for the main act. Boy, was I so wrong! Soon as we stepped up to take our instruments, the crowd went hysterical. The ocean of noisy chanting reverberating round the hall was supercalifragilisticexpialidocious. 'Metal! Metal! Metal! Give us metal!'

Closing my eyes like I was in a trance, I struck the first note and I could feel the hall rattling like Godzilla was fighting with another monster. The audience was jumping up and down to the beat of our music. As we got pumped up with pure adrenaline gushing through our veins, we began to play with great aplomb. The jumping looked like sea waves and we felt like we were actually sailing in the sea, shouting out words of oppression, angst and pure anarchy. We were the prophets of doom. The stage was flooded with colours as strobe lights were flicking everywhere and people with epilepsy would have had a hard time there. When the performance ended, we were heartened to hear the crowd chanting 'We want more!'

Looking back at this performance, I was thankful for the advice Mark had given me about the most difficult part – playing the solo. 'Take the stage as your bedroom where you normally practise,' he looked me in the eyes. 'Suddenly, all your parts will be easy-peasy,' he winked. That had made all the difference.

Soon, the world will be my bedroom.

(500 words)

Written by: Puvnaram (5J1); Edited by: LSF (28.9% addition)

Commented [WU1]: Context established

Commented [WU2]: Play with countdown

Commented [WU3]: Use of simile

Commented [WU4]: Personification

Commented [WU5]: Countdown

Commented [WU6]: Imagery painted for readers to imagine

Commented [WU7]: Use of humorous thought

Commented [WU8]: Countdown

Commented [WU9]: Fits the context – fun and ridiculous somewhat

Commented [WU10]: Sound described

Commented [WU11]: Hyperbole used to exaggerate

Commented [WU12]: Contrast of long and short sentences

Commented [WU13]: Reflection on the impact bit and also shows readers the real interaction with Mark

Commented [WU14]: Reference back to the intro. Also a substitute for oyster as in 'World is my oyster'. Fun. Worth a chuckle

Qn 2: Write about a time when you caused great difficulty to another person. What did you do about the situation?

In our lives, there are heroes who are willing to suffer for our well-being. They are willing to overcome uphill task with much trouble and difficulty involved. We ought to salute them. Two years ago, I had an encounter with my hero.

Gripping tightly to my umbrella, I brisk-walked under the torrential rain under the weight of my bag -- as heavy as 10 elephants. It was the first examination paper the following day and I wanted to return home as soon as possible to have ample time for revision. All of a sudden, I slipped and collapsed onto the ground -- only to feel excruciating pain below my left knee.

'Ouch...!' I yelled uncontrollably.

Moments later, I heard footsteps and a voice asked, "Are you alright?"

I could not reply but kept yelling. A pair of muscular arms swooped me up and I found myself being piggybacked by a burly schoolmate. 'I'm Dan,' he told me. 'Let me take you to the clinic to get your wound bandaged.'

I could tell that it was not easy for him, despite being muscular, to carry my umbrella and two bags to the clinic. He was groaning consistently for 10 minutes of the journey. As we were metres away from the clinic, Dan's groans turned into bad coughs. A wave of guilt hit me. What have I done to Dan?

Dan accompanied me to see the doctor, who said that my injury was nothing to worry about. However, Dan was running a temperature and had fractured his neck badly that he was bawling his eyes out due to the pain that engulfed him. The doctor phoned an ambulance which escorted him to a hospital, while I made my way home with a mind full of idioms, proverbs, formulae and concepts -- all the while thankful that I was alive.

While taking a short break from my revision at home, images of Dan flashed across my mind. At that instant, a sledgehammer hit me that I was the cause of Dan's hospitalisation! I began to panic. I began to quake. I began to shiver. Would I have to pay for his hospitalisation? Would Dan hold a grudge against me for causing immense difficulty to his life? I kept fretting over the matter that some of my revision had gone to waste. I decided to visit Dan to apologise the next day, after my paper.

Outside the hospital ward, Dan was grumbling about how much pain he was in, how he could not sit for his examination and how he had no access to his revision materials to his friends who had visited him. I was gutted. When his friends left, I entered the ward and made a humble apology.

'Don't apologise,' Dan assured me. 'It's my pleasure help you.'

Although Dan had forgiven me, I am still guilty about causing too much trouble to him up to today. He is indeed my hero and his sacrificial deed will eternally be etched in my mind.

(501 words)

Written by: Isaac Lum (4SA); Edited by: LSF (5.9% addition)

Commented [WU15]: Definition of heroes

Commented [WU16]: Time clearly spelled out

Commented [WU17]: Hyperbole

Commented [WU18]: Describing sounds

Commented [WU19]: We hear Dan

Commented [WU20]: Pain described, bearing in mind question requirement

Commented [WU21]: Problems Dan faced

Commented [WU22]: Good show of contrast

Commented [WU23]: Use of repetition for effect

Commented [WU24]: Internal thoughts racing

Commented [WU25]: More trouble caused to Dan

Commented [WU26]: Back to idea of hero established in intro

Q3: 'Cyberbullying is a big threat to youths today.' What are your views?

Cyberbullying is a huge problem today for youths, with at least one out of five Singaporean youths facing some form of harassment online. So, what makes cyberbullying such a pervasive ill of the internet? There are three main factors: Firstly, the ease of spreading falsified information; secondly, anonymity allowing users to behave as they wish; and lastly, herd mentality on the internet.

Firstly, fake news -- a term that seems right out of an Orwellian dystopia on the internet -- is frighteningly common nowadays, especially in the form of falsified information. One widely known example would be the Florida shooting survivors, who were made to be crisis actors by those who supported non-regulation of guns to harass these poor teenagers with undeserved accusations of being actors, along with a healthy amount of hatred and vitriol. As evident from this incident, people are too easily influenced by fake news about others online with ease, which takes a toll on the victim. Therefore, fake news is indeed a prevalent force behind cyberbullying and is a significant threat to our youths' wellbeing.

The masking of identity is another catalyst which intensifies the harassment of youths online. A prime example would be '4chan', an image board primarily frequented by youths, which is infamous for its toxic online activities. A decade back, a teenager discussed his suicide plans on '[b]', a board on '4chan' used for posts on any topic. Despite not knowing this teenager, anonymous users encouraged his suicidal behaviour and cheered when he livestreamed his death through a video-streaming website. Another example close to home was seen in the comments section of @potongpasirsecondary -- a public Instagram page. Boys from Anglo Chinese School (ACS) and St Andrew's School (SAS) -- rival schools with rugby bragging rights -- began hurling insults at each other under the guise of nicknames like 'bigboi' or 'eh-see-sux' to the point that it required de-escalation by both school's disciplinary committees. Evidently, anonymity brings out the worst in people and encourages people to voice unpleasant comments about others with zero restraints.

Lastly, the presence of herd mentality on cyberspace intensifies the magnitude of harassment people receive on the internet. A notable example would be a professional player 'Geguri', who due to her insanely good aim and high mouse sensitivity, was accused to be a cheater by other professionals. Some even proclaimed that they would quit if she was proven not to be hacking. This caused her to face a barrage of hacking accusations and many disparaging comments mainly due to people rallying their fans to attack her. Those who believed in her legitimacy feared speaking up due to concerns of being similarly attacked by the mobs. Clearly, cyberspace gives people an easily utilised tool to incite unjustified hatred and violence of highly impressionable youths, and simultaneously silences those willing to stand up for the hapless victims.

In all, cyberbullying is a major problem if the three major issues are unchecked. Alas, we will not see the light at the end of this dark tunnel of cyberbullying soon.

(505 words)

Written by: Yap Hong Xian (4SA) Edited by: LSF (2.6% addition)

Commented [WU27]: Use of data for Hook

Commented [WU28]: Clear and purposeful thesis

Commented [WU29]: Apt vocab

Commented [WU30]: Synonym phrase used to substitute 'anonymity' that's used in the introduction

Commented [WU31]: Appropriate example used

Commented [WU32]: Apt and wide vocabulary

Commented [WU33]: Use of idiom

Qn 4: 'People should always persevere in whatever they do.' Do you think there are any situations in which this might not be the best thing to do? Explain your views.

Thomas Edison, world renowned physicist and inventor of the lightbulb, once said this: "Success is one percent inspiration, 99 percent perspiration". This quote is often repeated to spur individuals to not give up; after all, Edison himself tried 99 times to perfect his invention. However, sometimes striving unceasingly to achieve success is not always the best course of action to take. One should instead always be open to options, know when to give up and work with one's talents instead of the frivolous pursuit of one's goals.

Throughout history, there are many prime examples of people who succeeded despite failures and setbacks. Alternatively, there are also those who succeed through cleverly calculated pursue of success instead. Take for example, Steve Jobs, founder and ex-CEO of Apple. Though Jobs did build his multi-billion-dollar empire through sheer determination, he was originally a college dropout. Had Steve Jobs persevered relentlessly in his education, we might not have the ubiquitous iPhone today. Originally set solely on finishing his degree, Jobs' tunnel-vision was greatly expanded upon 'dropping into a calligraphy course' – his own words -- before being enlightened to tinker with engineering to birth the world's first computer in his garage. Though many revere and place him at the altar of successful people who are formidably tenacious, I beg to differ. Jobs was not one-track minded; he was able to quickly adjust from one failure, learn from it and move on. Hence, being intuitive and adapting to failure with responsiveness is more crucial than striving hard.

Success is also determined by how astute one is. Mindless pursuit of a hopeless cause only leaves detrimental setbacks in one's wake. Einstein gave this analogy -- everyone is successful, but if you judge a fish on its ability to climb, then you are limiting it severely. Such is the education system today, which places emphasis on grades. Many of us are consequently forced to conform to these standards, mindlessly studying just to secure good grades. In reality, there is no point trying to strive for something that is not made for you, it only exasperates and exhausts you. Being astute is the ability to hope one's talents, skills and abilities to maximum potential, instead of blindly persevering in something one is not good at or has no passion in. Thus, working with strengths rather than trying to refine or improve weaknesses is also a determining factor of success.

Lastly, knowing when to give up outweighs perseverance. Though contradictory in nature, giving up can improve one's odds of success. Currently, today's world is volatile and uncertain; being rigid in thinking and possessing limiting skillsets is incompatible with today's pace of living. Flexibility and adaptability are now basic tropes one must possess. For example, with machines replacing humans, some skills will eventually be obsolete; hence, knowing not to compete against machines will increase avenues of success. So, if the outcome looks bleak or unpromising, change the course of action to avoid wasting time and effort.

Traditional views such as persevering and excelling in everything that have been inculcated since young are now subject to tweaking. Being smart in today's world is much different than being hardworking. Hence, we have to be open to options and eradicate narrow-minded perseverance to overcome challenges.

(541 words)

Written by: Joshua Soh (4SA); Edited by: LSF

- Well-written, very few errors; good paragraph development.
- Good use of appropriate examples and apt and wide vocabulary