

Name: _____

Class: _____



JURONG PIONEER JUNIOR COLLEGE

JC2 Preliminary Examination 2025

GENERAL PAPER

Higher 1

Paper 2

8881/02

15 September 2025

1 hour 30 minutes

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READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your name and class in the spaces provided above.

This Insert contains the passages for Paper 2.

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

Passage 1. *The author writes about how success can be problematic.*

- 1 Money is often equated with success, but this association carries significant societal harm. Those who accumulate substantial wealth can detach from everyday anxieties, enjoying life's pleasures far beyond the average person's reach. Yet, the problem with equating success with financial accumulation is its superficial nature. Money becomes a crude external metric of personal worth, suggesting that those who amass wealth are inherently more valuable. This notion distorts moral values, where financial success overshadows deeper qualities of character such as integrity, compassion, and empathy. 5
- 2 Such competitiveness inherent in common definitions of success often leads to a toxic environment. Success is always relative, valued only in comparison to others. This breeds a cycle where the successful are driven by an insatiable need for more, never content, always comparing themselves to their peers. High-profile cases like Sam Bankman-Fried exemplify how even the most successful can push ethical boundaries, driven by the endless desire for more. Success, in these terms, clouds judgment, inflating egos and diminishing the sense of vulnerability, leading to potentially disastrous decisions that can have widespread ramifications. 10
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- 3 Moreover, the chase for success exacerbates human contradictions – the desires to both fit in and stand out. While success might bring admiration, it is closely trailed by envy and resentment. There is another dark side of success, where notable achievements can lead to a lonely existence, marked by social avoidance and personal disconnect. Consider the case of J.K. Rowling, who became one of the wealthiest authors in the world after the global success of her Harry Potter series. Despite her substantial material success and positive impact on literacy, Rowling's fame also attracted intense public scrutiny and personal criticism. This often invasive attention has led to significant personal challenges, including battles with the media and isolation, illustrating how substantial financial success can paradoxically lead to social isolation and emotional distress. 20
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- 4 Furthermore, the freedom promised by success is often illusory. High achievers might escape menial jobs or impoverished living conditions, but they are frequently trapped in a cycle of unending responsibilities. Top executives may have financial security yet lack the freedom to enjoy personal time or pursue interests outside work. The very nature of their success subjects them to increased demands, perpetuating a cycle where professional obligations overshadow personal satisfaction, and where the quest for further achievements leaves little room for leisure or personal growth. This is evident in the life of Elon Musk, CEO of multiple high-stakes companies like Tesla and SpaceX. Despite his vast wealth and success, Musk has often spoken about his overwhelming work schedule, which includes working up to 100 hours a week, illustrating that even at the pinnacle of business success, personal time and freedom can be severely limited. His experience underscores how top-level success does not guarantee personal freedom or ease, but rather, often leads to a life dominated by work and devoid of personal leisure. 30
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- 5 In essence, societal glorification of success not only perpetuates harmful competitive cycles but also corrupts fundamental values, leading to isolation and an unbalanced life where personal achievements come at the cost of community and personal well-being. This skewed prioritisation urges a re-evaluation of what truly constitutes success and its impact on societal health and happiness. We must ask ourselves whether the price of such success is too high and consider more holistic measures of achievement that encompass not only material wealth but also personal fulfilment and societal contribution. 40
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Passage 2. *Another author writes about how success can bring about positive impact.*

- 1 Success often refers to the accumulation of wealth, possessions, or external markers of achievement. While these aspects can bring comfort, security, and opportunities, their true value lies in how they can be utilised to create a meaningful impact on a broader scale. Oprah Winfrey echoes this view when she says that success ‘while significant in its own right, can also serve as a platform for greater impact and positive change.’ 5
- 2 When we achieve a certain level of success, it can free up our time, energy, and resources, allowing us to shift our focus towards things that hold deeper significance. Rather than being solely consumed by personal pursuits or materialistic desires, we gain the capacity to concentrate on matters that truly matter – those that contribute to the well-being of others and the betterment of society as a whole. 10
- 3 Having material success can enable us to extend our influence, empowering us to contribute to causes, initiatives, or organisations that align with our values and address important societal issues. This usually involves philanthropy, volunteering or mentorship. In some cases, it may even involve using one’s skills and resources to create positive change. By leveraging our success for the benefit of others, we can create a ripple effect that extends far beyond our own lives. 15
- 4 Moreover, true fulfilment and happiness are often derived from acts of service, compassion, and making a positive difference in the world. While material possessions can provide temporary satisfaction, the deeper sense of purpose and fulfilment arises from connecting with others, supporting their growth, and working towards creating a more just, equitable, and harmonious society. 20
- 5 In essence, material success should not be an end in itself, but rather a means to pursue what truly matters: making a difference in both our own lives and the lives of others. By utilising our resources, time, and influence in ways that contribute to the greater good, we can experience a sense of purpose, fulfilment, and leave a lasting legacy that extends beyond material achievements alone. 25

Passage 3. *An author examines the reasons to chase success.*

- 1 In the course of writing my books and articles about success, I talk to a lot of people about what that word means to them, and why they want more success in their own lives. I am surprised at how often people give me the exact same reason for wanting more success: they want their life to be 'easier'.

- 2 I know many people who are highly successful beyond any objective measure. I interviewed 5 dozens of them for my upcoming book about self-educated millionaires. Some of them are wildly financially successful billionaires. Some are wildly famous. But I have yet to meet a successful person whose life got 'easier'. Of course, they may not have trouble paying rent anymore, or wonder where their next meal is coming from, or whether they can afford proper health care. Their success takes them safely out of worrying about the life-and-death 10 problems that a good part of humanity struggles with.

- 3 Yet, though success and money may solve survival-level problems, they bring new ones. If you are wealthy or famous, people constantly want things from you – favours, connections, money. Power attracts admiration, but also haters, who say vile, hurtful things they would never say face-to-face, even one they hated. 15

- 4 I have come to believe that you should only seek fame, power, and material success if there is a mission so important, and which requires additional resources, that you willingly take on the burdens of leadership to fulfil it. If that is your reason for seeking power and success in your life, and you finally achieve it, will it be meaningful? Sure. Worthwhile? Of course.

- 5 Easy? Forget it. 20

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