

Name		GP Class	
Reg No.			

NATIONAL JUNIOR COLLEGE
Senior High 2 Preliminary Examination
Higher 1

General Paper

Paper 2
INSERT

8881/02

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1 hour 30 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Insert contains the passages for Paper 2.

Passage 1. *An author writes about the art of collecting.*

- 1 Collecting is an intrinsic part of the human experience, deeply embedded in our history, psychology and social interactions. From ancient cabinets of curiosities to modern-day NFTs and designer collectibles, people have always gathered objects – sometimes for pleasure, sometimes for prestige, and often for reasons they may not even fully understand.

- 2 One of the most compelling aspects of collecting is the emotional satisfaction it brings. The thrill of the hunt – the excitement of discovery – can be intensely rewarding. Whether it is stumbling upon a rare vinyl in a record store or unearthing a limited-time deal in a supermarket aisle, the process of finding and acquiring something meaningful provides a rush that is difficult to replicate elsewhere. This search, often described as a journey, engages us deeply. The moment of acquisition offers a fleeting sense of joy, but it is the act of searching that remains most emotionally resonant. It is no surprise, then, that collectors often repeat the process, driven by the desire to re-experience that moment of discovery.

- 3 Beyond the emotional, collecting can also be intellectually gratifying. According to neuroscientist Shirley M. Mueller, the discipline and knowledge required to curate a specialised collection brings intellectual satisfaction. From building custom gaming PCs to archiving news articles, the process demands research, critical thinking, and a degree of mastery. Each collected item adds to a growing repository of expertise, affirming one’s identity and sense of self. The collector, in this sense, is not merely an accumulator but also a curator of knowledge.

- 4 Socially, collecting fosters connection. Shared interests give rise to communities – whether among vinyl enthusiasts, designers bookmarking websites, or NFT traders – where individuals bond over their findings. Within these spaces, recognition and admiration serve as strong motivators. Sharing one’s collection becomes a means of social interaction, offering validation and contributing to one’s sense of belonging. Such interactions have parallels in the natural world: crows collect shiny objects to attract mates; chimpanzees have made specific choices in items of interest they keep around their dwellings; wolverines (not the Hugh Jackman variety!) practise ‘cache spacing’, strategically spreading food across a large area to prevent it from being pilfered. Meanwhile, humans flaunt collectibles to signal social standing, taste, and intelligence.

- 5 Moreover, collecting also mirrors our innate desire for control and organisation. Like filing to-do lists or archiving information, the act of categorising a collection brings order to chaos. It can ease anxiety, provide structure, and reflect a sense of mastery over one’s environment. This is especially true in an age of information overload, where the ability to curate and organise has become a valuable skill.

- 6 Yet, the appeal of collecting extends beyond utility. In many cases, the value of a collected item is symbolic rather than functional. The 50-second video by Grimes or a £1,850 Loewe mini bag might seem extravagant, but they speak to broader human desires—for status, for identity, and for permanence. Collecting becomes a way to assert one’s place in the world, to create a tangible legacy in an otherwise ephemeral existence.

- 7 Ultimately, collecting is more than a hobby – it is a deeply human activity that fulfils emotional, intellectual, and social needs. Whether it’s driven by nostalgia, curiosity, pride, or simply the joy of the chase, the art of collecting offers insight into what we value, how we think, and who

we are. Its enduring appeal lies not merely in the objects we acquire, but in the meaning we derive from them, and the stories we tell through their accumulation.

Passage 2. *Another author presents the negative effects of hoarding and having massive collections.*

- 1 The act of collecting may begin as a harmless hobby, but when it escalates into compulsive hoarding, it becomes a dangerous and debilitating condition with serious consequences. Affecting between 2% and 5% of the adult population, a hoarding disorder is often under-reported due to a lack of self-awareness among sufferers. Unlike casual collectors, individuals with hoarding disorder struggle intensely with discarding possessions, regardless of their actual value. This difficulty often triggers overwhelming anxiety and shame, resulting in the gradual accumulation of clutter that severely compromises living conditions. 5
- 2 The physical dangers associated with hoarding are grave. Cluttered homes pose a heightened risk of trips and falls, which can cause injuries, especially among the elderly. Moreover, large quantities of items stacked near heat sources can easily ignite, leading to house fires. In such scenarios, clutter may also obstruct escape routes, endangering the lives of the occupants. The unsanitary conditions typical of hoarded environments can foster mould growth and pest infestations, potentially resulting in respiratory illnesses and infections. In some cases, access to basic utilities like heating and sanitation facilities is blocked, compounding health risks. 10
- 3 Psychologically, hoarding is often linked to depression, anxiety, and chronic distress. Hoarders may withdraw from social contact due to embarrassment, further exacerbating feelings of isolation. The disorder also strains familial and social relationships, frequently leading to conflict and emotional estrangement. Practical daily functions such as cooking, cleaning, and sleeping can become nearly impossible, as spaces are overtaken by unusable and deteriorating items. 15
- 4 The societal implications of hoarding are equally alarming. Severe cases may result in eviction, loss of child custody, and even animal cruelty charges when pets are kept in inhumane conditions. Financial mismanagement is another consequence, as hoarders often struggle to track important documents or pay bills. Additionally, emergency responders may face serious challenges accessing hoarded homes during crises, endangering both residents and rescue personnel. 20
- 5 Ultimately, hoarding is far more than excessive collecting – it is a complex psychological disorder with profound physical, emotional, and social consequences. Timely intervention, understanding, and professional help are essential to prevent the far-reaching dangers posed by this destructive behaviour. 25

Passage 3. *This passage describes the personal experience of an avid collector.*

- 1 As someone who once fell deeply into the world of collecting designer toys, I can attest to both the allure and the pitfalls of this absorbing pursuit. What began as a light-hearted way to appreciate artistic craftsmanship soon spiralled into a near-obsession. I would spend hours trawling online forums and auction sites, setting alarms for release drops, and planning my finances around limited-edition figurines. There was an undeniable thrill in securing a sought-after piece - the dopamine hit of acquisition, the pride of ownership, the envy of fellow collectors. My shelf, once a modest display, evolved into a shrine that reflected not only my tastes but also my emotional investment. 5
- 2 However, the line between hobby and compulsion blurred quickly. I found myself prioritising purchases over social plans, feeling anxious when I missed a drop, and becoming increasingly dissatisfied even as my collection grew. The joy of collecting became entangled with guilt, clutter, and the quiet realisation that I had lost sight of why I started in the first place. 10
- 3 It is here that the importance of balance becomes clear. Collecting, when done mindfully, can be enriching and meaningful. But left unchecked, collecting will reduce us into a hollow husk of our selves. 15