



**Raffles Institution**  
**2025 Year 6 Preliminary Examination**  
**General Certificate of Education Advanced Level**  
**Higher 1**

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**GENERAL PAPER**

**8881/02**

Paper 2

**3 September 2025**

INSERT

**1 hour 30 minutes**

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**READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST**

This Insert contains the passages for comprehension.

**Passage 1.** *Julia Keller argues that giving up is not necessarily a bad thing.*

- 1 How did the idea that perseverance is virtuous and quitting is sinful ever get its hooks in us? A major source, of course, is the nettlesome notion known as the Protestant<sup>1</sup> work ethic. According to Adam Grant, professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School and author of many best-selling books on personal transformation, treating perseverance as a virtue is a relic of the Protestant Reformation—but it still remains an indelible part of the American dream that fails to keep pace with modern sentiments. 5
  
- 2 And not just the American one. Other nations, too, put perseverance on a pedestal. If it weren't such an entrenched ideal, then the recent mini backlash against it wouldn't be so newsworthy. As essayist Charlie Tyson notes, widely reported revolts against inhumane work ideals—from the 'lying flat' movement in China to outcries against deaths from overwork in Japan and South Korea—reflect a growing sense of indignation in Asian countries. He adds Sweden and Finland to the list of countries who report surprising numbers of workers suffering from job-induced burnout—surprising because for so long, people just didn't quit, and the positive attributes of superhuman endurance were treated as truisms. 10 15
  
- 3 Recently, the notion of lying flat took a more vigorous turn. A new term has increasingly appeared on Chinese social media—runxue—which means the 'study of run', as in 'running away'. Young Chinese workers are dispirited by the cocktail of Covid restrictions, highly competitive working environments and social pressures to get married and do well financially. Additionally, in a buzzed-about 2021 essay in the New York Times, Cassidy Rosenblum chronicles her journey from radio producer operating in "the cacophony of the 24-hour news cycle" to serene porch sitter: "Work has become intolerable. Rest is resistance." Quitters, it seems, are finally coming out of the closet. 20 25
  
- 4 Well, maybe. But it's not that simple, of course. Because if perseverance didn't still have such a powerful hold on our imaginations, we'd not be reading essays by people determined to reject it. Despite the temporary uptick in workers going absent without leave, the traditional lessons of grit still linger: Quit and you'll fail. Keep your nose to the proverbial grindstone and you'll reap the rewards—even though it doesn't always end up that way in real life. Some people toil incessantly and go bankrupt, while others goof off and rake in the dough. Yet we're still primed to believe in the simple, cause-and-effect power of perseverance. 30
  
- 5 As people are discovering, the glorification of perseverance has a dark side. The campaign against quitting has a checkered past, a complicated and even somewhat sinister history. There's a reason quitting is so reviled in today's society. Quitting carries a foul odour. If you quit your church, your yoga class, your political party, your plant-based diet, or your marriage, you'll still be judged. Quitting is presented as an extremity. Indulge in it too many times and you'll be known as a failure, a flake, a wastrel—even though it might be exactly what you need to do. 35 40
  
- 6 There is still a persistent view that quitting is proof of a weak character—of a lack of initiative and follow-through. Quitting also means you'll never amount to anything.

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<sup>1</sup> A branch of Christianity.

Conversely though, such views are a shame, because in choosing to transform our lives in positive ways, quitting is a form of strength. Even more importantly, we can better achieve our goals when we can swap out one destiny for another. If we decide that things need to change, quitting is the first step. Until we're able to stop in our tracks and rethink our lives, we may be stuck in a place where we don't really want to be. 45

**Passage 2.** *Stefano Cappellini believes that we should never give up.*

- 1 In the face of adversity, it can be tempting to throw in the towel and succumb to the challenges that life presents. Yet history is replete with stories of individuals who refused to give up, ultimately achieving remarkable success. Thomas Edison, who famously said, "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work," and J.K. Rowling, who overcame numerous rejections before finding success with Harry Potter, are only two examples of the transformative power of perseverance. 5
- 2 Why must we never give up? Giving up guarantees failure, while perseverance opens the door to potential success. Many great accomplishments have been the result of continued effort in the face of setbacks. Whether it's in the realm of business, sports, or personal development, those who persist are far more likely to achieve their goals. They understand, as Babe Ruth<sup>2</sup> did, that every strike brings them closer to the next 'home run'. 10
- 3 The act of persevering in the face of adversity also builds resilience and character. Overcoming challenges requires strength, determination, and a willingness to stay on course despite setbacks. These qualities not only contribute to personal growth but also serve as a source of inspiration for others facing similar struggles. By refusing to give up, you become a living testament to the idea that obstacles can be overcome with unwavering resolve. 15
- 4 Difficulties are also opportunities to reassess your approach, learn from mistakes, and adapt your strategies—never giving up fosters a mindset of continuous improvement. This iterative process of trial and error provides valuable insights that refine your approach and deepen your understanding with each step. As the saying goes, "Smooth seas do not make skilful sailors.". Embracing challenges and persisting through them is what ultimately leads to mastery in any endeavour. 20
- 5 It is important to recognise that perseverance does not mean stubbornly clinging to a path that no longer serves you. At times, it is necessary to step back, reassess your goals, and adjust your approach. What matters is the unwavering commitment to your aspirations—because they represent what is most meaningful to you. 25
- 6 The decision to never give up is a powerful declaration of faith in oneself and a refusal to be defined by temporary setbacks. As you navigate the inevitable challenges of life, remember that it's not the absence of obstacles that defines you, but rather your response to them. In choosing not to give up, you affirm who you are and what you stand for. 30

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<sup>2</sup> An American professional baseball player.

**Passage 3.** *This passage describes the personal experience of college volleyball player Graesyn.*

- 1 I had known since I was 10 that I wanted to play volleyball in college, and from then it became my life. My hard work and dedication paid off, and I ended up with a scholarship to play for a team in a very competitive league. It was a dream come true.
- 2 Unfortunately, somewhere between my junior and senior year I just didn't love it anymore. And by the end of my senior year not only did I not love it, but I actually hated it and felt miserable. I was constantly injured, and advised by doctors to stop playing the sport to let my body recover. More importantly, I felt that I should spend the remaining time in my youth to explore other interests. Despite all this, when I confided in some teammates that I wanted to leave, they chastised me for lacking willpower and commitment. 5 10
- 3 However, after a lot of soul-searching and discussion with my parents and coaches, I finally decided that my sophomore college volleyball season was my last. A weight was lifted off my shoulders and I felt like I could finally breathe for the first time in years.
- 4 Choosing to walk away from my sport was the best decision of my life. I have been able to do so many things that actually make me happy in my time now. There has not been a second since I walked away that I regret the decision I made. You can call me a quitter if you want, but "quitting" was the best thing I've ever done for myself. 15